On the Sidelines:

Postfeminism, Neoliberalism, and the American Female Sportscaster

By

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ABSTRACT

The term “female sportscaster” elicits a broad range of feelings among the sports media consumer base. Many of the women who fall into the category of “female sportscaster” appear to be greatly admired while many others evoke considerable scorn, making the electronic sports media industry a seemingly dangerous and often vitriolic environment for women. The gendered mistreatment of women sportscasters is not unfamiliar to sports media scholars. Indeed, phenomena such as sex biases, double standards, and harassment have been documented, primarily through positivistic or quantitative research. What has not been investigated, however, is how these phenomena persist and evolve despite the extant research.

This dissertation employs Michel Foucault’s power/knowledge paradigm to take a discursive analytic approach to understand how the “female sportscaster” subjectivity, or imagined idea, is constructed through statements, images, and practices. That is, this dissertation investigates the way society “talks about” the “female sportscaster” and how those discussions affect the experiences of women sportscasters. Using one-on-one interviews with 10 women sportscasters, focus groups with sports media consumers, netnography, and textual analysis under the umbrella of a feminist methodological approach, this dissertation finds that the American female subjectivity is constructed through postfeminist and neoliberal discourses. These discourses “empower” women sportscasters to be responsible for their own success but, in doing so, normalize the obstacles women in sportscasting endure.

As a result of this normalization, the electronic sports media industry is seemingly justified in taking little to no meaningful action toward improving conditions for women

sportscasters. Specific manifestations of these discourses are traced across phenomena such as double standards, bias in hiring and development, harassment, and the expectation of affective labor. Suggestions are made for improving conditions for women sportscasters.

For:

Lindsay: This is your achievement, too. You offered your unwavering support while enduring my many late nights, carrying and birthing two children (at the same time!) and moving our super young family across the country. Thank you for your love and care during this crazy chapter.

V, H, and W: You are too young to understand any of this now. Nevertheless, may this forever serve you as an example of the value of ambition, critical thought, social justice, and empathy – even if the world comes to devalue such things.

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Chapter I – Introduction

As of 2018, a cursory glance at the Google search results for the term "female sportscaster" suggests it is a phrase that elicits a broad range of feelings among the sports media consumer base. Many of the women who fall into the category of "female sportscaster" appear to be greatly – perhaps even excessively – admired for their beauty and, to a much lesser extent, for their contributions to their profession, especially as they relate to "breaking down" longstanding gendered barriers. Conversely, many of these women also evoke considerable scorn, making the electronic sports media industry a seemingly dangerous and often vitriolic environment for women. As exemplified by the following flashpoints, all of which occurred in the span of four months, the idea of "the female sportscaster," especially in an American context, at once elicits lust, appreciation, hatred and, in a discursive sense, violence:

> On July 16, 2014, Kirk Minihane, a sports talk radio host in Boston, referred to Fox Sports field/sideline reporter Erin Andrews as a "gutless bitch" for conducting what he believed to be an unprofessional interview during the Major League Baseball All-Star Game. He later apologized but not without stating that Andrews would be a waitress if she "weighed 15 pounds more" (Finn, 2014).
>
> Less than a month later, in speaking about ESPN host/reporter Sam Ponder, Dave Portnoy, the founder of Barstool Sports, said, "No person who watches [her show] wants to see a picture of her and her ugly kid.…We want to see [her] sex it up and be slutty." Portnoy was defending sports blogs, which Ponder accused of being hypocritical in their analysis of the Ray Rice domestic abuse saga. According to Portnoy, sports blogs could justifiably objectify women sportscasters while also speaking out against domestic violence (Abelson, 2017, para. 27)
>
> On November 4, 2014, comedian Artie Lange, a white man, posted a series of tweets that described, in explicit

> detail, a sexual fantasy in which he was Thomas Jefferson and Cari Champion, a black woman and then-moderator of ESPN's *First Take*, was his rebellious slave. "I attempt to whip [Champion] cuz [sic] she disrespected the Jefferson Plantation but she grabs whip & beats me I [sic] cum like a fat founding father." (D'Zurilla, 2014).

As these snippets indicate, many women in the sports electronic media experience a variety of gendered mistreatment in the forms of humiliation, derision, and online and offline harassment framed by heterosexist white supremacist logics. In addition, these women are targeted not just by relatively anonymous sports media consumers but also by men who work within the sports and media industries and who have achieved varying levels of fame. The reasons for attacks such as these are multitudinous and contradictory; for some women sportscasters, their perceived level of attractiveness makes them an object of desire and a target of unsolicited remarks about their bodies and sexuality. For others, their attractiveness – and the perceived high levels thereof by sports media consumers – calls their credibility into question. Ultimately, all of these women – and the women referenced in this dissertation – are susceptible to this discourse because they are women.

The sexism that women in sports media encounter has not gone unnoticed by sports media scholars. A body of scholarly literature investigates the extent to which women in sports media face gendered double standards (Sheffer and Schultz, 2007), sex bias in evaluations of sportscaster vocal tone (Etling et al., 2011) and authoritativeness (Etling and Young, 2007), and hegemonic masculinity both in sports media college instruction (Hardin, Dodd and Lauffer, 2009) and in the industry itself (Bien-Aime, 2016). Although the extant literature sheds light on the sexism that pervades the sports media industry, what it does not do is explain how this sexism persists and evolves. Such

an explanation is of great potential utility, for if the assembly and maintenance of a thing is known, that knowledge could also be used to devise strategies for how to dismantle the thing. The impetus for this dissertation is therefore to provide a possible explanation of how sexism's persistence and evolution in sports electronic media. While the majority of the scholarly literature reviewed in Chapter II is positivistic and, therefore, comprised of straightforward presentations of collected data, if the aim is to produce scholarship that affects change in the sports media industry, an interpretivist approach is needed. Proving gendered inequities exist is not enough to curb them; despite the scholarship at its disposal, the sports media industry continues to be a problematic space for women.

Instead, scholarship that aims to contribute toward equality between the sexes in sports media must allow women's experiences and observations to be heard. These insights must then be analyzed and interpreted through a theoretical lens that allows scholars to explain the ways gendered inequities negatively impact women, professionally and personally, and how those inequities operate and persist within the industry. To that end, the chapters that follow attempt to answer the following questions:

Q1: How is "the female sportscaster," as a subjectivity, constructed through structures of discourse and manifest in everyday practices and language?

Q2: How do women in on-air sportscasting positions navigate and negotiate "the female sportscaster" subjectivity?

Q3: And how do sports media consumers contribute to the construction of "the female sportscaster" subject-position?

That is, I investigate how the idea of "the female sportscaster" is constructed and "known" by society at large, and how that constructed idea is brought to bear on the

subjective experiences of women sportscasters as well as the subjective perspectives of sports media consumers. To do this, and as is explicated in greater detail in Chapter II, I use Michel Foucault's (1978) power/knowledge epistemology – in concert with Stuart Hall et al.'s (2013) concept of representation – to analyze some of the discourse that contributes to the production of the female sportscaster subjectivity. The epistemological usage of Foucault and Hall is apropos to this study given that both social theorists understood discourse – language, images, texts, practices – as inherently political, insofar as discourse is not simply a passive presentation of facts, information, or entertainment but a producer of relations of power, dominance, and oppression between members of social groups. This dissertation, then, is an interpretation of the discourse that shapes (and, to a lesser extent, is shaped by) the structures of power and oppression that politically govern both "the female sportscaster" subject-position and the material experiences of women sportscasters as they navigate a quantitatively and ideologically male-dominated industry.

Foucauldian theory is the lens through which this analysis is conducted and feminist methodologies are employed throughout this dissertation as a compass to guide my research. As is discussed further in Chapter III, the usage of feminist epistemologies aided an avoidance of subordinating discourse and knowledge, a mission that coincides with the political commitment – equality between the sexes in sports media – that motivated the pursuit of this study. To that end, feminist methodologies often call upon the researcher to be reflexive about the ways in which his or her social identity – and the power and privileges it may or may not carry – can potentially impact the design, execution, and reporting of a project (Ramazanoglu and Holland, 2002). To that end,

being reflexive and transparent about my role and identity as the researcher compels me, at times throughout this dissertation, to refer to myself in the first-person perspective. This development will no doubt be jarring for many readers, given the rare usage of first-person in mostly-positivistic mass media research.

With Foucauldian and feminist epistemologies helping to shape the design of this study, the conclusions contained herein were reached after gathering qualitative data through one-to-one telephone interviews with women sportscasters and focus group discussions with male and female sports media consumers. In addition, relevant mediated texts were curated, analyzed, and put into conversation with the data gathered during the interviews and focus groups. This Foucauldian, feminist, mixed-methods investigation of the American female sportscaster subjectivity resulted in one primary finding supported and demonstrated by four related findings. Primarily, and as is explicated throughout this dissertation, the American female sportscaster is a postfeminist subject that the industry expects to be, to a problematic degree, an always autonomous body, a constructed "idea" manifest in the lived experiences of women sportscasters. This is true to the extent that these women appear to have the same opportunities as male sportscasters yet are expected to navigate gendered mistreatment and perform self-maintenance in the face of that mistreatment. Emblematic of this subjectivity's relationship with postfeminism is that the challenges women sportscasters encounter are often presented in a way that makes those women appear deliberately compliant with those challenges. In addition, these challenges are often contradictory, giving women in the electronic sports media strict guidelines with regard to appearance and roles within the industry, among others. This narrow area in which women in the industry are permitted to operate further

undergirds the relationship between the female sportscaster and postfeminism. Also problematizing the female sportscaster subject-position is the fact that many women in the industry are expected to grapple with these challenges with little to no meaningful structural assistance or acknowledgment that these expectations contribute to the persistent and evolving subordination of women in the industry.

These challenges – and the sophisticated ways in which women must autonomously grapple with them – are symbolic of a female sportscaster subjectivity that is constructed by contradictory and exclusionary postfeminist logics (Gill and Scharff, 2011; McRobbie, 2004) and their mass mediated hallmarks (Gill, 2007). With postfeminism comes, among other things, a mutually-informing relationship with neoliberal ideology, which, on one hand, calls upon individuals to constantly perform self-discipline and maintenance so they might thrive and succeed without statutory, institutional, or organizational assistance. On the other hand, neoliberal logic also ignores – and perhaps even relies on – the possibility that some individuals are disadvantaged, due to their social location (for example, race, gender, age, class, (dis)ability). So, while the postfeminist female sportscaster is a seemingly empowered and independent subject-position, the construction of the female sportscaster is also problematic insofar as it has created an expectation that women sportscasters must navigate all manner of unjust gendered mistreatment and dilemmatic choices with little to no meaningful assistance or support. As a result, the challenges women sportscasters face have been taken for granted and the sports media industry is therefore absolved of any responsibility for the continued subordination of the women it puts on the air.

This dissertation and its findings may be met with some skepticism among the sports media industry's decision-makers, who, as this dissertation demonstrates, often justify their actions – or inactions – by accepting certain phenomena, like sexism or their audience's desires, as inflexible. This is true whether these decision-makers answer questions about the lack of airtime given to women's sports (Cooky, Messner, and Musto, 2015) or their justification for giving certain sports, regardless of gender, preferential television coverage over others (Saks and Yanity, 2016). In short, to many of the industry's decision-makers, this dissertation's findings may seem naïve. The issue of television ratings – which generates revenue within the industry – is not addressed until the final chapter of this dissertation and gendered mistreatment of women sportscasters might appear to be "natural," which results in it being taken for granted. However, the purpose of this dissertation – as well as the theoretical and epistemological lens it employs – is to explain how the treatment of the industry's women sportscaster has become "natural" and how changing that treatment need not be mutually-exclusive of the quest for high ratings. To that end, I offer possible suggestions for how the treatment of women sportscasters can change, implicitly for most of the dissertation but also explicitly in Chapter VIII.

While a dissertation's arguments are traditionally contained within a single "finding/results chapter," after Chapters II and III – my review of literature and methodology, respectively – my primary argument and my four "sub-arguments" are presented across four chapters. This is done for three reasons. First, as this is an interdisciplinary study that calls upon scholarship and mass mediated texts to aid its analysis, it makes sense to treat each sub-argument separately. That is, the scholarship

and texts I call upon are specific to each chapter, therefore making it necessary to write a brief "literature review" at the beginning of Chapters IV through VII. Another reason I divide my findings into four chapters is that each sub-argument requires detailed analysis; a single findings chapter containing all my arguments would have been lengthy, leading to a chapter that could have been unwieldy and difficult for some readers to navigate. My arguments are therefore separated in this manner to make it easier to navigate this document for readers who want to more closely examine one of the sub-arguments in isolation. Lastly, each sub-argument is worthy of its own chapter because, although they work together to provide evidence of the construction of a postfeminist and neoliberal subject, they also each represent, in their own right, individual phenomena vis-à-vis gender in sports media. Also, this dissertation deals with postfeminism's problematic relationship with "the female sportscaster," which is also quite sophisticated. If the relationship is analogous, for example, to a machine, then a detailed examination of each cog is vital to understand how the machine operates. To that end, each "sub-argument chapter" refers to a single aspect of the female sportscaster subjectivity I propose.

Chapter IV presents interview and focus group data as well as mass mediated texts to examine the sports media industry's well-documented gendered double standards of appearance and credibility (Sheffer and Schultz, 2007), their manifestations and their most recent evolutions. With regard to the double standard of appearance, women sportscasters are presented with a conundrum that is paradoxical and resonates with postfeminist and neoliberal logics to the extent that the conundrum is presented as a choice women in the industry are free to make without repercussions. The data I collected and analyzed, however, suggest that this conundrum grants women in the industry few

choices that are free of consequences. As it relates to the credibility double standard, which is informed by the appearance double standard, women sportscasters claim to face gendered *a priori* skepticism and unjust critiques. While this double standard in and of itself is not representative of a postfeminist neoliberal subjectivity, the expectation that women overcome both double standards is very much rooted in postfeminist neoliberal ideology. As a result, although the existence of these double standards is well-known, the sports media industry is slow to act against them.

Chapter V examines a potential sex bias in hiring for certain on-air positions in sports media. Although there have been a few recent exceptions such as Beth Mowins, Jessica Mendoza, and Doris Burke, women are largely excluded from television play-by-play announcing and color commentary positions for highly-visible men's sports. This is symbolic of what I call sports media's "glass sportscasting booth," a site within sports media to which women sometimes aspire but are typically not hired to occupy. The chapter begins with an analysis of the position for which women are viewed as being ideally-suited, sideline reporter, since it offers us a glimpse of widely-held perceptions of the roles women sportscasters hold in the sports media industry. Chapter V then moves to an analysis of the lack of women assigned to the broadcast booth as play-by-play announcers and color analysts. My interview and focus group informants offered a variety of explanations for this phenomenon, ranging from the perceptions of women's voices to a paucity of available women play-by-play announcers and color commentators. In sum, the relatively narrow representation of women in sportscasting ensures women's perceived inferiority in the industry now and into the foreseeable future. In addition, and as it relates to my overall argument, discourse that places the onus on women to access

heretofore inaccessible roles – discourse to which many of my men and women informants subscribe – is rooted in postfeminist neoliberal logic.

Due in large part to the *#MoreThanMean* public service announcement (2016), reports of the gendered harassment women sportscasters endure online have found a large audience.[1] On the other hand, mass mediated reports of workplace harassment in the sports electronic media exist but likely have not found such a large audience. Chapter VI offers a discursive analysis of both forms of harassment within the industry. Regarding workplace harassment, women in the industry endure hostile work environments, stemming in part from the stigmatization of menstruation, pregnancy, and miscarriage. In addition to quid pro quo propositions and stalking, the taboo surrounding female reproduction is informed by the double standards explicated in Chapter IV and, by extension, women's perceived role in sportscasting as examined in Chapter V. In addition, Chapter VI examines the online harassment of women sportscasters and its purpose, through the lens of the online environment's role as an extension of a sportscaster's workplace (Laucella, 2014). In general, the harassment of women sportscasters serves to ensure the persistence of the gendered structure of the sports media industry, a structure in which women remain on the periphery. In a phenomenon that resonates with postfeminism and neoliberalism, the harassment women in the industry endure – and the lack of action the industry has taken against it – forces women to discipline their actions so as not to invite unwanted advances or attacks.

[1] As of September 25, 2018, the PSA had accumulated over 4.5 million views on YouTube.com.

Chapter VII employs feminist affect theory to more closely examine the postfeminist self-discipline that is required of women sportscasters in response to harassment and double standards, and sex bias. Using Sara Ahmed's (2014) work on affect as an entrée into Arlie Hochschild's concepts of emotional labor (1983) and emotion work (1979), I explain the extra affective labor women sportscasters are required to perform to exhibit the unaffected demeanor the industry manifestly demands of women. Emotional labor is performed in the workplace in exchange for the sort of political capital that allows female sportscasters to gain influence in their media organizations. Emotion work, or that which takes place outside the workplace, calls upon women sportscasters to seek interpersonal support that is often patronizing and normalizes the gendered mistreatment that necessitates emotion management. Many women in the industry have persevered despite the expectation of emotion management while others have either left or never entered the industry because the benefits of the job did not outweigh its emotional cost. This attrition further contributes to the gendered structure of the sportscasting industry. Additionally, and most germane to my overall argument, the expectation of emotion management resonates with postfeminism's requirement that women discipline themselves and strive for success in the face of (gendered) adversity.

Chapter VIII concludes this dissertation by reintroducing my overall argument before moving away from my analysis to discuss the theoretical, institutional, and social implications of this dissertation's findings. To complete the chapter, and the dissertation, I provide long- and short-term solutions for improving women's stagnating standing in sportscasting while potential avenues for future research are also proposed.

Operationalizing terms: "Female Sportscaster," "Woman Sportscaster," and "Sportscasting"

The term "female sportscaster" is loaded with a slew of meanings and carries with it a set of assumptions regarding sportscaster gender that undergird much of the discourse analyzed in this dissertation. Although commonly used in media and everyday talk to refer to women who provide sports reporting and commentary through broadcast media, this dissertation uses the phrase to describe a subjectivity, an idea or an imagined subject constructed through discourse. It is therefore important to specify when I am referring to this subjectivity and when I am writing about "real" women. "Woman sportscaster," or its plural equivalent, is used to refer to the women who were interviewed for this dissertation as well as those whose experiences can be found in mediated discourse. Not only is the term "woman sportscaster" used to differentiate the real from the constructed in this dissertation, but I also refer to them as "women" because that word is less clinical than "female" and is more inclusive. The inclusivity of the word "woman" is true to the extent that not everyone who identifies as a woman is biologically female and because it is not my intention to identify the "real" women in this dissertation by their reproductive anatomy. Conversely, as a constructed, imagined subject, "female sportscaster" works because it carries with it a set of assumptions, including the expectation that "female sportscasters" are cisgender[2] and heterosexual.

For the purpose of this project, a woman sportscaster is defined as a person who identifies as a woman and appears on, or is heard through, a broadcast, cable, satellite,

[2] A term used when someone self-identifies as the gender that mirrors the sex they were assigned at birth. This is the opposite of transgender.

and/or digital medium to provide commentary or news about sports. Since most of these various types of media cannot be accurately described as "broadcast media,"[3] for the sake of simplicity, I use "sportscasting" when describing the industry and the various media within which the women under study are employed. The women who fall within the purview of this dissertation are seen and heard through various platforms, including television and radio as well as the Internet (i.e., podcasting), and hold various on-air roles within the industry, including reporter, anchor, host, moderator, and, to a lesser extent, play-by-play announcer, color commentator, and studio analyst.

Much of the scholarship examining gender in the sports media industry does not differentiate between women sportscasters and women sports journalists, using "sports journalism" as a catch-all phrase that includes women who work in print *and* electronic media. Although this dissertation calls upon literature and mediated texts related to women in sports journalism collectively, I consciously chose to focus on sportscasters only. Within the sports media complex, sportscasters are more visible than their counterparts in the print media. In the print media, the words on the page tell the story whereas, in the broadcast media, the broadcaster tells the story, leaving him or her more susceptible to (para)social interactions[4] from the audience. This distinction between sportscasters and print journalists is important especially as one considers the sorts of vitriolic online interactions that motivated sportscasters Julie DiCaro and Sarah Spain to collaborate on the *#MoreThanMean* public service announcement.

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[3] The broadcast media (and, therefore, "broadcasting") only include over-the-air television (ABC, NBC, CBS) and terrestrial (i.e., not satellite or streaming) radio.
[4] Parasocial interactions are one-sided interactions media consumers have with the people they see on television or in films, much in the same way some viewers closely followed *The Oprah Winfrey Show* because they formed a one-sided bond with the show's host.

I therefore concentrate on sportscasting as a site for examining gender in sports media, due to the lack of anonymity often afforded to sportscasters, relative to print journalists. For example, a cisgender woman sportswriter named Sam Jones could develop a following of devoted readers who believe she is a man, so long as her likeness never appears next to her byline or anywhere on the Internet – not likely but not impossible. Meanwhile, a cisgender woman sideline reporter named Sam Jones will most likely be identified as a woman by her audience the moment she appears on camera, which would be impossible to avoid in her line of work. Furthermore, as this dissertation will show, because of the variety of platforms through which sportscasters are now expected to appear, many of the obstacles women sportscasters must grapple with owe to sportscasters' visibility and unprecedented accessibility.

Why Analyze Gender in Sports Journalism?

Although sportscasting serves as the site of inquiry for my research, my hope is that this dissertation will eventually join the growing array of sports journalism scholarship. The sports journalism industry has long struggled for relevancy in the academy and in the media industry at large. Because of its role in the sports/media complex (Jhally, 1989), an institution in which sport and media engage in a mutually beneficial relationship, sports journalism is often used as an "ethical straw man" (Oates & Pauly, 2007, p. 332) against which news compares itself and "defend[s] the virtue of its serious work" (p. 332). However, despite the long-held view of sports journalism as the "toy department" of media organizations (Garrison and Salwen, 1989, p. 57), a survey found that newspaper editors have wanted sports journalism to be viewed seriously as a

profession, despite – or perhaps because of – the lack of formal training required at the time the survey was conducted (Garrison and Salwen, 1989).

There is evidence that efforts toward the professionalization of sports journalism are underway. Many colleges and universities have launched sports journalism degree or certificate programs, using textbooks devoted to teaching aspiring sports journalists the practices, pitfalls, and ethics of the profession. One such textbook, written by Reinardy and Wanta (2009), teaches students the craft of sports writing, how to construct a game story and lead paragraphs, how to interview coaches and athletes, and how to navigate the many ethical considerations that sportswriters face in their careers.

However, while sports journalism has sought legitimacy as a profession, mediated sports also remain rooted in hegemonic masculinity, which is the coercive process through which men and women have come to view an implicit conflation of sports and masculinity as natural (Hardin & Schain, 2006). In a study of print and television representations of baseball pitcher Nolan Ryan, Trujillo (1991) found five characteristics of hegemonic masculinity in mediated sport: Physical force and control, occupational achievement, familial patriarchy, frontiersmanship, and heterosexuality. American sports media embrace these elements by presenting hegemonic masculinity as 'common sense.' (in Hardin et al., 2009). Given this definition, Hardin, Dodd, and Lauffer (2009) found hegemonic masculinity to pervade the vast collection of sports journalism textbooks they examined. In addition, Bien-Aime (2016) has found the sports section of the *Associated Press Stylebook*, the guiding publication used by the majority of print journalists nationwide, to promote hegemonic masculinity and subtle sexism by predominantly using male athletes, sports leagues, and teams in its examples.

"Mediated sports culture is an inescapable reality, forming part of the context of every American's life" (Wenner, 1989, p. 16). As this literature illustrates, the sports media combine to form a ripe area for research interested in relations of power, particularly in terms of race, gender, politics, and economics. Further, as Jhally (1989) argues, mediated sports are suitable for cultural studies of race, nationality, class and gender, especially as these axes of social location relate to hegemony and the production of power detrimental to women, people of color, and poor people.

Admittedly, the phenomena analyzed in the evidence chapters of this dissertation (double standards, sex bias, and harassment) are not new, nor are they unique to the sportscasting industry. This dissertation, therefore, is an examination of the ways in which the sports media industry is a gender*ed* space insofar as the systemic white supremacist, cisheterosexist, capitalist patriarchy that pervades society is brought to bear on the industry. Conversely, this study also serves as an investigation of the ways in which sports media is a *gendering* space, an institution that contributes to white supremacist, cisheterosexist, capitalist patriarchy as much as it is informed by it. The institution of mediated sports makes for a ripe site of cultural inquiry, as Jhally suggests above, because the institution is part of a social system (in this case, and in short, patriarchy) that is not centralized but is composed of a network of connected institutions. Although it may appear that many of the phenomena analyzed in this dissertation cannot be resolved unless they are addressed in society at large, the decentralization of patriarchy means the interrelated institutions that contribute to the system (which include mediated sports) must each take steps toward addressing phenomena such as sex bias and harassment. As a result, the changes I suggest with respect to achieving equality between

the sexes in sportscasting may also be applied within other contexts and institutions within the white supremacist, cisheterosexist, capitalist patriarchal network.

Chapter II – Literature Review

I situate my dissertation at the intersection of sports, media, and social theory. Thus, this review of relevant literature engages these three areas of scholarship. I have divided this chapter into two broad sections. First, I review literature framed by the theoretical lenses that inform this dissertation's findings: discourse, postfeminism, and neoliberalism. Then I review sports media literature, with special attention given to literature that examines issues of gender within sports media.

Theoretical Frameworks

This dissertation is framed by a constructivist approach to discourse. That is, it seeks to understand how "female sportscaster" and its various meanings is constructed through words, symbols, and practices. As I demonstrate throughout, the meanings and assumptions associated with the female sportscaster are neither fixed nor necessarily intentional. I start this section with reviews of Stuart Hall et al.'s (2013) concept of representation and Michel Foucault's power/knowledge paradigm, frameworks that guide the various methodologies at play in this dissertation.

Representation and Discourse

Stuart Hall's work broadly traces links between prejudice and the mass media. For him, in its simplest terms, representation is the process of connecting meaning and language to culture (Hall et al., 2013). That is, representation is the process in which people of the same culture come to use language, symbols, images and even practices to *represent* ideas, people, and things. According to Hall, while the definition of culture is slippery, we may understand it not as a "set of things" but as a "set of practices" concerned with the production and exchange of meanings (2013, p. xviii). Thus, people

who belong to the same culture can be said to make sense of the world in similar ways (p. xix). Representation is the process that teaches those of us in the same culture to make sense of the world through universally understood language and symbols.

With slight variations, those of us in the same culture understand, at an elementary level, that the term "female sportscaster" is language used to represent a woman who provides sports reporting and/or commentary to a large audience, either on television, radio, or the Internet. However, "female sportscaster" is also a loaded phrase; a female sportscaster is not, at this point in time, simply a female sportscaster. As Hall writes, "Things 'in themselves' rarely, if ever, have any single, fixed and unchanging meaning" (p. xix).

Hall suggests that there are three ways of analyzing the function of language in the process of representation: reflective, intentional, and constructionist (p. 1). The first two approaches are straightforward insofar as they assume language serves to describe its subject. According to the reflective approach, for example, a female sportscaster is a female sportscaster is a female sportscaster. That is, words reflect fixed meanings in the material world; in this view, the meanings words make have not been constructed and cannot be changed. The intentional approach assumes that language can only mean what a speaker, author, or artist intends for it to mean. Whereas the reflective approach assumes words have fixed, *a priori* meanings, the intentional approach suggests that the actors disseminating words are the only ones who can determine the meaning of those words. The constructionist approach most closely aligns with the idea that language is politically productive and assumes meanings are constructed through language and is

neither fixed nor intentional. Hall et al. (2013) focus on the constructionist approach, given its prominence in cultural studies (p. 1).

Hall suggests two ways of studying the construction of meaning. The semiotic approach, championed by Ferdinand de Saussure, analyzes signs (p. 16) while the discursive approach, conceived by Foucault, investigates discourse (p. 29). According to Hall et al. (2013), discourse refers to "a group of statements which provide a language for talking about … a particular topic at a particular historical moment" (p. 29). Discourse includes language and images, but it can also include practices because, as Hall states, what we do is greatly informed by meanings. Because of this, language, symbols, *and* practices form discourses that construct what we know about a topic or person and appear throughout a variety of texts. These texts that combine to construct a topic or person become a discursive formation.

Representation and the discursive approach to analyzing constructions of meaning provide researchers with tools for uncovering social relations of power that make meanings appear fixed, taken for granted and accepted as fact. As social theorists such as Hall and Foucault demonstrate, discourse is never merely descriptive, as conventional wisdom (the reflective approach) assumes. Rather, discourse is politically productive; it creates and maintains structures of power and oppression between groups of people. In this project, the language, images, and practices that comprise the taken-for-granted notions associated with the female sportscaster are also unintentionally politically productive, potentially contributing to the continued subordination of women in sportscasting. The unintentionality of discourse is important because it suggests no single person or organization can be singled out as creators of oppressive discourse. This

suggestion would further imply the creation of discourse as systematic and sophisticated. Conversely, the fact that meanings and assumptions are not fixed also means that they can change over time, suggesting no destructive discourse is entirely intractable. The notion that discourse and its meanings are not intractable rejects the normalization of taken-for-granted assumptions and gendered mistreatment (such as harassment) that the industry expects women sportscasters to endure.

One of the ways in which we can analyze discourse and discursive formations is by taking a Foucauldian approach to tracing the construction of power and knowledge. Michel Foucault's work is widely used in cultural studies of gender, race, and sexuality. Among his many contributions is his conception of power/knowledge, which is central to most of his work. According to Foucault, a relationship exists between power and knowledge, such that each leads to the construction of the other. "There is no power relation without the correlative constitution of a field of knowledge, nor any knowledge that does not presuppose and constitute at the same time, power relations" (Foucault, 1978, p. 27). In other words, no individual or group has power over another individual or group without a field of knowledge that supports that power relation, nor is any knowledge constructed without someone obtaining power – though this process is not always intentional. To Foucault, all knowledge is socially constructed and eventually results in someone or something achieving greater power, primarily through the regulation of bodies (or what he terms "governmentality").

In this dissertation, I argue that "the female sportscaster" is a discursive formation that regulates, in the material world, the practices, options, and choices of those women who work in – or seek to enter – the sportscasting industry. This regulation is problematic

to the extent that the female sportscaster discursive formation is rooted in postfeminist discourse, which forces women sportscasters to make dilemmatic and paradoxical choices. The postfeminist discursive formation of the female sportscaster is also problematic because it seemingly empowers women to be entrepreneurial and autonomous in their quests for success in the face of gendered mistreatment, yet absolves the industry of any culpability for its relative inaction toward addressing this mistreatment.

The aim of this project is not to show or prove women sportscasters endure gendered mistreatment. As the literature reviewed below indicates, we already know heterosexism in the sports media industry persists. Foucault (1980, p. 89) argues that scholars interested in structures of power like heterosexism would do well to ask: "If power is exercised, what sort of exercise does it involve? In what does it consist? What is its mechanism?" Jackson and Mazzei (2012) explain how qualitative researchers can answer such questions utilizing Foucauldian theory. According to the authors, reading qualitative data through Foucault's concept of power/knowledge is about explaining how material, everyday practices combine with power/knowledge to form discursive formations that serve to structure norms and common sense. Discursive formations, such as "the female sportscaster," structure the possibilities of subjectivity for women, like the women interviewed in this study, who report on and provide commentary for sports. Thus, any reading of qualitative data through the lens of power/knowledge is concerned with structures of power, their origins, and "how" power happens – not with the meaning or effects of power. In the case of this dissertation, such a structure of power could be found in a statement made by a sportscaster that says, "I learned a long time ago that this

industry requires you to have thick skin, especially as a woman." In this hypothetical example, a power structure exists between the woman sportscaster and whoever or whatever it is that calls upon her to develop "thick skin." The mechanism is the actions or series of actions that have led the woman sportscaster to conclude that she needs "thick skin." Additionally, the woman's acknowledgment that thick skin is needed and that her acknowledgment is "true" because she is a woman sportscaster are also examples of structures of power at work. Instead of simply examining phenomena such as the need for thick skin, however, I investigated how these phenomena, including sex bias and harassment, persist. That is, I analyzed the languages, images, and practices that normalize and maintain obstacles for women sportscasters.

Foucault's power/knowledge paradigm is both a theoretical and epistemological framework, to the extent that the latter informs the research methods used in a particular project. Although my findings in this dissertation are nominally rooted in postfeminist theory, Foucault's power/knowledge is the theory that solidifies the connections made between the collected data and postfeminism and neoliberalism. That is, the power/knowledge paradigm allows me to interpret the collected data in a way that explains how discourse constructs and maintains the structures of power and oppression – in this case, neoliberalism via postfeminism – that govern women sportscasters.

Applications of Foucauldian Theory

While studies that utilize Foucauldian theory commonly call upon mass mediated texts – images and digital, print, and electronic media distributed for a wide audience – to analyze discourse, these studies usually focus on phenomena that exist outside the context of media industries. Such examples include Laury Oaks's (2015) analysis of U.S.

baby safe haven laws and Andrea Smith's (2015) examination of various forms of violence against Native American women. A relatively small body of scholarship demonstrates the utility of Foucauldian theory in examinations of media industries as politically productive institutions.

Jill Edy and Shawn Snidow (2011) conducted a discursive analysis of print journalists' reactions – via news articles and columns – to appearances made by George W. Bush and Al Gore on *The Oprah Winfrey Show* during the 2000 presidential campaign. Edy and Snidow's analysis reveals a disciplinary reaction born out of jealousy that stemmed from Winfrey's ability to gain exclusives with both candidates. Calling upon Foucault's concept of panopticism (1977), which argues that people discipline themselves when they suspect they might be under surveillance, Edy and Snidow contend that traditional journalists attempted to discipline and surveil Winfrey, her show, and its viewers by delegitimizing the interviews. The authors also argue that, although the Foucauldian discipline employed by journalists helped them reassert their authority as purveyors of mass mediated politics, these tactics could have adverse effects. According to the authors, future candidates might seek alternative forms of media and insulted media consumers might repudiate traditional forms of news media altogether (p. 831).

Tina Eskes et al.'s (1998) discursive analysis of written and photographic content in women's fitness magazines shows a commonly co-opted discourse: "[The] empowerment offered in fitness magazines is framed in such a way that true health is bypassed for the sake of beauty" (p. 340). This emphasis on women's empowerment through representations of traditional beauty is a hallmark of the postfeminist media environment (Gill, 2007), as explicated further below.

Margaret Hull (2000) is another scholar who engages Foucault's power/knowledge paradigm to examine mass mediated entertainment. In this instance, it is Hull's argument that Matt Groening, cartoonist and creator of *The Simpsons*, unintentionally expands upon Foucault's theories, especially in what Hull calls a "satirical critique of the contemporary education system" (p. 56). According to Hull, these findings demonstrate that it behooves scholars to find examples of poststructuralist thinking within mass mediated texts at a time in which such texts are considered by some to be lacking in substance. This particular study "raises reasonable doubt concerning the common intellectual assumption that all contemporary popular entertainment can easily be dismissed as trite and mind-numbing" (p. 65). By conducting such an examination and using Foucault's theories as a framework, mass media scholars can study a popular mass mediated property while providing commentary on its significance to the public as a politically productive text.

Another of Foucault's core concepts is that of bio-power, a means through which institutions and nation-states manage human life. Although similar to panopticism in that it is rooted in governmentality, bio-power's primary weapons are regulations (government, laws, etc.) and discourse that are then internalized by subjects, as opposed to the surveillance or assumed surveillance of its subjects (Foucault, 1978). Katie Place and Jennifer Vardeman-Winter (2013) discursively analyze bio-power in the public relations industry. They find that the industry produces what the authors call "homogenous" messages, and has become "regularized" in terms of industry practices and the extent to which public relations practitioners willingly accept these messages (p. 320). The Place and Vardeman-Winter study serves as an example of an examination,

through a Foucauldian lens, of a mass media industry as a social institution. The study asks us to consider how public relations and other mass media professionals might be used by advanced capitalism, which has many implications for those who aspire to a career in the media. Studies such as these help mass media scholars and professionals understand the power that media industries might hold over practitioners, including the women I interviewed for this dissertation.

Postfeminism, Neoliberalism, and Subjectivity

The concept of postfeminism is contested; the term has various meanings throughout the academy and society at large. For the purpose of my arguments, I start with the definition offered by feminist theorist Angela McRobbie (2004). She defines postfeminism as "an active process by which feminist gains of the 1970s and 80s come to be undermined" (p. 255). Further, McRobbie suggests that postfeminism acts as an "undoing" of feminism, not purely by rejecting feminism's legitimacy as in a backlash, but by acknowledging – or "taking into account" – feminism's perceived success. This sophisticated undoing of feminism – which McRobbie argues "is manifest in popular and political culture" – seems to pay reverence to feminism while also making it appear irrelevant, unsexy, and, therefore, no longer necessary in spite of its historic success (p. 255). McRobbie refers to this process as a "double entanglement" (p. 256) of feminist discourses with those that serve to repudiate feminism.

According to McRobbie, two developments have made this double entanglement possible. The first of these developments is what McRobbie describes as the media's "full enfranchisement" of Western women and girls as target markets that now possess their own spending power (p. 258). Secondly, there is women's increasing levels of

achievement within the workplace and society supported by the individualism offered by the state, through changes in policy, and not seemingly by feminism (p. 258). These two developments have combined to create a postfeminist media culture in which men *and* women, corporations, and states can produce discourse that undermines – while still offering a nod toward – so-called second wave feminism. According to McRobbie, as a result of the proliferation of postfeminism and its continued presumption of equality between the sexes, postfeminism "provides a new horizon of power against which all sociological analyses must proceed" (2011, p. xi). Thus, any analysis of the female sportscaster subjectivity needs to attend to the double-entanglement — which is to say, the paradoxical framing of women's empowerment — that postfeminist media culture sells.

Rosalind Gill (2007) expands on McRobbie's entanglement by proposing the existence of a postfeminist sensibility, with "postfeminist media culture [as] our *critical object*" (p. 254, emphasis in original). Gill calls for this sensibility because of a need to "hit the refresh key to explore how the media today construct femininity, masculinity and gender relations" (p. 1). That is, Gill sets out to provide a theoretical lens through which we can analyze media representations of gender that are relatively new and exhibit, as she states, "extraordinary contradictoriness" (p. 1). This contradictoriness is manifest in a variety of electronic and print media and is apparent in the presence of a series of recurring "themes, tropes, and constructions that characterize gender representations in the media in the early twenty-first century," (p. 255). According to Gill, these tropes can be understood as a collection of hallmarks of postfeminist media culture, which are propagated by the mass media and internalized by many women. These hallmarks are a

prioritization of self-surveillance; a turn for some women from sex object to desiring sexual subject; misogyny framed in irony; "femininity as a bodily property;" the sexualization of culture and women's bodies; a reassertion and commodification of "natural sexual difference;" messages of "individualism, choice and empowerment;" an infatuation with makeovers; and an "entanglement of feminist and anti-feminist ideas" (p. 255). Together, these sophisticated hallmarks co-opt common-sense feminist notions, yet are problematic insofar as they still offer exclusionary and subjugating media representations of women that "coexist with stark and continuing inequalities and exclusions that relate to 'race'" and other markers of social identity (p. 255). Many of these tropes or hallmarks appear, to varying degrees, within the phenomena I analyze in this dissertation, firmly rendering the female sportscaster subjectivity as postfeminist and therefore contradictory and exclusionary. These contradictions and exclusions contribute to postfeminist constructions of femininity (more explicitly) as well as masculinity (more implicitly), as cited in Gill's writings above. These constructions of femininity and masculinity are particularly relevant given the documented undercurrent of hegemonic masculinity throughout sports media, as cited in Chapter I and later in this chapter. As a result of this connection between postfeminism and its constructions of masculinity, it can be said that the postfeminist female sportscaster subjectivity informs – and is informed by – sports media industry's hegemonic masculinity.

Building on Gill's postfeminist sensibility is the connection Gill and Christina Scharff (2011) make between postfeminism, neoliberalism, and the construction of subjectivities. For Gill and Scharff, this connection is important, due to the coexistence of messages of women's and girl's empowerment with a "reinvigoration of inequalities and

the emergence of new forms and modalities of power" (2011, p. 1). That is, postfeminism, neoliberalism, and subjectivities work together as a crucial component of the continued subjugation of women in a society in which the contradictory and sophisticated postfeminist media culture described above is pervasive. These new forms of gendered power arise, even as the usage of the word "sexism" – a form of power that still exists today – has waned (p. 1). According to Gill and Scharff, neoliberalism, another term with multiple recognized meanings, refers to a political and economic paradigm in which "privatization, deregulation, and a rolling back and withdrawal of the state" serve to encourage individuals and organizations to embrace autonomy and entrepreneurialism (p. 6). Made most visible in the US during the Reagan Administration in the 1980s and evolved under the Clinton Administration in the 1990s, neoliberalism stresses the "psychological internalization of individual responsibilization," or the transfer of responsibility from organizations with legal and/or financial power to individuals (p. 6).

Neoliberalism resonates with postfeminism in three ways. First, neoliberalism and postfeminism "both appear to be structured by a current of individualism" that ignores the possibility that people may be disadvantaged for reasons beyond their control (p. 6). Second, neoliberal and postfeminist subjects are both enterprising and autonomous, suggesting that neoliberal ideology undergirds postfeminism. Lastly, according to Gill and Scharff, in prominent mass mediated postfeminist discourses, "it is *women* who are called on to self-manage and self-discipline. To a much greater extent than men, women are required to work on and transform the self … and to present all their actions as freely chosen" (p. 7, emphasis in original). This expectation of self-management raises the

possibility that neoliberalism has always been gendered and has always fixated on women as its primary target (p. 7).

The resonance between neoliberalism and postfeminism has the potential to inform subjectivities and the ways in which they materialize and are brought to bear on the lived experiences of women (p. 8). Yet, Gill and Scharff argue that media scholars have not taken neoliberalism's impact on the psychosocial into concerted account (p. 8). This dissertation is an attempt to remedy this "significant omission" (p. 8). As the succeeding chapters demonstrate, postfeminist and neoliberal discourses inform the lived experiences of women sportscasters as well as the subjectivity those discourses serve to construct. These discourses work to push women sportscasters towards autonomy, entrepreneurialism, and the action of making seemingly agentic choices that significantly impact their careers. However, what postfeminism, neoliberalism, and the subjectivity they construct ignore (or perhaps rely on) are the gendered disadvantages – double standards, sex bias, and harassment, for example – that lie beyond women sportscasters' control. Thus, because of the inherent absence of social or political support associated with postfeminism and neoliberalism, the choices that women in the industry face are often more dilemmatic than agentic, forcing women sportscasters to choose between two or more undesirable options. This reality ensures the continued marginalization of women sportscasters.

Gender, Sports, and Media

While the arguments I make owe much to the literature below, there has been a need in feminist sports media scholarship to understand why these challenges still persist, how they have evolved over time, and the ways in which they are brought to bear on the

subjective experiences of women who work in, or are covered by, the industry. Turning to scholarship situated at the intersection of gender, sports, and media, I start by tracing gender within the symbiotic relationship between sport and media before moving to contemporary issues related to gender, sports, and media.

The Symbiosis of Sports and the Media

Women have been marginalized in sport since its initial proliferation in the second half of the 1800s. During the Gilded Age in the U.S. (1870-1900), when sports such as roller skating and cycling were gaining popularity, they were also increasingly viewed as strictly-middle class, masculine activities (Gorn and Goldstein, 2013). Such activities were believed to be a detriment to women and normative views of femininity. Sports had, in theory, become an avenue through which men could lose control over women, who had theretofore been viewed as physically incompetent and, hence, ideally confined to domesticity, "chasteness and delicacy" (p. 102). Thus, early mediated discourse – that is, discourse found in print media – discouraged women from participating in sports, emphasizing its supposed immorality and its risks to that effect. Women were told not to take up roller skating due to the "inherent" risk that they might have an affair with their skating instructor (p. 102). Bicycling was also purported to be tantamount to premarital sex (p. 102). In sum, white supremacist patriarchy attempted to use morality to discourage women from participating in commodified sport.

While men were preoccupied with ensuring that only they could participate in commercial sports, the relationship between sports and the media was established. The print media magnates of the time, William Randolph Hearst and Joseph Pulitzer, for example, boosted their circulations by creating sports sections in their newspapers (p.

115). In addition, Richard Kyle Fox resurrected a newspaper, the *National Police Gazette*, in part, by engaging in boxing promoting and using the sport's coverage as a back-channel way of boosting his magazine's circulation (p. 115). As Pamela Creedon (1998) writes, the sports page has been a "circulation builder" that has increased [print] advertising rates and revenue since its debut in the late 1800s (p. 89).

Sports and media remain inextricably linked today as part of a network of connected institutions that Sut Jhally (1989) calls "the sports/media complex" (p. 77). This link, in which the individual components all rely on each other, continues the economic and ideological relationship that has existed between the two entities since the Gilded Age; what happens to one affects the other. Thus, as one entity excluded women, it was logical for the other to follow suit into the 20th and 21st centuries, even as women became more visible in sports and sport media.

Sportscasting as a Site of Inquiry

According to Schultz and Wei (2013), telegraph technology enabled media companies to report sports news, establishing a distinct relationship between sports and the electronic media in the early 1900s. The relationship was forever cemented with the explosion of television and Congress' passage of the Sports Broadcasting Act of 1961 (SBA), which allowed sports leagues to negotiate television broadcasting rights on behalf of their clubs (p. 139). This development is vital to any examination of gender in sportscasting. Much of what is known and said about woman sportscasters is based on their appearance and, without television, a sportscaster's appearance would be of lesser significance.

The passage of the SBA also had a profound impact on commercial sports leagues. The National Basketball Association, for example, saw many of its franchises move from smaller cities to bigger cities to draw larger television audiences (Bellamy, 1989). The Syracuse Nationals' move to Philadelphia (as the 76ers) is a prime example (p. 126). According to McChesney (1989), three other developments – in addition to the passage of the SBA – legitimized sports on television: technology such as instant replay and color, the proliferation of television into American homes, and the purchasing of broadcast rights, which gave networks access to previously untapped audiences.

As of the 1980s, television's primacy shaped the relationship between sports and television; according to Robert Bellamy (1989, p. 129), sports needed TV more than TV needed sports. Today, sports are viewed as the "golden goose of 21st century media; seemingly impervious to downturns, contractions and fragmentation" (Schultz and Wei, 2013, p. 143). According to Bellamy (2009), live sports programming is reality programming in its truest sense and therefore considered immune to Digital Video Recorders (DVRs). As of 2009, live sporting event coverage accounted for 50 percent of all television sports programming (Brown & Bryant, 2009). The popularity of sports programming, as well as its importance to television networks, speaks to sports' cultural ubiquity and its relevance with regard to the representation of gender.

Social media also has made a significant impact on sportscasting. According to Mary Lou Sheffer and Brad Schultz (2013), local sportscasters were initially reluctant to adopt social media and the fan-athlete interaction that social media afford has made it more difficult to retain the audience's attention. Social media also has affected local newscasts, to the extent that the sports segment, as well as the news cycle, has been

shortened (Schultz and Sheffer, 2014). However, according to Pamela Laucella (2014), social media has changed the way sports broadcasters get the information they report on television. The impact of social media on sportscasting cannot be overstated and, as demonstrated in Chapters IV, VI, and VII, it plays a significant role in the construction of the female sportscaster and proves to be an important site of inquiry in this regard.

Coverage, Careers, and Consequences

Despite the 1972 passage of Title IX,[5] which has increased women's access to and interest in organized athletics (Garber, 2002; Schell & Rodriguez, 2000; Cahn, 1994; Snyder, 1994), women's sports remains on the periphery of the sports/media complex and this marginalization has ramifications for women sports journalists. Women's sports are given relatively little airtime (Cooky, Messner & Musto, 2015; Eastman and Billings, 2000; Creedon, 1994; Duncan, Jensen and Messner, 1993; Tuchman, 1979); there are a relatively small number of women in prominent sports media roles (Sports Business News, 2015; Papper, 2008; Sheffer and Schultz, 2007; Hardin and Whiteside, 2006); and sports journalists display an ambivalent attitude toward their desire to cover women's sports (Antunovic, 2015),

In addition, women's sports television coverage is now subject to "gender-bland sexism" (Musto, Cooky and Messner, 2017), an uninspiring brand of coverage. Gender-bland sexist coverage uses lackluster commentary and low production values that serve to discursively mark women's sports as inferior to men's sports. This sort of discursive

[5] Title IX of the Education Amendments Act of 1972 states: "No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance" (U.S. Department of Education, 2015). Participation in interscholastic athletics falls under the purview of this law.

practice, of implying inferiority through the usage of inferior production values, matches the discursive subordination of the sideline reporter position – a role in which women predominate. As noted in Chapter V, the sideline reporter position was created by the industry to be non-serious. Coupled with the prioritization of perceived attractiveness among sideline reporters, the non-serious nature of the role has resulted in the discursive construction of a sports media personality whose perceived credibility is diminished.

The marginalization of women's sports has an impact on the experiences and attitudes of women sports journalists. Creedon (1998) refers to this marginalization within journalism as being part and parcel of "the sports coverage hierarchy" (p. 95), which ensures women's sports and, by extension, women sports journalists remain ensnared in the sports/media complex's hegemonic cycle. The sports coverage hierarchy rewards the best men and women sports journalists with men's sports assignments, which bring with them greater prestige and higher salaries (p. 95). This system persuades the most ambitious sports journalists to gravitate toward men's sports, thus leaving women's sports – and women *in* sports – on the periphery.

Lesley Visser, former sideline reporter for CBS Sports, captured the spirit of the sports coverage hierarchy when she said: "Women who get into sports journalism don't want to cover women's sports. They want to cover sports that lead to success," (Cramer, 1994, p. 169). Annette John-Hall, a former beat writer assigned to Stanford University also said: "If you want to succeed in sportswriting, you don't want to cover women's sports. Women sportswriters get pigeonholed into women's sports, and when that happens, your career stalls" (p. 169). Athletes notice this avoidance of women's sports by talented journalists, as well. Cynthia Cooper, a former player in the Women's National

Basketball Association (WNBA), once remarked, "I'm a pro athlete … why should I have to beg and plead for attention? I am so tired of ignorant journalists covering me. I'm so tired of [being mistaken for teammate] Cheryl Swoopes. How many NBA players have to deal with that?" (as quoted in Creedon and Smith, 2007, p. 149).

As women remain on the periphery of the sports/media complex, it becomes easier to justify their marginalization. George Gerbner (1978) encapsulates this phenomenon with his concept of symbolic annihilation, which has been used by scholars as a way of explaining the marginalization of certain news stories in general. If agenda-setting theory (McCombs and Shaw, 1972) provides our understanding for how news story selection affects audience salience – that is, story selection by the media tells the audience what issues and events are most important – Gerbner's symbolic annihilation provides the opposite understanding. Sports media decision makers often attribute the decision to not provide equal coverage for men's and women's sports to television ratings and print readership, which skew towards men's sports. Nevertheless, according to symbolic annihilation, by choosing not to cover women's sports prominently, the media, in essence, tell the audience not to prioritize women's sports, causing a chicken-and-egg debate. Does an audience develop more of an appetite for certain content on its own or are the media responsible for developing that appetite by providing more of the content in question? With this debate in mind, over the past three decades and a half, various scholars have put their scholarship in conversation with Gerbner's symbolic annihilation as a way of explicating the relative invisibility of women within the sports/media complex (Cooky, Messner & Hextrum, 2013; Messner, Duncan & Cooky, 2003; Creedon, 1994; Tuchman, 1979).

Agenda-setting theory suggests that stories on the front page and above the horizontal fold of a newspaper are deemed more salient by the media and, therefore, by media consumers as well. Gaye Tuchman (1979) not only found the placement of women's sports above the fold rare, but also their newspaper coverage inconsistent overall, contributing to their symbolic annihilation. Nearly four decades later, the amount of women's sports coverage has not increased significantly. Cheryl Cooky, Michael Messner, and Michela Musto (2015) found that three local newscasts as well as ESPN's flagship highlight show, *SportsCenter*, have actually decreased the amount of time they devote to women's sports over the last 25 years. Although my project does not employ symbolic annihilation as a theoretical framework, it is nevertheless important because the theory provides a lens through which we can understand the sportscasting industry's uneven representation of women. The spirit of agenda setting and symbolic annihilation is especially relevant to this project, given its Foucauldian epistemology. If the presence of certain discourses can impact material experiences and subjectivities, logically, the absence of particular discourses could have a similar impact.

This relationship between power/knowledge and symbolic annihilation is especially apparent in Chapter V, in which I analyze a commonly-held aversion to women's voices among many sports media consumers. This aversion provides evidence of the longstanding symbolic annihilation – via discursive exclusion – of women from certain sportscasting roles and the impact of this annihilation. This widespread aversion exemplifies how the taken-for-granted invisibility of women in sports – seemingly justified by ratings, readership, and the revenues they garner – makes it difficult for boys, girls, men and women to envision a sports/media complex in which men and women

should be given equal consideration. This inequity, as normalized through discourse, is also manifest in hiring for local sportscasting jobs – to the extent that women face biases based on double standards (Sheffer and Schultz, 2007) – and in sports media consumers' perceptions of women sportscasters, as evidenced by four studies conducted over the past three decades.

First, Virginia Ordman and Dolf Zillmann (1994) studied perceptions of men and women reporter commentaries of collegiate men's basketball and women's gymnastics through print and radio. Respondents were asked to read or listen to the same commentaries attributed to either a man or woman reporter. The commentaries previewed the upcoming college men's basketball and women's gymnastics seasons and made the argument for the same unlikely yet realistic NCAA tournament winners for both sports. Notwithstanding the gender of the reporter to whom the commentary was attributed, the two commentaries remained the same. According to the study's results, regardless of respondent gender, sport or medium, the woman reporter was perceived to be significantly less competent and persuasive in her argument than the man reporter (p. 73). As the authors state, "The obvious conclusion … is that gender is an asset for a man seeking acceptance as an expert sports reporter but a liability for a woman" (p. 74). This finding is important as women in the sportscasting industry are still viewed as having less credibility than their peers of the opposite sex. As explored in Chapter IV, the interview and textual data I collected suggests that a discursively constructed gendered double standard of appearance informs women sportscasters' perceived lack of credibility, a standard that prioritizes appearance in the hiring of women in the industry over skill and knowledge. The double standard of appearance, rooted in postfeminist logics that call on

women to constantly monitor their appearance (hair, clothing, makeup, weight) and make dilemmatic choices to that end, contributes to the construction of female sportscaster subjectivity.

Second, Laurence Etling and Raymond Young (2007) conducted a study that measured the extent to which there is a sex bias as it relates to announcer authoritativeness – or expertise – among sports television viewers. The researchers screened telecasts of the same college football game to nearly 250 college students, with either a man or woman reading an announcing script. One hundred and nineteen of the students listened to the game as announced by a woman while 125 listened to the telecast featuring a man broadcaster. Not surprisingly, the man announcer was rated as exhibiting higher levels of authoritativeness. Results like these – and their usage by the industry – offer an explanation for why so few women are hired as play-by-play announcers, especially at the national level for men's sports. As of early September 2018, ESPN's Beth Mowins is the only national woman play-by-play announcer for a men's sport (football), replacing Pam Ward, the first such broadcaster, in 2005 ("Mowins Gets Call," 2005). The sex bias examined in Etling and Young's study mirrors the biases against women sportscasters I reference in Chapter V. Despite these documented biases, I found that men and women in and out of the industry place the onus on women sportscasters for their integration into the broadcast booth. The expectation that women ignore and/or overcome disadvantages (in this case, biases) to thrive in the industry resonates with the construction of a postfeminist neoliberal subjectivity. Further, the relationship between sex biases and a postfeminist neoliberal subjectivity demonstrates the advantage of employing Foucault's power/knowledge paradigm. While documenting biases is helpful,

it is even more productive to document, as I do in Chapter V, how those biases are part of a larger and more sophisticated discursive formation.

The subjects in Etling and Young's 2007 study were not shown the men and women announcers, thereby eliminating any correlation to their attractiveness. By contrast, the third study examined in this group, by Daniel Davis and Janielle Krawczyk (2010), did so. In this instance, the researchers showed the same sports report to three different groups of respondents using three women reporters who were each prescreened by a group of participants and selected to represent distinct (and subjective) levels of attractiveness. The study found the reporter who was predetermined to exhibit levels of attractiveness that were at the midpoint of the predetermined continuum to be rated as most credible (p. 21). This means, for a woman sportscaster, both extremes of the attractiveness spectrum can be a liability as she attempts to establish herself as a credible broadcast journalist. In other words, to be viewed as credible, a woman needs to be attractive but not too attractive, which coincides with the narrow lane made available by postfeminism's double entanglement.

Davis and Krawczyk's study is relevant to this dissertation to the extent that it documents one of the many dilemmatic and paradoxical choices women in the industry face, as examined in Chapter IV, vis-à-vis appearance. On one hand, appearance is often given top priority in hiring women sportscasters yet, on the other hand, this prioritization can bring with it a perception of diminished credibility and, as examined in Chapter VI, sexual harassment. The fact that women in the industry are expected to navigate this paradox (and its consequences) with little to no meaningful assistance from within the industry is emblematic of a postfeminist and neoliberal subjectification. Davis and

Krawczyk's study, combined with this dissertation, suggest that the case could be made for a deprioritization of women sportscaster appearance.

Lastly, Etling and his colleagues (2011) conducted a study that investigated the relationship between the vocal pitch of male and female sportscasters and their authoritativeness. The researchers played back radio sportscasts announced by two men and two women – one of each gender with a high-pitched voice and one of each with a low-pitched voice – and asked separate groups of respondents, in broad terms, to rate the announcer to whom they listened according to their perceived level of expertise. The study found that although both men were the preferred voices of choice, the men and women announcers with higher-pitched voices were perceived to exhibit higher levels of authoritativeness due to their supposedly higher levels of energy and enthusiasm (p. 15). This finding debunks the common perception, as discussed in Chapter V, that sports media consumers find women's voices grating, especially if they are higher-pitched. The findings released in Etling et al.'s study, coupled with the discourse I examine in Chapter V, suggest that it might not be women's voices that sports media consumers are truly opposed to. Moreover, as it relates to the postfeminist subjectification of the female sportscaster, Etling et al.'s findings demonstrate the weaknesses associated with postfeminist neoliberal logic, as I discuss them in Chapter V. As a result of placing the onus on women for their own success, the industry's decision-makers may point to biases against women based on what they believe to be audience preferences when, in fact, those biases may be rooted in narrow representations of women in sports media, and therefore, political insofar as they contribute to the overall marginalization of women in the sports/media complex.

Perhaps most telling in these examinations of sports media consumer perceptions of women sportscasters: more so than men sports media consumers, women sports media consumers saw men commentators as more competent, persuasive, and as having more expertise than women commentators. This supports studies by Etling and Young (2005) and Heather Toro (2005) that found that sex stereotypes and perceptions in sports media cut across gender lines. In finding men's voices to be more credible, men and women are equally affected by and contribute to the sex bias within sports media without being consciously aware they are doing so. This also suggests that the construction of the female sportscaster subjectivity is not an active or intentional activity taken up by any one person or group. Instead, the constructed subjectification of the female sportscaster receives passive contributions from society at large by way of discourse that has largely and explicitly excluded women from commentary positions. This discourse has therefore implicitly heralded men as paragons of sports information and coverage.

Taken together, the literature situated at the intersection of gender, sports, and media reveals longstanding and seemingly intractable challenges for women in sports media. The literature also demonstrates a need for sports media scholarship to strive for a deeper understanding of why these challenges persist as well as their impact on the experiences of women in the industry. The current literature helps us confirm sex biases that undergird the gendered structure of a sportscasting industry that privileges men's sports, and those men and women who seek to cover them. However, the gap that exists concerns the short- and long-term professional and psychosocial effects of those biases on women in the industry and the impact of those effects on the industry.

Women Sports Journalists in Men's Locker Rooms and the Issue of Harassment

As the participation and interest in sport among women increased, the issue of locker room access for female sports journalists surfaced as a significant site of women's subordination within the sports/media complex. Although the issue reached its tipping point in the early 1990s, it is still relevant to this dissertation, given the accounts of workplace harassment related by the sportscasters I interviewed (as detailed in Chapter VI). The issue acquired national attention in 1978 when Melissa Ludtke, a writer for *Sports Illustrated*, was denied access to the New York Yankees locker room during the World Series. She successfully filed a civil rights lawsuit for the right to conduct interviews in the theretofore "males only" clubhouse (Boutilier & SanGiovanni, 1983). For many years after the court's ruling, "access did not mean acceptance" (Creedon, 1998, p. 93). Throughout the 1980s and early 1990s, numerous women sports journalists revealed their accounts of the hostile environments in which they found themselves suddenly thrust.

Alison Gordon of the *Toronto Star*, for instance, was the first woman beat writer for an American League baseball team in 1979. In her memoir (1984), she wrote of a team official giving her a t-shirt that read "Token Broad Beat Writer" and players in the clubhouse greeting her with shouts of "Pecker Checker" (p. 121-123). Susan Fornoff (1993) covered the Oakland Athletics for five years as a writer for the *Sacramento Bee*. During her time as the Athletics' beat writer, she determined she had two choices: distance herself from the athletes she was covering or assimilate to what was essentially their culture of drinking beer and socializing with them. In determining that assimilation was her best course of action, Fornoff made herself more susceptible to direct

harassment. The hostile environment that she then experienced, which included incessant harassment from famed slugger Dave Kingman, was what eventually "drove [her] away from sportswriting" (p. 227).

Perhaps the most egregious case of harassment committed against a woman sports journalist in the locker room is that of Lisa Olson and the New England Patriots of the National Football League in 1990. Olson was the Patriots' beat writer for the *Boston Herald* when members of the team sexually harassed her in the locker room while she was conducting an interview. The locker belonging to the player she was interviewing was situated adjacent to the entrance into the team's shower area, which was being used at the time. While Olson conducted her interview, multiple players in the shower, led by Zeke Mowatt, attempted to distract her by suggestively displaying and commenting on their genitalia (Olson, 1990, p. 74). The harassment had its desired effect; Olson left the locker room before concluding her interview (p. 74). She later described the encounter as an act of "mind rape" (p. 74) that left her feeling "humiliated and degraded" (Kane and Disch, 1993, p. 332). "[That this happened] shouldn't be so surprising," Olson wrote (1990, p. 74). "We're talking about professional sports, a field that is unfortunately still dominated by males who think a woman's place is to be a cheerleader, a wife or a mistress" (p. 74).

In the incident's aftermath, Olson and the *Herald* attempted to settle the matter with the Patriots privately (Kane and Disch, 1993, p. 332). However, the *Boston Globe* reported the story, opening a wave of news coverage that included a *Herald* story that quoted then-Patriots owner Victor Kiam as calling Olson a "classic bitch" (p. 332). Other news coverage, according to Kane and Disch's study, portrayed Olson as a mythic rape

victim – one who "asked for it" by merely being in the locker room – and as an overly-sensitive, humorless woman. For the remainder of 1990 and into 1991, Boston-area sports fans harassed Olson even after she was reassigned to cover the Boston Bruins of the National Hockey League during the 1990 NFL season. During Bruins games, fans situated near the press box would spend much of the time verbally harassing Olson (p. 332). She also received threatening letters and phone calls, and even an instance in which the phrase "classic bitch" was spray-painted on the exterior of her apartment (p. 332). In order to escape the harassment, Olson was eventually reassigned to one of the *Herald*'s sister publications in Australia.

The issue of women's access to men's locker rooms was seemingly resolved by the mid-1990s. As Douglas Anderson (1994) wrote, "Most locker rooms – for many years considered male bastions – have been opened to both sexes for more than a decade, and there are more opportunities for women sportswriters and editors than ever before" (p. 14). Nevertheless, the harassment of women working in sports media has not ceased. In fact, the type of harassment endured by Lisa Olson – that which was taken up by fans – not only persists today, but is pervasive throughout social media such as Twitter. Julie DiCaro (2015), a sports radio host in Chicago, received threats of sexual violence via Twitter after her comments on the sexual assault allegations surrounding Patrick Kane of the National Hockey League's Chicago Blackhawks. This was not the first such encounter for DiCaro. According to her, the first time such an encounter took place, the message was explicit: "You may not share your sports opinion while, at the same time, being a woman" (para. 2). Just like the harassment women sports journalists received from players and team officials, such behavior from fans is also a manifestation of

women's subordination in the sports media complex. Within the context of sports, men feel threatened by the modicum of power women have in evaluating a man's performance or behavior (in the case of Patrick Kane) and are resentful of the fact that they can expose the flaws of their favorite athletes and teams, as was the case with Lisa Olson. As a result, and as Anderson wrote in 1994, "sports reporting still can be a tough business for women," despite the gains made by women in the industry (p. 14).

Women's marginalization in sports and sports media is about power and men's ability to maintain it, even as organizations have had to make concessions such as locker room access. As Creedon (1998) wrote, "It appears that some female reporters have reached a point where they are allowed to function within the sports system *if* they stay within the bounds of the sports coverage hierarchy" (p. 95, emphasis in original). Thus, as I argue in this dissertation, the increased presence of women sports journalists – especially within national outlets such as ESPN – is discursive "window dressing." Currently, according to Creedon, women in sports media "are simply functioning to preserve – consciously or unconsciously – the hegemonic stasis of a gendered media system" (p. 95). As all of the women interviewed for this dissertation cover men's sports, I return briefly to Creedon's conceptions of the sports coverage hierarchy and the gendered media system in Chapter V.

The Statistical Disparity Among Male and Female Sports Journalists

As demonstrated throughout the literature above, women and their opinions have been confined to the periphery of the sports/media complex. Nowhere is this more apparent than in the various studies that have attempted to quantify women's status in sports journalism. Although women can occasionally be seen in some of sports media's

most prominent national television outlets, both on the sidelines (e.g., Erin Andrews, Pam Oliver, and Michelle Tafoya) and in the studio (e.g., Linda Cohn, Charissa Thompson, Michelle Beadle), as also stated above, the proliferation of women at the national level of American sportscasting appears to be a false positive. Across the vast collection of America's local and national print and electronic media outlets, women make up a relatively miniscule portion of the sports media labor force. Here, I turn to descriptive statistics that serve as evidence of women's relatively small role in both print and broadcast sports journalism.

The Institute for Diversity and Ethics in Sport (TIDES), in conjunction with the University of Central Florida, conducts and publishes a diversity "report card" commissioned by the Associated Press Sports Editors (APSE). This report card measures the extent to which sports print media outlets are (or are not) becoming more diverse, as it relates to both race and gender. Although the TIDES report is solely focused on sports print media, it is nevertheless relevant as it serves as an example of the quantitative marginalization of women in sports media overall. As of their most recent report card (Lapchick et al., 2018), APSE newspapers and websites overall earned an F for gender diversity. This was the fifth consecutive report in which the APSE earned an F for gender diversity since the APSE began commissioning these reports in 2008. By comparison, APSE outlets earned a B+ for racial diversity, although, as noted in the report, that grade is largely due to ESPN's highly-inclusive hiring practices (p. 3).

What does an F mean for the APSE? It means that women are not being hired by sports media outlets at a rate that is close, by any definition, to those of male sports journalists. Additionally, women continue to struggle to earn prestigious print journalism

positions, such as columnist and sports editor, which TIDES's diversity grade calculations weigh more heavily. Overall, in 2018, women constituted 17.9 percent of sports print journalism staffs nationwide. Although this is a marked improvement on the 7.5 percent figure in the 2008 report card, there is still a discernible disparity in the number of men and women in print sports journalism. This disparity holds especially true if one breaks the numbers down by position.

While 11.5 percent of APSE reporters were women in 2018, among the legacy positions, women made up 10 percent of sports editors and 16.6 percent of columnists. The portion of the sports print journalism labor force with the largest percentage of women, according to TIDES, is that of the APSE's copy editors and designers, of which women make up 20.4 percent. This means women are trusted to polish their (mostly male) peers' writing mechanics and to use their creative talents to layout their publications more than they are to actually do print sports journalism. The available television statistics are just as bleak: survey results released by the Radio Television Digital News Association (Papper, 2008) found that only 7.8 percent of television sports anchors nationwide were women while 18.7 percent of sports reporters were women. Although the results of this survey were released in 2008,[6] this disparity is emblematic of the longstanding marginalization of women in the sports media complex. This especially rings true when one considers that in 2008, 56.8 percent of news anchors were women,

[6] After 2008, Papper stopped including sports television personnel in his annual diversity survey. In personal communication with me, Papper stated that he did not receive enough participation among sportscasters to make them worth including in future surveys. I found no other statistics regarding diversity in sports broadcast news in review of literature.

which is representative of the current perception that most newscasts have one male and one female anchor.

As it relates to job satisfaction, the existing statistical data paints an ambivalent picture, one in which women note the improvements made toward gender equity in sports journalism while also acknowledging that certain obstacles persist. This closely mirrors the overall impressions of the industry related to me by the sportscasters interviewed. In a 2005 survey of 306 women sports journalists, Miloch et al. found their respondents to have neutral feelings vis-à-vis job satisfaction. When separated by age, experience, salary and job title, however, the feelings were divided. Those older than 26, for example, reported fewer opportunities for entrance into the field (p. 227). I believe this could be because a journalist's best chance of entering the field, regardless of gender, could be upon graduating from college, especially if they actually studied journalism in college. Indeed, this is the case for many fields. On the other hand, a "double discrimination" of ageism and sexism afflicts female sports journalists. As they age, they are given fewer opportunities, regardless of experience, as corroborated by those respondents with ten years of experience in their current positions (p. 227). Women sports journalists who had less than six years of experience overall reported receiving more assignments specific to women's sports (p. 227). This phenomenon speaks to Creedon's (1998) coverage hierarchy within the hegemony of the gendered media system (p. 93) discussed earlier in this chapter. More prestigious and experienced sports journalists generally receive fewer women's sports assignments. In other words, women's sports assignments are often where women journalists "pay their dues." Women sports journalists earning below

$35,000 annually perceived fewer opportunities for advancement and more discrimination from supervisors than those with higher incomes (p. 226).

The statistical figures above suggest women remain on the periphery of sports journalism. Slightly less than 87 percent of the print sports journalism labor force is made up of men and roughly 90 percent of all sports editors are male. A decade ago, approximately 93 and 90 percent of television sports anchors and reporters, respectively, were men. Statistically, sports journalism is still very much a male-dominated industry, and appears likely to remain that way, with only 30 percent of America's women journalism students expressing an interest in sports, as of 2003 (Sheffer & Schultz, 2007, p. 83).

Despite women's increased interest and participation in sport post-Title IX, the reality is that men still quantitatively and ideologically predominate sports. Thus, it is difficult to discern any sort of bias or other form of gendered mistreatment from these statistics and, as a result, it is convenient to normalize these numbers as a natural consequence of the way men and women and boys and girls engage sports. In addition, just as one cannot discern any bias from these statistics, the numbers also do not disprove the existence of gendered mistreatment such as harassment, for which I found evidence. Rather, much of the gendered mistreatment that women sportscasters endure serves to keep women on the periphery of the industry, or out of the industry entirely.

The statistics cited above do not and cannot account for this. However, the gendered mistreatment of women sportscasters and its impact on the industry's underpinnings – or gendered structure – is part of the sports/media complex's complicity in the representation of women and construction of gender in the industry and in society

at large. Thus, while the statistics above may appear to be a natural consequence of the way women, men, girls, and boys have been taught to engage sport socially, so it likely is that the sports/media complex has played an equal role in the perpetuation of the status quo. Discourse is the mechanism through which the status quo is (inadvertently) maintained; postfeminism and neoliberalism are the new status quo for women sportscasters.

Chapter III – Methodology

I begin this chapter with an overview of the feminist epistemologies that inform this project's design before justifying my usage of qualitative research methodology. I then explicate the four methods used in this dissertation: one-on-one interviews, focus groups, textual analysis, and grounded theory methodology. I also introduce my informant samples and the limitations I encountered during the research process.

Feminist Methodologies

Feminist epistemologies shape the approach taken in this dissertation, from the formulation of research questions, to my theoretical commitments, data collection design and analysis, and my presentation of findings. A feminist project requires adherence to feminist methodology(ies), which ensure, among other things, that the experiences of the women under study are treated with care and are not used to reinforce discourses that already oppress (groups of) women. It is important to note that there is no single, correct way to employ feminist methodologies. Indeed, they can be tailored to the needs and contexts of any particular research project. In this section, I examine the two feminist methodologies I employed in this project.

Postpositivist Realism

Paula Moya's postpositivist realism (2000; 2001) "shows how identities can be both real *and* constructed: how they can be politically and epistemically significant on the one hand, variable, nonessential and radically historical on the other" (2000, p. 12). Postpositivist realism, then, is a reconciliation of the "metaphysical entanglements" (2001, p. 442) inherent in a project that uses a poststructuralist paradigm – which assumes truth and knowledge are not absolute but historically and culturally constructed

and that power is fluid and contextual – but also attends to a political commitment to affect equality for women. Postpositivist realism therefore allows us to examine the socially constructed identity of the "female sportscaster" while acknowledging that what has been socially constructed – and is, thus, not "real" – has in fact had a profound impact on the material lived experiences of women sportscasters.

Within the context of this dissertation, postpositivist realism requires an investigation and explanation of both the power structures and the discourse that constructs the female sportscaster subjectivity and women sportscasters' material reality. Taking an example from the data reported in this dissertation, one existing social construction is the idea that the female sportscaster knows less about sports than her male counterpart. We can assume this idea is socially constructed since sportscasters, both men and women, are generally not required to take a test that measures their sports knowledge and because the results of such a test are nowhere to be found for public consumption. Instead, the sports/media complex has done much to construct the "knowledge" that women typically know less about sports than men; women's mediated presence in sports is relatively invisible. Although this characteristic of the female sportscaster, that she *must* know less about sports than men sportscasters do, is a social construction, it has a material (or "real") impact on women sportscasters' interactions with colleagues and sports media consumers who believe it to be true, as will be explored in Chapters IV and VI.

Qualitative research methods serve as a medium through which we can understand the link between socially constructed knowledge and lived experience. Interviews with women sportscasters, for example, provide access to their experiences

and therefore a method with which to understand how power structures and constructed subjectivities were brought to bear on their experiences. Likewise, sports media consumers' perceptions of women in sports media – gleaned through focus group discussions – help to produce, and are produced by, the female sportscaster subjectivity. Lastly, textual analysis – the examination of texts, mass mediated or otherwise – provides examples of how this socially constructed knowledge is manifest in cultural artifacts that therefore make "real" such knowledge. If women are invisible in sports media products, for example, then one might incorrectly assume that women must not be that knowledgeable about, or interested in, sports. I provide deeper explications of these specific research methods – interviews, focus groups, and textual analysis – later in this chapter.

Feminist Standpoint Theory

Postpositivist realism affords researchers the ability to treat socially constructed knowledge as having a material impact on the real. However, feminist methodologies also call upon researchers to be critical about the ways in which the western and androcentric academy creates its own knowledge, often perpetuating subordinating discourses. Feminist standpoint theory offers a lens through which researchers can be critical and strategic about the process they use to contribute to knowledge. First conceptualized by Nancy Hartsock (1983), feminist standpoint theory privileges women's voices and experiences by repudiating the concept of an unbiased, absolute truth. According to Hawkesworth (2006), feminist standpoint theory "argue[s] that knowledge is always mediated by a host of factors related to an individual's particular position in a determinate sociopolitical formation at a specific point in history" (p. 56).

In other words, who I am as the researcher has informed the claims written in this dissertation. This is also true of research participants, the focus of Hartsock's conceptualization of feminist standpoint theory, which argues that the androcentric academy has subjugated women's voices and experiences, failing for too long to readily accept them as contributing to truth. According to Hartsock, "Women's lives make available a particular and privileged vantage point on male supremacy, a vantage point which can ground a powerful critique of the phallocentric institutions and ideology which constitute capitalist patriarchy" (p. 285). That is, because women have a different relationship with Western white supremacist, cisheterosexist, capitalist patriarchy than do men, they can understand the world from a standpoint that is relatively untapped and therefore valuable (Ramazangolu and Holland, 2002, p. 69). Indeed, when attempting to critique sexism within sportscasting, it stands to reason that women in the industry would be better equipped to articulate these phenomena since they bear on their material reality. This is not to say that *only* women can comprehend these phenomena or that their perspectives are the ones that are most "true" and unadulterated. Feminist standpoint theory merely asserts that women, as a result of experiencing the world as women, have a relatively untapped and therefore unique and valuable perspective on issues that closely affect them and that those perspectives have been historically underutilized by the academy. To be sure, women's perspectives might be informed by oppressive discourse – in this case, discourse supported by white supremacist, cisheterosexist capitalist patriarchy – but those perspectives are nevertheless (or, perhaps, therefore) valuable.

Some contemporary feminist standpoint theorists (like Patricia Hill Collins and Dorothy Smith) have moved away from Hartsock's early conception of a feminist

standpoint toward one that accounts for the ways sexism intersects with other forms of oppression, such as racism, classism, and homophobia (Ramazangolu and Holland, 2002, p.71). In fact, Hartsock herself wrote that her initial conception of feminist standpoint theory "may have the effect of excluding the specific experience of lesbians and women of colour, since her initial focus was on what women have in common in 'western class societies'" (as quoted in Ramazangolu and Holland, 2002, p. 71).

Although I included men in my focus group samples, ten women sportscasters – and the experiences and insights they related to me – served as the starting point for my findings in this dissertation. The insights of the men and women sports media consumers who participated in my focus groups, as well as the mediated texts I analyzed, were used to further explicate the concepts that emerged from my discussions with the sportscasters. These other sites of inquiry also provided multiple insights or angles through which I could analyze the various discursive formations that make up the female sportscaster subjectivity. Much of the literature reviewed in Chapter II, especially that which examined gender in sports journalism, did not use a feminist standpoint, instead relying on the opinions of sports media consumers or decision makers (most of whom were men) within the industry. Such studies, especially those centering the opinions of news and sports directors – most of whom are men – fell prey to social desirability bias, among other shortcomings.

According to Anton Nederhof, social desirability bias refers to research subjects' tendency to answer questions in a way that "place the [subjects] in a favorable light," according to social norms (p. 264). Nederhof cites two forms of social desirability bias: "self-deception," in which the subject mistakenly claims they behave in a socially

desirable manner, and "other-deception," or the act of intentionally claiming they behave in such a manner, when they know such claims to be false (p. 264). Though they do not reference it explicitly, Mary Lou Sheffer and Brad Schultz (2007) acknowledge the potential for other-deception social desirability bias in the limitations section of their study on gendered double standards and sex bias among television news directors. "The lack of female representation in the media is a controversial issue, and news directors might have felt pressured to give politically correct answers. If anything, the attitudes of stereotyping and gender bias might be even more pronounced than the results showed" (p. 93). Employing feminist standpoint theory as an epistemological framework both centers and capitalizes on women sportscasters' vantage points while lowering a project's susceptibility to conscious and subconscious interests, and the maintenance of the status quo. This advantage was evident as the women who were interviewed displayed a willingness to exhibit a wide range of attitudes on issues related to gender in sportscasting.

Why Use Qualitative Methodology in Constructionist Research?

Because of the epistemological considerations discussed above, the research questions I am examining is best answered by using qualitative methodology. Steven Taylor, Robert Bogdan, and Marjorie DeVault (2016) explain the utility of qualitative methodology by outlining eight hallmarks of qualitative research(ers), the most relevant of which will be discussed here. First, "qualitative researchers are concerned with the meanings that people attach to things in their lives," (p. 8). This hallmark is relevant to this dissertation given that it investigates the language, symbols and images that construct the female sportscaster's identity. For a woman in sportscasting, what do her interactions

with her peers and her audience mean to her? For sports media consumers, what does it mean to them when they hear a woman's voice on the broadcast of a men's sporting event, for example? These answers varied and could not be captured by quantitative data since every participant's answer was (likely to be) different. It is unlikely that a survey instrument, for example, could account for that broad variety responses.

Second, "qualitative research is inductive," (Taylor, Bogdan, and DeVault, 2016, p. 9). It tends to create theory rather than test it. Although I called upon Foucauldian theory, for example, when designing this project, I did not test power/knowledge so much as use it to drive my methods, especially with regard to data collection and analysis. Third, qualitative researchers also consider all people and settings holistically, thus, all is contextual (p. 10). This hallmark renders my project specific to the time, place, and people within which and with whom the project was conducted, which coincides with Hall et al.'s (2013) explanation of discourse as "representing the knowledge…about a particular topic at a particular historical moment" (p. 29).

Fourth, in qualitative research, "all perspectives are worthy of study," (Taylor, Bogdan, and DeVault, 2016, p. 10). Although this dissertation centers women sportscasters' voices, male and female sports media consumers were also included as participants. Also, qualitative research privileges validity as meaningful over replicability (p. 11). Because variables will not be controlled, it is not likely another researcher would achieve the same results if this dissertation were replicated. Still, if my project does not achieve validity, it will not be because of its lack of replicability.

Sarah Tracy (2010) offers four alternatives to replicability for the sake of validity (or, what she calls, "credibility" (p. 843)) in qualitative research. The two alternatives

that are most relevant to this dissertation are "triangulation and crystallization" and "multivocality" (p. 843). Triangulation "assumes that if two or more sources of data, theoretical frameworks, types of data collected, or researchers converge on the same conclusion, then the conclusion is more credible" (p. 843). In the case of this dissertation, I analyze interview and focus group data with sportscasters and sports media consumers – as well as mass mediated texts – to arrive at the conclusions advanced in this dissertation. Crystallization also refers to the usage of multiple sources of data but, conceived through a poststructuralist/postmodern lens, rejects the idea that triangulation would result in a singular truth (p. 844). Instead, crystallization, like the solid material from which its name is derived, seeks to use triangulation to reach conclusions that are multifaceted and intricate (p. 843). Doing so, Tracy writes, "open[s] up a more complex, in-depth, but still thoroughly partial, understanding of the issue" (p. 844). The findings presented in this dissertation are complex, insofar as they are paradoxical and are not likely manifest in the experiences of all women sportscasters. Multivocality is the inclusion of multiple points of views and opinions in the data analyzed and included in the final written report (p. 844). Not only does this approach "provide an empathic understanding" of the issues but it "attends to viewpoints that diverge with those of the majority or with the author" (p. 844). Throughout the dissertation, I include the thoughts and opinions of women sportscasters and men and women sports media consumers whose opinions differ from the advanced arguments, which emerged from the insights widely shared by my informants. In addition to achieving a dissertation that is inclusive of other viewpoints, this approach makes for nuanced arguments and claims.

Methods

As I stated above, I designed this project with feminist methodologies in mind. These methodologies eschew the traditional western and androcentric practice of attempting to separate one's identity and social position from their research. To do so with this project, in which I am the research instrument, would be disingenuous. This project therefore calls for reflexivity when possible. As Ramazanoglu and Holland (2002) state, reflexivity calls on the researcher to make explicit "the power relations and the exercise of power in the research process" (p. 118). In this section, I take a reflexive approach to detailing the research methods that were used and the steps taken to find research participants. In the interest of reflexivity, these details may be more descriptive than usual to some readers; my identity and social position – and their attendant power relations – played a role in most of the decisions that were made vis-à-vis data collection and analysis. That is, I designed this project while taking into consideration who I am and how that might have had an impact on my informants, my data, and my analysis. As a result, the detailed explications that follow are an attempt to be transparent about my research design.

One-on-One Interviews

As conceived, this project required me to record and gather women sportscasters' insights. The most time- and cost-efficient way to do this was to conduct one-on-one phone interviews with women sportscasters. Svend Brinkmann and Steinar Kvale (2015) assert that the "qualitative research interview attempts to understand the world from the subjects' point of view, to unfold the meaning of their experiences, to uncover their lived world prior to scientific explanations" (p. 3). The authors go on to state that interview

subjects are, apropos of the various epistemologies at play in this study, "authored authors" who are susceptible to "discourse, power relations and ideologies that are not of their own making" but that also greatly inform the insights they share (p. 3).

The conception of interview subjects as "authored authors" is particularly relevant to this study given its employment of Foucauldian power/knowledge as well as the feminist methodologies explicated above. Through power/knowledge, we are aware of the ways in which discourse not only shapes what we know about others but what we know about ourselves. The insights provided by my interview subjects are informed by discourse they have observed or experienced. Similarly, postpositivist realism affords us the ability to see how constructed identities shape our experiences, which is the aim of this entire study. The usage of the interview method therefore allowed me to document the ways in which these women viewed their experiences as an effect of a socially constructed subjectivity. Lastly, feminist standpoint theory privileges women's voices because their experiences, which are shaped by power relations and are therefore different from those of men, shape their view of the world and have been relatively untapped.

To understand the world of sportscasting from my informants' points of view, each interview ranged anywhere from 35 to 60 minutes and was recorded using a digital voice recorder. The interviews were later transcribed using a transcription service (GMR Transcription). I used MAXQDA, a qualitative data analysis software, to analyze the transcriptions. At the beginning of each interview, I read a notice of informed consent (see Appendix A), gaining each informant's permission to record her and include her remarks in the research. I also granted each sportscaster anonymity with assurances that I

would not include her real name or other identifying information in the dissertation or any other written reports. After gaining each sportscaster's consent, I the interview proceeded as planned, according to a pre-written interview protocol (see Appendix B), from which I occasionally strayed if the conversation warranted.

I primarily used "snowball" (or referral) sampling – seeking assistance from informants in recruiting other informants – to recruit female sportscasters for interviews. This method of recruitment was chosen since women sportscasters are closer to their audiences than ever before because of social media. As a result of this access, it stands to reason that sportscasters receive many questions and requests, making it more likely that a sportscaster would agree to an interview if I was referred to her by a colleague than if I made an unsolicited interview request.

To begin recruiting women sportscasters, one of my committee members contacted a well-connected member of my journalism school's faculty on my behalf, requesting the contact information for any female sportscasters they may have known. This well-connected faculty member provided me with the names and contact information for five sportscasters. I was successful in arranging interviews with all who were contacted:

- Samantha,[7] white, early 20s, an update anchor and self-described "girl voice" for a sports talk radio station in a large market in the Western United States.
- Lizzy, white, mid-20s, a fantasy sports talk show host for a sports talk radio station in a large Western market.

[7] The names of all informants referenced in this dissertation are pseudonyms.

- Amelia, white, early 40s, pre- and post-game show host and reporter for a regional sports television network (an RSN) in a large Western market.
- Nancy, white, mid-60s, a semi-retired reporter and host for an over-the-air national television broadcast network and its 24-hour sports cable sister. Nancy is a member of the National Sportscasters and Sportswriters Association's Hall of Fame.

I did not contact the fifth sportscaster to whom I was referred, and who had fully retired from the industry. I decided not to contact that person because my preference was to interview sportscasters who were still active in the industry, since their insights and, in particular, their experiences were likely to be recent.

During this initial round of interviews, I continued to seek referrals for more interviews. Samantha was too new to the industry to know another female sportscaster aside from Lizzy, and Lizzy did not respond to my request for an interview until a month after the request was made due to illness. Nancy implicitly refused my request for referrals, mentioning something about how she often receives requests for game tickets and contacts before abruptly ending the phone conversation I was having with her (after I had completed the interview). Thankfully, Amelia referred me to a sportscaster:

- Jane, white, late 30s, a freelance sports reporter often seen on an RSN in a large Western market.

At the conclusion of my interview with Jane, she did not hesitate to refer me to two female sportscasters she personally knew. One did not respond to my request for an interview but the other obliged:

- Paula, Latina, early 30s, an Emmy Award-winning anchor and reporter for an RSN in a large Western market.

Although Paula agreed to provide a referral when I spoke to her on the phone, she never provided one and all attempts to follow up on my part went unanswered. Sportscaster recruitment stalled for about a month. During that time, and feeling that I had interviewed enough women who were white, cisgender, heterosexual, and who had worked for RSNs and radio stations, I attempted to contact several women of color, the few sportscasters who I knew to be openly gay, and those who worked at the national level, but none of these sportscasters responded. My fortunes changed, however, when I turned to Twitter to contact lesser-known sportscasters, which was when I successfully recruited my seventh informant:

- Stephanie, white, late 20s, self-identifying as queer, co-host and -producer of a baseball podcast produced on the East Coast.

As someone who held a "day job" in addition to her duties as a podcaster, Stephanie could not refer me to another sportscaster. Thus, I continued to mine Twitter for more informants. Luckily, a Twitter "acquaintance," with whom I had never interacted in person, was mutually followed by my next informant:

- Patricia, biracial,[8] mid-20s, a reporter and weekend sports anchor for a local television news station in a midsized Eastern market.

Patricia quickly agreed to participate in an interview and did not hesitate to refer me to two other women sportscasters. She knew the first from college and the other was a friend who worked at a rival television station in the same market:

[8] Patricia's mother is white and her father is African-American.

- Hannah, white, mid-20s, a reporter for a local television news station as well as for an RSN in a small Eastern market.
- Marie, white, mid-20s, reporter and fill-in anchor for a local television station in a midsized Eastern market.

Focus Groups

Focus groups with sports media consumers were conducted to learn how they view women in the sportscasting industry and how those views might be informed by discourse. Initially used for marketing research, focus groups have been increasingly adapted for, and utilized, in the academy. David Morgan (1996) found "investigating complex behaviors and motivations were a direct outcome of the interaction in focus groups" (p. 139). Within the context of this study, the focus group format helped my informants articulate their complicated and sometimes contradictory insights on women sportscasters. For example, debating Erin Andrews's journalistic skills (or potential lack thereof) with other informants also led to acknowledgments of the somewhat unjustified criticisms often lobbed at her. Morgan also claims focus groups have two potential uses in scholarly research: as a self-contained study where focus group interviews are the only method of data collection or as part of a multi-methods study that employs a variety of qualitative methods (1988, p. 10). This project employed the latter usage of the focus group method.

The group interaction that the focus group method affords was also key to this project's data collection and its engagement with sports media consumers. Barbour (2007) states that focus groups have become a research method *par excellence* for engaging participants who may otherwise be reluctant to share their insights. Given the

sensitive nature of gender in sports media as research topic, some participants might not have been as forthcoming with their insights in a one-on-one interview. Instead, a focus group allows the informant to provide insights that arise organically within a discussion among their peers. The aim of a focus group, then, is to encourage the informants to discuss the topic among their peers, rather than with a scholar who may have political commitments driving their research, or with people who may not be like-minded. For this reason, whenever possible, my informants were assigned to focus groups that shared commonalities based on demographics such as gender, race, and age.

The focus group informants were not experts per se. That is, they could not – nor were they expected to – explicitly tell me why, for example, sports media consumers are generally averse to hearing women play-by-play announcers. Instead, the insights offered by the focus group informants helped expose some of the discourse that is often used to make sense of – and contribute to – biases against women's voices and other phenomena. An example of the contributions my focus group informants offered can be found in Chapter V when one informant refers to women sideline reporters as "cheerleaders with microphones." This statement should not be taken as an authoritative judgment of women sportscasters by sports media consumers, but one of many possible conceptions of women sideline reporters constructed according to a field of intersecting discourses.

Recruiting focus group participants proved more challenging than recruiting women sportscasters. My preference was to sample these informants from my local area's professional and amateur sports teams' (the Arizona Cardinals, Coyotes, and Diamondbacks; the Phoenix Mercury and Suns; and the Arizona State University Sun Devils) electronic marketing mailing lists, which are typically comprised of consumers

who have purchased single-game or season tickets in the past. These lists, in theory, would have offered the deepest pool of sports media consumers since many people who have purchased tickets to sporting events are likely to be at least casual sports fans. If I had received access to these marketing lists, I intended to send them a call for participants, inviting them to take part in a series of what was to be four focus groups. While I did not believe that *all* of these sports organizations would provide access to their marketing lists, I thought it likely that at least *one* organization would, as a way of facilitating what I believe to be a noble research endeavor. Unfortunately, my requests essentially went unanswered by all the above organizations.

Resigned to the fact that I was not going to get access to any team's marketing lists, I turned my attention to Facebook groups and Arizona State Sun Devil sporting events. I joined a few of the former but only successfully recruited two focus group participants. With recruitment moving along slowly, I then turned to what I believed to be the least desirable option: college students.

Recruiting college students was my least preferred option because I wanted a more diverse sample, especially with regard to age. Some institutions of higher education (i.e., community colleges) have more diverse student bodies than four-year state universities but, generally, most undergraduate college students are aged 18-24. More variance with regard to age can be found in graduate student populations, but I believed that pool to be even more homogeneous: mostly politically liberal, socially-aware twenty- and thirtysomethings who have less time for sports media consumption than their undergraduate counterparts. Secondly, I wanted to avoid recruiting college students because, in my previous experiences in recruiting them for a variety of activities, they are

far more unreliable. I never know if a student who previously committed to participating in a focus group will actually come to the discussion. Thus, relying on students to serve as focus group informants for my dissertation did not feel like a sound strategy. Unfortunately, this was the tack I was forced to take, given the financial and temporal constraints within which I operated.

In total, I conducted four focus group discussions. Two took place in the Phoenix area before I accepted a full-time faculty position and moved to the Youngstown, Ohio area, which is where the third and fourth focus groups were held. This provided some geographical diversity among my focus group sample. In the Phoenix area, I decided to recruit graduate students despite my reservations. The relative political homogeneity of the graduate student population was more tolerable than the unreliability of undergraduate students; as is often stated in the sporting world, the best ability is availability. I sent a call for participants to a graduate student listserv and directed all interested parties to submit an online form that asked about availability and also measured the extent to which they consume sports media content. With a relatively small number of recruits expressing interest (twelve), including graduate students, Facebook group members and ASU men's basketball patrons – which included undergraduate students and members of the local community – I decided to extend invitations to everyone who expressed an interest in participating, regardless of the amount of sports media content they consumed. I then conducted two focus groups each with four informants, in a conference room at the Graduate Student Center on Arizona State University's Tempe Campus.

In the Youngstown focus groups, which took place several months after those in the Phoenix area, I decided to eschew the formal process of pre-screening potential informants. Instead, I invited students from all three of the classes I taught at Youngstown State University to volunteer as participants. The response was overwhelming with 26 students volunteering to participate. As was the case in Phoenix, finding mutually agreeable times to hold the discussions proved challenging. However, I was able to schedule two focus groups of six students each. The unreliability of undergraduate students was manifest in both focus groups; for both groups, two students did not attend the discussions. Nevertheless, it appeared as though the focus groups reached saturation by the end of the third focus group. That is, the first three focus groups (as well as the fourth) largely made the same observations, even if they were finding unique ways to articulate them.

According to Barbour (2007), the focus group method offers participants a comfort in numbers that comes with having the opportunity to speak with people who share similar interests and backgrounds. I was therefore intentional in constituting each focus group. The first group included two graduate students and two community members from a Facebook sports fan group page. Two of the informants were women and the other two were men. The two men were roughly the same age (30s) while the two women were of disparate ages; the graduate student was in her 20s and the community member was in her 60s. I believed this group to be the best in terms of its members' candor and the depth of their insights. Upon further reflection, this first group set a standard that none of the other three groups were able to match. The second group was comprised of one male, a twentysomething graduate student; two male undergraduates;

and a community member in his 40s. The commonality as I constituted this focus group was that all four informants were male and that each member was relatively young.

The third focus group was comprised entirely of undergraduates (as was the fourth group) and included three women and one male. The three women were all upperclassmen enrolled in a sports media degree program while the man, whom I will call Eddie, was an upperclassman of nontraditional age. I was initially apprehensive about the constitution of this group, given the fact that Eddie may not have been so eager to speak about gender in sportscasting as the only man in the group. Despite the notion of comfort in numbers in the focus group method, I decided to proceed with the group as planned since those three women were the most women I could get into one focus group due to scheduling conflicts, and it was my goal to have a mostly-, if not all-, woman group for the purpose of ensuring a variety of viewpoints among the focus groups. The last of the four focus groups was comprised entirely of male undergraduate students of traditional college age.

Prior to each discussion, I asked participants to read and sign notices of informed consent (see Appendix C), granting me permission to record the discussions and granting them anonymity. Like the one-on-one interviews, the focus group discussions were recorded using a digital voice recorder and transcribed by GMR Transcription. I later uploaded the transcripts into MAXQDA for analysis. To foster discussion, I asked participants broad questions regarding sportscasting and sportscasters (see Appendix D). To lessen the risk of social desirability bias, I did not reveal or make this dissertation's focus on gender unambiguous until the end of the discussion. The length of the discussions ranged from 30 to 60 minutes.

Grounded Theory Methodology in a Foucauldian Discursive Analysis

Grounded theory methodology (Corbin and Strauss, 2015) long has been associated with qualitative research. It is understood by many in the academy to be a process that allows researchers to develop theory through data collection and analysis, rather than testing theory. Although this project is theoretically informed and does not seek to develop theory, it also is not testing theory. Over the past two decades, some scholars, including Anselm Strauss (in Cooney, 2010), have argued that grounded theory methodology has many uses beyond developing theory. The versatility and flexibility of grounded theory methodology calls to mind Taylor, Bogdan, and DeVault's (2016) assertion above that qualitative research is a fluid craft.

While not conducting a "grounded theory study," per se, grounded theory methodology was used – in combination with the concept of Foucauldian power/knowledge – to analyze interview and focus group data. Using the grounded theory analytic process, called constant comparison, qualitative data (field notes, texts, and interview transcripts) were broken down into smaller pieces (codes) that I then compared for similarities (Corbin and Strauss, 2015, p. 7). While certain codes (such as "double standard") were defined in a straightforward manner, using Foucauldian theory, other codes were defined discursively, or according to practices and images they have come to represent. The contexts in which the phrases were used or implicitly referenced often determined discursive meanings for certain codes. For example, given the context in which women sportscasters explicitly used the phrase "thick skin," I defined the code "thick skin" as a mechanism sportscasters used to display an unaffected demeanor in the face of harassment and other forms of gendered mistreatment. Next, I grouped those

codes that were thematically similar (like “mansplaining” and “sports knowledge”) into categories or themes, which, using power/knowledge, represented structures of power and domination. Since both referred to women sportscasters’ perceived lack of knowledge, relative to their male peers, I grouped the “mansplaining” and “sports knowledge” codes into a double standard of credibility theme.

I integrated all these themes (double standards, sex bias, harassment, and emotion management) into a “core category,” (p. 7): the postfeminist, neoliberal American female sportscaster subjectivity (see Appendix E for a complete list of codes and themes). To integrate the themes into this dissertation’s core category, I used the power/knowledge framework to map structures of power and domination represented by the above themes that combine to construct the female sportscaster subject. That is, as opposed to simply noting the themes disparately, I traced relationships between and among them. Using the linkages between these themes, and using my tacit knowledge of theories of postfeminism, I could map relationships between the structures of power and domination and the postfeminist neoliberal female sportscaster subjectivity I advanced in this dissertation (see Appendix F for a conceptual map). In this map, the double standard of appearance was conceptually connected to the double standard of credibility, both double standards were linked with sex bias in hiring and harassment, and all three themes (double standards, bias, and harassment) were connected to emotion management and the expectation thereof. These themes and their linkages represent the discursive formation that constructs the female sportscaster subjectivity.

According to Juliet Corbin and Anselm Strauss (2015), data collection and analysis is complete when saturation is achieved. Saturation usually occurs when no new

categories emerge from data analysis (p. 134). While this is often achieved through theoretical sampling – the process of analyzing data after each set of data are collected and adjusting the contexts within which data are collected accordingly – it can also be achieved by performing several rounds of analysis on the same data after collection has been completed (p. 134). Given the temporal and fiscal constraints within which I conducted this project, saturation was achieved by performing several rounds of analysis on the same data.

Textual Analysis

Intertexuality is key to any analysis of relations of power, representation, and discourse. According to Gillian Rose (2012), intertextuality refers to the way in which the meaning of a spoken, written, or visual text depends on the meaning of other such texts (p. 191). In this case, what an informant believes to be true about women sportscasters is informed by what the informant sees, hears, or reads elsewhere. Because of this, it is important to analyze mediated texts. The mediated texts curated for this study include photos, audio and video clips, and articles. I used these artifacts, which are also intertextual, to contextualize informant language and practices. Textual analysis is a research method that facilitates intertextuality in qualitative inquiry.

Alan McKee (2003) defines textual analysis as "a way for researchers to gather information about how other human beings make sense of the world" (p. 1) or, stated another way, it is the interpretation of the meaning of a text. Just as there is more than one way to interpret qualitative data collected from an interview or focus group, McKee posits that there is a myriad of ways a text can be interpreted. Thus, there is no "truth" to be gleaned from a textual analysis. Instead, as McKee argues, textual analysis is "an

educated guess at some of the interpretations that might be made of that text" (p. 2). In an analysis of power/knowledge and representation, the educated guess derived from one text is based on discourse found in other texts. Not only does this render all texts as intertextual, but it allows us to see how the discourse under examination has been presented and disseminated through a wide variety of media. For example, when ESPN host Michelle Beadle says in a video interview that women sportscasters are no longer "just sideline reporters," she implies that women in the industry had theretofore been confined to that role. Further, this implication is based on a discursive field – evident in other texts – that has primarily presented women sportscasters as only sideline reporters. In this project, the purpose of the analysis of mediated texts was to help me further clarify the discourses found in the insights my informants provided and how those discourses inform and are informed by their presentation(s) in mediated texts.

The process I used for determining which texts to analyze was not systematic, except to the extent that I chose those texts that I knew contain discourses referenced by my informants. I possessed an *a priori* familiarity with many of these texts, especially those published or disseminated prior to 2017, because of my long-held interest in this topic. This familiarity calls to mind John Berger's (1972) claim that "to look is an act of choice" (p. 8). Since I decided to "look" at these texts prior to conducting this project, it can be argued that these mediated texts are not only objects of analysis here, but also objects that have informed my interpretation of the data and my execution of this dissertation. The impact of these texts on me as a sports media consumer and as a researcher are similar to the ways in which these texts have informed, at least to a small degree, the subjective experiences and insights of my informants. On the other hand,

serendipity brought many of the texts created in or after 2017 to my dissertation. For example, within 24 hours of beginning to write my chapter on harassment (Chapter VI), news stories about rampant gendered harassment against women sportscasters at NFL Network and ESPN were published.

In total, I analyzed 49 texts, including Internet news and feature articles, blog posts, photos from magazines and tweets, and YouTube video and audio clips. I list these 49 texts in Appendix G and provide an example as Appendix H. As stated above, these texts were not systematically selected for analysis in this dissertation. Instead, I chose them for their relevance to the topics, themes, and concepts that emerged in the analysis of interview and focus group data, and used them to offer a more robust understanding of the field in which many of these concepts as discourses can be found. Thus, as harassment emerged as one of this dissertation's primary themes, I searched the Internet for texts related to online and offline harassment of women in sports media. Some items were not available (such as the *Boston Globe*'s story on harassment at ESPN) until I began writing the dissertation.

Netnography

I did not include tweets disseminated by sports media consumers and sports media personnel in the 49 texts referenced above. The tweets I reference in this dissertation were collected as part of an intermittent "netnography" I conducted from September 2014 through December 2017. According to Robert Kozinets (2006), netnography is a method through which researchers can collect data from Internet communities or interactions, such as those existing within chat rooms, blogs, or gaming worlds. Kozinets proposes three types of online data collection: direct copying of text within online interactions,

"fieldnotes" recorded from observing computer-mediated interactions, and direct contact with subjects in the form of interviews over instant messenger, for example (p. 132). I employed the "direct copying" method, taking "screenshots" – or still images – of tweets and saving them for later reference (an example is provided in Appendix I). This netnography was approved by Arizona State University's Institutional Review Board, under the condition that non-public figures' Twitter handles and tweets were granted anonymity (see Appendix K).

As stated above, I employed the netnographic methods intermittently. That is, although Twitter interactions were observed and recorded within the three-year timeframe referenced, sometimes I observed tweets – and others' reactions to them – multiple days in a row while, at other times, days, weeks, and even months would pass between observations. In order to filter the vast amounts of data available on Twitter, I limited my observations to a selection of 30 women sportscasters (see Appendix J),[9] with some observed more often than others based on how often they tweeted and the content they tweeted. Linda Cohn, for example, tweeted often and with content that was exceptionally provocative. Thus, her Twitter feed was observed and captured more often than those of most other sportscasters. It would have been impossible to record all Twitter interactions involving the 30 sportscasters selected. Instead, I recorded tweets in which sportscasters or sports media consumers referenced gender in relation to sports media, the woman sportscaster's appearance, or tweets that included provocative images. The sportscasters I chose to observe were those whom I already followed and others whose prominence in the industry (like Erin Andrews and Jemele Hill) made their

[9] None of the women included on this list were interview informants.

Twitter feeds appealing for research. As it relates to sports media consumers who used Twitter to interact with women sportscasters, their handles (or usernames) have been excluded from this written report, unless those tweets came from someone who, like Artie Lange, is already a public figure and/or were reported by a media outlet. My rationale for this decision stems from the purpose of this dissertation, which is not to "out" any individual as sexist.

While the exact number of tweets recorded is difficult to determine, given variations in the number of responses each tweet received, at minimum, I observed and recorded 109 interactions on Twitter, as represented by the number of screenshot images I saved. Not all data I collected through netnography is included in this written report. Instead, I included the data that buttressed the concepts and themes that emerged from my analysis of interview and focus group data. That is, for example, as "nightclub attire" became a concept that emerged in data analysis, I mined my collection of recorded tweets for visual examples and mentions of this phenomenon on Twitter. While finding tweets representative of this theme was not difficult, some themes, such as offline workplace harassment, did not have a recorded tweet to support it. Thus, no tweets are used in relation to workplace harassment in Chapter VI.

Chapter IV – Hoochie-Mama Dresses and Pop-Quizzes: Double Standards and the American Woman Sportscaster

As a result of my analysis of the interview and focus group data I collected and the mass mediated texts I procured, I argue that the American female sportscaster subjectivity is a postfeminist, neoliberal construct. This subjectivity manifests in gendered double standards of appearance and credibility; a sex bias in the hiring and development of women sportscasters for certain roles in the industry; online and offline harassment; and a ceaseless expectation that women sportscasters manage their emotions in the face of harassment, bias, and double standards. Women sportscasters are therefore forced to negotiate these obstacles with little to no meaningful support from an industry that is – because of postfeminist, neoliberal discourses – seemingly absolved of any culpability for the treatment endured by women sportscasters. In the absence of such culpability, harassment, bias, and double standards are normalized, and the sportscasting industry has no impetus to make cultural changes that might significantly improve conditions for women working in the industry. The industry's inaction, along with the phenomena that contribute to the construction of the female sportscaster subjectivity, is the result of a systemic process and not the monolithic actions of a small group of individual actors. This systemic process contributes to the gendered structure of sportscasting, ensuring that women remain on the industry's margins, discursively and materially.

This chapter is the first of five in which I provide evidence of this argument. In each chapter, I cite double standards, bias, harassment, and the expectation of emotion management are respectively phenomena that women sportscasters are required to

negotiate. I also make linkages between these obstacles, their impact on the gendered structure of the sportscasting industry, discourse, and postfeminist and neoliberal discourses. The next four chapters demonstrate how the female sportscaster subjectivity affects the material experiences of women sportscasters, and vice-versa. To that end, in this chapter, I focus on the gendered double standards of appearance and credibility, introducing interview and focus group data, as well as mass mediated texts, to demonstrate how these double standards are manifest in women sportscaster experiences. Using qualitative research methods, as well as the concepts of power/knowledge and representation, my aim is not to prove causality. Instead, these findings are one of many possible interpretations of female sportscaster discourse and how it affects women sportscasters in the material world.

My informants (both the women sportscasters *and* focus group participants) universally agree that gendered double standards exist in sportscasting. I define a double standard as a rule or criterion that is applied differently to different people. In this case, my informants consistently expressed a belief that men and women sportscasters are evaluated by superiors and media consumers differently across a variety of criteria, particularly those related to appearance and credibility. While evidence of the existence of gendered double standards is not likely to register as a surprise, the manifestations of those double standards are more revelatory, illustrating the complexity of the challenges women in sportscasting must navigate. In that regard, many of the double standard manifestations I analyze in this chapter are not unique to sportscasting. Indeed, as I stated in Chapter I, sports and sports media are *gendering* spaces as much as they are *gendered* spaces. That is, much of what transpires in society informs sports media's practices and

vice-versa. However, the significance of the phenomena I explore here lies in the fact that, as some of the evidence I present demonstrates, society's multitude of discourses often clash with and complicate those that pervade sportscasting. Thus, the sportscasting industry and society at large diverge from each other as much as they intersect.

Based on my analysis of interview and focus group data, it seems the appearance double standard forms the basis for nearly all other challenges that women sportscasters encounter. This double standard is manifest in sportscaster hiring and retention as well as evaluations of appearance made by sports media consumers. In addition, as noted by many of the women sportscasters I interviewed, not only are the expectations for men's and women's clothing different, as has been the case in society at large, but these inequitable expectations are also shifting. This evolution is true to the extent that some women in the industry are now forced and/or seduced into wearing more revealing clothing, a turn that I refer to as the *nightclubification* of women in the sportscasting industry. I rely on interview data, news articles, tweets, and images to explore this phenomenon.

According to the women I spoke with, the *nightclubification* of women sportscaster dress has emerged to the detriment of the perceived credibility of women sportscasters and resonates with many hallmarks of postfeminist media culture (Gill, 2007). These hallmarks include a turn from "sexual object to desiring sexual subject," a turn that seems to signify an increased willingness by some women to actively express their sexuality rather than passively participate, if at all, in their objectification (p. 258). Longtime ESPN *SportsCenter* anchor Linda Cohn appears to exemplify both the industry's nightclubification and the postfeminist turn from sexual object to sexual

subject through photos posted on her Twitter account (figs. 1-3). Although the turn toward sexual subjectification – often demonstrated by way of t-shirts with suggestive phrases and "duck lip" selfies – might appear to be lighthearted and liberating, this mode of representation is problematic. First, this turn is typically only afforded to women who, like Cohn are white, heterosexual, and thin, but who – unlike Cohn, who is approaching 60 years of age as of this writing – are also young (Gill, 2007, p. 259). The narrow set of criteria within which women's sexual subjectivity must fit within the narrow boundaries established for women by postfeminism overall. This aspect of postfeminism, the narrow guidelines it affords women, will be evident throughout this chapter and this dissertation.

Second, the turn toward sexual subjectification is also problematic because it is often presented in such a way as to contribute to rape culture by giving heterosexual men the impression women are "always up for it" (Gill, 2007, p. 258-259). As noted later in this chapter, and in Chapter VI, the impression that women sportscasters are always already up for sex because of their self-presentation has ramifications for women sportscasters when they engage male sources. There is a presumption of promiscuity that diminishes the perceived credibility of successful sportscasters and is sometimes brought to bear on their interactions with male sources who be inclined to seek sexual or romantic favors. Lastly, and most germane to this dissertation's analysis of a postfeminist neoliberal subjectivity, the desiring sexual subject is problematic because it is "(re-)presented not as something done to women by some men, but as the freely chosen wish of active, confident, assertive female subjects" (p. 259). That is, Cohn's self-presentation on Twitter appears to be freely-chosen. However, Cohn's agency may be an illusion. Women in television broadcast industries, as evidenced in a *Boston Globe* article (Teitell,

2017), are increasingly pressured to wear more revealing clothing. This pressure can be explicit – with news directors requesting such clothing – or implicit, with some women feeling the need to participate in *nightclubification* to compete with other women willing to wear more revealing outfits. This illusion of choice is also problematic because of the misconceptions of women's empowerment, autonomy, and agency that pervade the current postfeminist media environment. These misconceptions typically ignore the panoptic discipline and self-surveillance (Foucault, 1977) that often drives these choices. In other words, the decisions women sportscasters often make about their bodies and appearance are often the byproduct of discourses that encourage those decisions and discourage others. This decision-making process is implicit insofar as it is not typically obvious. Women do not, for example, shave their underarms because of an ever-present "underarm patrol" ensuring proper underarm grooming. Instead, women shave their underarms because the practice has been normalized and because the practice of not shaving is stigmatized and would therefore be detrimental to many aspects of a woman's life. Instead of acknowledging this as a case of Foucauldian discipline, most women simply shave, making it seem like an act of free will. This perceived agency is apparent in many of the decisions women sportscaster make regarding appearance. It stands to reason, then, that the illusion of choice perpetuated by postfeminism has a mutually-informing relationship with neoliberalism. As stated above, neoliberal logic – and its emphasis on individual responsibility in the face of gendered mistreatment – implicitly allows for the absolution of the sportscasting industry when it comes to the objectification of women sportscasters, who sometimes seem to be freely choosing to

objectify themselves. This seemingly freely made choice to objectify oneself is often manifest in the way women sportscasters present themselves on social media.

Due in part to this self-objectification by subjectification, I also advance the argument in this chapter that the gendered double standard of appearance undergirds the double standard of credibility, a relationship that is illustrative of Michel Foucault's power/knowledge (1978). If we understand discourse (practices, images) as being politically productive insofar as it aids in the construction and maintenance of relations of power and domination, it becomes easier to understand how a woman sportscaster's perceived credibility could diminish without men or other women intentionally taking a single action to that effect. In this chapter, I present interview and focus group data, as well as mediated texts, that suggest that women sportscaster credibility is seemingly diminished because of the double standard of appearance.

As a result of the perception of diminished credibility, based on my analysis, women sportscasters are often held to a different standard when it comes to demonstrating their qualifications. These qualifications are represented as sports knowledge and skills, such as the ability of the sportscaster to accurately, clearly, and creatively describe and articulate sports news or action and the ability to find their own stories. In my analysis, the gendered double standard of credibility also often manifests itself early in a woman sportscaster's recruitment and employment. According to my sportscaster informants – as well as mediated texts – being a successful and attractive woman in the industry often begets an assumption of promiscuity. Many of the women I interviewed also admitted to being quizzed on their sports knowledge, both in-person and through electronic communication, in their view, simply because they are women.

According to my interview and focus group informants, being a woman sportscaster often breeds skepticism from male and female sports media consumers as well as male coaches and athletes. Lastly, I advance the claim espoused by my interview and focus group informants that women sportscasters also face much harsher backlash than their male peers when sharing their opinions on sports or sociopolitical issues. This backlash to woman sportscaster opinions, which appears be somewhat linked with women sportscasters' seeming lack of perceived credibility, is apparent in much of the harassment women in sportscasting endure online as I examine in Chapter VI.

Taken together, the double standards of appearance and credibility work in tandem as power structures that serve, especially within the context of postfeminist discourses, to ensure women remain on the material and discursive periphery of the sportscasting industry.

Double Standard of Appearance

Hiring and Retention

One of the well-documented manifestations of the gendered double standard of appearance in sportscasting relates to hiring and retention. In a survey of television news directors, for example, Sheffer and Schultz (2007) found that woman sportscaster attractiveness was prioritized over their sports knowledge in hiring. The ten women sportscasters I spoke with were nearly unanimous in their agreement with this assessment, at least to the extent that appearance was not a prioritized criterion in hiring for male sportscasters. "Like, a better-looking guy doesn't really get the job," said Lizzy, the sports talk radio fantasy sports show host. She continued, "That isn't as influential for men as it is for women. And that's unfortunate but it's the truth." Similarly, ESPN

personality Sarah Spain writes about the role appearance plays in the sportscasting industry, "We don't need our male sports reporters to be good at their jobs AND eye candy, they're allowed to just report" (Spain, 2015, para. 6, emphasis in original). David Portnoy (2014), president of *Barstool Sports* wrote "[ESPN's] Sam Ponder has a job because she's hot. Is she good at it? Can she think on her feet? Does she know sports? Probably but [sic] she doesn't even get in the door for an interview at ESPN if she doesn't look [the way] she does. It's requirement #1 for female sideline reporters" (para. 3).

Many of my focus group informants, including Molly, an undergraduate sports media student, agreed, even though, like other focus group participants, she is not privy to the hiring practices within the industry. "Looks is such a huge factor. Any type of broadcasting, I believe that looks are a – It's sad to say, but [heterosexual male sports fans] want someone that's good-looking on TV, for sure." Marcus, one of my undergraduate focus group informants, offered this comment in support of the notion that appearance is of greater import in the hiring of women sportscasters than it is in the hiring of men:

> It's that kind of thing that makes me think that it's more of an uphill battle for women…Men – any of us – I feel like any of us would have a higher likelihood [of getting hired], just any of us…if we just knew the right people and knew what we were talking about. Whereas, if a woman [had] all of that, [but wasn't] genetically born with the looks that society deems worthy, then their already slim chances of getting there in the first place just becomes almost nonexistent.

The fact that Molly, Marcus, and other sports media consumers believe this to be true speaks to the discursive effect of the prioritization of attractiveness for women hired in the industry. As a form of power/knowledge, or common sense, we can say that the

prioritization is normalized and aids in the construction of the female sportscaster subjectivity. That is, because of the prioritization of attractiveness, society "knows" the female sportscaster to be "attractive," in accordance with a standard of attractiveness that is ever-evolving. In addition, and more importantly, society "knows" that the female sportscaster *has* to be "attractive" in order to enter and thrive in the industry. This knowledge – in which a norm has become normative and attractiveness becomes a form of power and oppression – therefore limits which women can and cannot be sportscasters.

Two sportscasters, Nancy, the semi-retired hall of famer, and Patricia, the local TV sports reporter and anchor, both believed attractiveness is also a consideration when directors and producers hire male sportscasters. In analyzing the insights with which I had been provided and a variety of mediated texts, the difference lies in the extent to which attractiveness is prioritized in hiring as well as the fact that women in the industry are disproportionately expected to be attractive overall. This is not to say that *all* women sportscasters are universally attractive; attractiveness is subjective and ever-evolving and many women sportscasters, like Michele Tafoya and Holly Rowe, are known more for their ability and professionalism than their looks. However, the data demonstrate a perception among observers that high levels of attractiveness is *the* consideration for women in the industry while it is *a* consideration for men. As shown throughout this dissertation, this perception has a material impact on women sportscasters that it generally does not have on men sportscasters. Indeed, *Barstool Sports*'s David Portnoy believes that this perception – that attractiveness is "requirement #1" for women sideline reporters – justifies a pervasive objectification of women sportscasters.

The gendered double standard and prioritization of appearance over skill is especially true as sportscasters age. Recently-retired play-by-play announcer Verne Lundquist was permitted to call the Southeastern Conference (SEC) college football game of the week on CBS until the age of 76 and, although Lundquist is recognized as having one of sportscasting's most recognizable voices, he was also portly, balding, and white-haired. Along with his age, these are all traits women sportscasters are generally not afforded the opportunity to exhibit. The then-62-year old and balding Tony Kornheiser, in a public apology after questioning the wardrobe choices of colleague Hannah Storm, stated, "I'm a troll; look at me. I have no right to insult what anyone looks like" (Kennedy, 2010, para. 9). ESPN radio and television personality Bomani Jones, 36 years old at the time, professed his privilege as a man in this regard, tweeting: "I'm the skinniest dude in the world with a messed up [set of teeth]…and hairline AND THEY PUT ME ON TV. Think about that" (Jones, 2017, emphasis in original). This is not to say that men are free to stay in the industry for as long as they want. Some, such as Brent Musburger, are demoted or forced out of their roles as they age. However, the discourse – comprised of material practices and perceptions – suggests that this attrition is more pronounced among women and has more to do with appearance than it does for men.

It is important to understand the extent to which this double standard in hiring and retention has been normalized. What many of my informants and some of the mediated texts referenced above, aside from a double standard of appearance in sportscasting hiring, is a lack of fairness that coincides with this double standard. Their comments also reveal a willingness, even if they are women who are already in the industry, to readily accept this hiring practice as a taken-for-granted and unbreakable reality. Jane, the

freelance television reporter, also revealed such a willingness. “Sadly, it’s probably the part I don’t like about my industry,” she said. The comments made by Kornheiser and Jones above also suggest a willingness among men to participate, implicitly and explicitly acknowledging that it is “normal” for men who are self-proclaimed “trolls” to provide sports commentary. Based on these comments, and those made by other women and men in the industry cited above, it appears that the appearance criteria for men sportscasters are incongruous compared to those for women. Further, it appears this incongruity is visible yet “normal,” insofar as many acknowledge it without calling for change or offering solutions to that effect.

Paradoxical Evaluation of On-Camera Appearance

According to my informants, the gendered double standard of appearance is not unique to sportscasting’s hiring practices. This double standard continues when women sportscasters appear on camera. The appearance of women sportscasters is prioritized over their knowledge and skills when they are evaluated by the audience and industry decision-makers, according to my interview and focus group informants. With regard to audience evaluations of appearance, many of the women sportscasters I interviewed expressed being scrutinized for their looks more often – and in greater detail – than their male counterparts. Patricia recalled the many times her station tweeted a photo of her and her colleagues previewing an all-woman newscast. Responses to the tweets often critiqued the broadcasters’ bodies, especially if they wore similar clothing. “If it was two men wearing the same suit, everybody knows that that wouldn’t be the case and that those comments wouldn’t be thrown around,” she said.

This emphasis, and maybe even obsession, with critiquing the bodies of women who appear on camera is one of the hallmarks of the postfeminist sensibility: "femininity as a bodily property" (Gill, 2007, p. 255). In the present postfeminist environment, a woman's worth is often correlated to her possession, or lack thereof, of a "sexy" body (p. 255). This correlation has led to the constant surveillance of women's bodies by media consumers, both men *and* women, and media organizations such as magazines, which often print large photographs of celebrities in swimsuits and critique their bodies (p. 255). For women, the obsession with women's bodies marks the body as "always already unruly and requiring constant monitoring, surveillance, discipline and remodeling" (p. 255). According to Patricia, media consumers often comment that she and certain of her women colleagues are "too fat" or "too skinny." Comments like these act as a disciplinary mechanism through which the bodies of women on television are surveilled, calling on these women to constantly monitor their appearance. The expectation of self-surveillance, and the normalization thereof, is not unique to the postfeminist moment. The paradox within which these disciplinary discourses reside *is* unique to the current moment, however, and further complicates and problematizes the present emphasis on women's bodies.

According to interview and textual data I analyzed, the self-surveillance required of women sportscasters calls on them to strive for standards of appearance that are appealing to some and distasteful to others. Patricia stated she and her colleagues receive many emails whenever they wear red lipstick or certain dresses. Even though her news director approves of their choices, the women at Patricia's station get emails in which viewers tell them "we look slutty, we look like whores." This paradox was apparent when

then-ESPN reporter Erin Andrews's participated in *Dancing with the Stars* as a contestant in 2010. Reacting to a dress Andrews wore, Elisabeth Hasselbeck, a host on the all-women roundtable morning show *The View*, questioned the appropriateness of the dress, slut- and victim-shaming Andrews, who had previously been stalked and secretly recorded in a hotel room (Everett, 2010). After stating that Andrews wore "next to nothing," Hasselbeck proceeded to say, "I mean, in some way if I'm [Andrews's stalker], I'm like, 'Man! I just could've waited 12 weeks and seen this – a little bit less – without the prison time!'" (Everett, 2010, para. 7).

The paradox is also apparent when one considers Andrews – who is now with Fox Sports – is known more for her appearance and slender build than her journalistic skills, as evidenced by interview and focus group data, and images I analyzed. Additionally, competitive dancers often wear revealing outfits, normalizing dresses such as that worn by Andrews. Instead, Hasselbeck's comments appear to have been spurred on by the fact that Andrews's body had already been literally surveilled. Thus, Hasselbeck's statements were disciplinary – in a Foucauldian sense – in nature. This particular paradox, in which industry norms clash with those of a certain subset of society, places women and women sportscasters in a double bind. Women have to weigh the industrial rewards of wearing such clothing with the punishment society doles out as a result of such sartorial decisions.

Given Daniel Davis and Janielle Krawczyk's (2010) study on women sportscaster appearance, in which women who were deemed "least attractive" and "most attractive" were perceived as having less credibility than a woman in the middle of a predetermined "attractiveness" spectrum, it stands to reason that perceived women sportscaster credibility overall may suffer as a result of this paradox. Hasselbeck's victim- and slut-

shaming, and that endured by Patricia and her colleagues, also resonate with postfeminism's "entanglement" of feminist (*women should not have to wear dresses like that*) and anti-feminist (*no wonder she got stalked*) discourses, as argued by Angela McRobbie (2004) and Rosalind Gill (2007). In this entanglement, media outlets and media consumers often co-opt feminist discourses to advance anti-feminist arguments. Gendered and inequitable evaluations of on-screen sportscaster appearance are not the only manifestations of this entanglement explored in this dissertation.

In addition to being paradoxical, the comments Patricia receives as a biracial woman, especially those that mention her hair, are often racially-tinged. "[They'll call me] Beyoncé or [say] 'your big hair this, that, and the other thing,' which they obviously would never [say] to a man, and also would never send to my blonde, white coworkers." Patricia also claimed that most of the scrutiny she has received about her hair, makeup, and clothing comes from women viewers. In her memoir, Cohn (2008) wrote about criticism she received when *SportsCenter* began employing "tower shots" (camera angles that require the anchors to stand up in front of a wall or large screen). As a result of this new angle, Cohn's wardrobe became heavily scrutinized by the show's producers and (women) viewers. "It seemed that over the next few months I was frequently being told I couldn't wear certain outfits because they were too tight, too revealing, or inappropriate" (Ch. 10, para. 7). Cohn also detailed the scrutiny she received from women viewers, including an angry voicemail she received in which a concerned mother berated her for what the mother believed to be a stance that was too wide for young boys' eyes during a tower shot. (para. 9). Andrews, Cohn, and Patricia's experiences all suggest women are also complicit in sportscasting's appearance paradox. Through a Foucauldian lens,

women's complicity demonstrates that the woman sportscaster appearance paradox is a result of a diverse set of normalized practices and images, and not monolithic proclamations made by men.

The issue of makeup and hair is part of this double bind as well. The women sportscasters I spoke with face criticism when they do not put forth the effort required to apply makeup. For example, Marie stated that on days in which her schedule is full and she has little time to do her hair or makeup before going on air, she will face criticism whereas, in the same circumstance, her male colleagues and superiors will not. "I had six and half minutes to get ready and people – I guarantee you that if my boss were to rush on set, his tie might not be completely done, people wouldn't say anything," she said. "For me, I'm going to get an email."

Although she has not experienced this scrutiny, Hannah supported the assertion that a lack of hair and makeup preparation causes undue criticism by recalling some of her female colleagues' experiences. "If they weren't to wear makeup, [viewers would] say, 'Oh, this one looks tired. Why is she tired? I don't want to look at someone tired on my broadcast, this is ridiculous.'" Hannah also agreed that men do not receive equal criticism for their clothing. "No one would say, 'That guy's tie is too bright. That's too much. His suit is offending me.'" Marie and Hannah may be overstating their assertions by suggesting that "no one" would make these comments to men. However, given the data I have analyzed, it appears women at least receive more of this sort of criticism than do men.

Expectations for Clothing and the *Nightclubification* of Women Sportscasters

Notable in Marie and Hannah's comments is that the examples they gave of hypothetical male sportscaster criticism focused on men's sartorial choices – ties and suits – and not their hair or makeup. This is a phenomenon in which socially embedded discourses affect the experiences of women sportscasters. In this case, Western men – especially those who hold public-facing jobs – have fewer options for hair and makeup, the latter of which men are generally not expected to use unless they appear on camera. This paucity of options for men results in hair and makeup being of greater import to a woman's overall attractiveness than it is for men. "It's sort of how it is," said Amelia, an RSN reporter and host in her 40s. "It's just like if I go on a date with my husband, it might take me 30 minutes to get ready. It might take him two." Nevertheless, mediated texts and focus group data support Marie and Hannah's claim that men and women are held to different standards when it comes to clothing.

The late Craig Sager, a courtside reporter for the *NBA on TNT* until his death in 2016, was known for wearing suits and ties with loud colors and patterns. My focus group informants saw Sager's suits as a bit of a running gag. "The way he dressed, people loved it and it was fun to watch him. I don't know, it just got a little laugh in," said John, a male undergraduate. Marcus believed that a woman sportscaster with a similar fashion sense would not be so well-received:

> If a woman [wore] a flamboyant outfit, I think it would've been received less comically and more seriously and in a negative way, rather than a positive way. That was [Sager's] gimmick after a while. He would wear these suits. I think he was wearing them on purpose because it was his thing. But a female doing that long enough – she would never be employed long enough for that to become a thing.

Esquire included Sager in a story titled, "The Long, Sordid History of Horribly Dressed Male Sportscasters" (Vinciguerra, 2016). However, a closer look reveals the story – or, at the very least, its headline – was ironic. The subheadline was, "We can only assume LSD was involved," suggesting drug use led to the sartorial choices of the men included in the article. Also, the article explains the decision to dress eccentrically as a pragmatic one for male sportscasters who have sought to distinguish themselves from the rest of the crowd (para. 6), similar to Marcus's assessment of Sager's wardrobe. ABC's Wide World of Sports sportscasters wore bright yellow sports coats to distinguish themselves. This attempt at standing out was made in spite of it rankling ABC's sports director at the time, who remarked that the coats "look[ed] like a fucking canary" (para. 11). Although men sportscasters have worn clothing for attention, unlike their women colleagues, men sportscasters have rarely, if ever, have felt it necessary to wear more revealing clothing. Indeed, as an example of Foucauldian discipline, many women in electronic media industries have felt a need to do so in order stay on par with other women in the industry. Conversely, some women have been explicitly told by their superiors to don less conservative clothing.

Evidence of this practice can be found in mediated texts. In one of the news articles I analyzed as part of my textual analysis, Beth Teitell (2017) of *The Boston Globe* reported that women in the television news industry (which also includes sports and weather) are increasingly being told by their superiors to wear more revealing outfits. Teitell's story was spurred by the sudden retirement of Boston television news anchor Heather Unruh, who, upon retiring, stated, "Women are encouraged to dress more provocatively than I feel is appropriate for delivering news" (para. 2). Upon further

investigation, Teitell found that the pressure women in the industry feel to dress sexy has become pervasive. As one anonymous newsperson told Teitell, “management at her station has told women to wear ‘tighter, smaller, shorter, more revealing clothes’” (para. 4). Another woman newscaster referenced in the story reported occurrences of women affixing clothespins to the backs of their clothing so as to make it tighter and more revealing (para. 5), while another recalled a station’s management asking her to dress more like her colleague who “wore her skirts short and her tops unbuttoned” (para. 8). The result is an environment in which many women in news and sportscasting, like the men sportscasters referenced above, willingly wear clothing that will get them noticed (para. 9). The difference, however, is men in sportscasting do not feel it necessary to show more of their bodies to get noticed. In fact, it is deemed more professional for men to dress conservatively.

The increase in revealing clothing appears to have created a race among some women in the electronic media industries to show the most skin their audiences will allow. This race, spurred by managers who force otherwise unwilling women to do the same, has subjected women in the industry to the analogy that they are dressing for nightclubs. This analogy appeared in texts I analyzed (Teitell, para. 33; Copeland, 2013, para. 2) and some of the women sportscasters I interviewed used it as well. Although none of my informants reported being asked by their superiors to dress less conservatively, many of them have noticed the trend toward more revealing clothing and lamented this shift.

Paula, the Latina, Emmy-winning reporter from a western regional sports network, spoke the most passionately about the topic. “They’re starting to dress women

super inappropriately, like we're going to a damn club," she said. "If you go turn on Fox [Sports], ESPN, they're showing their legs, their arms, cleavage. It's a little over the top." Paula's first comment seems to suggest that the women she sees may be advised to wear revealing clothing. Samantha, the early 20s sports talk radio update anchor, also noticed the trend. "I watch *SportsCenter* every morning … Those girls … look like they're going to a nightclub, and so they have these dresses on and high heels and sometimes I wish that it would be more about what they're talking about and not just so much sex appeal." Marie expressed similar sentiments, although, unlike Paula, her comments only initially intimated that the "choice" to dress less conservatively was an illusion. "I personally look at [what others wear] and I'm like, 'That sure looks uncomfortable. I'm sorry you have to do that,' but that's their own choice." Marie's last sentence suggests the decision to wear more revealing clothing was freely made.

Indeed, every woman in sportscasting nominally has a choice when it comes to clothing. For the women whose managers suggest they take a less conservative sartorial approach, however, the choices create a double bind: wear revealing clothing while also potentially subjecting themselves to the sort of unjust slut-shaming referenced by Patricia above, or dress conservatively and risk being passed over for promotion (or possibly replaced) by someone willing to show more skin. In the *Globe* article, one newscaster spoke of her station's management hiring wardrobe consultants who recommended more revealing clothing, while another said they were pulled into a news director's office and reprimanded for wearing a jacket that was "too boxy" (Teitell, 2017, para. 9). This newscaster also said, "This is so murky, because appearance is part of your job. [News directors] can be very subjective about how you move up and down the ladder" (para. 12)

The double bind this produces creates an illusion of choice, especially for women who have spent time and money in college learning how to be sportscasters – a job whose number of opportunities is outstripped by its number of qualified candidates. The illusion and assumption of choice is part and parcel of postfeminist discourse and is problematic to the extent that the choices women appear empowered to make regarding their appearance almost always call on them to emphasize universal yet ever-changing standards of femininity (Gill, 2007, p. 260). Although this phenomenon exists firmly within the news and sports media industries, it can be said, then, that *nightclubification* helps define – and is defined by – universally understood constructed notions of femininity, insofar as *nightclubification* is emblematic of postfeminist media culture, which has served to define femininity (and masculinity) in the early twenty-first century. This is one instance in which there is evidence of sports media as a space that is both *gendered* and *gendering*.

ESPN's Sarah Spain hinted at the double bind women sportscasters find themselves in regarding clothing when, in reference to the nascence of her career, she wrote:

> [My first on-camera job] was an incredible opportunity to work with big producers on a high budget and the only drawback was I had to wear low-cut shirts while I delivered fantasy football news. When you're just starting out and you don't know any better, you take a great opportunity when it's in front of you. When no one will give you a break and then a big-time producer hires you and you get to write the content and host and you just have to "be hot" like every other woman you see in the industry, then you think "I guess this is how the industry works" and you do it (Spain, 2015, para. 6).

As I show in greater detail in Chapter VI, Spain has been slut-shamed, primarily online, for her early-career wardrobe, even years after taking a turn toward more conservative attire. In Chapter VI, I state that the double binds established by the appearance double standard and *nightclubification* set women sportscasters up for harassment, among other challenges.

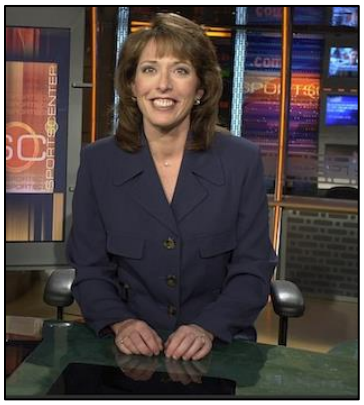

Figure 2 - Linda Cohn, Circa 1990s
© ESPN

The pressure to wear more revealing clothing perhaps explains Linda Cohn's transformation. When Cohn's tenure at ESPN began in 1992 (at the age of 32), she primarily wore loose-fitting pantsuits (fig. 1). Now at 58 years old, the *SportsCenter* anchor's clothing has become increasingly revealing, and a look at her Twitter account suggests the turn is purposeful. As of November 25, 2017, her profile picture (fig. 2) was an image of her at a fitness center, bent over at the waist, looking at the camera as she posed with her hands on a balancing ball, with her hair down. Leaving her hair down in this context further suggests the photo was staged. Cohn was also wearing spandex that stopped above the knee and a purple tank top, which, due to her posture, revealed her cleavage. On March 25, 2016, Cohn tweeted a photo of herself wearing a form-fitting outfit in which she was turned with her side to the camera and her hands on her hips (fig. 3). It is also clear that she disseminated this photo as a means of selling it. While including a link to purchase her autographed photos, she stated, "This one is the top seller


Figure 1 - Cohn Profile Picture
© Linda Cohn

so far. Do you agree?" (Cohn, 2016). On December 4, 2014, Cohn tweeted, "At least [co-anchor] @DavidLloydESPN was hard at work during a commercial break. I felt compelled to strike a pose" (Cohn, 2014). With that tweet, Cohn included a photo (fig. 4) of her in one of the two *SportsCenter* anchor chairs, with her back to the desk and Lloyd in the background. She wore knee-high boots and a form-fitting, low-cut dress that stopped at her mid-thigh. Her pose and facial expression were purposely provocative, as indicated by the tweet itself.

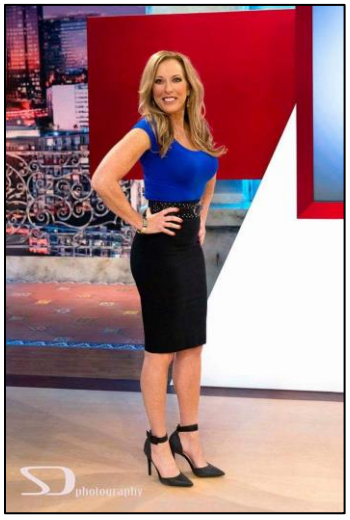

Figure 3 - Cohn, March 25, 2015
© Linda Cohn

Photos like these are pervasive on Cohn's Twitter account and her sartorial transformation appears to be the result of sportscasting's gendered double standard of appearance. Cohn's turn and self-presentation on Twitter resonates with many hallmarks of postfeminist, neoliberal media culture: "femininity as a bodily property," empowerment and choice, Western culture's obsession with makeovers, and women's mediated turn from sex object to desiring sexual subject, in which it seems appropriate for some women to actively appear to be "up for" sex, as Cohn appears to be in Figure 4 (Gill, 2007). As a result, the extent to which Cohn's self-presentation resonates with postfeminist discourses situates her self-presentation as prototypical of the American female sportscaster subjectivity. That is, Cohn appears to be an enterprising woman who, in an effort to overcome the "disadvantage" of her age, has made herself over, has played up her sexuality and her (feminine) body, and has tried to earn additional income from these choices. Further, it

appears that Cohn can choose to do this because of the perceived success of feminism, even if objectification is anti-feminist.

Cohn's transformation is also an example of the sort of sartorial turn the *Boston Globe* reported and that women sportscasters such as Paula, Samantha, and Marie lamented above. "Look at Linda Cohn, how she dresses now," Paula said, without provocation on my part. "She used to dress in pantsuits, and now they got her in hoochie-mama dresses all the time. And she's old. It's just ridiculous."

Paula's continued usage of the word "they" when discussing Cohn is noteworthy.

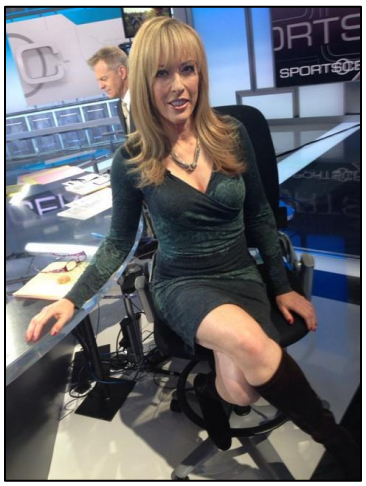

Figure 4 – Cohn, December 4, 2014
© Linda Cohn

As stated above, "they" could be Cohn's managers at ESPN or an ambiguous "they" that includes those who are complicit in the normalization of the gendered double standard of appearance. Based on the *Globe* article referenced above, we might assume Cohn has either been told to dress like this by her superiors or she decided to present herself in this manner to stay relevant among her peers and audience. This assumption could be true given her age, a rarity for women in this industry. Thus, when Paula says "they" have Cohn dressing a certain way, whether "they" are Cohn's superiors at ESPN or an ambiguous "they," Cohn is absolved of responsibility, even though Paula is clear about her own intentionally conservative wardrobe choices.

Regardless of the meaning Paula herself would apply to the language she used, it appears Cohn's decision to present herself in this manner is informed by the gendered double standard of appearance, since, as stated above, men sportscasters are generally not

compelled to wear skimpier outfits and sell or promote images of themselves in suggestive poses. To a casual observer, Cohn's transformation likely appears to have been freely-chosen. However, upon considering the evidence above, Cohn's sartorial turn seems to exemplify a key component of the postfeminist neoliberal female sportscaster subjectivity: an illusory exercise of free will.

While it appears that Cohn has been compelled to prioritize her appearance as a means of sustaining her career, she is just one embodiment of the appearance double standard in sportscasting. My informants also referenced Fox Sports sideline reporter Erin Andrews as an example of the type of career arc that occurs when appearance is prioritized over perceived skill and knowledge. Specifically, my interview and focus group informants recalled Andrews's well-documented promotion to Fox Sports' top National Football League sideline reporter role, at the expense of Pam Oliver, one of the very few NFL sideline reporters of color, who was reassigned to Fox's B crew (Deitsch, 2014). For her part, Andrews does not normally wear revealing clothing on the air. In fact, because most of her appearances occur during football season – which takes place during the fall and winter – she is often wearing a coat.

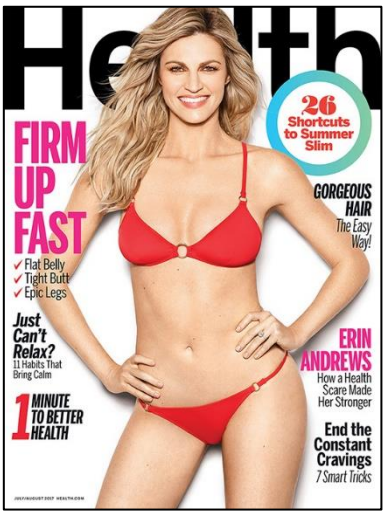

Figure 5 - Erin Andrews Red Bikini © Health

Andrews's status as a sex symbol who is not averse to wearing revealing clothing perhaps comes from her work away from the football field, however. She has posed numerous times for magazines. This includes such images as her photo on the cover of a 2017 issue of *Health,* in which she is wearing a red bikini (fig. 5); another photo in the same issue of *Health,* in which she is

wearing a highly-stylized, white one-piece bathing suit (fig. 6); and a photo in a 2014 issue of *Men's Health*, in which she is wearing short denim shorts and a button-down shirt while lying on her side, hair down, painting one of the yard numbers on a football field (fig. 7).

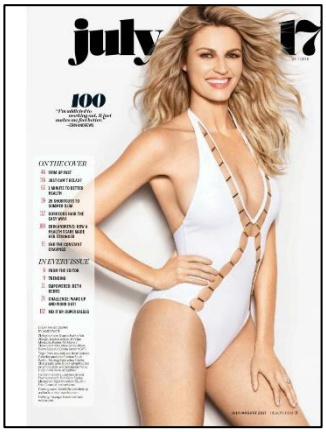

Figure 7 - Andrews White Bikini
© Health

Additionally, Andrews has been a co-host on *Dancing with the Stars* since the show's 18th season in 2014. Throughout her tenure on the show, Andrews has worn many stylish yet revealing dresses, aside from the one that drew Elisabeth Hasselbeck's scrutiny in 2010. For Season 22's finale in 2016, Andrews wore one dress that was so skimpy (fig. 8) that her stylist, Alyssa Greene, said Andrews needed approval (presumably from the show's producers) before it could be worn on air (Alindogan, 2016, para. 3). "In the end we had to cover up a little more than we would have liked but we still totally went for the sheer sexy look," Greene said (para. 3). These examples are out of the context of Andrews's primary job as a sideline reporter, and, in the case of the *Health* photos, are meant to promote confidence in one's body after news of Andrews's cervical cancer diagnosis. Nevertheless, these examples are still available as mass mediated texts and can be viewed as being related to her role as a woman sportscaster insofar as her job as a reporter is what made her worthy of such publicity in the first place.

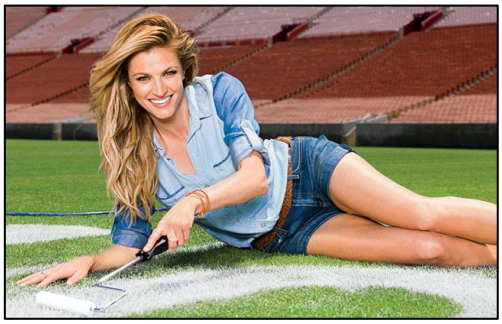

Figure 6 - Andrews Football Field
© Men's Health

Men in the industry perform the same general function as women, to deliver sports information and commentary. However, as is the case in other industries, it is women sportscasters who seemingly need to show their bodies to make a name for themselves. As Sarah Spain stated above, men "are allowed to just report." Nevertheless, it appears no woman sportscaster has used her appearance to make a greater name for herself than Erin Andrews. Given her longstanding willingness to show her body – and the plentiful opportunities afforded to her to do so – it becomes easy to see how her attractiveness is perceived as having been prioritized over her and others' perceived abilities. "I think that Erin got that role [on Fox's top NFL broadcast crew] because she's younger and she's prettier," Lizzy said. "And not to say Erin isn't good at her job – I think she is. But I think she was given that role despite the fact that she wasn't better than who she replaced." Ken, another undergraduate focus group informant had this to say about the Andrews/Oliver situation: "With Erin Andrews, she's more of the eye candy, where she – if you sat in a room with her and Pam Oliver, I think Pam Oliver would know a lot more about football than [Andrews] would know. But it's – they want the prettier girl."

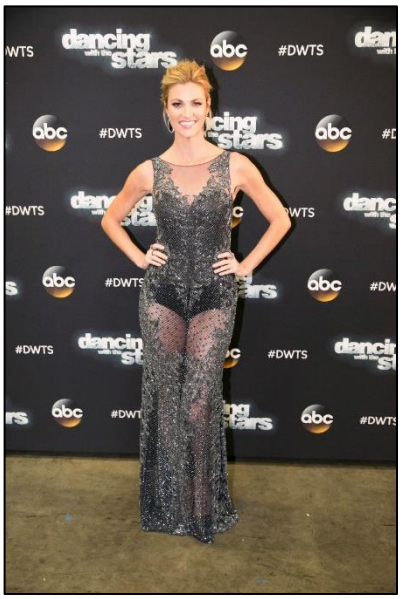

Figure 8 - Andrews Dress
© ABC

Left unsaid is the extent to which race and age might play a role in Andrews's and Oliver's perceived attractiveness – and ability, for that matter. Could it be that Andrews was considered by other women sportscasters and media consumers to be prettier than Oliver because Andrews is white and younger? Conversely, could it be that Oliver is

deemed to be more knowledgeable about football because she is older and because Andrews has blond hair? As the speculative comments above demonstrate, the upshot of the prioritization of appearance for women sportscasters is the assumption among sports media consumers *and* some women sportscasters that some of the industry's women primarily gain entry or upward mobility in the field because of their appearance. Although attractiveness and journalistic ability are both socially constructed, the view that a highly attractive sportscaster might have been promoted because of her appearance loosely resembles the findings of the Davis and Krawczyk study cited above, which suggests that a woman sportscaster's perceived credibility decreases if she is perceived to be more attractive than her peers.

While it is clear that a double standard of appearance exists, what is not as clear is *why* it exists. Conventional thinking suggests the expectations of appearance placed on women sportscasters – informed by socially-embedded expectations of women's appearance – serves the sexual tastes of what is assumed to be a mostly-heterosexual male sports media consumer base. This comment from David Portnoy, the president of sports blog *Barstool Sports*, which he made during a since-deleted podcast that was transcribed by *USA Today* (Kerr-Dineen, 2017), exemplified this line of thinking: "No person watching [ESPN's College] GameDay wants to see a picture of [Sam Ponder] and her ugly kid.…We want to see [Ponder] sex it up and be slutty" (para. 7). Eddie, the nontraditional-aged undergraduate, offered another similar take on this conventional line of thought during one of my focus groups:

> As I said, I mean, look at sports. I'm going to throw out a figure. Probably about 80 percent of [sports media consumers] are men. Supply and demand. What does your audience want to see? … I mean, look at the PGA Tour, professional golf. Men are not allowed to wear shorts because,

> let's face it, guys who are watching it don't want to see men's legs. The LPGA, everyone's wearing skirts. Why? Because the guys want to see the women in skirts.

As I explore in Chapter V, the necessity of a prioritization of appearance for women sportscasters ignores the possibility that many sports media consumers, heterosexual men or otherwise, consume sports media regardless of who is on screen and what they look like. In that same vein, as reported by *The Boston Globe,* Andrea Kremer, a longtime sports television reporter, suggested that the *give men what they want* argument is a dubious one. In her view, the justification for the appearance double standard might be a cover for heterosexual male managers who want to fulfill their own fantasies. "Until we have women in the position to hire," she told the *Globe*, "you will get men who want to hire women they couldn't get dates with in high school" (Teitell, 2017, para. 26). Given the mounting sexual misconduct allegations within the entertainment (Harvey Weinstein), news (Matt Lauer), sports media (Gregg Zaun), and political industries (Al Franken), Kremer's theory is seemingly valid. Following Eddie's and Kremer's logic, the simplest explanation for the double standard of appearance, then, is that it serves to titillate male sports media consumers and managers.

Discursively, however, the double standard of appearance is more complex than that. Based on what we know about the Foucauldian concept of power, its fluidity and that it is not exercised monolithically, the appearance double standard is better understood as a practice that both informs, and is informed by, what we "know" about the female sportscaster. The experiences and observations shared by my informants, as well as other statements made in mediated texts indicate that men, women, media consumers

and media managers understand women sportscasters to be hired more for their looks than for their knowledge and skills.

As a result of this discursive and material prioritization of appearance, many women in the sportscasting industry feel as though they must wear less conservative clothing, even if they are not asked to do so by their superiors, in many cases. Women who participate in *nightclubification* risk diminishing their perceived credibility, much in the same way Erin Andrews's qualifications have been called into question. This process, in which women sportscasters lose perceived credibility as the result of an emphasis on appearance, illustrates Foucauldian power and its lack of a "possessor." To the best of my knowledge, men have not held meetings in which they elected to force/seduce women in the sports media industry into wearing revealing clothing specifically for the purpose of weakening their credibility. And yet, although no such meeting has taken place, based on the data I have collected and analyzed, it appears women sportscasters have to work harder to prove that they are qualified. Because the gendered double standard of appearance has diminished women sportscasters' standing, it seems women in the industry must also endure a double standard of credibility.

Double Standard of Credibility

Although it helps both men and women sportscasters to be perceived as credible, based on the data I have collected and analyzed, the standard of credibility – or the extent to which a person is perceived to be a trustworthy source of sports knowledge – appears to be inconsistently applied to men and women in the industry. This inconsistency is true inasmuch as it seems a man sportscaster's qualifications are taken for granted by members of the sports media, media consumers, athletes, and coaches more often than a

woman sportscaster's. The foregoing manifestations of the credibility double standard do not necessarily inform each other. However, they do demonstrate, to some extent, how the double standard of appearance affects the female sportscaster's perceived credibility.

The Promiscuous Female Sportscaster

There were various manifestations of the credibility double standard in the data I collected, including the presumption that some women who are in (or are ascending in) the industry have performed sexual favors for their male superiors in exchange for preferential treatment. Lizzy has heard her colleagues suggest she slept with managers as well as athletes to gain favor. In a profile of multiple women sportscasters published in *The Hollywood Reporter* (2013), Rachel Nichols, host of ESPN's *The Jump,* provides support of Lizzy's experience, stating that the assumption of *quid pro quo* is sometimes even the result of a woman in sports media doing her job well. "And when a female sports journalist gets a great story," Nichols says, "you can almost set your watch by how quickly whispers start that she must have slept with the player to get it" (para. 1). Similarly, in an article published by *The Seattle Times,* Sarah Spain stated that, within her first two weeks in a new position at a startup sports website, "a longtime beat reporter told a team public relations representative [that Spain] must be sleeping with a player because she was getting better stories than other reporters" (Kaminski, 2014, para. 3). Lizzy believes male sportscasters are not accused of sleeping with their managers because their managers are typically men. She also had this to say about the assumption that she got her job by sleeping with male athletes: "Can you imagine a man being told

that? He gets to cover the WNBA and, 'Oh, it's because he's sleeping with the women.' … That doesn't happen. That's a completely ridiculous double standard."

Lizzy's comments point to sports and sportscasting's heterosexism. The underlying assumptions at play within her experience and observation – aside from the perception that she is not qualified for her job – are that a male sportscaster would not sleep with another man to gain favor and that men in the industry do not need to perform sexual favors with women because, in general, women are not in a position to ask for them. As was the case with the appearance double standard, in all likelihood, there was no committee of men in the industry that ceremonially selected the assumption that successful (and, especially, youthful and attractive) women in the industry have slept their way into their roles as the subordinating discourse of choice. Instead, this assumption is, in large part, the consequence of the appearance double standard and situates the "promiscuous female sportscaster" narrative firmly within a sophisticated discursive formation.

Gendered Skepticism

Another manifestation of the credibility double standard is the skepticism women sportscasters receive from media consumers regarding their credentials and sports knowledge, often in the form of sports knowledge quizzes. Jane reported attending events in which she would be quizzed on her sports knowledge by random attendees while nearby male colleagues would not face similar scrutiny. "And I was, like, 'You know, you don't have to be a walking trivia person to be a strong sports reporter,'" she said. "'And the person standing right next to me does the exact same thing. You didn't ask him who won some championship in a year before he was born.'" Stephanie, the baseball

podcaster, said that, to test her knowledge, men often ask her if she understands baseball's incredibly complex infield fly rule. The rule is designed to prevent a defensive team from using deception to record two or three outs in one play by intentionally dropping a popup on the infield and throwing out – or "forcing" out – the baserunners at their next base(s). "Like, really? Really? That's the test? Why? Why the infield fly rule? If I had a dollar for every time I've been asked if I know the infield fly rule, I could pay off the umpire to stop enforcing the infield fly rule."

Similarly, Patricia has often received emails from her viewers attempting to stump her and question her editorial choices while Paula stated that a woman sportscaster spends her first year on the job just proving her credibility. Women sportscasters especially spend much time proving themselves if they are covering a sport like football, which does not have a major female professional equivalent, aside from the relatively obscure Legends Football League, formerly known as the Lingerie Football League. "You look at me as a woman and say, 'Well … she's a woman. What the hell does she know?' You're already judged – that's already the first impression that they get. So, you have to prove yourself."

This gendered skepticism does not just come from media consumers. Sometimes it comes into play when women sportscasters cover a press conference or access a locker room. According to both Patricia and Marie, security guards often question their ability to access those spaces, despite the fact they wear press credentials around their necks and carry around video equipment. Patricia said, "We have big cameras and tripods, but [security and team personnel] feel the need to stop us and ask us, 'Do you guys know where you're going? Are you supposed to be here? Do you know what you're doing?'

Yeah, we just carry around these cameras for fun." During the 2015 National Football League season, an usher denied two women print journalists entry into the Jacksonville Jaguars' locker room at Lucas Oil Stadium in Indianapolis ("Female Sports Writers Denied," 2015). Graham Watson, one of the two reporters, tweeted about the incident and said, perhaps ironically, that the usher "apparently [was] not aware that women cover sports" (Watson, 2015a) before adding, "I have covered male sporting events all over the world and it took coming to Indianapolis to face my first gender discrimination" (Watson, 2015b). Coincidentally, Graham and her colleague were attending the game as part of the Associated Press Sports Editors' diversity weekend ("Female Sports Writers Denied, 2015, para. 3).

In addition, male athletes and coaches sometimes openly express their doubts about women in sports media and the knowledge they possess. Carolina Panthers quarterback Cam Newton laughed when Jordan Rodrigue, a print journalist with the *Charlotte Observer*, asked him about the receiving routes one of his teammates had been running in recent games. Newton chuckled and said, "It's funny to hear a female talk about routes," (Fowler, 2017, para. 3). In the aforementioned profile written by *The Hollywood Reporter* (2013), *NBC Sunday Night Football* sideline reporter Michele Tafoya told the story of a time, early in her career, when she met Bobby Knight, one of the all-time winningest (and surliest) coaches in college basketball, for an interview. Just prior to the interview, Knight asked Tafoya if she was "any good at this" (p. 9). When Tafoya told him that she *was* good and that she felt she had been assigned to interview him for a reason, Knight replied, "Because you know there are a lot of women who do this who stink at it" (p. 9). Knight dropped his skepticism after they both agreed that there

are also a lot of men who "do this" and are not very good at it (p. 9). Tafoya evidently had proved her mettle to a man who literally questioned her qualifications, and perhaps expected her to make mistakes, simply because she was a woman. Knight has never been known to be friendly, thus he could have just as easily expressed skepticism toward a neophyte man sportscaster. Nevertheless, given his comments, Knight seemed to use Tafoya's gender to justify his query about her credentials.

Gendered skepticism is not just carried by men. In one of my focus groups, two women, both undergraduates, stated that they preferred listening to male sportscasters because, in general, they believed men to be more well-informed. One of those two women, Cindy, even said that she would be initially skeptical of a woman sportscaster talking about a men's sport like American football. These comments appear to be based on a presumption of male sportscaster superior knowledge, which is deeply-rooted in the discursive formation that governs gender in sportscasting, informing who she "knows" to be chiefly responsible for possessing, producing, and disseminating sports knowledge.

Ability to Give Opinions

The determination of who possesses the authority to give their opinions in sports debates is related to the gendered skepticism that greatly informs the double standard of credibility. Judging by the interview and focus group data I collected, women are more likely to be belittled or dehumanized for offering their sports opinions than their male peers. Many of the women sportscasters I spoke with, as well as my focus group informants, have either experienced or observed this manifestation of the credibility double standard.

Marie told me she receives many more emails than her male boss (who also appears on air) when she and her boss share their opinions on the air. “I just think a lot of times people are … very harsh, very, very harsh in terms of a sports opinion,” she said. “[My opinion] can be different than my boss’s, which is fine in sports, but he won’t get an email. I will.” Patricia, who also co-hosts a podcast with a male colleague, stated that while she does receive negative feedback online for her opinions on the podcast – along the lines of “that girl’s an idiot” – her colleague has never received negative feedback. “And,” Patricia said, “we’ve actually experimented where we’ve tried to – he will purposely say the same thing that I say. Either just word it a little bit differently, or after a few minutes expire, he will say almost word for word what I say. And, always, if there’s any [negative] comments, it’s directed towards me – not towards [him].”

As I referenced in Chapter III, the past decade and a half has seen an increase in the number of (mostly male) sports television talk show hosts who tend to speak loudly and bloviate. Present-day sports media personalities such as Stephen A. Smith, Skip Bayless, Jim Rome, Tony Kornheiser, Michael Wilbon, and Colin Cowherd come to mind. These hosts, and the manner in which they speak – loudly and often over their co-hosts – exemplify the impunity with which men are permitted to give their sports opinions. This is true insofar as women, with few exceptions and as explained in Chapter V, are not given the opportunity to share their opinions. As stated above and as argued by some of my focus group informants, those who do have the latitude to give their opinions face harsher criticism than their male counterparts. The strident and gendered criticism women sportscasters often face can disincentivize women from sharing their opinions, which can result in the perceptions that women do not have opinions or are ill-informed.

My focus group informants cited the men mentioned above, as well as Philadelphia sports media personality/antagonist Howard Eskin, as examples of men who freely state their often-abrasive opinions. Marcus said this about the aforementioned men:

> "[A guy like that is] just a loudmouth who doesn't really say a lot of stuff. Right? Doesn't know what they're talking about. They are an opinion piece, really, to kind of stir the pot, if you will. I don't think – I think people are more accepting of a guy doing that than they are of a girl doing that."

When I asked members of another focus group if they could envision a woman as an opinionated sports media antagonist, one informant shook her head and said that such a woman would be called "a bitch, with a capital 'B.'" Lisa, another informant in the same focus group believed that such a woman sportscaster might be permitted on the air but would quickly be taken off the air, stating: "I don't know how long she would be allowed to remain, on the air … if she were to be that confrontational. I think it's more acceptable in a man, even if it causes scandal. But, I feel like in a woman, they would milk it for whatever attention it might bring, but then, she'd be gone." Another informant from that focus group, Lenny, offered Nanci Donnellan – known in the 1990s as The Fabulous Sports Babe – as a woman who enjoyed a relatively short career providing inflammatory sports opinions. Donnellan hosted a syndicated sports talk radio show for ESPN Radio that was also simulcast on ESPN2. "She had that kind of approach that you're talking about – real aggressive, real 'in your face.' And, she was real big for…a while, but that disappeared fast." Indeed, *The Fabulous Sports Babe* lasted only three years on the ESPN family of networks.

In instances in which women sportscasters *are* given fair latitude by their employers to share their opinions, sometimes the backlash from sports media consumers

still serves to silence the sportscaster. Julie DiCaro (2015), a sports talk radio personality in Chicago, wrote about this in response to the backlash she received for sharing her opinions in the wake of rape allegations made against Chicago Blackhawk player Patrick Kane. DiCaro, herself a victim of rape, received rape and death threats on Twitter as a result of her opinions on the Kane case. To her, online interactions such as these make it clear that "you may not share your sports opinion while, at the same time, being a woman" (para. 2). These online interactions became the basis of the *#MoreThanMean* public service announcement, which demonstrated that sports media consumer backlash against female sportscaster opinions is especially strong on social media.

Conclusion

It has been well-known that, not unlike women in other industries, women sportscasters must endure gendered double standards of appearance and credibility. As I have attempted to demonstrate throughout this chapter, however, these double standards are constructed by (and contribute to) discourse that is a key component of a postfeminist, neoliberal female sportscaster subjectivity.

In my analysis of qualitative data and mediated texts, it seems that the double standard of appearance provides a firm basis for the double standard of credibility (as well as the other phenomena I explore in Chapters V-VII in this dissertation). Viewed through a Foucauldian lens, the appearance double standard serves to diminish the perceived credibility of women sportscasters. This relationship between the appearance and credibility double standards appears to be true to the extent that no individual or group of people, generally speaking, are actively working to diminish the overall

credibility of women in sportscasting. Instead, this diminishment is the result of a sophisticated and paradoxical discursive formation.

The inequitable standards of expected and acceptable clothing for women are apparent within this contradictory formation. Just as extant scholarship suggests women sportscasters can look "too sexy" to be credible, it appears women sportscasters can also *dress* too sexy to be credible (or to even be seen on television), even though the clothing that is deemed too sexy for some is becoming increasingly expected in the broadcast television sports and news industries. This paradox forces women sportscasters to make dilemmatic choices – in this case, they can either dress "too sexy" or risk not advancing in a career they have spent time and money training for. The illusion of choice, coupled with the paradoxical clothing paradigm that women sportscasters must navigate resonates with postfeminist media culture, insofar as discourses of agency and an "entanglement" or contradiction of feminist and anti-feminist discourses are at the heart of that culture.

Discourses of agency and empowerment are disingenuous and problematic within the context of sportscasting; they almost always call on women to self-regulate their bodies and appearance (Gill and Scharff, 2011). That is, if women sportscasters were truly empowered to dress or look how they wanted, they could do so without being told they looked too sexy or not sexy enough. The entanglement of feminist and anti-feminist discourses is also problematic because either can be co-opted to advance an idea or structure of domination. In the case of women sportscasters, accusations that some wear clothing that is unnecessarily revealing (a feminist discourse) can be co-opted as evidence that most women in the industry are hired to be "eye candy" (an anti-feminist discourse).

The entanglement of such discourses has therefore served to diminish women sportscaster credibility, leading to assumptions that some seemingly "successful" women sportscasters, in the absence of journalistic skills, have performed sexual favors on their way toward achieving upward mobility. As I argue in the next chapter, the assumptions associated with the gendered credibility double standard (which also includes *a priori* skepticism of skills and knowledge) have made it challenging for women to obtain certain roles (such as play-by-play announcing) in the sportscasting industry. Through a Foucauldian lens, the credibility double standard as well as the continued absence of women in these roles makes it more difficult for sports media consumers to see anyone but men in those roles. Additionally, the onus for making women more visible in those roles is discursively placed on women who aspire to them. As I intend to show in Chapter V, this practice of making women primarily responsible for their own success is emblematic of a connection between the sexist bias that exists in the hiring and development of women sportscasters for certain positions and postfeminist media culture, due to the latter's mutually informing relationship with neoliberalism.

Chapter V – "Cheerleaders with Microphones": Deconstructing Sportscasting's Glass Booth

On August 24, 2015, former U.S. Olympic softball player Jessica Mendoza made her debut in the sportscasting booth as an analyst for ESPN's coverage of Major League Baseball. She became the first woman in the network's history to provide baseball commentary from inside the broadcast booth. Six days later, Mendoza, who had previously been assigned to ESPN's *Baseball Tonight* studio show as well as the network's coverage of the Women's and Men's College World Series, was introduced to a larger audience when she filled in for the suspended Curt Schilling as an analyst on ESPN's *Sunday Night Baseball*. Later that same year, Mendoza would stand alongside play-by-play commentator Dan Shulman and fellow analyst John Kruk when she became the first female commentator ever assigned to a televised Major League Baseball postseason game. After that game, Mendoza's presence in the booth garnered a highly-publicized wave of criticism, led by Atlanta-area sports talk radio host Mike Bell[10] who tweeted, "yes tell us [sic] Tits McGhee when you're up there hitting the softball [do] you see many 95 mile an hour [fastballs]?" (Hill, 2015).

After the 2015 MLB postseason, Mendoza permanently replaced Schilling on the *Sunday Night Baseball* announcing team. Kruk was replaced by Aaron Boone who, two years later, became manager of the New York Yankees. Shulman would also leave the announcing crew after the 2017 season to spend more time with his family. Having outlasted all three of her fellow *Sunday Night Baseball* broadcasters as of early 2018,

[10] Bell, who was never a professional athlete, was suspended for three days for his comments regarding Mendoza.

Mendoza found herself in a position rarely achieved by women in sportscasting, especially those assigned to cover a men's sport: ESPN sought to build a team of announcers and commentators around her.

Mendoza is neither the first nor the latest woman to step into the booth and provide commentary for a men's sport. In 1987, Gayle Sierens became the first woman to serve as play-by-play announcer for a televised National Football League game and in 2001 Lesley Visser was the first woman to serve as a color commentator for an NFL game (Business Wire, 2001). Beth Mowins was the first woman to serve as play-by-play announcer for a *nationally-televised* NFL game in 2017 (DiCaro, 2017) and, in the same year, Doris Burke, Kara Lawson, and Sarah Kustok were all given full-time NBA game analyst roles by various organizations (Spanberg, 2018).

Although there have been women who have blazed trails into the booth both before and after Jessica Mendoza, I began this chapter with her story because her introduction to ESPN's baseball audience – and the response it garnered – brought sportscasting's gendered hierarchy back into public discussion with a specific eye toward the roles to which men and women in the industry are typically assigned. As I explain in this chapter, using qualitative data and mediated texts, there are roles – such as anchor, host, and sideline/field reporter – to which women have been increasingly assigned with very little backlash. Based on the insights provided to me by my informants, I argue that these roles are readily available to women because those roles afford them the fewest opportunities to share their opinions and expertise or to use artful language and turns of phrase to provide a firsthand, live account of what is happening on the field, court, or rink.

The constructed deficiencies I describe are in relation to the play-by-play announcing and color commentary (or analyst) positions, sportscasting's most coveted and prestigious roles. For women sportscasters, these roles are also the most elusive in the industry, so much so that they appear to be contained within what I call a "glass booth." My usage of this phrase is derived from the "glass ceiling," a metaphorical barrier to upward mobility that makes it possible for women to see what it is like to reach "the top" of their respective industries yet makes actually reaching the top difficult to achieve. Likewise, through their work with sports media organizations, women sportscasters have as close a view of the work that takes place in the sportscasting booth as anyone, but few of the women who want to be play-by-play announcers and color analysts actually find themselves in those roles. Throughout this chapter, I explicate the various reasons these positions are usually given to men.

I frame my analysis in this chapter according to sports media's gendered hierarchy. As Pamela Creedon (1998) and others have written, the sports media industry is not unaffected by the marginalization of women's sports. According to Creedon, men's sports are hegemonically positioned as *the* destination for successful journalists and media personalities while women's sports are constructed as a space that ambitious journalists want to avoid. That is, as a result of its taken-for-granted prominence and priority within the sports media complex, aspiring sports journalist more often pursue careers covering men's sports. This distinction between men's and women's sports is important because, if men's and women's sports were given equal treatment (Musto, Cooky, and Messner, 2016) and equal time (Cooky, Messner, and Musto, 2014) by sports broadcast organizations, and were thus viewed equally by sports media personalities and

consumers, the approach I take in this chapter would be necessarily different. Instead, consider the career arcs of many of the women I mentioned above. Why was Jessica Mendoza, a former softball Olympian, not satisfied with analyzing Women's College World Series games? Before calling NFL games (and college football games before that), Beth Mowins handled play-by-play duties during ESPN's coverage of collegiate women's basketball, women's volleyball, and softball. That seems like plenty of work for a versatile sportscaster. Doris Burke and Kara Lawson both covered collegiate and professional women's basketball in various capacities. Why take their talents to the NBA?

As I cited in Chapter II, and as Lesley Visser stated, "Women who get into sports journalism don't want to cover women's sports. They want to cover sports that lead to success" (Cramer, 1994, p. 169). The implication is that men's sports are viewed – even among many women in sports media – as the pinnacle of sportscasting assignments, in large part because there is greater money and prestige to be earned by covering men's sports. As a result of the disparity in the quality and quantity of coverage between men's and women's sports, the former currently attracts larger audiences, and therefore larger ad revenues while, as noted in Chapter 1, women's sports are marginalized and "symbolically annihilated" (Tuchman, 1979). As a result, men's sports are taken for granted as superior and more prestigious than women's sports. Thus, this chapter is not a discussion of the paucity of women sportscasters in certain roles overall, given the accepted prevalence of women in women's sports coverage. Instead, this chapter discusses the (in)visibility of women sportscasters in certain roles in coverage of men's sports.

I begin my analysis of sportscasting's glass booth by discussing and analyzing the discourse that constructs the sportscasting role for which women are often perceived by some members of the media and media consumers as being ideally suited, the sideline/field reporter position. Although women are equally visible in the sports anchor chair, especially at the national level, I devote particular attention to the sideline/field reporter role as, in analyzing the interview, focus group, and textual data I collected, it appears to be the position within sportscasting that is the most gendered and the most disputed with regard to its utility. From its origins, the position has always meant to serve as a moderator of sorts for a non-serious, irrelevant sideshow to the actual sporting event. This purpose, in addition to the prioritization of appearance that has coincided with the proliferation of women hired in that role over the past four and a half decades, has contributed to the construction of women sideline reporters as, according to one informant, "cheerleaders with microphones." Next, I examine the roles contained within sportscasting's glass booth, play-by-play announcer and color commentator. Using the interview and focus group data I have collected and analyzed, I explain why those roles are considered to be the most prestigious in sportscasting and discuss the various arguments – made by my informants as well as those found within mass mediated texts – for why so few women are assigned to these positions.

Like many of the other phenomena analyzed throughout the remainder of this dissertation, sportscasting's glass booth has a mutually informing relationship with the industry's double standards of appearance and credibility. Because of the prioritization of appearance for women, they are not viewed as credible or knowledgeable sources of sports information capable of articulating what is happening on the field, the court, or the

rink for sports media consumers. This is the micro-argument I make in this chapter; as I demonstrate, the reasons for a lack of female play-by-play announcers and analysts are numerous and complex. Thus, women sportscasters have rarely broken the glass barrier built around the sportscasting booth.

As it pertains to the macro-argument I make in this dissertation – the existence of a postfeminist neoliberal female sportscaster subjectivity – based on interview and focus group data, it appears the onus for breaking into the glass booth is placed squarely on women sportscasters who aspire to those roles. That is, according to some of my informants, women have to be enterprising and aggressive in their pursuit of play-by-play and analyst positions. This line of thinking resonates with postfeminism and relies on neoliberal logic insofar as such logic calls on groups of marginalized people (in this case, women in sportscasting) to be steadfast in the face of any inequitable treatment or oppression. In Chapter IV, I analyze the argument often used by the industry's decision-makers that the prioritization of female sportscaster appearance is what a predominantly-male audience supposedly wants. Similar arguments have been used by those in the industry to explain the paucity of women play-by-play announcers and color commentators (i.e., sports media consumers prefer listening to men). Nevertheless, as was the case with the appearance and credibility double standards, in this chapter I argue that the extent to which the "glass booth" is (un)breakable is in the hands of sportscasting's mostly male decision-makers. The neoliberal discourse described above – and cited in this chapter – absolves the industry of any responsibility it might have for the construction and maintenance of the glass booth.

The Discursive Construction of the Female Sideline Reporter

In spite of sportscasting's glass booth, there exists a role within the industry to which women are assigned with relatively little resistance from decision makers and sports media consumers. In the entire gendered hierarchy of the sportscasting industry, no on-air position is perceived as ideally suited for women as much as the sideline reporter role. In a video interview for *The Hollywood Reporter* (2015), ESPN's Michelle Beadle said, "We're not just sideline reporters anymore," implying sideline reporting was theretofore the only role for women in the industry. Although there have been prominent male sideline reporters like Craig Sager, Chris Myers, and Evan Washburn in recent years – and in spite of the fact that women *are* assigned to other sportscasting roles – when my focus group informants discussed women sportscasters, they almost always referred to sideline or field reporters such as Erin Andrews, Doris Burke, or Pam Oliver.

Further, as I have discovered through speaking with my own women sports media students, others almost always assume they want to be sideline reporters when they express an interest in going into sportscasting. This assumption is often correct, possibly due to the narrow representations of women in sportscasting. It may be easiest for women to imagine themselves in the roles in which they are most represented in the media. In the case of sportscasting, women are most often represented as sideline reporters. Often, though, this assumption that aspiring women sportscasters want to be sideline reporters is incorrect; I have spoken with women who want to be play-by-play announcers, analysts, and hosts. Yet, when viewed through a lens of power/knowledge, the "easy" assumption exists because, in live sporting event coverage (as opposed to studio coverage), women

are usually only seen or heard from the sidelines. This narrow representation of women in the industry is therefore materially and discursively significant.

The sideline reporter subject is also problematic due to its own constructed subjectivity. According to one of my focus group informants, Lenny, women sideline reporters are analogous to "cheerleaders with microphones." Implicit and explicit references to cheerleaders can be traced throughout my interview, focus group, and textual data. The comparison to cheerleaders, and the stereotypes associated with them, would suggest that the female sideline reporter is typically a young and attractive yet passive observer who serves to provide emotional support for athletes. They are not asked to comprehend or explain the intricacies of what is happening on the field or court. As I intend to show, the constructed image of women sideline reporters as cheerleaders therefore renders "cheerleaders with microphones" as a discursive formation that informs the female sportscaster subjectivity. This informing relationship is especially true when one considers the assumption that early-career and aspiring women sportscasters want to be sideline reporters.

Perhaps not coincidentally, the utility of the sideline reporter role has long been in dispute by members of sports media and media consumers, given the relatively small amount of airtime sideline reporters receive and the content they provide when they are on air. During the average football game, for example, a sideline reporter gives a brief report just before kickoff and just after halftime. When time permits, the reporter also interviews the player(s) of the game after the contest. If there are no significant injuries during the game, these may be the only times the reporter is seen and heard. Compared to the play-by-play announcer and analyst who are permitted to speak freely throughout the

contest – and are the ones usually heard during the event's most important moments – the sideline reporter is given very little opportunity to affect the telecast of a game. The incidental nature of the sideline reporter positions is partly why the utility of the role is in dispute and why even the women sportscasters I interviewed have such varied opinions of the position.

Not only do some of the sportscasters I interviewed struggle to see the utility in the sideline reporter role, many disavow any aspirations of being assigned to the sidelines. Consider these comments from Marie, the mid-20s reporter/anchor from a local television news station in a mid-sized market in the Eastern U.S.:

> I fucking hate [the sideline reporter role]. I have blonde hair and I am tall. I don't look anything like Erin Andrews other than the fact that we have blonde hair, we're both tall, and we both have faces. People immediately assume "oh, are you a sideline reporter?" "You must do sideline." "You should apply for a sideline job." I don't want to do it. Personally, I think it's not really essential to a broadcast. I'm glad they have it, but I cannot – I will never be just a sideline reporter because I just don't think that – for me, I want more responsibility other than saying, "This person just left the game. I talked to the trainer. It's an ankle issue. Back to you." No, that's just not me.

As noted, most aspiring women sportscasters I have spoken to encounter a recurring assumption that they are aspiring sideline reporters; Marie's experience reflects this observation. Moreover, it seems that Marie has a disdain for the role because she is immediately thought of by others as a sideline reporter simply because of a superficial resemblance to Erin Andrews, who, possibly aside from Doris Burke, may be the most recognizable woman in sportscasting. Not only does Marie believe the position to be non-essential to a sports broadcast, but she believes the role does not give the person holding it much responsibility.

Lizzy, the late-20s fantasy sports radio talk show host from a large Western market, had earned a sideline reporter assignment at one point in her career. She supported Marie's assertions, stating that, although she "respected" the position, she thought its utility could be improved if sideline reporters had more opportunities to inject their own insights into the telecast. She explained: "They aren't really allowed to give their opinion or really weigh in on the conversation at all. It's kind of just little moments and brief things. And that kind of limits the role to such a – well, really, not that valuable." Lizzy's "respect" for the position echoed Marie's statement that she was "glad" the sideline reporter position exists. I read their quasi-reverence for the role as a sort of compulsory gratitude since the position has long stood as the only role through which women could have a presence in telecasts of primetime men's sporting events. Marie and Lizzy seem to respect the women who have held and currently hold the sideline reporter role but believe the position to possess potential that remains untapped.

Nancy, the mid-60s, semi-retired national reporter and host who was also one of the first women assigned to the sideline reporter position, is also ambivalent about the role. While she admitted having "mixed feelings" about the role, she adamantly requested that I not downplay its significance because "there are only three people in a broadcast, right?" a reference to the play-by-play announcer, color commentator, and sideline reporter positions. However, she also said that she has challenged aspiring women sportscasters to dream beyond the sideline reporter role:

> I know how hard sideline [reporting] is, but play-by-play is really hard. I don't want them to be afraid of it.…I feel a little like I've done my job [paving the way for more women to enter the industry]. I've opened up all these things so that the next [generation can] take over the play-by-play.

Patricia, the mid-20s sports reporter/anchor from a local, mid-sized market television station in the Eastern U.S. had also worked as a sideline reporter at one point in her career. She, too, expressed ambivalence regarding the position. For her, the position was "a lot of fun;" she felt the reporter adds value to a sports telecast because she (or he) can offer information and insights that cannot be gleaned by the announcers working in the broadcast booth above the field or by a television station reporter 20 minutes after the conclusion of the game in the locker room. "[The reporter] is adding value to the broadcast whether you're just taking it for granted or not," she said. Conversely, Patricia also felt that the utility of the position may be in dispute because it is primarily staffed by women. "I think that oftentimes, because it's become a woman's role, people just feel as though it's a throwaway role," she said, before explaining that many sports media consumers often assume sideline reporters are being fed information by another member of the telecast crew and not finding their own information. "It kind of sucks, honestly, because [they're] doing a great job."

The interview and focus group data I collected show that the assumption that sideline reporters are being fed their insights, or that those insights add very little to a broadcast, might also be informed at least in part by the double standard of appearance – and, by extension, the double standard of credibility – examined in the previous chapter. The constructed notion of female sideline reporters as "cheerleaders with microphones" therefore also becomes visible when one considers the relationship between these taken-for-granted assumptions and the gendered double standard of appearance. When talking about the roles women are permitted to perform in sportscasting, Stephanie, the baseball podcaster in her late 20s said, "We're allowed to be the sideline reporter who's cute and

makes sort of stupid observations about things." It is one thing to be known for providing inconsequential information, it is yet another thing to be known for that as well as being attractive. Just as perceived woman sportscaster credibility is diminished by the prioritization of appearance, so is her perceived ability to be an autonomous journalist capable of finding and reporting relevant information she herself gathered.

Lenny's "cheerleaders with microphones" analogy during his focus group discussion was precipitated by a similar appraisal of women sideline reporters. These comments, made by a middle-aged woman named Teresa, emphasize the "emotional support" a cheerleader-like figure might provide:

> And, I think, too, that somehow, either perceived, or for real, the [male sportscasters] seem to do the more serious stuff. For example, [for my favorite baseball team], you would hear [the male commentators] break down a pitching sequence but you would hear [the female sideline reporter ask], "How did it feel to hit that homerun?" And, the women – whether it's intended or not – they cover more the emotional, human side. The men cover a little more of the intellectual, really hardcore sports side.

The constructed image of the sideline reporter as an emotionally supportive cheerleader with a microphone exemplifies the impact of Foucauldian power and knowledge, constructed through verbal and written texts, images, and, in this case, practices. It seems that, because appearance often takes precedence over ability in the hiring of women sportscasters, and because of the information the sideline reporter gathers, women in the industry (especially sideline reporters) are often viewed as serving as "eye candy" and emotional support.

This construction of a cheerleader with a microphone is not newly-formed. This idea has been constructed over time, with its origins dating back to the 1970s. The

sideline reporter role was originally conceived as a non-serious foil to the buttoned-up business that took place between the commentators in the broadcast booth; the first person assigned to that role was a man, Jim Lampley, now a veteran sportscaster who primarily covers the Olympics and boxing. In an article written by Tommy Crags (2009) for *Deadspin*, Lampley acknowledged that he was hired by ABC Sports in 1974 as a recent college graduate after what he describes as a months-long, "gimmicky" search for a new, young reporter who could serve as part of the network's college football commentary team and "represent the face and voice of the American college student" (para. 2). Lampley admitted the content he delivered in the 1970s was not overly relevant to the games being played on the football field. "I never thought for a second that what we did was vital," Lampley said. "What had been envisioned was that, several times during the telecast, they'd throw to the sideline, where a college-aged reporter would do something, within 24 seconds, on Herbie the mascot buffalo or the cheerleader who won homecoming queen or whatever" (para. 14). When Lampley asked to be moved from the sideline reporter role for, as he said, the sake of his "dignity," he was replaced by Anne Simon, who Lampley described as a "beautiful young woman" (para. 16).

Lampley's analysis of the sideline reporter position after Simon succeeded him is relevant and important. Not only did he recognize the fact that the vast majority of sideline reporters are women who are "bright, eager to become *legitimate* sports reporters" (para. 16, emphasis mine), he also posited that women are placed in what he called "an awkward position," due to the relatively lighthearted approach the position has always called for (para. 16). In Lampley's view, when female sideline reporters give information that is not particularly relevant, it is easy for sports media consumers to

conclude that the reporter was hired to serve as eye candy, especially since he believed producers were strategically hiring attractive women so as to draw larger heterosexual male audiences. Lampley believes this strategy to be dubious, stating:

> Obviously, they think [female sideline reporter appearance] filters into the mix that prompts more people to stay and watch a telecast. I just doubt that's the case. If my goal today was to look at a beautiful woman, I don't have to turn on the Notre Dame-USC telecast. I've got 147 channels to choose from…(para. 16).

Lampley's observations suggest the purposeful prioritization of appearance for women sportscasters perpetuates the perception among sports media consumers that female sideline reporters are hired for their looks. This conclusion is a byproduct of both the double standard of appearance and the initial conceptualization (and continued utilization) of the sideline reporter role.

The "cheerleaders with microphones" analogy has also been constructed in a similar fashion. The same *Deadspin* article profiling Lampley also described one-time ABC Sports *Monday Night Football* sideline reporter Lisa Guerrero – a former actress with limited journalism experience at the time of her hiring – as "a natural step in the evolution of a position that was defiantly stupid from its very conception.…More than anyone…Guerrero was exactly what the job had called for, from the first: a smiling, pleasantly daft cheerleader" (para. 12).

For their part, my focus group informants also exhibited an ambivalent attitude toward the sideline reporter role. One informant, Phil, said that the halftime and postgame interviews sideline reporters conduct "helps you feel engaged," while another, Cole stated, "I'd say if they're good at what they do, then they can be very useful." On the other hand, some informants felt the reports delivered by sideline reporters sometimes

detract from their enjoyment of the telecast. “There are some times when I think they’re just talking about pointless things when it’s less related to the actual [game],” said Cindy, an undergraduate. She continued, “Sometimes I like it when [they report] about injuries or what’s going on during the game. But when it’s little outside things, I don’t like it as much.” It appears that sportscasting decision makers must find a balance between not making sideline reporters too intrusive yet including them enough so as not to further diminish their credibility.

Patricia expressed a belief that the sideline reporter role was seen as a “throwaway role” primarily because it is a position in which women predominate. Using power/knowledge, and the data cited above, it stands to reason the opinion that the sideline reporter is unnecessary may be a consequence of the role’s original purpose and the gendered double standard of appearance. It appears the original purpose of the job as well as the appearance double standard has contributed to the construction of the concept of “cheerleaders with microphones.”

Why Are There So Few Women in the Sportscasting Booth?

The above analysis of the sideline/field reporter position partly helps us to answer the question of why so few women are hired as play-by-play commentators and analysts for men’s sports. The appearance double standard, the conceptualization of the sideline reporter role, and the manner in which women have been integrated into broadcasts via the sideline reporter role – with an emphasis on appearance – seems to have contributed to a bias against women for certain sportscasting roles. Still, in speaking with my informants – and in analyzing mass mediated texts – it appears the lack of women in the booth is a complex issue, to the extent that there are a variety of explanations for the

phenomenon. The complexity of the issue can make it difficult to pinpoint a cause or a solution. My informants offered an apparent lack of interest among aspiring women sportscasters, the predominance of men's voices in mediated sport, and a lack of intentionality in developing women announcers as contributing to the predominance of men in the sportscasting booth. On the surface, these explanations appear to contradict one another. However, based on the data I collected, these explanations are not mutually exclusive. Instead, when viewed through the lens of power/knowledge, it seems that each of these three phenomena are mutually informing.

Lack of Interest in Play-by-Play

Although I did not find discursive evidence of this assertion in mediated texts, according to many of my interview informants, the paucity of women in the booth may owe to a lack of interest in those positions. While Nancy expressed a belief that "play-by-play is a skill that you can learn," she also said that it is a position to which few women seem to aspire to. "For some reason, women don't want to go there, or I haven't seen it. All the letters I get, you know, or emails, that's not the role they want to pursue." Nancy also told me that, although women have not been given equal opportunities to work in the broadcast booth, "they have to help themselves," given the lack of development that exists for such roles, which will be discussed later in this chapter. The view that women could be more aggressive in pursuing roles in the broadcast booth if they want them, was supported by Amelia, the early-40s host/reporter for a regional sports network in a large market in the Western U.S. Having only recently taken an interest in doing play-by-play (to which she had yet to be assigned), she said, "I put it on myself…I haven't pushed

because I haven't put forth the necessary time to prepare myself and to get in on the ground."

Paula, the Western RSN anchor/reporter in her early-30s, supported Nancy and Amelia's assertion by positing that, if there are "one million men" who aspire to do play-by-play, "the reality is there's probably only 200,000 women who [want to do it]." Marie admitted that she has no interest in doing play-by-play but noted women in general may not be interested in the position because they are not groomed for that role early in their careers and the role intimidates many women. Marie did suggest, however, that this lack of interest may change as more women enter the industry in general and the sportscasting booth in particular. "I think this new wave of women who are in sports media, younger than myself, the girls that are now watching me, they will have the confidence to say, 'Yeah, I can do that. I can be a play-by-play [announcer].'"

A young woman in one of my focus groups, Molly, offered the opinion that the lack of women play-by-play announcers may just result from a sort of gendered predilection toward other industries aside from sports media and other roles beside play-by-play.

> A lot of people are willing to say, "We want women, we want women." I think sports as a whole is, yeah, a little bit more male-dominated, but there are also fields where it's female-dominated. And for men to come in, I don't think we would be talking about it in the same way we are with women.

Molly makes the point that, as a society, we do not push quite as hard for more men to enter fields predominated by women, thus such an effort for equality in sportscasting is not necessary, if the interest from women is lacking. Her comment seems

to point to fields in which women predominate, and in which men purportedly have less interest, such as elementary education and nursing.

The idea that positions in the booth are simply available to women if they want them – and that women naturally do not – also resonates with two hallmarks of postfeminist media culture: a "reassertion of sexual difference" (Gill, 2007, p. 265) and a mutually-informing relationship of neoliberal ideology through messages of empowerment and choice (also in Gill and Scharff, 2011). Whereas so-called second wave feminism emphasized the similarities between the sexes, it is now considered normal to point out or even embrace the "differences" between men and women (Gill, 2007, p. 265). Molly's comments are therefore firmly rooted in a postfeminist logic that has pervaded media culture, seen often in "chick lit" or sitcoms (such as *The Big Bang Theory*), both of which often depict men and women as possessing vastly different communication styles (among other things) and therefore not understanding each other. This reaffirmation of difference is problematic to the extent that it has the potential to ignore the fact that certain "differences" may be discursively constructed through longstanding gendered messages and practices. That is, a difference between men and women may exist because of gendered norms constructed through discourse, not because it occurred "naturally." These constructed notions are similar to the way America views athleticism along racialized lines; blacks – especially black men – are generally thought to be more athletic than their white peers. However, black Americans predominate most popular American sports because they have been encouraged – through representation and discourse – to participate in and master sports and have been similarly discouraged from participating in other, more intellectual pursuits (Carrington, 2010, p. 174). Also,

postfeminism's endorsement of neoliberalism calls on women to take control of their own lives and careers, without organizational or statutory support. This call for personal responsibility also ignores the fact that a longstanding set of practices might make it difficult for women to choose their ideal vocational path and that some form of oversight might be required to eliminate these practices.

The Predominance of Men's Voices

The suggestion that sports media consumers, regardless of gender, are unaccustomed to and, therefore, averse to hearing women's voices throughout the sportscast is another explanation offered by my informants (and mediated texts). Consider these comments made by Amelia:

> I think there's a reality of, do people want to hear a woman calling the game? That sounds really obvious, but I feel like a lot of people are afraid to say it. Do people want to hear a woman calling the game? I mean, some men might not.…But I think – here's the thing. There are a lot of networks out there that are doing it because they like the idea of it because it is different. And it's worth the try. Are you going to have a woman right now calling the Super Bowl? No, because I don't think we're there yet, and maybe we won't be there ever. I don't know.

According to Amelia, national sports networks have slowly integrated women – such as Beth Mowins and Jessica Mendoza – into the booth but are opposed to putting them in the most high-profile positions (allowing them to announce during the Super Bowl, for example) because sports media consumers are not "ready" to hear women's voices yet. If we equate audience readiness to acceptance, a look at mediated texts suggests there is validity to Amelia's assertion. When Mendoza made her Major League Baseball postseason as a sportscaster in October of 2015, author Molly Knight spliced

together and disseminated via Twitter a series of tweets she saw criticizing Mendoza's presence in the telecast. Among the tweets she found, sent by men *and* women:

> SOS, there's a woman talking during my baseball watching
>
> ESPN putting a woman broadcaster in the booth for a playoff baseball games [sic] is one of their worst decisions ever.
>
> The last thing I want to hear while I'm watching baseball is a woman talking.
>
> What's a woman doing on the play by play broadcast team for a MLB game??? Unacceptable!!! That's a sell out!!! (Knight, 2015).

For these sports media consumers, Mendoza's ability in the booth (or potential lack thereof) was not the issue. Instead, she did not belong in the booth simply because she is a woman. According to sportscaster Julie DiCaro in an op-ed for *The New York Times*, Mowins faced similarly sexist criticism upon making her *Monday Night Football* debut. However, the criticisms curated by DiCaro focused on Mowins's voice:

> Hey @espn, I commend you for giving Beth Mowins a shot.. but her voice is annoying to listen to.
>
> Beth mowins voice super annoying [sic]. Please replace immediately.
>
> I'm sure Beth Mowins is a nice person but her voice should not be on tv [sic]. I feel like she is scolding me for throwing snowballs (DiCaro, 2017).

Other comments made about women sportscasters' voices, as cited by DiCaro, suggest that listening to them is "like listening to my ex nag me" (para. 3) and they "sound like mom yelling at me" (para. 4). A sportscaster's vocal tone is a significant aspect of an announcer's ability to attract and hold an audience; as such, these may be well-founded critiques. Nevertheless, my data suggest that criticism of women's voices in

sportscasting may be rooted in a discursive construct that situates their voices as inappropriate for the booth. As veteran sports reporter Andrea Kremer told DiCaro in the same *New York Times* article, "I have no doubt that 'hating the sound of her voice' is code for 'I hate that there was a woman announcing football'" (para. 10). This is not to say that women announcers should not be judged by their voices; men sportscasters are subject to the same scrutiny. However, Kremer is suggesting – and what I have found it in my data – that scrutiny of women's voices is sometimes rooted in a gendered bias that has been constructed over time.

In explaining why sports media consumers generally disapprove of women's voices inside the broadcast booth, one of my focus group informants, Marcus, lent credence to the possibility that sports media consumers do not find woman's voices suitable because they are similar to those of their mothers and spouses. "It's like, 'Oh, my gosh. She's like my wife or something.' It's like, 'I don't want to think about my wife while I'm trying to relax away from my wife.'" This view assumes heterosexual men are the primary audience, even though women who watch and listen to sports also take issue with women's voices. Marcus's comments – which, were not necessarily his personal views – also assume that all men in significant heterosexual relationships are "nagged" by their partners and that these men watch sports to distance themselves from their partners or women in general. Because these assumptions are dubious, it is difficult to reject Andrea Kremer's assertion that sports media consumers disapprove of women's voices not because of their vocal quality but because they disapprove of their very presence during the broadcast of a sporting event.

Further, it is likely that sports media consumers repudiate women's voices because they are simply not accustomed to hearing women provide play-by-play or color commentary, considering the longstanding invisibility of women in those roles. Even the most open-minded sports fan can be taken aback when hearing a woman provide commentary. Consider this perspective from Patricia:

> I really don't think that it's acceptable to the majority of the masses to hear a woman calling play-by-play…It would be strange for me to even hear. And I am a woman in sports. But I feel that it would be jarring to me to hear a woman's voice calling play-by-play just because it's just something that hasn't really been done. It's been done a few times, of course, but not enough – when you tune in you expect to hear a deep male voice calling the game and telling you what's going on. That's just kind of the way things have been. And I think that that's one area where sports viewers, men and women alike, are not willing to budge.

Paula supported this view by stating, "That's just what we have been programmed to like or know, is a male voice behind a mic.…We have not been programmed to hear a woman." The "programming" Paula speaks of can be found in mediated discourse. It is neither intentional nor is it explicit; parents generally do not tell their children that only men can be play-by-play announcers or color commentators. Instead, the way sports are documented and historicized, through archival footage and audio clips, aids in the discursive construction of women's invisibility in the booth. Due to the longstanding lack of representation of women in the booth – reinforced whenever any of American sports' most prominent moments are revisited on radio, television or film – sports media consumers have come to expect men's voices to be amplified beyond the booth. "It's like that," Paula said, "because that's just how it is, and this has been since, shit, before TV, when it was just the radio, back in the day. It's always been males calling games." The

expectation that men are behind the microphone for the majority of a broadcast contributes to the lack of women's interest in commentary roles as well as the minimal development of commentary skills for women at all levels of the sportscasting industry.

Hiring and Development Bias

The exclusion of women's voices from sports' most well-documented moments has led, in large part, to the assumption by some media consumers and, possibly, industry decision-makers that men are more naturally suited for the roles of play-by-play announcer and color analyst. Among other things, this bias against hiring women for such roles is manifest in the efforts (or the lack thereof) taken by the industry to develop women for those positions. In explaining why she believed there to be relatively little interest in those positions among women, in addition to her assertion that play-by-play can be intimidating, Marie added, "I think that it's because as women were coming up the ranks earlier on, it was just like, 'Okay, this is going to be your role. You're going to be the host or you're going to be the sideline reporter.'" In other words, women who aspired to be sportscasters were pigeonholed into a small number of positions earmarked for women.

In discussing the color analyst role – which for men's sports is usually given to former male athletes – the views provided by my informants were split. Some women, like Nancy, believed that analyst roles for sports like football, that have no professional women's equivalent, should go to the people who have played or coached the sport, on the grounds that they are most well-equipped to explain for the audience what exactly they are seeing on the field. "I think the reason I lasted all these years," Nancy said, "is I never pretended that I knew what [my color analyst] knew. I wasn't in the huddle."

Similarly, Paula believed that the only way women could get into the broadcast booth was if they were a former athlete and became a color analyst, like Kara Lawson. This is because being an athlete is not viewed as an asset for play-by-play announcers – in fact, most did not play their sports professionally. Without the privileged perspective of being a former professional athlete, then, it appears women have a slimmer chance than men of entering the booth. Hannah believed that even a former woman athlete would encounter bias for an analyst position for a men's sport, even if she played the women's equivalent of the same sport. "The woman – she could have been in the WNBA – and they're like, "Well no, it's still not the NBA; so, why would she be as knowledgeable about the NBA, compared to a man?" As I stated at the beginning of this chapter, there are now three full-time woman television analysts in the NBA and all three of them played basketball at the collegiate level, if not professionally. Still, Hannah's point, that former women athletes generally face bias when seeking analyst positions for men's sports still stands, as evidenced by the sexist criticism launched at Jessica Mendoza, if we accept softball as a close enough equivalent to baseball.

Conversely, Lizzy and Stephanie both called the idea that only a former athlete would be qualified to be an analyst "silly." In truth, while it is rare, national networks have not been averse to hiring men who have little to no collegiate or professional experience playing a sport as analysts. From 2000 through 2002, ABC Sports employed comedian Dennis Miller as a color commentator during its *Monday Night Football* telecasts. In 2003, ESPN – long owned by the same companies (Capital Cities and then Disney) that owned ABC – hired conservative political commentator Rush Limbaugh as an analyst for its *Sunday NFL Countdown* pregame show. From 2006 to 2008, ESPN

used Tony Kornheiser, a sportswriter and host of ESPN's *Pardon the Interruption*, as an analyst for *Monday Night Football*. Kornheiser's role was perceived by many observers to be similar to that of Miller's – a comedic voice in the booth who spoke for the common fan and could also provide tidbits of information. Lastly, from 2014 through the end of the 2015 Major League Baseball season, Fox Sports employed Tom Verducci, a longtime sportswriter for *Sports Illustrated*, as an analyst. He was given the opportunity to broadcast the World Series in both years. Although the list of names is short, it appears that networks have shown a willingness to permit men who were never professional or collegiate athletes into the broadcast booth as analysts. Rare as it has been for men, this is an opportunity that has only once, as stated above, been afforded to a woman who has never played or coached the sport in question: Lesley Visser. According to Stephanie, in some cases, being an analyst does not require privileged knowledge:

> I do like [the analyst for the team I cover]. Just for the record, I think he's fine, but I don't think he comes up with anything that I couldn't come up with … Half the time I say the same thing he's saying at the same time he's saying it, and it's usually something to do with how much dirt a pitcher has on his uniform. My sister could notice that and she doesn't watch sports.

This is not to say privileged knowledge is not valuable to sports media consumers. Instead, Stephanie's comment suggests that privileged knowledge is not always a requisite for what constitutes acceptable analysis.

Later, Stephanie went further in discussing the lack of women in the booth overall, for both play-by-play and analyst positions, explaining that a bias against women precludes them from getting opportunities to develop the skills required by those roles. "God knows I don't think it's because women aren't interested or because women aren't

qualified," she said, before comparing the situation to the development (or lack thereof) of women baseball players.

> Why can't a woman pitcher throw 96 miles an hour? Well, if you don't develop her from the start, if you assume that it's a foregone conclusion she's never going to get there, even if she turns out to be 6'3" and can deadlift six of me, if you didn't develop her as a player from the time she was five years old like you do for the guys, she's going to become a softball player and, of course, she's never going to be able to throw 96.

In other words, if women are not afforded the opportunity to develop as play-by-play announcers or analysts and are instead assumed to be unsuitable for these positions, then women will prepare and develop the skills required for careers that are more available to them. Just as softball is more available to women athletes than baseball, sideline reporting, anchoring and hosting are all more available for women sportscasters than are positions in the booth.

Conclusion

Taking all the available explanations into account, many factors contribute to the lack of women in the sportscasting booth. These factors are not mutually exclusive but instead inform each other in a nearly cyclical manner. Because of the lack of representation of women in the booth, a relative few women are interested in breaking through sportscasting's glass booth. Likewise, because women are not hired or developed for these positions at the same rate as their male peers, women remain relatively invisible in the booth, which makes it more difficult for aspiring women sportscasters to envision themselves there. Lastly, because women have shown relatively little interest in becoming play-by-play announcers and analysts, they remain largely invisible in the booth. This invisibility perpetuates the idea that women are not naturally suited for, or are

inclined to, those positions. The paucity of women in the booth is a consequence of a sophisticated discursive formation that offers no clear causes or solutions and therefore serves to ensure the booth remains predominated by men.

Within the context of the postfeminist neoliberal female sportscaster subject-position, the "glass booth" phenomenon is undergirded by postfeminist and neoliberal discourse. Chief among this discourse is the idea that women need to be more aggressive and entrepreneurial in their pursuit of play-by-play and color analyst positions. In the absences of any apparent causes or solutions, the call for women to be neoliberal subjects is presented by the industry as the only viable solution to the glass booth. As is the case with neoliberal ideology in general, this "solution" is problematic since it ignores many of the obstacles explored in this chapter and dissertation (such as the discursively constructed invisibility of women in historicized accounts of sport), and how those challenges result in a sex bias in the hiring and development of women announcers. Similar to the way that the *nightclubification* of women sportscaster dress discussed in Chapter IV is presented as a freely-chosen turn, the purported need for more entrepreneurship on the part of women sportscasters further absolves the sportscasting industry for its lack of women in the booth. Postfeminist assumptions regarding naturalized sexual difference support the idea that men are naturally predisposed toward roles in the sportscasting booth and women are not.

When the glass booth – and its postfeminist justifications – are added to the double standards of appearance and credibility, the constructed subjectivity of the American female sportscaster begins to take shape. To this end, in Chapter VI, I explore another key component of the subjectivity: the online and offline harassment of women

sportscasters. While persistence of harassment is not unique to sportscasting and is therefore informed by socially-embedded practices, the specific manifestations of harassment in the industry persist as a result of the industry's gendered double standards and its narrow (and problematic) representation of women, as discussed in this chapter. As a result, the harassment that pervades the sportscasting industry also aids in the definition of what is socially-acceptable treatment of women. Additionally, and as explored in Chapter VII, women in the industry must endure harassment with very little to no meaningful support, as a result of postfeminist neoliberal ideology.

Chapter VI – "Hey, Pretty Girl": Gendered Workplace and Online Harassment in Sportscasting

Due to the #MeToo movement, the year 2017 will long be remembered as the year that brought to light a culture that had theretofore allowed (mostly) men to harass, humiliate, fondle and even rape women – and, to a lesser extent, men – with impunity. Although men in the entertainment, news media, and political industries dominated the headlines, accusations and subsequent disciplinary actions taken against personnel at ESPN and the NFL Network show that the sports media were also complicit in a system that ignored sexual misconduct.

The media narrative on sexual misconduct, however, often misses the forest for the trees. As feminist scholar Sarah Banet-Weiser (2017) wrote in an op-ed for *Fortune*, "The media focus has been on highly visible celebrity men – those men who occupy important positions of power … The news stories emphasize the individuals involved rather than the structural underpinning of all these industries" (para. 2). Using discourse analysis and feminist standpoint epistemologies, in this chapter I examine the ways in which gendered misconduct such as online and offline sexual harassment greatly informs sportscasting's gendered structure. That is, I investigate how sexual harassment in sportscasting has a material impact on the industry's hierarchy, and vice-versa, insofar as men dominate the industry and occupy a preponderance of sportscasting's most prominent positions. To do this, I report and analyze interview and textual data I have collected as they relate to two sites of harassment: the sportscasting workplace – within which exists sexual harassment, as defined by U.S. federal anti-discrimination laws – and

the online environment, which has similar protections that have not been so closely enforced.

This chapter begins with an examination of workplace harassment in sportscasting. Based on the data I collected, I found there to be three primary manifestations of workplace harassment: hostile work environment, *quid pro quo*, and stalking. As it relates to hostile work environment harassment, it appears women in sportscasting are often treated by media organizations as liabilities, simply because of their ability to bear children. This view of women in the industry often creates a work environment that presents narrow and paradoxical boundaries; women must exhibit nearly all feminine traits except for the ability to procreate. These boundaries sometimes make it taboo for women to have or exhibit signs of menstruation, pregnancy, and miscarriage. Such taboos often make it emotionally and physically difficult for women sportscasters to complete their work, leaving them susceptible to demotion or termination. In examining my interview data and mediated texts, the *quid pro quo* – i.e., this for that – harassment of women sportscasters is pervasive, especially when the sportscasters are reporters tasked with using male sources to find stories. Not only does *quid pro quo* harassment create another type of hostile work environment if the women sportscaster rejects a source's sexual advances, it also undergirds the subordination of women in sports media by precluding many female reporters from producing the type of stories for which their male counterparts earn upward mobility and acclaim. Lastly, because the appearance double standard sometimes diminishes the female sportscaster's perceived credibility, it greatly informs much of the sexual harassment they endure, to the extent that they are widely viewed as women hired for the aesthetic and physical pleasure

of heterosexual male sports media consumers, media managers and sources. In the case of the third type of sexual harassment, stalking, one woman sportscaster I spoke with believed her perceived lack of credibility caused a man to ignore her work as he developed and demonstrated an obsession with her.

Due in large part to the *#MoreThanMean* (2016) public service announcement, in which sportscasters Julie DiCaro and Sarah Spain have malicious tweets read to them by randomly selected men who did not send the tweets, the online harassment women in sports media endure has reached a large audience.[11] However, less well known are the types of online harassment and their discursive functions for women in sportscasting. The online environment has become especially problematic for women sportscasters as, according to Pamela Laucella (2014), the maintenance of a social media presence has increasingly become part of a sportscaster's duties.

In this chapter, I analyze two distinct – but sometimes overlapping – types of online harassment. The first, as discussed in Chapter IV, occurs in response to female sportscaster opinions. Women in the industry sometimes receive death threats or calls for them to be raped for expressing their opinions. This phenomenon especially presents itself if a woman sportscaster says anything that would suggest a lapse in judgment by a popular male athlete. The second type of online harassment is that which objectifies or sexualizes a woman sportscaster. Much like *quid pro quo* and stalking, the appearance and credibility double standards undergird the online objectification and sexualization of women in sportscasting. Because of the inequitable prioritization of appearance in the hiring and retention of women sportscasters, women in the industry have found

[11] As of September 2018, the video had amassed over 4.5 million views on YouTube.

themselves and their bodies to be the subjects of scrutiny and sexual fantasy. In some instances, the two types of online harassment have overlapped; Internet users have objectified women sportscasters as a way of discrediting and silencing their opinions.

Double standards of appearance and credibility construct commonsense knowledge about women sportscasters, including widely-held assumptions that their skills and abilities are of lesser importance than their looks. Similarly, online harassment transpires because of, and reinforces as normal, the institutional and social prioritization of appearance over skill and credibility regarding women sportscasters. Not unlike the appearance and credibility double standards, the harassment of women in the industry serves to ensure their subordinated positioning in the industry. As I show below, examples of harassment analyzed in this chapter are emblematic of the sports/media complex as a structure of power.

As is the case for double standards and sex bias, harassment is a circumstance that is not unique to sportscasting, as the rise of the #MeToo movement suggests. Nonetheless, this chapter provides more examples of the ways in which a set of socially-embedded and normalized practices are manifest in the sportscasting industry, how they impact the industry's gendered hierarchy, and how those practices aid in the construction of the female sportscaster subjectivity.

Workplace Harassment

While the 2016 release of the *#MoreThanMean* public service announcement called attention to the issue of online harassment in sports media, instances of workplace harassment within the industry had not been widely-reported until the latter months of

2017. Three of the women sportscasters I interviewed each related to me their own experiences with workplace sexual harassment.

Hostile Work Environment and the Reproductive Paradox

Both Marie and Paula experienced harassment in the form of hostile work environments. According to the United States Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (2018), hostile work environment harassment is a form of discrimination that occurs when a person engages in "unwanted conduct" that is based on race, sex, religion and many other protected classes or groups (para. 2). To be unlawful, the conduct needs to be pervasive enough "to create a work environment that would be intimidating, hostile, or offensive to reasonable people" (para. 3).

Marie had a particularly rocky working relationship with a sports director[12] she used to work with. She knew going into the job that he was "kind of a weird guy," but she took the job, her first out of college, because she needed the income and experience. According to Marie, it only took a few weeks before she was the target of the sports director's strange behavior. "He asked me … when my period was so he could track when I was going to get it and when I was PMSing so that he would know that I was going to be moody." Twenty-two years old at the time, Marie did not say anything to anyone at the station because she felt she was too new to file a complaint. Feeling she had not accumulated the social capital necessary to accuse her sports director of harassment, Marie continued to have what she described as a "terrible relationship" with him, one in which there would be minimal interaction between the two of them, save for the

[12] A sports director at a local television station usually oversees the station's sports department, particularly its on-air personnel and, in many cases, is the station's lead sports anchor.

occasional instance in which he would purposely intimidate Marie. “We had a radio booth and whenever he wanted to talk to me, he would basically kind of trap me in there and block the door.” As it became clear to Marie the sports director was gruff with many of the station’s employees – male and female – when she eventually told her regional manager about her sports director’s harassment, she discovered that he was “on his last legs.” When the station made the decision to fire him, he had already accepted a job offer in another market. Although the sports director harassed both male and female colleagues, it appears his interactions with Marie served to assert his superiority over her as a man and – given his remarks about Marie’s menstrual cycle – stigmatize certain aspects of her femininity.

Journeyman sportscaster Lindsay McCormick faced similar stigma during a job interview for the NFL Network. During the interview, McCormick was asked if she “plan[ned] on getting knocked up immediately like the rest of them,” if she was hired (Martin, 2017, para. 2). Former *SportsCenter* anchor Lindsay Czarniak chose to walk away from ESPN after the network offered her a different job with a significant pay cut upon her return from maternity leave. Not only are these actions violations of the Family Medical Leave Act of 1993, the reference in McCormick’s case to “the rest of them” carries with it a presumed disadvantage for the media organization that hires a woman.

The stigmatization of femininity marks women sportscasters’ bodies as always already unruly and subject to punishment when they clearly become sexually active (as is the case during pregnancy). This reproductive taboo can create an atmosphere, such as the one reported by *The Boston Globe* (Abelson, 2017), in which women sportscasters hide pregnancies and even miscarriages. Such was the case for Sara Walsh who, while

working at ESPN, elected to go on the air despite bleeding after a miscarriage (para. 47). The unlawful treatment of pregnancies within the industry appears to be contradictory. Even though there is evidence that suggests women sportscasters are pressured into hiding pregnancies to appear reliable and tireless, according to a *Boston Globe* report (Abelson, 2017), women in the industry have been frequently replaced – often by other women – upon returning from maternity leave. This practice would suggest firing women sportscasters is not detrimental to a sports media organization, to the extent that such organizations appear to have a steady labor force from which it can recruit replacements for the women who decide to start or add to their families. If there was not a steady labor force, one would assume that a media organization would reserve a similar job with similar pay for all women sportscasters when they return.

None of what I explore in this section is unique to sportscasting. Much like the double standard of appearance and the expectations placed on women regarding clothing, hair, and makeup, socially-embedded taboos of menstruation, miscarriage, and pregnancy are sometimes brought to bear on women sportscasters. However, as is the case with the appearance double standard and its paradox, the aforementioned taboos are manifest in a way that is less generalizable to society at large. The appearance double standard paradox is the result of a clash between the taken-for-granted, anti-feminist norms of an industry in which appearance is of great import and seemingly feminist standards for appropriate dress. Likewise, the paradox that women sportscasters are irreplaceable until they get pregnant and take a leave of absence to care for a newborn child, appears to be linked to a clash undergirded by the gendered double standard of appearance.

In Chapter IV, I report that media consumers and superiors expect women sportscasters to look and dress sexy but could be deemed to look or dress *too* sexy to be credible. Here, if a woman's sexiness is correlated in some measure to her femininity, it seems women sportscasters need to be feminine insofar as they look sexy but not too feminine as to exhibit motherhood. That is, a woman sportscaster is expected to work "like a man" but to also be feminine while doing it. This paradox, then, presents another entanglement of feminist and anti-feminist discourses. In this case, the idea that women can choose work over child-rearing and "homemaking" is rooted in second-wave feminism, but that idea is co-opted to advance the anti-feminist practice of employers not retaining women who get pregnant or otherwise exhibit their motherhood. As stated at various points throughout this dissertation, the entanglement of feminist and anti-feminist discourses pervades the postfeminist media landscape. The woman sportscaster reproductive paradox therefore contributes to the postfeminist female sportscaster subjectivity, and vice-versa.

Quid Pro Quo

While it appears sports media managers often view women sportscasters as organizational liabilities, others, such as male athletes, coaches, and peers sometimes may view women in the industry as objects meant to fulfill their amorous or sexual desires. These desires often preclude women sportscasters from fulfilling their journalistic duties. Early in her career, Paula experienced an episode in which a college football player she covered, one of the most popular on his team, propositioned her for a date. Upon rejecting him, the player called her a "bitch," gave curt responses during interviews and spread rumors that she had been sleeping with his teammates. According

to Paula, athletes and coaches sometimes ostracize male reporters but that usually occurs in response to a report the male journalist wrote or gave on television. Instead, this player turned on Paula because she did not agree to go on a date with him.

Getting propositioned by athletes, Paula said, is still commonplace for her, despite being married and covering a professional football team. “I always get hit on by the rookies until other people are like, ‘She’s married. Just don’t try. We’ve tried. Don’t try.’ And it’s just kind of frustrating.” According to Paula, coaches behave this way, too, and often act professionally at first before later making an advance. As a result of what she believes to be her male sources’ always present desire for sex, she stated that she has never had a strictly platonic interaction with a male source.

Aside from the emotional consequences of Paula’s experiences, there are also vocational implications to consider regarding the role sexual harassment occupies in structuring gendered power and access in sportscasting as institution. These sorts of interactions can make it challenging for women sports journalists to obtain information for stories that their male colleagues can get without the expectation of dates and/or sexual favors in return. As one unnamed reporter told *Sports Illustrated*’s Richard Deitsch (2017b), there is always “information to be had – for the right price,” she said. “The implication is always clear, always just beneath the surface … As competitive and as driven as I am, there have actually been moments in my career where I had to be OK with [letting a story go] because it wasn’t worth dealing with the nonsense” (para. 32). This was similar to the tack taken by Amelia Rayno, former *Star Tribune* reporter who covered the University of Minnesota. Rayno stopped all non-essential communication with UM’s then-director of athletics Norwood Teague when he continued to make

unwanted advances toward her (Rayno, 2015). In response, he continued to send her text messages that included statements such as, “U seem obtuse,” and “Ur giving me a complex” (para. 18). After Rayno asked for him to stop his advances, Teague’s behavior evolved into stalking, a third type of workplace (sexual) harassment.

Stalking

Women sportscasters sometimes endure stalking, or unwanted and/or obsessive attention given by one person to another. Hannah suffered such an experience, which also showed that women are often required to cover men who had previously behaved inappropriately toward them (or toward the organizations with which they are affiliated). An assistant coach of a team Hannah once covered stalked her by continuing to send her messages on social media despite her requests that the messages cease. She thought the messages started innocently enough, including comments like, “Hey, pretty girl.” However, the coach started asking her what she was doing on weekends and where she lived before demanding that she see him outside their professional relationship. When she blocked his Facebook and Twitter accounts, he used his organization’s Twitter account to continue his advances.

When Hannah reported the stalking to the sports director at her station, he approached the team’s head coach, who saw to it that the stalking ended. Although the head coach was embarrassed, he admitted that Hannah was not the first reporter to be approached by his assistant. Making matters worse, in Hannah’s view, was the fact that her sports director obliged the head coach’s impassioned request to have her continue to cover their games. “[Despite] how uncomfortable I felt, and how much I asked him not to

send me to these games, he sent me, literally, every other day for two weeks straight to cover this team."

As explained in Chapter II, women are already subordinated within the sports/media complex. Similarly, the workplace sexual harassment that women sportscasters often face serves to ensure that society perceives women in the industry as working on the periphery. Women caught in the situations described above, Paula's in particular, face a double bind: choose not to interact with a source who the reporter knows will expect a date or sexual favors in return and watch a male colleague cash in on a story that could have advanced her career and/or improved the status of women in the industry overall, or interact with the source and risk humiliation and shame (or worse) during and after the interaction. This double bind is another in a group of dilemmatic choices women sportscasters are often forced to make and exemplifies the impact sexual harassment can have on sportscasting's gendered hierarchy.

The stories Marie, Paula, and Hannah shared are far from the only harassment each has had to endure, but they are the most egregious cases they recalled. Taken together, interactions like these have a discursive impact on the female sportscaster subjectivity. These examples of harassment suggest that there might be a relationship between sexual misconduct and the double standards examined in Chapter IV, whereby the former is largely informed by the latter. "It almost makes me feel like they're undermining my [credibility]," Hannah said. "Like, 'Oh, because she's a woman, I can speak to her this way.'…So, it kind of [makes] me feel like my [credibility has been] taken away a little bit, because they don't see me as anything more than just a 'face,' so to speak." That is, the industry's prioritization of looks for women sportscasters, at the

expense of their perceived credibility as journalists, seems to have contributed to an environment in which some women sportscasters are viewed by some media consumers and sources as "eye candy."

This environment marks many women sportscasters as potential objects of sexual desire first and journalists second, regardless of what they wear or how much makeup the have on. Marking women sportscasters in this manner is especially dangerous given socially-embedded attitudes that celebrate, or at the very least condone, the notion that (white cisgender heterosexual) "boys will be boys" – in this case, the excessive, endless, and seemingly-natural pursuit of sexual partners – which contributes to rape culture. In the context of sportscasting, the dangers of an emphasis on looks therefore echoes the dangers of the postfeminist turn from sexual object to "desiring sexual subject," that women are presented as being "always up for it" (Gill, 2007, p. 259). Sportscasting's de-emphasis on woman sportscaster ability and knowledge, therefore, appears to have much to do with the prevalence of sexual quid pro quo and stalking harassment within the industry. Prioritizing knowledge and skill over appearance may not put an end to *all* sexual harassment women sportscasters encounter but it may help to curb such harassment.

Online Harassment

The 2016 release of the *#MoreThanMean* public service announcement cast a glaring light on the issue of gendered online harassment in general, and that which targeted women in sports media in particular. The primary site of this online harassment is social media, especially Twitter. Male sportscasters and other public figures face online harassment as well, but not simply because they are men; unlike women, their gender is

not used by online harassers to make them feel or appear inferior. As Soraya Chemaly, Director of the Women's Media Center Speech Project, wrote, "For girls and women, [online] harassment is not just about 'un-pleasantries.' It's often about men asserting dominance, silencing, and frequently, scaring and punishing them" (2014, para. 7). The difference between hurling insults at a man and using a woman's gender as a central aspect of her constructed and material identity to police her behavior and attitudes is the crux of the meaning behind the title of the *#MoreThanMean* PSA. That is, the PSA attempts to demonstrate that the gendered online harassment of women in sports media, and in society at-large, are more than "mean" comments that are simply meant to insult someone. Instead, as I demonstrate in this chapter as well as in Chapter VII, this harassment serves a multitude of purposes that can have long-lasting damage on a woman's psyche and, in the case of women sportscasters, her relationship to her career.

Further, the gender-based online harassment that women and women sportscasters endure, much like the workplace harassment explicated above, serves to keep women on the periphery of the sportscasting industry. This subordination is a two-step process: in the first step, an ad hominem attack as harassment occurs. That is, some aspect of the woman sportscaster's character or identity as a woman is attacked, rather than or in addition to the argument or opinion she shares. In the second step, in response to the harassment, women in sportscasting are forced to choose between performing and not performing the affective labor, or emotion management, required to fulfill their usual job duties. Although the second step in this process is explored in greater length in Chapter VII, this section of Chapter VI explores the first step: the various manifestations of gender-based online harassment directed at women sportscasters.

The Result of Expressing Opinions

The online harassment that women sportscasters must endure takes various forms, the most prominent of which seems to come as a result of offering opinions. As explained in Chapter IV, women sportscasters often face gendered backlash for giving their opinions. Based on the interviews I conducted and mediated texts I analyzed, it appears that the primary medium through which women in the industry receive such backlash is through social media in general and Twitter in particular.

Lizzy recalled an occasion in which she was harassed on Twitter after offering her opinion of NFL quarterback Cam Newton's taciturn approach to a press conference that immediately followed Super Bowl 50. In addition to being called "all sorts of horrific names," the fantasy sports show host received death threats, simply for saying she believed Newton's behavior was "childish." In 2014, ESPN reporter and host Sam Ponder criticized the sports blogosphere for what she saw as hypocrisy in the wake of the National Football League's handling of Ray Rice's domestic violence. "Blogs/websites that constantly disrespect women & objectify their bodies, then take a strong stand on the Ray Rice issue really confuse me," she said on Twitter (Ponder, 2014). In response, Ponder received a wave of demeaning tweets, including:

> [This is] the dumbest thing on Twitter I've read in weeks. Congrats. Your entire career is based on being good looking.
>
> [H]ey Sam, you're hot and NOBODY gives a fuck what you say. Not even ya [sic] husband. (Yoder, 2014b, emphasis in original).

Lizzy and Ponder's experiences call to mind Chicago-area sportscaster Julie DiCaro's (2015) argument, referenced in Chapter IV, that "You may not share your sports opinion while, at the same time, being a woman" (para. 2). DiCaro would know what it is like to be the recipient of gendered online harassment, having received threats and insults in response to her opinions on the investigation of a rape that was allegedly committed by hockey player Patrick Kane. The backlash DiCaro received was the impetus of the *#MoreThanMean* PSA, in which she collaborated with fellow female sportscaster Sarah Spain. According to the PSA, among the tweets DiCaro received:

> "One of the players should beat you to death with a hockey stick like the whore you are, cunt."
>
> "This is why we don't hire any females unless we need our cocks sucked or our food cooked."
>
> "Hopefully this skank Julie DiCaro is Bill Cosby's next [rape] victim. That would be classic."

Even DiCaro's identity as a rape victim was used against her.

> "Why even bring up your own rape in this story? Is it your way of firing back at critics who said you can't get any?"
>
> "I hope you get raped again." (*#MoreThanMean*, 2016).

These tweets were primarily sent by fans of the Chicago Blackhawks (DiCaro, 2015) – the hockey club that employed Kane at the time of the investigation – in response to DiCaro's opinion that the player should have been placed on leave while his case was adjudicated, a gesture that many viewed as a presumption of Kane's guilt. Therefore, it appears the purpose of tweets such as these was to police DiCaro's opinions, to make her feel something that would cause her to hesitate to offer her opinions again. By all accounts, while DiCaro did not stop sharing her opinions about rape, sexual assault, and

domestic violence in sports, the tweets culled for the PSA appeared to have achieved the desired effect of causing her emotional distress. At one point during the PSA, after one of the "average Joes" reads a tweet directed at her, DiCaro visibly had to fight back tears despite knowing the tweets were going to be read. It appears, then, that online harassment directed at women sportscasters in response to their opinions serves to punish and (to attempt to) silence women in the industry.

Sexualization and Objectification of Women Sportscasters

Sexualization and objectification is another form of online harassment that women sportscasters endure. Social networking sites such as Twitter seem to have also served as a site of sexualization and objectification, doing so in a way that, not unlike the double standard of appearance, serves to diminish perceived female sportscaster credibility.

Samantha, the sports talk radio update anchor in her early 20s, told me that, on multiple occasions, she or her station was mentioned in tweets by sports media consumers that were meant to sexualize and objectify her. First, she recalled an instance in which she tweeted about her new role with one of her station's popular programs. In response, according to Samantha, a sports media consumer tweeted, "Finally [Samantha's new] show has some eye candy. Too bad it's radio." She remembered not being as bothered by that tweet as the other two she recalled. Second, when her station sent a tweet promoting an upcoming on-air Twitter poll segment led by Samantha, someone responded by tweeting, "Forget the Twitter poll, can [she] get on a [stripper] pole?" The third objectifying tweet Samantha recalled receiving, one in which someone suggested she would look better if she underwent lip injections, was the one that had the greatest

emotional impact. “I was kind of upset by it for a little bit,” she said. As referenced in Chapter IV, Patricia recounted that many of her station’s tweets that include photos promoting its all-women newscasts receive responses that critique Patricia and her colleagues’ bodies. In a blog post about Twitter, Sam Ponder recalled receiving a tweet in which someone suggested she opt for breast enhancement surgery (Ponder, 2014b). Samantha and Ponder’s experiences correlate with two postfeminist hallmarks: self-surveillance, which calls upon women to constantly monitor their femininity and a cultural obsession with makeovers and the normalization of cosmetic surgery (Gill, 2007). As it relates to self-surveillance, these two sportscasters became conscious of their appearance – and their “flaws,” more specifically – by their own admission, as a result of the messages they had received from Twitter users. In this instance, in which cosmetic surgery is recommended to both women, we see postfeminism’s constructions of femininity – of which the usage of surgical procedures are a component – brought to bear on Samantha and Ponder. Also, if we extrapolate the impact of online interactions such as these on woman sportscaster self-surveillance, it is not difficult to imagine sportscasters spending more time tending to certain cosmetic flaws, especially those related to hair, makeup, and clothing and not necessarily those that require surgery. If and when this happens, any such alteration would likely subscribe to universally understood standards of femininity. Such an adjustment would therefore provide another instance in which socially-embedded norms influence the extent to which sportscasting is *gendered* while contributing to sportscasting’s *gendering* mechanisms, in this case, the way women are visually represented when they appear on television or online.

Otherwise anonymous sports media consumers are not the only people who disseminate tweets that objectify and sexualize women sportscasters. Then-Chicago area sportscaster Aiyana Cristal was the target of objectification when a local sports talk radio host, Dan Bernstein, tweeted, "I have no rooting interest in her work, but enjoy her giant boobs" (Feder, 2015, para. 5). This focus on Cristal's bust resonates with "femininity as a bodily property" as a postfeminist hallmark and its attendant obsession with women's bodies (Gill, 2007, p. 255). In Cristal's case, Bernstein admitted that, while he had no interest in her work, her bust made her worthy of being on television. As noted in Chapter II, this hallmark essentially equates a woman's worth to her possession of a "sexy" body (or lack thereof). It can be argued, therefore, that any comment made about Cristal's bust prior to postfeminism would not have been made in any discussion of her ability as a sportscaster. A comment made by Boston-area sports talk radio host Kirk Minihane about Erin Andrews further demonstrates the way a woman sportscaster's worth is bound up in her possession of a feminine body. In arguing that Andrews is not a good sports reporter, Minihane said, "I think if she weighed 15 more pounds, she'd be a waitress at Perkins" (Feitelberg, 2014).

Perhaps the most egregious instance of the objectification and sexualization of a woman sportscaster came in November 2014. American comedian Artie Lange, a disciple of *The Howard Stern Show*, published a series of tweets to his more than 280,000 followers that described, in explicit detail, a sexual fantasy he imagined while watching then-host of ESPN's *First Take* Cari Champion one morning. The tweets about Champion, a black woman, show that racism can be mixed with sexualization. Among the tweets:

> Here's the scenario I'm using to jerkoff to chick on First Take. I'm T[homas] Jefferson & she's my slave. She beats the shit out of me & runs free.
>
> I attempt to whip @CariChampion cuz she disrespected the Jefferson Plantation but she grabs whip & beats me.…I cum like a fat founding father (Duffy, 2014).

Taken together, the above objectifying and sexualizing Internet comments serve to remind women sportscasters that, as discussed in Chapter IV, their abilities as sportscasters often are of secondary import to the presumed tastes of sports media consumers than their looks. Just as the prioritization of appearance discursively diminishes the female sportscaster's perceived credibility, online objectification is also used to discredit women sportscasters who, like Lizzy and Sam Ponder described above, give their opinions.

Images of ESPN commentator Sarah Spain donning the revealing clothing she wore early in her career, as referenced in Chapter IV, are sometimes used by sports media consumers to weaken Spain's credibility as an outspoken feminist sports media personality. Spain often speaks publicly about violence against women and other issues related to gender equality in the sports world. That she once wore revealing attire is often used to discredit these views much in the same way that a trial lawyer questions a witness's life choices as a means of discrediting his or her testimony. Coincidentally, immediately following, and in response to, the release of the *#MoreThanMean* PSA, a Twitter account operated by the Chicago sports blog, SportsMockery, tweeted an image of Spain in a remarkably low-cut top (fig. 9) along

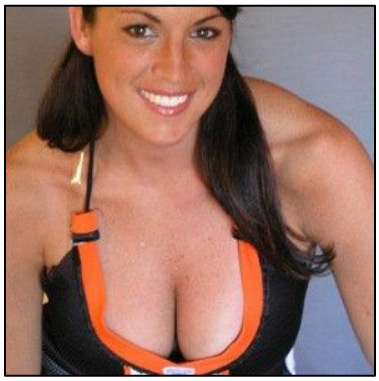

Figure 9 - Sarah Spain Shirt
© SportsMockery

with the message, “Must be the public’s fault her top is falling off, she obviously didn’t mean for you to see those” (SportsMockery, 2016). In response to this slut-shaming, Spain tweeted: “So the shirt I wore literally a dozen years ago makes me deserving of hate? You guys prove my point over and over. #trash” (Spain, 2016). Similarly, Sam Ponder’s critique of the blogosphere referenced above was also met with backlash from Barstool’s David Portnoy (2014), which served to remind Ponder that she “has a job because she’s hot … It’s requirement #1 for female sports reporters. They are hired to be objectified … That’s what you signed up for honey. [sic] Don’t complain about it and play dumb after the fact” (para. 3). Portnoy’s post is emblematic of the objectification manifestation of online harassment as well as the discursive impact of the appearance double standard on perceived female sportscaster credibility.

The attacks against Spain and Ponder also provide another example of the postfeminist entanglement between feminist and anti-feminist discourses. Here, feminist discourses (calling out the prioritization of appearance and inequitable standards of dress for women in the industry) are co-opted to advance anti-feminist ideas (in this case, repudiations of Spain and Ponder’s claims of harassment and mistreatment against women sportscasters). This approach to discrediting women sportscasters through the entanglement of discourses is sophisticated insofar as its implicit claims of hypocrisy make it challenging to advance the sort of feminist critiques Spain and Ponder disseminated on Twitter. This phenomenon, which is a hallmark of the postfeminist moment, therefore also contributes to the construction of a postfeminist female sportscaster subjectivity.

Conclusion

Like women in other industries, women in sportscasting are forced to endure online and offline gendered harassment. While harassment is not unique to postfeminist media culture, the manifestations of harassment explored in this chapter are uniquely postfeminist insofar as they force women in the industry to negotiate a series of contradictions. The workplace harassment of women sportscasters sometimes occurs because of menstruation, pregnancy, and miscarriage taboos. Although women in the industry are expected by some to display normative femininity and "be sexy" (as I reported in Chapter IV), it appears they cannot be so feminine as to exhibit any signs of motherhood. This paradox is emblematic of postfeminist media culture's pervasive co-opting of second-wave feminist discourse ("you don't need to be a stay at home mother") to advance anti-feminist ideas ("you're not going to get pregnant, are you?"). Similarly, to invalidate their feminist opinions, women sportscasters are often ridiculed online for complying with the double standard of appearance, which sometimes pressures women into objectifying themselves.

These entanglements, as they are manifest in harassment, contribute to the construction of the postfeminist female sportscaster subjectivity. While postfeminism has a mutually informing relationship with neoliberalism, harassment – and its attendant entanglements – in and of itself does not resonate with neoliberalism. Instead, harassment's relationship with neoliberalism is indirect, insofar as the affective (or emotional) impact of harassment – and not harassment itself – causes women sportscasters to negotiate neoliberal discourses. It is to the affective labor prompted by harassment and its relationship with neoliberalism that I turn in Chapter VII. Because of

this relationship, women in the industry are expected to manage their emotions in the face of harassment, normalizing the practices explored here in Chapter VI. As a result, the industry is yet again absolved of any responsibility, in this case, for much of the harassment its women endure.

Chapter VII – "It Broke Me": The Woman Sportscaster's Affective Labor

Sara Ahmed writes in *The Cultural Politics of Emotion* (2014) that "emotions show us how power shapes the very surface of bodies as well as worlds" (p. 12). In this chapter, I explore how woman sportscasters' emotions – in response to double standards, bias, and harassment – occupy a pivotal role in shaping the "body" of the female sportscaster subjectivity as well as the "world" of sportscasting. *The Cultural Politics of Emotion* has become a canonical text in an emerging field in cultural studies known as affect theory, which seeks to investigate the way emotions impact individuals, institutions, and society at large. Affect theory, as Ahmed writes, is utilized under the notion that "emotions should not be regarded as psychological states, but as social and cultural practices" (2014, p. 9). That is, emotions are not simply involuntary reactions to psychological or even physical stimuli. Instead, emotions are performative, insofar as, according to Norbert Elias (1978), we as a collective people have learned to "control emotions, and to experience the 'appropriate' emotions at different times and places" (as cited in Ahmed, 2014, p. 3). In this chapter, I provide evidence that shows that women sportscasters have had to learn to control their emotions in accordance with the gendered demands of the sportscasting industry. Sportscasting, as with many other institutions, is a site in which "some emotions are 'elevated' as signs of [an individual's sophistication], whilst others remain 'lower' as signs of weakness" (Ahmed, 2014, p. 3). In this case, based on the data I collected and analyzed, it appears that women sportscasters are taught that emotions that may be "appropriate" responses to gendered mistreatment in other contexts are viewed as "signs of weakness" in sportscasting.

Ahmed's work calls upon a wide range of scholars who have previously studied the sociocultural implications of emotions, including Arlie Hochschild. In 1979, Hochschild drew distinctions between two approaches to studying emotive experiences: the first examines the social factors that induce an individual's emotions and the second investigates the way social factors make us think and feel about, assess, and manage our emotions (p. 552). The latter approach, "emotion management," (p. 552) was crucial to Hochschild's work and it is also vital to this chapter of this dissertation. Chapters IV and VI established double standards and harassment as the foremost practices that evoke woman sportscaster emotions; this chapter serves to analyze the extent to which those practices inform the way women sportscasters assess and manage their emotions and how that assessment and management of emotions have a material impact on the sportscasting industry.

Based on my interviews, women sportscasters often find themselves in situations that can evoke a variety of emotions that range from excitement and pride to anger and sadness. As I stated in Chapter VI, one of the goals of this dissertation is to explain how the phenomena analyzed in the previous three chapters support the gendered structure of the sportscasting industry, insofar as those phenomena contribute to the industry's subordination of women. I have also argued elsewhere that scholarship that "takes affect under consideration is of great import if sports media are to achieve greater quantitative and representational equality for women," (Harrison, in press, para. 6). To study the impact of affect on women sportscasters is to "[provide] a critique of a model of social structure that neglects the emotional intensities, which allow such structures to be reified as forms of being" (Ahmed, 2014, p. 12). That is, sportscasting's gendered structure

iteratively ignores the issue of affect as it pertains to women sportscasters and therefore perpetuates the subordination of women in the industry. In response, we acknowledge the fact that women sportscasters endure double standards and harassment and ask, what are the long-term individual and structural effects of the effort required to navigate those phenomena? An analysis of what Hochschild calls the "secondary acts" (1979, p. 562) that ensue after emotive experiences is one such attempt at using an affective approach to answer this question. Using affect theory in this manner also affords us the opportunity to see how the sportscasting industry's failure to effectively take affect into consideration informs its gendered "social structure," which largely marginalizes women.

Based on the interviews I conducted and the mediated texts I have analyzed, the ability to manage one's emotions is a skill women sportscasters have been forced to exhibit in both professional and private contexts to gain entrée into, and thrive within, the sportscasting industry. The ubiquity of gendered double standards and harassment is not unique to sportscasting; Western women have grown accustomed to managing their emotions in and out of the workplace. However, as I show in this chapter, the compulsory practice of Hochschild's emotion management contributes to the construction of a postfeminist neoliberal female sportscaster subjectivity, due to the postfeminist media environment's attendant call for women to manage and discipline their emotions.

Hochschild distinguishes between two different types of emotion management. The first, emotional labor, is employed primarily in customer service industries such as tourism and hospitality and has exchange value; an employee can earn a wage in exchange for this kind of labor (Hochschild, 1983, p. 8). In such service industries, employees are asked to follow "display rules" or guidelines that dictate how workers are

expected to act in face-to-face or voice-to-voice interactions with customers (Ekman, 1992). In general, emotional laborers are expected to provide "friendly" customer service that is manifest as a "publicly observable facial and bodily display," (p. 8) regardless of their own personal feelings with regard to the task at hand. Sportscasters are not customer service agents per se; the commodity they exchange is information, not "service with a smile," nor do they earn a wage in direct exchange for their ability to provide friendly service or conform to display rules. Nevertheless, an additional part of a woman sportscaster's job is to follow a set of display rules in spite of personal or professional turmoil, as exemplified by the story of Sara Walsh – the sportscaster who went on the air while still bleeding from a miscarriage – in Chapter VI. As I demonstrate in this chapter, emotion management within a professional setting necessarily serves as a currency with which women sportscasters accrue social capital that can be used to gain the influence and favor necessary to enter and thrive in the industry.

The second type of emotion management, according to Hochschild (1979), is emotion work, which occurs in private contexts. As women sportscasters are humans who live lives outside the workplace, they will often reflect on the day's events outside the work setting and assess the emotions they exhibited as a result of those events. According to Hochschild, when people perform emotion work, they often confide in others – friends, family, co-workers – as they assess their emotional responses to the day's experiences (p. 562). This optional usage of an "emotion-work system" (p. 562) shows that emotion work can be either be a communal practice or a solitary one. In either case, people who undergo emotion work often reach a moment that Hochschild calls a "pinch," a moment in which people assess their emotions as having been incongruous in relation to the

moment in which the emotions were felt. This incongruity, according to Hochschild, is usually determined by the emotions the person wishes to feel or believes are more appropriate to feel.

Lastly, Hochschild explicates three types of emotion work: cognitive, bodily, and expressive. In cognitive emotion work, people try to manage the ideas and thoughts in their minds in the hopes that it will change the emotions they feel during particular experiences (p. 562). During bodily emotion work, people will try to change or control symptoms that are exhibited due to emotions felt. The example Hochschild provides is that of someone who takes deep breaths and tries not to tremble (p. 562). Expressive emotion work calls on people to change their outward expressions so as to change their inner emotions. Similar to display rules, Hochschild introduces the concept of "feeling rules" in emotion work, the set of socially-constructed rules that dictate, for example, the sadness we "should" feel after the death of a loved one or the anger we believe we are entitled to feel after being slighted (p. 562).

Based on my data analysis, I advance two findings as they pertain to women sportscasters and emotion work. First, it appears emotion work is commonplace for women in the sportscasting industry as a result of the double standards and harassment they are often forced to endure. As the data also illustrate, women sportscasters often use emotion-work systems as a way of navigating the trials and tribulations associated with being women in a male-dominated industry. As these women undergo their emotion work – either in concert with their support systems or through their own volition – they usually employ two of the three types of emotion work referenced above: cognitive and, to a lesser extent, expressive.

Secondly, because of double standards and harassment, emotion work is a task that is essentially required of women sportscasters, due to feeling rules associated with industries in which men dominate. These feeling rules call on women in sportscasting to accept the need to exhibit emotions that contradict those that are induced by the double standards and harassment. Many of the women I interviewed – as well as my focus group informants – spoke of a need for women sportscasters to develop what many of them called "thick skin," which can be defined as having the ability to not (appear to) be insulted, angered, or saddened in the face of harassment or unfair treatment. As I show in this chapter, the "pinch" for women sportscasters typically occurs immediately after cases of harassment or unfair treatment. In these instances, the feelings that often ensue neither match those that the woman sportscaster wants to feel ("happy," "confident," or "empowered") nor what she believes she is permitted to feel or exhibit, lest her emotions be perceived as emblematic of weakness or of a "difficult" employee or colleague. The additional emotion work that is required of women sportscasters can have the effect of driving some women away from the industry, as the data also demonstrate.

I conclude this chapter by further arguing that the emotion work required of women sportscasters contributes to the gendered structure of the sportscasting industry (and sports in general) by calling upon women to necessarily accept patronizing support and assistance from male managers, colleagues, family members and friends. Because this support primarily comes from men – due to their predominance at all levels of the industry – women are, once again, subordinated within the industry. The perception, as constructed through discourse and undergirded by the expectation of woman sportscaster emotion management, is that no matter how qualified these women are to be

sportscasters, and however unfair their experiences are, gendered mistreatment is to be expected. As a result, there is an assumption that women in the industry will need to learn to calibrate their emotions so as to reflect that expectation. Not only does this paternalistic support position men within the industry as superior and women as both inferior and vulnerable, it also permits the industry to establish woman sportscaster display and feeling rules. This discursive practice makes the industry complicit in the normalization of sportscasting's gendered double standards and harassment. Lastly, the expectation that women sportscasters manage their feelings through emotion work, with very little meaningful support, is a key component of the postfeminist neoliberal female sportscaster subjectivity.

Emotional Labor, Thick Skin, and Trolls

As stated above, emotional labor is emotion management – or the act of intentionally (not) "feeling" a specific emotion – that transpires within the workplace. Hochschild argues this form of labor is a quotidian expectation for service industry workers who are called upon to feel happy and friendly and is compensated with the wages they earn. Emotional labor is also commonplace for women sportscasters, though the compensation they receive in exchange for this labor is social capital, which may serve as a substitute for actual compensation commensurate with that male sportscasters receive.

I define social capital in a workplace context as an intangible asset one accrues to varying degrees that allows that person to influence relationships with (and decision-making by) others. To be sure, women sportscasters, as I have defined them in this dissertation, are not "decision-makers" per se; they do no generally have much say in

hiring decisions, for example. Instead, the sort of influence I believe women in on-air positions in the industry accumulate is the kind of influence that allows them to be hired, retained, and promoted. That is, based on my interviews and textual analysis, there appears to be a prevailing assumption that a woman sportscaster who does not accrue social capital through emotional labor can find it difficult to navigate the industry, particularly early in one's career.

This strategy of gaining social capital through emotional labor was evident in the case of Marie, the sports reporter/anchor from the midsized Eastern market, whose story I referenced in Chapter VI. In her early-20s and in her first job out of college, Marie endured hostile environment sexual harassment from a sports director who not only cornered her in their station's small audio booth but also thought it necessary to know when Marie would menstruate. "I was terrified," she said, "but I didn't really say anything to [the station's executives] at that moment because I had just gotten the job and I felt like I couldn't say anything. I didn't want to have their attention right from the start." In Marie's case, the harassment she endured evoked a feeling of terror. But, in her view, she could not display that emotion to her superiors because of the social capital (or lack thereof) she had accrued at her station.

Emotional labor is also manifest in the belief that, as many of the women I interviewed expressed, women sportscasters have to have "thick skin." In all instances, "thick skin" was used to describe the temperament a woman sportscaster must present in the face of unjust and gendered criticism and mistreatment. A central component of one's temperament is the emotions they display. Thus, the act of developing a thick skin is a form of emotional labor. Women sportscasters believe, in order to enter and thrive in the

industry, they must develop the ability to display a calm, unaffected temperament when facing gendered mistreatment.

While both men and women in on-air broadcasting positions often speak of the need for thick skin, the thick skin they respectively develop make them seemingly impervious to different forms of critique. A man sportscaster might endure harsh and even insulting criticism for a poor performance. In such a case, the man sportscaster's gender, a key component of his (self-)identity, is not usually used to belittle or dehumanize him. In response to criticism of poor performance for example, a male sportscaster can alter or improve his performance after enduring harsh criticism. On the other hand, a woman sportscaster, as discussed throughout this dissertation, often endures criticism and mistreatment that is rooted in (hetero)sexism. A cisgender woman sportscaster, however, cannot become a cisgender man in the face of criticism that is only given as a result of her being a woman. A woman sportscaster *could* become a transgender man, but I am not aware of such a man working in sports media as an on-air personality. In addition, given the transphobia that exists in society at large, evidenced by the introduction of numerous state "bathroom" bills, it is fair to question the idea that a transgender male sportscaster would not also be subjected to transphobia. This would render any transition for the purpose of gaining acceptance to most likely be moot. The distinction between the respective purposes of male and female sportscaster "thick skin" represents another inequitable obstacle women in sportscasting often grapple with.

Amelia, the RSN reporter and host from a large Western market, spoke about what she perceived to be the importance of developing thick skin as she discussed the negative attention she has seen other women sportscasters receive simply for being

women. “[Mistreatment] can leave a mark, right? So, then, you would not feel confident…but I think you also have to have thick skin.” Amelia then recounted times, early in her career, in which male athletes she covered gave her skeptical looks in responses to questions she asked, simply because she, as a woman, was the one asking the questions. In her mind, women reporters who aspire to successful careers – however those are defined – have no choice but to maintain a positive attitude despite such interactions. According to Amelia, “For the women out there that go in with a negative attitude about it – [those interactions] can be damning.”

While Amelia’s comments might seem dismissive of the gendered mistreatment women sportscasters endure, they are emblematic of the active management of one’s emotions despite gendered mistreatment. The accrual of social workplace capital is a motivating factor in the woman sportscaster’s active performance of emotional labor. Moreover, Amelia’s comments imply this performance also serves as a form of cognitive emotion work, in which women sportscasters manage their thoughts as a way of altering the emotions they display. The phrase “fake it ‘til you make it” applies here; in theory, if a woman sportscaster can actively feign an unaffected disposition, it becomes easier to actually be unaffected. ESPN’s Michelle Beadle echoed this sentiment in a profile of her in the *Hollywood Reporter*: “It’s definitely a business where if you’re self-conscious at all, you either grow a thick skin or at least fake like you have one” (2013, p. 10). These data suggest that once a woman sportscaster does the work of dissociating herself from her feelings, it becomes easier to accrue the sort of social capital she needs to thrive and advance in the industry. This approach also suggests the importance of emotion management in a neoliberal and increasingly postfeminist society, insofar as women

sportscasters must take it upon themselves to be entrepreneurial, or resourceful and resilient, in their response to gendered mistreatment. The expectation that women need to be enterprising in this case is emblematic of a component of the female sportscaster subjectivity.

Instead of displaying the emotions that harassment and the like evoke, my interviews suggest women in the sportscasting industry have accepted the idea that the best way to subvert workplace mistreatment is to actively display emotions that are not actually felt. One such strategy often employed by the women I interviewed is the use of humor. “I use humor as a deflection,” said Nancy, the hall of fame semi-retired host and reporter. “That was my thing. That’s how I got through it.” Hannah, the mid-20s anchor/reporter from a small town RSN, took a similar tack earlier in her career. Whenever Hannah, a reporter at the time, expressed an interest in expanding her skills by attempting the anchor role, her general manager would discourage her from doing so by using language she deemed “very inappropriate.” Although she admitted wanting to respond by saying, “Don’t talk to me that way,” Hannah concluded that it was more appropriate to display an unaffected disposition. “So, it’s one of those things, where I just suck it up and smile and laugh it off, pretty much.” Both Nancy and Hannah have endured workplace interactions that left them feeling insulted and/or humiliated and have found that the best way to display “thick skin” is by laughing at the insulting or humiliating comments. This strategy has become increasingly expected as sexism in the postfeminist moment is often framed in “irony and knowingness,” blurring the lines between that which is sexist and that which is meant to be humorous or satirical (Gill, 2007, p. 266).

But what happens when sexism is obvious and is purposefully injurious, such as the sort of comments directed at Julie DiCaro in the *#MoreThanMean* PSA? Given the increasing expectation that women sportscasters interact with their audience online – and the harassment women endure therein – the social media environment has become another site of emotional labor for women in sportscasting. Jane, the freelance reporter in the Western United States, shared the same sentiment expressed by Nancy and Amelia: an unaffected disposition is required for women sportscasters, even in response to online harassment. "You have to have thick skin in this business," Jane said, echoing this ubiquitous refrain, which preceded an even more revealing comment:

> You have to think that – and people shared this with me in the industry – [it] just tends to be [that] the people who fire back the fastest or whatnot are the ones who literally just sit on their couch all day, and they get pleasure in being rude and harsh and whatever it is, attacking, bullying you, and you have to let it slide.

A discursive reading of Jane's comment suggests cognitive emotion work. She, in consultation with others within the industry, believes that an effective way of dealing with online harassers is to imagine them as trolls who find joy in emotionally harming others. According to the theory, this approach helps women sportscasters to understand the purpose of the harassment and makes it easier to (pretend to) ignore. In this instance of cognitive emotion work, by changing the image she has of her harassers, she hopes to change the emotions she feels when she encounters them.

According to Patricia (the mid-20s anchor/reporter for a local station in the Eastern U.S.), the strategy of ignoring her harassers is easier said than done. "Sometimes you get really down on yourself when people write in just absolutely trashing you," she said before noting that the harshest and most unjust criticism she receives is related to her

appearance and not her performance. Ultimately, however, Patricia is quite familiar with emotion work. She used the phrase "have to have a thick skin," or some variation, three times when discussing her experiences. The contexts in which she used it suggest she is not using the phrase passively. When discussing the viewers who endlessly comment on her appearance, for example, Patricia admitted using a similar approach to the one detailed by Jane above:

> And it's from people who I know have nothing else better to do than to sit at home and just hate everything they see – and unfortunately there are a bunch of miserable human beings out there. So, it's just kind of like I have to put it out of my mind and have a thick skin about it.

In other words, because her harassers behave in this manner, she feels obligated to manage her emotions – in a *Hochschildian* sense – by reframing her harassers in her mind as trolls, making it easier for her to ignore them. Later in her interview, Patricia implied that her harassers are not trolls but human beings engaging in anti-social behavior that compels her to manage her emotions. "We shouldn't have to have a thick skin. People should know better than to comment on those things. But it is what it is." These comments demonstrate that Patricia is an active participant in emotional labor and that she views it as a compulsory task.

While Patricia did not use the terms "emotional labor" or "performance" to describe her approach to contending with online harassment, her comments demonstrate an awareness – also possessed by Nancy, Hannah, Michelle Beadle, and Jane above – that she is tasked with a performance indeed, one that requires her to display or intentionally evoke feelings that differ from those that are actually felt. Like the four women referenced above, Patricia has implicitly accepted emotional labor as a compulsory part of her job. To not do so would risk her social capital and her emotional

relationship with her career. After investing so much time and resources in training to be a sportscaster, Patricia and her peers have much to lose if they do not come to enjoy their jobs. This feeling of enjoyment would be difficult to achieve if negative feelings were evoked and displayed with each instance of harassment or mistreatment. The desire to thrive in and enjoy one's career thus appears to be a motivating factor in the acceptance of emotional labor.

Many workers (e.g., customer service representatives, flight attendants, and servers) also encounter emotional labor as an essential job duty. However, unlike women sportscasters, service workers are trained by their employers – many of whom have elaborate customer service training modules – to handle upset and unruly guests after they successfully apply for jobs that call for the maintenance of a demeanor that is at once calm, friendly, hospitable, and warm. Conversely, most women sportscasters acquire their journalistic skills through college training and, in many cases, internships. Neither from personal observation nor from my interviews am I aware of an institution or media organization that prepares future or new sports journalists for the emotional labor they need to perform when entering the workforce, particularly in response to online harassment. This would seem more important now than ever, given the growing expectation that sportscasters actively maintain an online presence.

Even if there was such training for sports journalism students, there still would be no such preparation for the students who do not pursue that course of study. Paula, the early-30s RSN anchor and host, was not a sports journalism student and admitted to being surprised when she entered the industry, to the extent that she "didn't know what I was getting myself into. I didn't realize how tough of skin I needed to [have] in the

business, to be honest." In truth, even if colleges and media organizations undertook emotional labor training of some kind, it likely would not be as effective or as applicable as that which service industry employers offer, which can be more general in such training. Unlike women in most service industries, women sportscasters have their work and likenesses distributed to wide audiences and archived in perpetuity. As was the case with Sarah Spain, as referenced in Chapter VI, this allows for the repetitive gendered mistreatment by way of references by many social media users to previous work and/or appearances.

Samantha, the early-20s sports talk radio anchor, also described an approach similar to that used by many of the women above, but her experience also demonstrates the difficulties associated with emotional labor. In one instance, reacting to an online comment that she "belonged in the kitchen," Samantha also cognitively reframed her harassment as coming from a troll, aiding her emotional labor. "For all I know," she said, "you're a girl that's jealous or a guy in your mom's basement. So, I try really hard and that one didn't bother me." Samantha's second sentence implies two things. First, it is indeed no simple task to display an unaffected disposition in the face of negative comments made about her online, something she admitted a few moments later. "I try not to let those things bother me, and some days I'm better at it than others." The second implication is that she has received comments that *have* bothered her, such as the suggestion, referenced in Chapter VI, that she receive lip injections. When comments like that are made, she says, "I never let it upset my [ability to do my] job or let anyone know it's bothering me [but] for a while my confidence was not very good [after that comment]."

After the lip injection comment, instead of cognitively reframing her harasser and feigning indifference, Samantha admitted that she was upset. In this case, to cope with the interaction and to help manage her emotions, she sought the assistance of a relative. This approach exemplifies Hochschild's emotion-work system, a significant component of her conceptualization of emotion work and one that is often used by women sportscasters.

Emotion Work, Emotion-Work Systems, and Patronizing Support

Emotion work represents another form of emotion management for women sportscasters, albeit one that is employed less often. For women in the sportscasting industry, emotion work – which transpires outside the workplace – often includes the usage of an emotion-work system, as referenced in Samantha's case above. According to Hochschild (1979), an individual calls upon her emotion-work system, a network of close friends and family, to discuss the emotions of the day.

After a Twitter follower suggested that she consider receiving lip injections, Samantha sought the comfort of her mother to help her work through what Hochschild calls a "'pinch,' or a discrepancy, between what one does feel and what one wants to feel," (p. 562). What one believes is appropriate to feel often informs what one wants to feel (p. 562). In Samantha's case, she was insulted by the suggestion that she needed lip injections, yet wanted to feel – and thought it more appropriate to feel, for the sake of her relationship with her job – unaffected by the comment. "And I was kind of upset by it for a little bit, but my mom was like, 'Why? You're letting someone that's never seen you in person [determine] what you think about yourself.'…But then I [realized], like, yeah, you're right, they haven't seen me in person, so why do I care?" On the surface, and

certainly in Samantha's case, it appears that emotion-work systems can be a healthy outlet for working through one's emotions, especially if one has gotten in the habit of compartmentalizing her emotions. Emotion-work systems can be discursively problematic, however, especially if the system is comprised of male co-workers, friends and family.

Lizzy, the talk radio fantasy sports host, related to me in Chapter IV her experience as a young woman whose qualifications for a previous job were questioned on the basis that she earned her position by sleeping with athletes. "I could deal with the 'You only got your job because you're pretty,'" she said. "I could deal with the 'You only got your job because you're a girl.' But when they attacked my character … that really upset me." Lizzy later called this a "trying moment" that made her question her desire to work in sports media. Soon after receiving that comment, Lizzy recalled retreating to her car, crying, and calling her father who gave her what she described as a "harsh reality talk," one she did not want to have. This was a sign that she felt a Hochschildian discrepancy during her phone call, although it was unclear to me which emotion – either sadness or indifference – Lizzy wanted to reject since she considered her father's words harsh.

After telling Lizzy that she should not be upset because the assumption she had slept with athletes was not true, she said her father told her, "'This isn't going to get any easier for you.' You know, 'This is going to happen to you if you choose to go down this path of sports media.'" Lizzy's father told her that she needed to be confident in her abilities and ignore her doubters before adding, "'But you can't let them see you cry and you can't let them see you get upset because then they know that they've gotten to you.'"

Discursively, the message provided by Lizzy's father both supports and was supported by sports' and sports media's gendered structure. It is taken for granted that women in the sportscasting industry must endure harassment and other gendered mistreatment and the message Lizzy received – that she ought to expect mistreatment and display an unaffected attitude – normalizes the subordination of women in the industry.

Just like the diminished perceived credibility of women sportscasters discussed in Chapter IV, this is another instance in which an idea (in this case, that women in sports media should expect harassment) has proliferated even though no group of people intentionally sought to normalize the idea. This dissertation was conducted and written on the premise that, although power subordinates, it is not monolithic or always employed intentionally. Just as men did not collectively and actively decide to impose a double standard of appearance so as to weaken female sportscaster credibility, men did not collectively issue a decree that instructs all people to view gendered double standards and harassment – and the emotion work that they necessitate – as normal. Instead, this knowledge was constructed iteratively through everyday as well as authoritative discourse over a lengthy period of time. However, as power is fluid, it is possible, albeit through a concerted effort, to discursively modify perceptions of what is normal. So long as women sportscasters are advised to accept yet ignore mistreatment, cultural and structural change is unlikely to happen.

Consider the case of Sam Ponder who wrote a blog post about the very first time she used Twitter professionally (2013). Similar to Samantha's experience, another Twitter user suggested Ponder undergo cosmetic surgery to augment her breasts. After her initial reaction to the tweets, she confided in her emotion-work system. Her family

gave her the usual encouragement, which included a directive from her father to "consider the source" (para. 15), and she was encouraged, once again, to view her harassers as trolls. Ponder also enlisted the advice of Aaron Taylor, a former professional football player and sportscaster with whom Ponder had previously worked. His response was not a suggestion as much as it was a philosophical reading of the situation. In his view, "people can only hurt your feelings in areas [in which] you're already insecure. Does a tall guy care if someone calls him short?" (para. 17). Although Taylor likely meant well, his comment implicitly endorsed the gendered mistreatment of women sportscasters. He seems to suggest that Ponder needs to employ emotion work to project an unaffected demeanor. To do otherwise, then, would be to imply that the comment was true, which would encourage more comments. Patricia received a much different response from a male colleague after she shared with him some comments she received. "He just was like, 'I am so sorry that you have to deal with this shit constantly because it's so unacceptable that people think that it's perfectly fine.'" This comment serves as an acknowledgement that the behavior that compels people to harass women sportscasters online is not normal. In the absence of consistent emotional and structural support such as this, however, women sportscasters are required to regulate their emotions and negotiate the compartmentalization the job necessarily requires at present.

Learning to manage emotions is a key component of the postfeminist neoliberal female sportscaster subjectivity. Postfeminism not only requires women to constantly self-regulate their emotions – among other bodily processes such as menstruation, pregnancy, weight and so on – as a means of ensuring job security and satisfaction, they are expected to do this work without much meaningful support. The commonsensical

tenor of these expectations demonstrates the mutually-informing relationship between postfeminism and neoliberalism, insofar as one helps justify the need for the other.

The consequences for individuals, and the industry at large, when women sportscasters choose not to manage their emotions further justifies and naturalizes the postfeminist neoliberal discourse undergirding expectations of emotion management. That is, my data imply that when a woman sportscaster chooses not to manage her emotions, she can be deemed to be not "tough" enough or resourceful enough to navigate the industry's obstacles for women. Marking women this way allows the industry to be more resolute in its notion that women sportscasters need to have thick skin – after all, "she didn't make it" – even though it may be more accurate to say that the industry has ignored the challenges that cause women to have to manage their emotions in the first place. While emotion management serves as a short-term panacea that allows women sportscasters to navigate the industry, it would be naïve to ignore the possibility that this increasingly essential job function might make the job less desirable for women, contributing to sportscasting's marginalization of women.

Emotion Management's Contribution to the Marginalization of Women in Sportscasting

In an article written for *The Athletic*, Lisa Olson (2017) – the sportswriter who, as detailed in Chapter II, was reassigned from her job at *The Boston Globe* to one in Australia after an instance of locker room harassment – exposes an adage that is, as Olson describes it, discursively taught to "every female" who enters the sports media industry. "Check your dignity at the door," she writes (para. 3). If women in the industry, including women sportscasters, are willing to accept that they can never display their true feelings

(to others or, to a lesser extent, to themselves) after experiencing harassment or mistreatment, they may find that they can enjoy successful careers in the business. "Forget your dignity, keep your head down and you'll get along fine. If you're extremely lucky you might even go an entire season without an incident that demeans or belittles you, makes you feel as if you barely exist" (para. 3).

As I have argued throughout this chapter, emotion management serves as a tool that aids women sportscasters' efforts to "check their dignity at the door." But as I have also argued, emotion management has also become another essential job function, one that, for women sportscasters, ought to be included in "other duties as assigned." Given these arguments then, it becomes easier to imagine an instance in which the added burden of emotion management might be too much for one person to bear.

It becomes easier still to imagine an earlier "breaking point" for those women sportscasters who are non-white, non-cishet, are in committed relationships, are parents, or those who might be away from home for the very first time. This is what very nearly happened to Paula, the Latina RSN reporter and anchor. A native of a coastal region, Paula's first five-and-a-half years in the business took her to rural, conservative markets far from home. One day, she received what she thought was her first fan letter. Instead, it was hate mail that asked her, among other things, to "do us all a favor and get the hell off our television screen." According to Paula, letters and emails like this were regular occurrences throughout the first five years of her career before she moved to her current, more metropolitan market.

Given the demographics of her early-career markets, the fact that she was the only woman sportscaster of color in those markets at those times, the fact that it was well-

known that she was in an interracial relationship, and the fact that viewers often yearned in their correspondence with her to see more of – as she describes him – her less accomplished, monotone, "cookie cutter" white male colleague, Paula equally chalked up the seemingly endless wave of disapproval to race *and* gender. None of the criticism she endured made as much of an emotional impact as that first letter, however. "Getting that piece of mail, it broke me," she said. "And the fact that it was continuously happening for five straight years was really heart-breaking, and really hard for me not to start believing what they said." Although Paula persisted and has no qualms about her career choice now, she said she very nearly left the industry during those first five years.

As it relates to the topic of gendered harassment and mistreatment in sports media, we generally hear about the women who, like Paula, used emotion management to persevere and find a comfortable niche within the industry. Rarely, however, do we hear from those who voluntarily leave the industry or those who, like Stephanie the baseball podcaster, hesitate to pursue a full-fledged career in the industry because of the burden emotion management places on women sportscasters. Although Stephanie admitted that much of her hesitancy stems from the fact that she has already put her "day job" at risk by podcasting, she also stated that she would be more likely to want to become a full-time sportscaster "if it didn't come with all that baggage." Stephanie expressed a belief that a career as a baseball sportscaster would be fun "if somebody was just going to pay me to sit in front of a camera and talk about baseball all the time … but it's not quite enough for me for all the crap that comes with it." This comment suggests that, in Stephanie's view, emotion management is an essential job duty that cannot be divorced from a woman sportscaster's job.

The story of Lisa Guerrero, a former *Monday Night Football* sideline reporter and current investigative reporter for *Inside Edition*, provides an example of a woman sportscaster who voluntarily left the industry in part because the emotion management it required outweighed its benefits. In Lisa Olson's *Athletic* article referenced above, Guerrero told the story of the time she was humiliated at Fox Sports' roast of sports media personality and former Major League Baseball player John Kruk. As Guerrero puts it, sitting on stage with her colleagues from Fox Sports' *The Best Damn Sports Show Period*, she quickly became the target of the roast, enduring humiliating cracks about her breasts and her supposed ability to get elusive interviews because she slept with athletes. Guerrero told Olson, after being brought to tears during the event, "I was so thrown and shaken from that John Kruk roast, it nearly broke me. After *Monday Night Football*, I went into a hole for a year. It completely flipped the script for me [as to] how I felt about myself and my value as a reporter" (para. 43).

Although, as Olson wrote, most women in sports media are implicitly or directly told to check their dignity at the door, it seems this episode required too much of Guerrero's dignity. In addition, although it is difficult to imagine anything equaling fair recompense for her humiliating experience, Guerrero was powerless to seek restitution. As Olson also wrote, "Women who complained were [seen as] women who didn't belong in [the] business" (para. 42). Although she never stated in the article that this episode caused her to leave the industry, Guerrero tweeted a link to the article along with a message that read, "Lots of people thru [sic] the years have asked me why I left sports broadcasting. In this wonderful article…I finally share one of the many reasons why" (Guerrero, 2017).

As I stated at the end of the previous section, the emotion management stemming from harassment and gender inequality contributes to an institutional structure in which women are left on the periphery. The choice for women who are either in or are considering entering the industry is clear: accept the status quo – in which women in the industry are humiliated, harassed, belittled, or otherwise subordinated – leave, or do not enter. No matter what a woman chooses, men are discursively maintained as superior. In accepting the status quo, male sportscasters are not sexually harassed or belittled due to their gender. Because of this, they are less likely to want to voluntarily leave the industry while gainfully employed. Similarly, because male sportscasters do not endure the same challenges that women sportscasters do, men very rarely have to weigh the potential loss of their dignity – or the emotion management the job requires – against their desire to enter the field. This makes men more likely than women to attempt to enter the industry. Although this could be a positive development for women who would encounter less competition from other women sportscasters, as I reported in Chapter V, fewer on-air roles are available for women sportscasters than are available for men. In sum, then, we can see that the structure of the sportscasting industry – buttressed by the expectation of woman sportscaster emotion management – ensures that men are likely to continue to dominate the industry. In this section, I set out to demonstrate the discursive dangers associated with conditioning women in the industry to expect harassment and gendered mistreatment. When we do that, we risk losing and discouraging those women who are in or are considering a career as a sportscaster.

Conclusion

Emotion management – and the expectation thereof – by women sportscasters in response to gendered double standards and harassment contributes to both the gendered structure of the sportscasting industry and the construction of a postfeminist neoliberal sportscaster subjectivity. Emotion management supports the continued invisibility of women in sportscasting to the extent that it discourages many women from pursuing or continuing careers as sportscasters. As expressed by Stephanie and Lisa Guerrero, emotion management cannot be divorced from the other duties required of women sportscasters and can outweigh the benefits associated with a job in the industry.

Women in the industry are also expected to manage their emotions with little to no meaningful support, further contributing to the postfeminist neoliberal subjectification of women sportscasters. As my data have demonstrated throughout this dissertation, postfeminist media culture – in this case, exemplified by self-help articles in women's magazines such as *Cosmopolitan* and *Marie Claire* – pervasively calls on women to manage their emotions, appearance, and sexuality, among other things. This expectation of self-regulation, coupled with a lack of meaningful emotional support – or the predominance of that which is patronizing – is rooted in neoliberal logic. As a result of the socially-embedded normalization of gendered mistreatment, the emotion-work systems these women confide in usually fail to provide meaningful support insofar as they often reinforce and normalize the mistreatment these women endure. Given this normalization of gendered mistreatment, there often appears to be no need for a solution to the issues of gendered double standards, bias in hiring, harassment, and the emotion management they both require. Thus, the sportscasting industry is seemingly absolved of any responsibility for the persistence of these phenomena. As I state in the next and final

chapter, however, given the forgoing analyses of double standards, bias, harassment, and emotion management, there are solutions if the industry recognizes the iterative processes through which these phenomena have been normalized.

Chapter VIII – Conclusion and Discussion

Through Foucauldian discourse analysis, I have attempted to show how the American female sportscaster subjectivity is constructed through postfeminist and neoliberal discourses, and how that subjectivity is brought to bear on the material experiences of American women sportscasters. That is, women in the sportscasting industry are looked upon, thought of, spoken about, spoken to, and treated by men *and* women according to expectations that are narrow and notions that are often paradoxical. These notions leave little room for feminist critique and, because of their relationship with neoliberalism, make women sportscasters solely responsible for their own success or failure. The sportscasting industry's pervasive postfeminist and neoliberal discourses are problematic to the extent that they absolve the industry of any responsibility for the way women sportscasters are treated. This absolution therefore leads to an industry that has little impetus to take steps to make the industry more inclusive and supportive of women and results in the persistence of the quantitative and discursive marginalization of women in the industry. Because of the marginalization of women in the industry in general, many women who are in the industry suffer inequitable working conditions, which makes some women choose to either voluntarily leave or not pursue careers in the industry. The treatment of women sportscasters overall therefore also has ramifications for sports media consumers, who lose the perspectives of some women who may have otherwise had access to information or offered perspectives currently not found within the industry.

According to my analysis of the data I collected, the presently-sophisticated marginalization of women sportscasters is evident in at least four phenomena: gendered double standards, sex bias in hiring and training, harassment, and the expectation of

affective labor. Many of these phenomena mutually inform each other. All of them contribute, to varying degrees, to the discursive construction of a postfeminist neoliberal female sportscaster subjectivity. None of these four phenomena are unique to the sportscasting industry, nor are they the result of measures taken by individual actors. Instead, my analysis provides an illustration of how a set of socially-embedded practices inform institutional power exercised by the sportscasting industry and how that power is brought to bear on the industry and many of the women it puts on the air. Conversely, my findings also illustrate the ways in which sportscasting as an institution uniquely participates in the normalization of these socially-embedded practices.

In this final chapter, I move beyond the analysis that preceded it and discuss the theoretical implications of the findings reported in Chapters IV through VII and tie them to what they mean for the institution of sportscasting. I conclude the chapter by offering possible solutions that can help the sportscasting industry begin to affect greater equality for women, by proposing avenues for future research.

Theoretical and Institutional Implications

Unlike much of the extant scholarship that examines gender and sports media, this dissertation is not a quantitative study and is therefore neither a statistical analysis of survey entries nor a presentation of the results of a content analysis. In the absence of statistical data, this dissertation does not claim to "prove," for example, that the majority of sports media consumers like hearing a woman's voice during a broadcast of a men's sporting event. In truth, given the extant scholarship, I would expect such a quantitative study, especially one that controls for social desirability bias, to demonstrate that sports media consumers generally do *not* like hearing women. This would be my expectation

because this attitude is apparent in the extant scholarship, in the data I analyzed, and in everyday conversations I have either had, overheard, or read on the Internet. In other words, a disdain for women's voices during broadcasts of men's sports has been normalized and, as a result, sports media consumers, men *and* women, have come to conclude that women do not belong in the sportscasting booth.

For decades, sports media scholars have sought to affect change within the sports media industry by using quantitative data to prove the disparities that exist between, say, the coverage of men's and women's sports or the number of men and women working in the industry. The reliance on quantitative research stems from a Western-centric notion that unbiased, objective truth can be obtained through positivism, embodied by quantitative research. While I do not mean to suggest quantitative research is *never* effective, as sports media scholars have come to realize, quantitative data have not affected much industrial change. This is perhaps due, in part, to the fact that data only confirm what the industry already knows: the media do not provide equitable coverage of women's sports and men hold the majority of positions in the industry. To industry decision-makers, these statistics serve as evidence of "common sense" realities that cannot be changed. It may also be that the statistics offered by sports media scholars do not offer a complete picture of the issue at hand. In the hypothetical study of media consumer willingness to listen to women's voices above, if the results told us audiences were not willing, neither scholars nor the industry would know *why* this was the case. This would allow the industry to conveniently dismiss the bias for women's voices as a "scientifically-proven" human predisposition towards men's voices, a dismissal that avoids any acknowledgement of the industry's responsibility for the phenomenon.

To this end, I undertook this dissertation using the epistemological framework(s) I used because I believe they offer a more nuanced understanding of the issue of gender inequality in sportscasting. Foucault's power/knowledge paradigm does not claim to be able to prove anything. In fact, it implicitly rejects the notion of "proof" because it also, more explicitly, rejects the notion of a singular truth. According to Foucault and his contemporaries, the truth is subjective insofar as the truths we hold are constructed by discourse and are therefore fluid. I have not attempted to prove anything. The experiences of the ten women I interviewed cannot and should not be read as representative of the experiences of *all* women in the industry. However, this dissertation is an attempt to demonstrate how the truths that many media consumers and industry professionals hold regarding women sportscasters have been iteratively constructed over time so as to appear "real." In the case of the disdain for women's voices, using power/knowledge, we now know this truth has likely been, at least in some small measure, learned through the exclusionary and narrow representation of women in the industry, and is not a natural or monolithically-imposed reality. If these constructions of the "real" are fluid, then the upshot of this approach is that it also offers an avenue through which many of the discursively constructed female sportscaster "truths" can be reverse engineered to construct new truths.

It would therefore behoove sports media organizations to be proactive. Bringing about change for the sake of greater equality for women would be a noble pursuit in and of itself. As Foucauldian power is fluid, though, there may come a time – however unlikely it seems at the moment – when structures of power and knowledge work against the institution of sportscasting and its current gendered hierarchy. At such a point, those

sports media organizations that have not made efforts toward greater equality for women may find that their practices regarding the treatment of women sportscasters (and even women's sports coverage) have become antiquated. As of 2018, there is evidence that the pendulum may already be swinging in that direction. Sports media critics have shined a light on a groundswell of support for ESPN's Doris Burke, at age 52, to be promoted to the network's top NBA announcing crew as an analyst, with this support calling for Burke to replace former NBA player and coach Mark Jackson, whose analysis is deemed by many to be inferior to Burke's (Koo, 2018). This potential development, both of the pendulum swing and sports media organizations' failure to recognize it, could be much like the present moment in which sports media organizations are reeling as a result of not proactively adapting to the changes in media consumption brought about by digital technology.

Station and network executives may wonder if the aforementioned discursive shift has not already taken place. Indeed, national sports networks like ESPN have made significant progress in integrating women into their studio shows like *SportsCenter* and in the booth. NBC Sports Nework employed former U.S. Olympic women's hockey player AJ Mleczko as a booth analyst during its 2018 coverage of the NHL's Stanley Cup Playoffs. Fox Sports utilized Aly Wagner, a former U.S. Women's National Team member, in a similar role during the 2018 FIFA Men's World Cup. Additionally, as evidenced by the women I interviewed, local television stations, sports talk radio stations, and regional sports networks have shown an increased willingness to hire women to cover sports. However, as I have already implied, and as evidenced by reports of hostility toward women at ESPN, quantitative data can be deceiving; although more women are on

air than ever, as a result of the gendered mistreatment documented in this dissertation, that does not mean men and women in the industry enjoy equitable working conditions. Station and network executives know this. Consider this comment – as told by Jane, the late-30s freelance reporter – made by a male general manager to a group of new women hired by Jane's former full-time employer, a Western RSN:

> "I'm not saying I support this. I'm not saying I like it, but I'm saying this is how it is…The reality is, we're going to put you all on TV, and your male counterparts are going to…be judged [by the audience] in a different way.
>
> The reality in this building, at our network, [is] you're probably also going to be held to that different standard, just because our product reflects our ratings and our approval ratings and viewership, so it's going to come down to being a business decision."
>
> He was making it very clear in my first week that, "Hey, I recognize this. It's not fair, but this is how it is, and you need to step up to that."

This general manager knows that women in the industry, at the very least, encounter double standards. Because of postfeminism and neoliberalism, however, he is not only absolved of any responsibility for acting toward gender equity at his network but he is also permitted to use "ratings" and "business decision[s]" to justify making the women sportscasters at his station responsible for overcoming the gendered obstacles he readily acknowledges.

I am not so naïve as to not understand that ratings drive the sportscasting industry's decision-making. The industry's goal is to attract as many viewers and listeners to its content as possible to entice companies to advertise their products on their stations and networks. Through this process, electronic sports media organizations accrue advertising revenue, which pays for the organization's operating costs and fills the

coffers of its stakeholders. Therefore, sportscasting is very much a capitalistic enterprise, which brings with it a litany of issues for those who are marginalized. Because the industry is capitalistic, all other objectives, including achieving gender equality, are typically secondary or are, in many cases, non-existent. Even if we acknowledge that the industry is capitalistic – and therefore fraught with social "baggage" – what if accumulating good ratings and achieving gender equality need not be mutually-exclusive? If it is possible that media organizations can increase profits while also being socially conscious, to what extent does the industry need to be held accountable for the treatment of women sportscasters and women in society at large?

It is true that audience research suggests sports media consumers prefer their women sportscasters to look youthful, thin, and (usually) blonde or their play-by-play announcers to be men. However, as my usage of Foucault's power/knowledge in this dissertation demonstrates, these learned preferences can be more accurately described as expectations. Just as longstanding practices have led sports media consumers to expect men, in the absence of women, to narrate sporting events, industry decision-makers can rewrite these expectations. As evidenced by the cases of Jessica Mendoza and Beth Mowins, many sports media consumers will reject efforts to this effect. Nevertheless, if sportscasting wants to be more inclusive of women, their voices, and their opinions, the industry must be willing to risk initially alienating much of its consumer base while also perhaps attracting new consumers. I realize the benefits of this approach will not likely be realized until sometime after many of the current decision-makers have retired or moved on to other jobs. The task of reengineering audience expectations must begin, however,

with decision-makers willing eschew that status quo without being immediately praised for doing so.

Many decision-makers may also raise the argument that the gender inequities I have explored in this dissertation (double standards, sex bias, harassment, and emotion management) are not unique to the industry. However, I also stated that socially-embedded practices and beliefs are not prescribed monolithically. Instead, they are constructed through contributions made by a network of institutions. Sportscasting is one such institution and, thus, the persistence of these phenomena is partly informed by how they are manifest in sportscasting and other (mediated) institutions. I also understand that the quest for ratings is a motivating factor in the lagging effort to affect greater equality for women in the industry insofar as similar efforts have been politicized by partisan media outlets and politicians. In the current political climate, integrating women into the booth during men's sporting events is often viewed as being too "politically correct," or overly-concerned with equality and diversity. Much of the backlash women like Mendoza and Mowins encounter stems from a politically-driven and postfeminist notion that these women, and ESPN, are inexplicably and unnecessarily eschewing gender normative roles at the expense of otherwise qualified men. In other words, I understand the decision not to make changes toward greater equality for women in sportscasting is, by at least some small measure, driven by a desire to not alienate sports media consumers who may view any efforts toward diversity as unnecessarily virtuous.

This strategy seems safe and apolitical. However, it is an approach supported by tweets disseminated by U.S. President Donald Trump in response to ESPN personality Jemele Hill's claim that Trump is a "white supremacist" (Mandell, 2017). Trump

referenced ESPN's declining ratings, stating: "ESPN is paying a really big price for its politics (and bad programming). People are dumping it in RECORD numbers" (Trump, 2017, emphasis in original). Although Trump referenced ESPN's programming, the fact he separated it with parentheses and the context in which he made the comment suggests a belief that the network's politics have primarily been detrimental to its ratings. While ESPN's ratings *have* been falling and the network *has* been losing subscribers, the extent to which its "politics" – which also includes the network's propensity for discussing issues of gender and race in sport and its more inclusive hiring practices – and its "bad programming" have negatively impacted its ratings is unknown. Indeed, other factors such as media consumers' migration away from cable, toward streaming services such as Netflix and Hulu, have negatively impacted ratings for ESPN and other relatively apolitical cable networks such as TBS, TNT, and Discovery (Inside Radio, 2017). Nevertheless, many observers consider it a discursively constructed and taken-for-granted "truth" that ESPN's perceived "liberal bias" is the primary factor in its ratings decline (Clavio and Vooris, 2017). Many political pundits, including Rush Limbaugh, have pointed to ESPN's inclusive hiring practices as evidence of a network that is liberal and seemingly overly-virtuous ("LIMBAUGH," 2017).

Just as political "truths" can be discursively constructed and learned through messages and practices, media consumer expectations of who is qualified to provide commentary and narrations for certain sports can also be constructed and learned. The findings I have presented in this dissertation, and the lenses through which I arrived at them, suggest as much. To that end, I present a series of suggestions for the sportscasting industry that might make it a more inclusive space for more women and normalize the

presence of women in the industry. I offer these suggestions with the caveats that their desired results will take time to be realized, that they may not agree with the attitudes embedded in society at large, and, as a result, they may initially alienate some media consumers. However, if media consumers are alienated by the presence of a woman on a baseball broadcast simply because she is a woman, that is why these changes are worth considering. Mediated sports are often marketed by sports media outlets as a force that has the potential to unify people of varying identities for the benefit of society at large. Is that marketing, however, disingenuous if the industry does not utilize and support its employees according to these same ideals? If it is disingenuous, does that cancel out any of sports' potential for affecting social change?

During the 2018 FIFA Men's World Cup, a supposedly unifying mega-event, a Colombian reporter was sexually assaulted on live television (Gardner, 2018) while the controversial reaction to the presence of women as analysts in Britain during the BBC's coverage drew attention in the U.S. (Blum, 2018). The backlash against the BBC analysts may have been inevitable and comes from an effort to integrate more women into the coverage of a men's sport. Also, sexual assaults such as that encountered by the Colombian reporter happen to women across many institutions, not just sportscasting. Nevertheless, these events drew some attention away from what is supposed to be a celebration of competition and multiculturalism and shed light once again on the issues women in sportscasting often encounter. The industry, which extends beyond the U.S. context, bears at least some responsibility for both incidents, and the amount of attention they have garnered, given its historically-problematic representation of women. Is the industry comfortable with that culpability?

Suggestions for Improving Conditions for Women Sportscasters

The goal of the suggestions I make below, among others, is to get the audience accustomed to listening to women narrate and analyze men's sports while also making sportscasting a more enjoyable and attractive industry for women.

Addressing the Double Standard of Appearance

Because the double standard of appearance is the foundation upon which so many of the other obstacles are built, industry decision makers need to be intentional about deprioritizing appearance in the hiring and retention of female (and male) sportscasters. This does not mean that universally attractive woman sportscasters – those who are young, thin, long-haired, and white – should be disqualified from future job openings. Instead, this simply means the opposite, that women sportscasters who are not universally attractive should *not* be disqualified or viewed as less qualified than someone who they deem more attractive yet has inferior qualifications.

Decision makers will attempt to justify this double standard by citing the will of their audiences. While it is true that many sports media consumers might be initially surprised and perhaps even "turned off" by a deprioritization of appearance for women sportscasters, decision makers need to be undeterred in the face of any such criticism. Media organizations have sometimes shown a willingness to remain steadfastly committed to gender equity, as evidenced by their refusal to relent despite the criticism they have faced while incorporating women like Mendoza and Mowins into the broadcast booth. To justify a turn toward deprioritizing appearance as a way of fostering more equitable hiring and retention among woman sportscasters, decision makers would do well to heed the comments made by Jim Lampley, cited in Chapter V. Sports media

consumers primarily watch sports programming because of their interest in sports, not because of the women (and men) who appear on camera. There are other media industries (such as pornography) that rely on the presentation of attractive women to draw an audience. Sports media organizations are not among those industries and need not try to be.

Deprioritizing attractiveness among woman sportscasters would have many positive effects. For one, it would allow them to wear whatever clothing they deem to be comfortable. This does not mean that conservative attire would be mandated, just that revealing clothing would neither be expected nor rewarded. Working to eliminate the appearance double standard would give women sportscasters the latitude to wear what they want without feeling pressured to do otherwise. Making appearance less of a priority would also, in theory, open the door for women who, because of their identity(ies), do not meet the standards of universal attraction. Specifically, I mean non-white, non-cishet, non-thin women and people who are gender-fluid. This is not to suggest that people who fall into these categories are not attractive in their own right. Instead, I mean to suggest that a deprioritization of appearance will make irrelevant discursively constructed, normative notions of what constitutes attractiveness. These notions have typically excluded the women I just described. An unwillingness to participate in this turn would help justify the need for more female executives.

Perhaps the most wide-reaching effect of a deprioritization of appearance would be the increased perceived credibility of women sportscasters. This is not to suggest attractive women cannot be credible. Instead, I suggest that a prioritization of appearance gives the appearance of a lack skill among those women who are hired. Although the

relative invisibility of women in sports in general does women no favors, the sports media complex can help construct woman sportscasters as knowledgeable, trustworthy sources of sports information by hiring those with the most knowledge and the best abilities. This would help to eliminate, among other things, the assumed promiscuity and gendered skepticism I described in Chapter IV.

Responding to Harassment

Although the appearance and credibility double standards inform the harassment women in the sportscasting industry endure, harassment is very much part of a larger societal issue that needs addressing in and out of sports media. Still, sportscasting can aid in ending the normalization of gendered workplace and online harassment. First, women should not feel ashamed or at risk of losing their jobs because they menstruate or in instances in which they suffer a miscarriage or become pregnant. Given the illegality of this practice, this suggestion would seem to go without saying, but in light of the discourse analyzed in Chapter V, that is not the case.

To help curb this type of workplace harassment, I suggest that media organizations, especially larger ones with more resources and more women employees (such as national networks and RSNs) establish a role that is independent of the human resources department but performs a similar function as a university's Title IX office. In sportscasting, the person in this role would be tasked with ensuring that the media organization complies with all EEOC regulations vis-à-vis harassment (based on gender and other protected classes). To eliminate potential conflicts of interest, the person in this role would report to an executive of the highest possible rank (i.e., a general manager) and work with human resources to investigate any claims of workplace harassment. This

position may seem unnecessary, given the universal presence of a human resources office. However, given the relatively larger predominance of men in sportscasting, it stands to reason that such a position, one that can act relatively independently, might be necessary.

Aside from administrative changes, the industry can help curb the harassment of women sportscasters by fully supporting women when they say they have been harassed. This means not dismissing their feelings or normalizing their harassers' behaviors. Women who are harassed by the athletes and coaches they cover should be allowed to distance themselves and should not be forced by the industry to succumb to pressure from superiors or sources to do otherwise. Further, sources and superiors who do harass woman sportscasters should be dealt with. To ignore their behavior normalizes it and leaves open the possibility they may harass other women. In the case of sources, a lack of acknowledgement makes it impossible for women to cover them or their teams. Lastly, a commitment to ending harassment against women sportscasters means that male superiors and peers need to also speak out against (rather than ignore) observed acts of workplace and online harassment, and to educate their audiences as to why harassment is wrong. To not do this is tantamount to complicity. Addressing these practices, meanwhile, will help lessen the emotional load on women in the industry, which, in turn, will make it more desirable for women who are considering entering or staying in the business. This increased desirability would theoretically help increase the visibility of women in the industry.

Making Women More Visible

Another action that sportscasting could take to make women in the industry more visible would be to include more women's voices not just in live sports broadcasts but also in presentations of historicized sporting events. These presentations should include sports documentaries, which, thanks to the proliferation of regularly televised series such as ESPN's *30 for 30*, NFL Network's *A Football Life*, and HBO's *24/7* (which offers a behind the scenes look at athletes and teams as they prepare for future events), have become an essential part of sports media consumption. Taking up this practice would serve multiple purposes. First, it would help prime the sports media consumer base for hearing women's voices during broadcasts and other sports media products. Having women narrate historicized sports might also encourage more women to enter the field in roles in which they primarily use their voices (play-by-play or color commentary). This strategy may also encourage more industry executives and college programs to afford women the opportunity to train for the broadcast booth. In essence, the premise behind this strategy of making women's voices more prominent would be to make it more reasonable for everyone to imagine hearing (and enjoying) women provide commentary during sporting events.

Avenues for Future Research

So long as gender inequality persists in sportscasting, there exists plentiful opportunities for future research. Given the arguments that there are neither high levels of interest among women for commentary roles nor adequate preparation for women who might otherwise aspire to those roles, it would also be worthwhile to examine the ways in which collegiate sports media programs contribute to the industry's gendered structure.

Mass mediated texts and subjective experiences are not the only discourse through which identities are constructed. Teachers and parents (who pass their views and behaviors along to their progeny) play significant roles in teaching young people not just knowledge that can be found in textbooks, but also which behaviors and attitudes are acceptable. Thus, it may be a worthy endeavor to investigate the extent to which collegiate sports media programs, their instructors, and their students reinforce (or weaken) the discursively constructed structures that I have analyzed in this dissertation.

Lastly, given the effects that harassment and emotion management can have on women in the industry, I see two potential studies. The first would require an interdisciplinary research team to examine the long-term psychological effects of the dissociation required of woman sportscasters, especially now in the digital age, when harassment is more prevalent than ever before. I would assume that compartmentalizing one's true feelings from their work cannot be emotionally healthy, but such a study would help to confirm or reject my assumption. Additionally, it might be helpful if a researcher conducted a project in which her or she exclusively interviewed women who either left the industry voluntarily or avoided a career in the industry altogether – despite having, at some point in time, expressed an interest in pursuing one – due to the industry's well-documented treatment toward women. I believe such a project would help flesh out the argument I make, vis-à-vis harassment and emotion management's role in the industry's underpinnings.

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Appendix A
Verbal Notice of Informed Consent (One-to-One Interviews)

My name is Guy Harrison and I am a doctoral candidate under the direction of Professor Joseph Russomanno in the Walter Cronkite School of Journalism and Mass Communication at Arizona State University. I am conducting a research study that, in part, examines the experiences and attitudes of women working in on-air positions in the sports media (television, radio, and/or the internet).

I am inviting your participation, which will involve discussing the topic with me, over the phone, for no more than 45 minutes. You will not receive any compensation for your time. Your participation is voluntary. You have the right not to answer any question and to stop participation at any time.

Other than having a forum within which you may speak freely about your experiences and views on the topic in question, you will not receive any direct benefit from participating in this study. Your participation may help others in the future, however. There are no foreseeable risks that stem from your participation. In order to minimize any unforeseen risks, your responses will be de-identified to the fullest possible extent and stored according to ASU Data Storage Guidelines. Upon receipt of the interview transcript, the audio recording of our discussion will be destroyed and your responses will be made anonymous through the usage of a pseudonym within the transcript and any presentations or publications that result from this study.

As stated above, the plan is to audio record this discussion. However, the interview will not be recorded without your permission. Please let me know if you do not want the interview to be recorded; you also can change your mind after the interview starts, just let me know.

If you have any questions concerning the research study, please contact the research team at guy.harrison@asu.edu or russo@asu.edu. If you have any questions about your rights as a subject/participant in this research, or if you feel you have been placed at risk, you can contact the Chair of the Human Subjects Institutional Review Board, through the ASU Office of Research Integrity and Assurance, at (480) 965-6788.

By participating in this interview, you are agreeing to be part of the study and are verifying that you are 18 years old or older. Knowing all of this, would you like to proceed with the interview?

Appendix B
One-on-One Interview Script

1. Please tell me how and why you decided to become a sportscaster.
2. Tell me about your job? Is it what you anticipated?
3. What are the greatest challenges you encounter now?
    a. During your career what have evaluators said were your greatest weaknesses?
4. Please describe your past and current relationships with your directors and producers.
5. How do you view the current role of women in sports broadcasting?
6. Please describe your interactions with your audience?
7. Do you use social media and, if so, what is it like to use it as a woman working in sports media?
8. As you know, the number of female analysts and play-by-play announcers for men's sports is relatively small. Why do you think this is the case?
    a. Do you/have you ever aspired to be an analyst or play-by-play announcer? If so, what is stopping you?
9. What are your thoughts on the sideline/field reporter role?
10. Do women in the industry face double standards? If so, which ones have you personally experienced or observed?
11. What does it take to make it in the sports broadcasting industry?
    a. What does it take to make it as a woman?
12. What do you think is the future of the sports broadcasting the industry?
    a. What is the future of the industry for women?

Appendix C
Notice of Informed Consent (Focus Groups)

My name is Guy Harrison and I am a doctoral candidate under the direction of Professor Joseph Russomanno in the Walter Cronkite School of Journalism and Mass Communication at Arizona State University. I am conducting a research study that, in part, examines the attitudes and opinions of sports media consumers as they relate to members of the media who report or provide commentary on sports news over the broadcast media (television, radio, and/or the Internet).

I am inviting your participation, which will involve discussing the topic amongst a group of your peers for no more than two hours. For your time, you will receive a $25 Amazon gift card at the conclusion of the discussion as well as three points extra credit toward an exam or assignment in a class for which I am your instructor.

Your participation in this study is voluntary. You have the right not to answer any question and to stop participation at any time. If you choose not to participate or to withdraw from the study, there will be no penalty and you will still receive your compensation.

Other than having a forum within which you may speak freely about your views on the topic in question, you will not receive any direct benefit from participating in this study. Your participation may help others in the future, however. You should also be aware that there are risks that stem from your participation, though none of those risks extend beyond those associated with everyday life. In order to minimize those risks, your responses will be de-identified to the fullest possible extent and stored according to ASU Data Storage Guidelines.

Upon receipt of the focus group transcript, the audio recording of our discussion will be destroyed and your responses will be made anonymous through the usage of a pseudonym within the transcript and any presentations or publications that result from this study. Due to the nature of this focus group, which includes independent members of your community, complete confidentiality cannot be guaranteed. However, I do ask that you respect the privacy of the other members of the group by not disclosing any personal information that they share during our discussion.

As stated above, the plan is to audio record this discussion. However, the focus group will not be recorded without your permission. Please let me know if you do not want the interview to be recorded; you also can change your mind after the interview starts; just let me know.

If you have any questions concerning the research study, please contact the research team at guy.harrison@asu.edu or russo@asu.edu. If you have any questions about your rights as a subject/participant in this research, or if you feel you have been placed at risk, you can contact the Chair of the Human Subjects Institutional Review Board, through the ASU Office of Research Integrity and Assurance, at (480) 965-6788.

By signing below you are agreeing to be part of the study and are verifying that you are 18 years old or older.

Name:

Signature: Date:

Appendix D
Focus Group Script

1. Who is your favorite sportscaster and why?

2. What are the differences, if any, between male sportscasters and female sportscasters?

3. In general, how do you feel about women in sports broadcasting?

4. What are your thoughts on the treatment of female sportscasters on social media such as Twitter?

5. Is there anything related to what we've discussed that you would like to ask or add to the discussion?

Appendix E
List of Themes/Concepts and Codes

(Themes bolded and italicized)

Double Standard of Appearance
Makeup
Clothing
Hair
Hair color
Diversity of appearance
Dressed for clubbing
Double standard
Attractiveness
Good-looking
Slut-shaming
Treatment based on gender
References to woman sportscaster's sexuality
References to woman sportscaster bodies
Femininity through appearance
Weight
Demands of a male audience

Double Standard of Credibility
Credibility
Sports knowledge
Questioned motivation
Giving opinions
Double standard
Treatment based on gender
Mansplaining
Hot takes
Fabulous Sports Babe
Jim Rome
Online criticism
Women's career motivations
Audience reaction to poor performance
Sergio Dipp

Sex Bias Hiring, Developing Women Sportscasters
Confidence
Passivity
Aggressive
Gendered broadcasting roles
Role of women in sports broadcasting
Play-by-play
Sideline reporter
Perceptions of women's voices
Authoritativeness

Self-reliance
Future for women in sports broadcasting
Proving one's self
Insider
Host
Imposter syndrome
Anchor
Comparisons to Erin Andrews
Feedback concerning voice
Former athlete
Hiring practices
Disparity between men and women
Development
Serving as eye candy
Sports as a man's domain
Cheerleaders
Jessica Mendoza
Erin Andrews
Preference for men sportscasters
Society's impact on gender in sports broadcasting
Escapism
Representation
Generational fandom

Harassment
Blending in
Drawing attention
Clothing
Experience with social media
Uncooperative athletes and coaches
Sexual harassment
Online harassment
Locker room experiences
Objectification
Professional relationships with superiors

Emotion Management
Treatment due to gender
Questioned motivation
Emotional labor
Audience interactions
Sexual harassment
Response by others to gendered mistreatment
Temperament
Response to social media trolls
Racism

Treatment as a woman of color
Bias
Double standard
References to woman sportscaster's sexuality
References to woman sportscaster bodies
Slut-shaming

Appendix F
Conceptual Map

Double Standard of Appearance
Double Standard of Credibility
Via representation (or lack thereof)
Sex Bias in Hiring and Development
Harassment
Postfeminism & Neoliberalism
Emotion Management
American Female Sportscaster Subjectivity

Appendix G
List of Mediated Texts Analyzed

Links Provided in References Section

Internet Articles and Blog Posts

Abelson, J. (2017, December 14). At ESPN, the problems for women run deep. *Boston Globe*.

Alindogan, M. (2016, May 25). Erin Andrews makes surprising admission about 'DWTS' finale dress. *AOL*.

Anonymous. (2015, October 4). Female sports writers denied entry to locker room at Lucas Oil Stadium. *Sports Illustrated*.

Anonymous. (2015, March 30). CSN's Aiyana Cristal responds to Dan Bernstein's sexist remark. *Chicago Tribune*.

Anonymous. (2013, August 14). 10 All-Star Female Sports Reporters. *The Hollywood Reporter*.

Baccellierri, E. (2017, September 12). Sergio Dipp is Having a Night. *Deadspin*.

Berrien, H. (2017, October 17). Barstool Chief to Sam Ponder In 2014: "Sex It Up And Be Slutty." *The Daily Wire.*

Copeland, L. (2013, April 29). Female TV newscasters and the sleeveless sheath dress. *Slate*.

Deitsch, R. (2014, July 14). Erin Andrews replaces Pam Oliver on Fox's No. 1 NFL team. *Sports Illustrated*.

Deitsch, R. (2017, November 26). Revisiting Sexual Harassment of Female Sports Reporters and Media Members. *Sports Illustrated*.

Diaz, T. (2017, September 12). Sergio Dipp Goes Viral After Monday Night Football. *People*.

DiCaro, J. (2015, September 28). Threats. Vitriol. Hate. Ugly Truth About Women in Sports and Social Media.

DiCaro, J. (2017, September 18). Safest Bet in Sports: Men Complaining About a Female Announcer's Voice. *The New York Times*.

Duffy, T. (2014, November 5). Artie Lange's Slave Sex Fantasy Tweets About ESPN's Cari Champion Offended Just About Everyone. *The Big Lead*.

D'Zurilla, C. (2014, November 5). Artie Lange explains his racist sex fantasy about ESPN's Cari Champion. *Los Angeles Times*.

Everett, C. (2010, May 11). Erin Andrews: 'I didn't speak' with Elisabeth Hasselbeck when she tried calling me to apologize. *New York Daily News*.

Feder, R. (2015, March 26). Comcast SportsNet extracts apology for The Score's sexist tweets.

Finn, C. (2014, July 25). Fox pulls all advertising on WEEI, Entercom. *The Boston Globe*.

Fowler, S. (2017, October 4). Cam Newton's sexist comment to Observer report wasn't one bit funny. *Charlotte Observer*.

Hill, T. (2015, October 7). Jessica Mendoza receives sexist backlash after calling MLB playoff game. *The Guardian*.

Hookstead, D. (2017, October 9). Jemele Hill Predicted the Biggest News of the Day – Was Very Wrong. *The Daily Caller*.

Kennedy, H. (2010, February 23). ESPN suspends Tony Kornheiser for comments about SportsCenter anchor Hannah Storm's wardrobe. *New York Daily News*.

Lambert, M. (2017, December 20). Doris Burke Wants More Women in Sports Media. *New York Times Magazine*.

Martin, J. (2017, December 13). Reporter: NFL Network asked if she plans on "getting knocked up." *CNN*.

Ponder, S. (2013, November 20). Examining Truth and Twitter (by Sam Ponder).

Putterman, A. (2017, September 11). ESPN Deportes reporter Sergio Dipp became an internet sensation for the wrong reasons Monday night. *Awful Announcing*.

Rayno, A. (2015, August 11). Star Tribune's Amelia Rayno adds her own story to Teague scandal. *Star Tribune*.

Reimer, A. (2017, October 18). David Portnoy on K&C: I stand by explicit Sam Ponder rant.

Rosenthal, P. (2017, September 12). ESPN sideline reporter Sergio Dipp steals the show in his "MNF" debut. *Chicago Tribune*.

Spain, S. (2015, June 19). I'm Mad as Hell & I'm Not Going to Take This Anymore (by Sarah Spain).

Teitell, B. (2017, August 14). For at least a decade, women broadcasters have been pushed to look sexier on-air. *Boston Globe*.

Vinciguerra, T. (2016, March 23). The Long, Sordid History of Horribly Dressed Male Sportscasters. *Esquire*.

Yoder, M. (2014. July 16). This Adam Wainwright thing is the dumbest sports controversy of the year for so many reasons. *Awful Announcing*.

Internet Videos

DailyRushBo. (2017, September 12). *LIMBAUGH: 'Poor' Sergio Dipp Had No Business Being Put On The Sideline*.

Feitelberg, J. (2014, July 16). *minihane.* (Kirk Minihane's critique of Erin Andrews's Wainwright interview).

Fox Sports (2014, July 15). *Adam Wainwright sorry about Derek Jeter joke - MLB All-Star Game 2014* (Erin Andrews interview).

The Hollywood Reporter. (2015, July 29). Michelle Beadle on Women Sportscasters: We're More Than Just Sideline Reporters.

Just Not Sports (2016, April 26). *#MoreThanMean – Women in Sports 'Face' Harassment*.

S M (2017, September 11). Sergio Dipp's Monday Night Football report.

TMZ (2017, September 17). *Say Hello (and Good Bye) to Sergio Dipp!*

Books

Cohn, L. (2008). "Sex and the Female Sportscaster." In *Cohn-head: A no-holds-barred account of breaking into the boys' club*. [E-book version].

Images

Three images of Linda Cohn from her Twitter feed, including a profile picture.

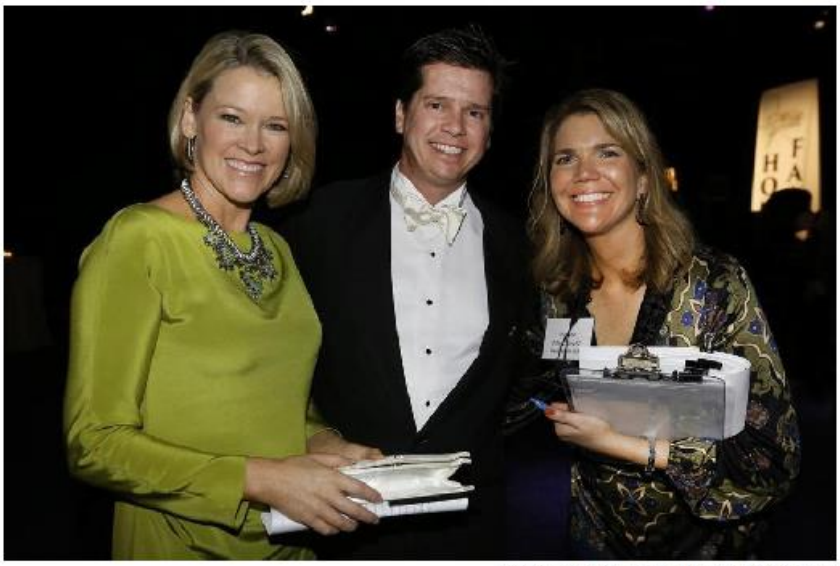
Three images of Erin Andrews, two from the July/August 2017 issue of *Health* magazine (including the cover). The third photo was from a photo shoot and feature article for the October 2014 issue of *Men's Health*.

Image of Sarah Spain, shared on Twitter by SportsMockery in 2016, from earlier in her career.

Appendix H
Sample Mediated Text

Television

For at least a decade, women broadcasters have been pushed to look sexier on-air



BILL BRETT FOR THE BOSTON GLOBE/FILE 2014

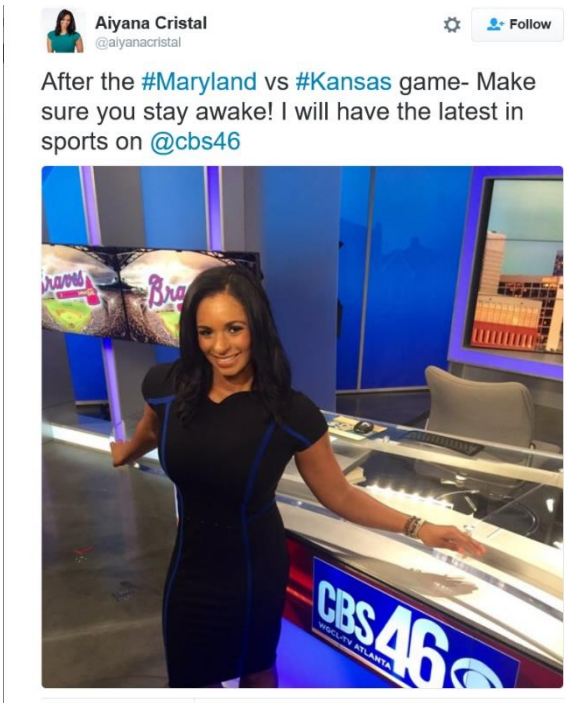
Heather Unruh (left), a former television anchor in Boston, talked about the pressures women feel about how they dress on TV.

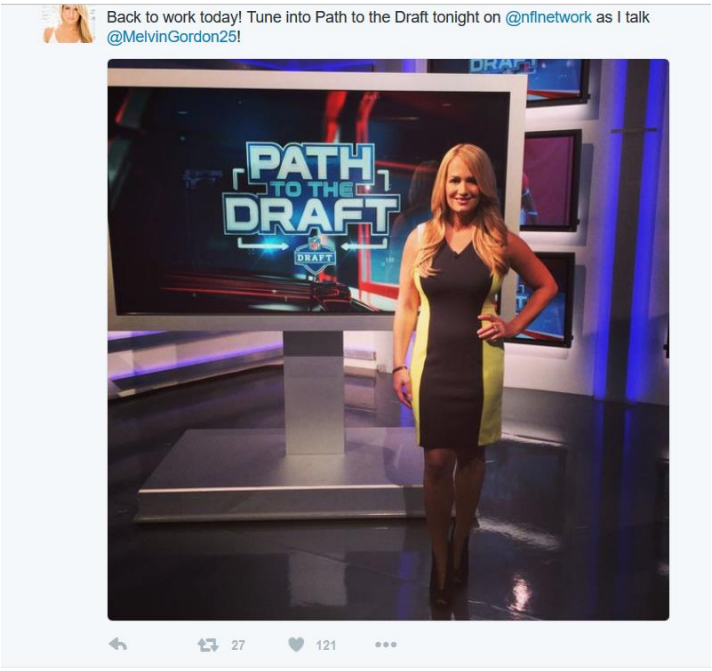
By Beth Teitell | GLOBE STAFF AUGUST 14, 2017

Should a TV anchorwoman be required to dress for work in a cocktail dress? Or stilettos? What about body-hugging tops?

The always-simmering wardrobe issue flared recently when Heather Unruh, the

Appendix I
Sample Twitter Screen Captures





Follow

@JennBrown @nflnetwork @Melvingordon25
Christ you've gained weight

Appendix J
List of Women Sportscasters Observed in Twitter Netnography

Name, Organization(s) During Netnography

Josina Anderson, ESPN
Erin Andrews, Fox Sports
Jamie Baker, WTAJ in Altoona, PA
Michelle Beadle, ESPN
Lana Berry, Podcaster, *The Lana Berry Show*
Jenn Brown, NFL Network
Cari Champion, ESPN
Linda Cohn, ESPN
Antonietta Collins, ESPN
Aiyana Cristal, CSN Chicago, WGCL in Atlanta, GA
Lindsay Czarniak, ESPN
Julie DiCaro, Chicago Radio
Kate Fagan, ESPN
Cynthia Frelund, ESPN, NFL Network
Jemele Hill, ESPN
Dana Jacobson, CBS Sports and Spike
Jade McCarthy, ESPN
Molly McGrath, Fox Sports
Jessica Mendoza, ESPN
Beth Mowins, ESPN
Rachel Nichols, ESPN
Katie Nolan, Fox Sports, ESPN
Kari Osep, WJAC in Johnstown, PA
Sam Ponder, ESPN
Elika Sadeghi, ESPN
Prim Siripipat, ESPN
Sarah Spain, ESPN
Sage Steele, ESPN
Hannah Storm, ESPN
Michele Tafoya, NBC Sports

Appendix K
Institutional Review Board Approval
For Netnography

EXEMPTION GRANTED

Ann Koblitz
Social Transformation, School of
480/965-8483
koblitz@asu.edu

Dear Ann Koblitz:

On 4/1/2015 the ASU IRB reviewed the following protocol:

Type of Review:	Initial Study
Title:	Panopticism, Twitter and the Female Sportscaster
Investigator:	Ann Koblitz
IRB ID:	STUDY00002309
Funding:	None
Grant Title:	None
Grant ID:	None
Documents Reviewed:	• IRBProtocolTwitter - Updated 412015.docx, Category: IRB Protocol;

The IRB determined that the protocol is considered exempt pursuant to Federal Regulations 45CFR46 (4) Data, documents, or specimens, (2) Tests, surveys, interviews, or observation on 4/1/2015.

In conducting this protocol you are required to follow the requirements listed in the INVESTIGATOR MANUAL (HRP-103).

Sincerely,

IRB Administrator

cc: Guy Harrison
Guy Harrison

Appendix L
Institutional Review Board Approval
For Interviews and Focus Groups

ASU Knowledge Enterprise Development

EXEMPTION GRANTED

Joseph Russomanno
Journalism and Mass Communication, Walter Cronkite School of
602/496-6602
russo@asu.edu

Dear Joseph Russomanno:

On 1/26/2017 the ASU IRB reviewed the following protocol:

Type of Review:	Initial Study
Title:	On the Sidelines: A Qualitative Study of Power, Discourse and the American Female Sportscaster
Investigator:	Joseph Russomanno
IRB ID:	STUDY00005593
Funding:	None
Grant Title:	None
Grant ID:	None
Documents Reviewed:	• Recruitment Script for Local Sports Teams.pdf, Category: Recruitment Materials; • AWSM Call for Participants.pdf, Category: Recruitment Materials; • On the Sidelines Informed Consent Form, Category: Consent Form; • Sportscaster Interview Questions.pdf, Category: Measures (Survey questions/Interview questions /interview guides/focus group questions); • On the Sidelines Informed Consent Sportscaster Form, Category: Consent Form; • On the Sidelines IRB Protocol, Category: IRB Protocol; • Focus Group Call for Participants.pdf, Category: Recruitment Materials; • Focus Group Interview Questions.pdf, Category: Measures (Survey questions/Interview questions /interview guides/focus group questions); • Survey Monkey Recruitment Questions.pdf,

Appendix M
Notice of Previously Published Work

1. Portions of Chapter V appear in an online article authored by Guy Harrison for *Engaging Sports* titled *"Hey, Pretty Girl": Sexual Harassment in Sports Media*. The article can be found at https://thesocietypages.org/engagingsports/2017/12/05/hey-pretty-girl-sexual-harassment-in-sports-media/.

2. Portions of Chapter VII appear in an essay written by Guy Harrison for *Feminist Media Studies* titled *"You Have to Have Thick Skin": Embracing the Affective Turn as an Approach to Investigating the Treatment Women Working in Sports Media*. The essay can be retrieved using DOI 10.1080/14680777.2018.1498123