

The Pennsylvania State University

The Graduate School

College of Communications

**UNDER THE GLASS CEILING:
POWER, IDENTITY AND SEXUALITY IN SPORTS INFORMATION**

A Dissertation in

Mass Communications

by

Erin Whiteside

© 2010 Erin Whiteside

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements

for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

August 2010

The dissertation of Erin Whiteside was reviewed and approved* by the following:

Marie Hardin
Associate Professor, Journalism
Dissertation Adviser
Chair of Committee

Colleen Connolly-Ahern
Associate Professor, Advertising/Public Relations

Matthew P. McAllister
Professor, Film/Media Studies

Mark Dyreson
Associate Professor, Kinesiology

John Spicer Nichols
Professor of Communications
Associate Dean for Graduate Studies and Research

*Signatures are on file in the Graduate School.

ABSTRACT

Women's marginalization from high status workplace roles has been a common theme across areas of literature, including that which looks at women's experiences in sports media. The general field of scholarship is at a critical turn where difference must be interrogated as difference between women, rather than between men and women (Aldoory, 2006). Such a perspective will offer more sophisticated analyses of women's experiences, choices and work outcomes.

This dissertation seeks to continue that trajectory by focusing on how sexuality shapes workplace experiences and sense of self, using college sports public relations, commonly called "sports information" as a specific site of inquiry. Sexuality has not been a focus of research from any perspective in the context of sports media producers and micro-level studies of public relations and sports journalism workroom cultures, and this project seeks to address that gap. As a media scholar, I used this dissertation to take ideas developed in literature related to sports participation and physical education and apply them to a media setting, where I could begin to think about the ways sexuality mediates relationships among women, organizes the sports media workplace and works as a system of discourse that produces what Bartky (1988) calls a specifically feminine docile body.

In doing so, I have employed a poststructuralist perspective that regards sexuality not as an inherent identity natural in each of us, but as a discursive framework that normalizes bodies through the naturalization of sexual identity categories (Foucault, 1990). These ideas are not new among those situated in sports cultural studies literature. However, applying such an analysis to workplace media cultures does reflect a divergence in this area of scholarship,

and I offer this project as an answer to recent calls for such a theoretical turn (Aldoory, 2006).

In articulating arguments about the ways sexuality as a public, but often invisible, discursive framework functions as an organizing principle in sports information, I draw from in-depth interviews with female sports information directors (SIDs) that I conducted at a regional and national convention of this industry's large, formal organization, called College Sports Information Directors of America (CoSIDA). I used the transcripts to think through how the SIDs I interviewed situated sexuality in their everyday lives and to further theorize about the politics of sexuality in this particular sports media workplace culture.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acknowledgments.....	ix
Chapter 1. INTRODUCTION.....	1
Sports Information	3
Intersections and Gaps: A Starting Point.....	5
Chapter Summaries.....	7
Chapter 2. THEORIZING SEXUALITY	15
Sports, Culture and Gender.....	17
Feminist Analyses.....	19
“Feminisms”	20
Radical Feminism	21
Power from a radical feminist perspective.....	22
Postmodern Feminism	24
Integrating a Foucauldian perspective	24
Political action	28
Technologies of the self.....	29
Applying a Feminist Approach to Sexuality in Sports	32
Heterosexism in Sports	33
The Glass Closet	35
Sexuality and Privacy	36
New Homophobia.....	37
Conclusion	39
Chapter 3. THE GLASS CEILING AND BEYOND: TRACING THE EXPLANATIONS FOR WOMEN’S LACK OF POWER AT WORK	41
Gender and Labor	42
Demand-Side Explanations.....	43
Work-family issues.....	47
Family-friendly policies.....	47
Supply-Side Explanations.....	49
Sexual harassment.....	51
Femininity in a Feminine Profession: Women, Gender and Public Relations.....	53
Descriptions of a Gendered Industry	54
Explaining and Assessing Gender Bias	55
Limitations	57
A Critical Turn.....	58
Treading on “Male Terrain”: Women in Sports Media	60
Sports Journalism.....	61
The Culture of the Sports Journalism Workplace.....	61
Outsiders on Male Turf.....	62

Sports Public Relations and Sports Information.....	65
Introduction to the field	66
Gender and sports information.....	66
Future Directions of Sports Media Research	69
A Missing Component: Sexuality in Sports	70
Distancing: Image Management Strategies in Negotiating Through the Lesbian Stereotype	70
Changing the Climate?.....	74
Poststructuralist Analyses	75
Technologies of the self.	77
Conclusion	78
Chapter 4. ACTIVELY CREATING KNOWLEDGE WITH AN ACTIVIST AGENDA: REFLECTIONS ON DOING QUALITATIVE FEMINIST WORK.....	80
Activism Through Research: Feminist Methodology	81
Feminist Standpoint Theory.....	82
Standpoint theory critiques	84
Producing Feminist Research	85
Using the Long Interview: Justification and Review.....	88
The Long Interview.....	88
Recruitment.....	90
Recruiting lesbian SIDs	91
Participant demographics.....	95
Conducting the Interviews	97
Developing rapport	100
Analysis	103
Personal Memos.....	104
Textual Analysis	106
Thematic analysis.....	106
Trustworthiness in Qualitative Research	109
Conclusion	110
Learning from the Interviews.....	111
The Style of Qualitative Research	112
Chapter 5. “I AM NOT A LESBIAN!” NEGOTIATING THE LESBIAN STIGMA IN SPORTS INFORMATION.....	114
A Pervasive Stigma.....	115
Magnifying the Stereotype: Sports Experience as a Betrayal.....	117
Magnifying the Stereotype: Working with Women’s Sports	119
Magnifying the Stereotype: Single and Working in Sports	121
Docility Amidst Constant Surveillance	125
Showcasing Heterosexuality Through Femininity.....	126
Strategic discourse	128
The advantage of a heterosexist culture.....	129
Unspoken rules.....	131
Showcasing Heteronormativity Through	

Adherence to “Family Values”	132
Conclusion	133
Constituting the Feminine Subject.....	133
Effects of Discourse.....	134
The Glass Closet	136
Chapter 6. FROM INEPT INTRUDERS TO SUSPICIOUS SEX VIXENS: THE PROBLEM OF HETEROSEXUALITY	137
Seeking Inclusion: Women in Sports Information.....	138
Proving Ground.....	139
A Heterosexual Advantage	141
Exposing the Illusion of the Heterosexual Advantage.....	144
Suspicious Sex Vixens.....	144
Managing Heterosexuality	148
A Sexually Charged Workplace Culture.....	149
Conclusion	150
Feminine, but not Too Feminine.....	150
Considering Women’s Opportunities in Sports Information	151
Chapter 7. THE POLITICS OF ACTIVISM: ASSESSING POTENTIAL FOR CHANGE THROUGH FAME.....	153
The Politics of Female Networks.....	155
The Meaning of Activism	156
Female Networks and Mentorship.....	157
Embracing Individualism.....	161
“Safe” Activism	163
Looking for time	163
Perceived lack of fit	163
Interrogating the visibility of work-family narratives	164
Depoliticizing Sexuality.....	166
“Sexuality is Personal”	166
The Irrelevancy of Identity Politics at Work	167
A Depoliticizing Effect.....	169
Conclusion	172
The Ideological Work of Work-Family Narratives	173
The Docile Political Subject	175
Constructing Difference.....	176
Valuing Privacy	177
Chapter 8. CONCLUSION	
SEXUALITY AS DISCOURSE:	
PROBLEMS AND (POTENTIAL) SOLUTIONS.....	178
Sexuality as Discourse	179
Discourse and Difference.....	180
Divisions Among Women.....	183
Sexuality as Public.....	184

The Ethical Responsibility of Sports Feminists.....	185
Self Reflection	186
Seeking out Possible “Material Moments”	188
Interviews as Libratory	192
Appendix A: IRB Materials	194
Appendix B: Email Script.....	204
Appendix C: Recruitment Flier.....	205
References	206

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I once opened a fortune cookie that included the following message: Don't forget to send the elevator back down after you get a ride up. Many people helped me on this ride and I want to wish a heartfelt thank you to my committee members, Marie Hardin, Matt McAllister, Colleen Connolly-Ahern and Mark Dyreson for their thoughtful comments and help in this process. To Marie, your help, guidance and teaching over the course of my graduate career epitomizes what a quality graduate experience should be, and I am forever grateful. I only hope I can send that "elevator" back down by helping put other aspiring scholars in a position to succeed in the way you did for me.

My friends and colleagues have been a wonderful support system, and to Erika Polson, Doug Tewksbury, Jonathan Obar, Kathleen Kuehn, T.C. Corrigan, Caryn Winters, and many others, your ideas, feedback and support throughout this process have been worth more than you realize.

To my family, thank you for listening and offering an open ear, especially during the last year of writing. My parents have always made education a priority, and for that I acknowledge that I am extremely lucky and privileged. To my mom, who wrote down the title of my dissertation and main ideas so she could tell her friends what I was writing about, your dedication to participating in this process was incredibly meaningful. To my dad, your humor and jokes not only helped keep things light -- as they should be -- but also this project in perspective.

Finally, this dissertation could not have come together without the time and thoughtfulness presented to me by the women in this study. We must continue find ways to

facilitate the opening of opportunities for women in sports media, and it is for you and others like you that I have written this dissertation.

Chapter 1

Introduction

At the 2007 meeting of a group called Female Athletic Media relations Executives (FAME), several dozen women crowded in a room to talk, network and discuss common goals. As part of the discussion, group leaders handed out notecards and asked women to fill in the blank to a statement: “As a woman in sports information I _____.” One woman answered with “I love my job.” Another said, “I try not to let that get in the way.” A third wrote she has “a chance to give a more personal side of a student-athlete’s story.” The answers were as varied as the women themselves and illustrated the breadth of experiences in the room.

At the same time, much of the meeting focused on the challenges the women collectively faced in navigating the male-dominated industry of college sports public relations, commonly called “sports information.” The industry has historically been inaccessible to women and they still occupy a marginal position within its ranks today. Women are generally excluded from powerful and high-status positions and are so few in number that they occupy token status (Carpenter & Acosta, 2010).

Scholars have long advocated for the inclusion of women in management and gatekeeping positions in media to both provide opportunities to women, as well as to build a possible pathway for the production of more diverse media content. These analyses have resulted in the increasing acceptance of flex-time and maternity leave policies, which help ease the pressures of working mothers (Aldoory, Jiang, Toth, & Sha, 2006). Despite the work of academics and advocates toward changes in policy, however, women still are excluded

from management positions or toil on the fringe altogether of various media organizations (Creedon and Smith, 2007; Grunig, Toth and Hon, 2001; Whiteside and Hardin, 2010).

Advocating for the inclusion of women in sports media workplaces has been a personal passion of mine, both as an academic and former sports media professional. As a sports information director myself, I was often frustrated by experiences at work and those experiences have been an impetus behind my research agenda. I have found my research niche in developing a toolkit to theorize the source and implications of those former frustrations.

My research agenda is further shaped by my experiences as a collegiate athlete where my gender became a more salient identity than ever before. As scholars have consistently argued, sporting spaces are naturalized as male spaces through a discursive framework that situates sporting activity – muscling for a rebound or leaping to catch a ball, for example – as representative of masculinity (Birrell, 2000). Given the pervasiveness of messages equating sports with traditional masculinity, it is no surprise that when women engage in such pursuits, they often report feeling a tension between their claimed feminine identity and their identity as athlete, a sentiment I identified with, as well (Fallon & Jome, 2007).

In sum, this project is informed by both personal experiences and scholarly literature relating to sports and media workplaces. The two have intersected in a variety of ways, but in critiquing women's underrepresentation in management and positions of leadership, sexuality has not been a central focus of research. Further, women are often presented opposite of men, with an assumption of male-held power, a theoretical position reflective of radical feminism and a Gramscian notion of power.

Thus, I aim to make two main contributions with this dissertation. In exploring sexuality in the context of a media workplace, I articulate a new dimension in thinking about diversity in media organizations. I further provide an additional perspective on identity and the notion of “women” by entering this project from a poststructural perspective. Doing so requires considering sexuality not as a natural identity inherent in each of us, but as a discursive framework that normalizes bodies through the naturalization of sexual identity categories (Foucault, 1990). These ideas are not new among those situated in sports cultural studies literature. However, applying a poststructural analysis to workplace media cultures does reflect a divergence in this area of literature, and I offer this project as an answer to recent calls for such a theoretical turn (Aldoory, 2006). In articulating arguments about the ways sexuality as a public, but often invisible, discursive framework functions as an organizing principle in sports information, I draw from in-depth interviews with female SIDs that I conducted at a regional and national convention of this industry’s large, formal organization, called, College Sports Information Directors of America (CoSIDA). I used the transcripts to think through how the SIDs I interviewed situated sexuality in their everyday lives and further theorize about the politics of sexuality in this particular sports media workplace culture.

Sports Information

As a former sports information director (SID) I have a personal connection to the industry and an admitted passion for it. Before arriving at Penn State as an SID, I was an editor for major league baseball where I often interviewed and wrote stories about professional baseball players. Despite the allure and excitement of working in such a high-

profile environment, I missed women's athletics and sought an opportunity to re-connect with that community. At Penn State, I was assigned to the women's basketball team, and thus responsible for promoting and publicizing a highly successful program, something that appealed to me as a women's sports advocate. Women's sports, and other lower-profile men's sports, are often marginalized or excluded altogether from mainstream media outlets. Thus, the task within sports information is to find creative ways to gain attention for these sports, which makes sports information an important part of the sports media production landscape and one with much potential for women and women's athletics.

As an industry, sports information is a unique subset of public relations. Like public relations technicians, sports information directors, as staffers are called, are an integral part of the sports media process and complete numerous public relations duties, such as promoting teams, writing press releases and maintaining and developing media contacts. Women in public relations constitute the majority of the profession — although they make up a minority of managers, a phenomenon that scholars such as Elizabeth Toth and Carolyn Cline, among others, have termed the velvet ghetto. Still, Grunig, Toth and Hon (2001) argue that women in public relations are in many ways especially qualified for PR-related work because many of the qualities inherent in effective PR practices are also qualities we associate with women. In contrast, as Carpenter and Acosta (2010) have shown, women are a minority in sports information, making this profession a distinctive area in public relations scholarship and fruitful for thinking about issues of gender and sexuality.

Intersections and Gaps: A Starting Point

The inspiration for this research stems from literature exploring women's experiences in the media workplace as well as in sporting organizations. On the latter, scholars have shown the important and critical factor sexuality plays in how we understand sporting bodies, theorizing on the topic from a variety of perspectives. Important work by Cahn (1994), Lenskyj (1986; 2003) and Griffin (1998) has been at the forefront in providing a narrative of the development of women's athletics that indicts sports as a male-defined institution that has been oppressive to women and facilitates the stigmatization of lesbians in athletics. More recently, a post-structuralist perspective has emerged, pointing out the usefulness of considering sexuality as a discourse and related expression of power that normalizes and orders bodies within sporting spaces (Markula, 2003; Thorpe, 2007).

Although most associate the growth of women's sports with the passage of Title IX in 1972, women have participated in athletics via a variety of venues throughout the course of American history, and scholars have illustrated the ways in which the development of women's sports parallels evolving notions of normative gender expectations. For example, during the late 1800s women participated in sports through country clubs which offered events such as croquet and tennis tournaments (Guttman, 1991). Victorian women were obsessed with adhering to a strict "Cult of Domesticity" that dictated appropriate gender norms for women that included frailty, weakness, submissiveness to men and distinct labor roles that revolved around motherhood and the household. Thus, their recreation habits reflected these ideals (Howell, 1982). During the same time period female physical educators began overseeing sports at the university level. While the physical educators valued physical activity for women, they wanted to protect women's true "nature," which included

motherhood, and feared that competitive, intense sports would bring out masculine social behavior (Gerber, 1975). They staunchly opposed competition (which was seen as masculine) and used doctor's opinions about the negative effects of over-exertion and competition on women to justify this ideological position (Lenskyj, 1986). They feared that men running women's athletics would exploit the female athletes and they fought to keep women's athletics under female control.

In the early 20th century, however, sports leagues began to emerge for working women. Called industrial leagues and offered through the workplace, these sporting leagues were run by men and explicitly paired sex with women's sports (Cahn, 1994). Basketball games featured women in shiny, revealing uniforms and beauty contests were often part of the event. Men in charge rewarded women with sex appeal by giving them spots on the team; women who did not conform to heterosexual standards of beauty risked being left off the rosters (Lenskyj, 1986).

While the values of female physical educators and industrial league promoters appear wildly different, the end goal was the same: Female physical educators put forth a wholesome, feminine female athlete while the industrial league offered a sexy woman. Both strategies implied the need to neutralize the masculine perception of sports. As Cahn argues, the result was the normalization of sports as antithetical to femininity, creating question marks about women who participate. If femininity means alluring to men, and engagement in sports reflects a rejection of femininity, then are sportswomen also rejecting men? Does this mean they are lesbian?

The hysteria surrounding this question has contributed to the construction of sports as a breeding ground for homophobia, and Lenskyj, Cahn and Griffin have strongly indicted

sports as creating a hostile climate for women who do identify as lesbian, forcing them into a closet where they are denied the opportunity to freely express themselves. This research has been invaluable in articulating the homophobic culture in sports and the problems it creates for all women – those silenced by heteronormativity, and those that must go to extreme lengths to showcase their heterosexuality in order to avoid the demonized lesbian label. However, these critiques accept various sexual categories as a given and the recent poststructuralist turn assessing sexuality as a set of narratives has provided a framework for thinking through the constitution of sexual identity categories (Markula, 2003; Pringle, 2005). This turn takes sports not as something under the control of a dominant group (men), but as the product of discourses that have in turn benefited men and therefore buttress notions of male authority (Diamond & Quinby, 1988).

As pervasive sexuality is among sports studies scholars, it has not been taken into account in assessments theorizing women's marginal status in media organizations -- both sports and non-sports related -- and is the point at which this project begins.

Chapter Summaries

Chapter 2

Theorizing Sexuality

Fundamentally, this project is about the discursive frameworks of sexuality in sports information and the effects on bodies as a result of the relational expression of those frameworks. In discussing sexuality, I am strongly influenced by both radical and postmodern feminism, theoretical approaches that I explain in the context of this project, as well as sports studies in general.

Given the focus on relational expressions of power, Michel Foucault's work on the normalizing function of sexuality discourse is useful, and I use this chapter to justify using a Foucauldian approach as a theoretical device. In many ways Foucault is at odds with feminist work -- especially that which values the personal experience as the starting point for the production of knowledge. I thus attempt to reconcile that tension before moving on in a project that -- through interviews with female sports information directors -- draws from individual experience to make claims about the ways in which power is expressed through sexuality discourse in sports information. In this section I draw heavily from Sandra Bartky, whose work illustrates one critique of Foucault's work often put forth by feminists in that his ideas of the normalization of bodies overlook the gendered ways in which bodies are ordered. A second critique of Foucault's work by feminists is the way his conceptualization of the self undercuts a feminist movement drawn together by the notion of similar gendered experiences. If the self is merely a constitution of practices, what basis do women have to align in a quest for their collective liberation? I again draw from Bartky to illustrate the ways power relations inscribe a specifically feminine body that puts women under surveillance in ways not applied to men -- a concept I show in depth in Chapters 4 and 5.

I conclude the chapter by integrating feminist and Foucauldian thought with a discussion of sexuality in sports, including a review of several relevant theoretical concepts: the glass closet, heterosexism and "new homophobia." On the latter I draw from political scientist Wendy Brown, who articulates the ways in which tolerance as a valued discourse depoliticizes difference, clouds the very power relations that create social hierarchies and essentializes difference and aversion to difference as natural, a useful topic given my later arguments about the depoliticized nature of sexuality in sports information.

Chapter 3

The Glass Ceiling and Beyond: Tracing the Explanations for Women's Lack of Power at Work

Women have historically been underrepresented across various workplaces (horizontal segregation) and within individual organizations (vertical segregation). Chapter 3 begins with a review of the leading studies and theoretical explanations of women's underrepresentation in management, drawing from sociological literature. It may seem strange to begin a project about women in sports with a section devoid of sports-related material, but understanding how women's lack of power has been conceptualized helps situate this study within a broader context of scholarship. I then trace the work assessing women's experiences at two professions that relate to sports information: Public relations and sports journalism.

Public relations scholars, drawing from "excellence theory," have strongly argued that women, by nature of perceived natural feminine traits, have the potential to practice better public relations because of their femininity. Given the large number of women working in public relations, their femininity is never in question, and indeed, the profession is often described as "feminized." This is in contrast with the experiences of women in sports journalism, where their entrance into a profession deemed more masculine has created a climate where their presence is questioned and their worth trivialized.

Both areas of scholarship on women's experiences in media workplaces have focused on gender and the way women are marginalized or valued for their perceived "essential femininity." This project brings a new dimension – sexuality – into arguments about gender,

and outlining the ways gender has been conceived as mediating women's experiences provides a starting point from which to launch conclusions in this study.

Finally, I end with a review of relevant literature on sexuality and sports, detailing key studies exploring these issues. In doing so, I provide a foundation for integrating sexuality and sports studies literature with the feminist work on women's experiences in public relations and sports media workplaces and their overall lack of power in the media production process.

Chapter 4

Actively Creating Knowledge with an Activist Agenda: Reflections on Doing Qualitative Feminist Work

This research is partially shaped by my own agenda, assumptions and personal experiences, and I use Chapter 4 to articulate the value and importance of locating oneself within the research process and illustrate how I see this project as a collaborative production of knowledge between myself and the various women whose voices are included within it.

The chapter begins with a discussion of feminist standpoint theory, which I use to justify the value of grounding the knowledge production process in women's experiences and how doing so can illuminate alternative views of "reality" that may lead to social change (Hirschmann, 2004; Wahab, 2003). Given that assumption, I then articulate the main chosen method for this study – the long interview -- and review its usefulness for this project. In doing so, I try to clearly lay out the process I engaged in, from recruiting potential participants, to crafting interview questions, to the analysis. A transparent and explicit analysis makes the author's assumptions, choices, descriptions and arguments clear, and in doing so, gives the reader the necessary tools to evaluate the author's claims. Thus, I address

how I conducted the interviews, problems I encountered and the struggle I engaged with in asking women to discuss a topic they were not entirely comfortable with addressing.

Qualitative research is a somewhat “messy” process in that it is not a linear one with a clearly defined set of steps. I finish by reflecting on how the iterative nature of qualitative work produced *better* insights in this project and the process I engaged in to arrive at those insights.

Chapter 5

“I Am Not a Lesbian!”: Negotiating the Lesbian Stigma in Sports Information

This chapter assesses one way in which the technologies of sports – the knowledges, practices and discourses of sports – produce truth claims that put women’s sexuality under suspicion. Using stories and anecdotes from the interviews, I show how sexuality factors into these women’s sense of self by specifically focusing on a lesbian stigma in sports information. I make several key arguments about the way cultural understandings about sports and gender produces related narratives on sexuality that mediate women’s experiences at work and overall sense of self. I first describe how women situate the lesbian stigma and then show three ways in which ideology about gender and sports amplify that stigma. Firstly, I discuss how prior sports experience -- often seen as an advantage for sports media professionals -- buttresses the lesbian stigma for women. Secondly, I discuss work associations with women’s sports – such as handling sports information duties for women’s basketball, for instance – contributes to the lesbian stigma. Finally, I discuss how meeting the epitome of femininity – wife and mother – aids women in escaping the stigma but thickens the cloud of suspicion for women who fail to meet those heteronormative standards.

Using these initial claims, I then borrow from Foucault's work on normalizing discourses to show the resulting docility amidst the constant surveillance experienced by women in sports information. Again, using excerpts from the SIDs, I describe the image management strategies engaged by the SIDs in this study in an effort to comply with heteronormative standards. In doing so, I argue that although most of the women did not articulate overt homophobic attitudes, such image management discourse and behavior naturalizes the problematic dichotomy between heterosexuality and homosexuality.

Chapter 6

From Inept Intruders to Suspicious Sex Vixens: The Problem of Heterosexuality in Sports Information

This chapter expands on the ways sexuality as a discourse can be understood as an expression of power with a specific effect on women through the exploration of what I call the problem of heterosexuality. As deviants in the space of sports, women stand before a constant "panoptical gaze" (Bartky, 1988). Their presence is questioned and their motives are framed as suspect, two concepts I use this chapter to explore.

In escaping the lesbian stigma, women may earn acceptance from men and freedom from suspicion regarding their sexuality. Yet, that acceptance may result in a cost to their professional credibility in the form of sexual harassment and suspicion regarding their ethics and virtue as SIDs. Ultimately, in proving their heterosexuality, women must also manage it in a way as to not invite unwanted advances or the perception that their presence in sports information is the product of unethical motives in the form of a desire to meet men. I conclude the chapter by arguing that sexuality discourses are problematic for women in that female SIDs find themselves in a kind of maze with no way out: Their presence raises

constant questions about their sexuality that forces women into a constant state of angst about their appearance and public presentation.

Chapter 7

The Politics of Sexuality: Potential for Activism and Collectivity Among Female SIDs

Women are a minority in sports information and hold little institutional power. As part of their lack of voice within the broader organization, a group called Female Athletics Media relations Executives (FAME) was created to provide support and mentorship to other women. In this chapter I situate FAME's mission and narratives among women about female networks within the broader matrix of discourses on sexuality discussed in Chapters 5 and 6.

Along with excerpts from the interviews, I draw from the official FAME newsletter to discuss how the politics of sexuality interact with the politics of activism, and what this might mean for group's potential to meet its goals of providing more opportunities for women. I argue that FAME's most visible issue – providing more support for working mothers – is a product of gender and sexuality discourses in this profession. The issue, although important and relevant to women in sports information, is the only public issue addressed by FAME and I suggest that because the issue does not challenge heteronormative standards for women, is given privileged status in the public discourse. Homophobia and sexual harassment, however, remain “private” issues. I conclude the chapter by showing how such ideology repositions sexuality as either irrelevant or invasive, with the ultimate result being the depoliticization of an issue with important political (and public) implications for women.

Chapter 8: Conclusion

Sexuality as Discourse: Problems and (Potential) Solutions

In the concluding chapter, I weave together the story of sexuality in sports information, with special attention to deconstructing its illusion of privacy. Sexuality figures into an SID's sense of self and lived experiences and when sexuality is taken as a discursive framework, the "attack point" for feminists looking to enact change must be at the level of discourse. Thus, working toward making visible what seems transparent must be a central tenet. But how? Markula (2003) argues that sports feminists must be at the forefront in provoking critical inquiry among those involved in sports in order to challenge normalizing discourses. I suggest that qualitative research in media studies provides one answer to her call. I thus conclude this chapter and the dissertation by reflecting on the roles and responsibilities of sports feminists, and show how through qualitative research, we may be able collectively work toward challenging various Truths that constitute women as outsiders in sports information, the greater field of sports media, and other sports-related organizations.

Chapter 2

Theorizing Sexuality

In 2005, working as the sports information director for women's basketball at Penn State, I became part of a controversial story involving the head coach, who had been accused of discriminating a player on the basis of sexual orientation. As the sports information director (SID) for that program, part of my job was to handle media requests on the story, which had reached the national level, appearing in the *USA Today* and broadcast on ABC World News Tonight and ESPN among other media outlets. I became the "official" voice of the athletics department on the issue, where I delivered athletic department-sanctioned responses to media inquiries. It was, in a word, a conflicting time in my professional life given my personal feminist politics.

In the spring of 2006, the university released its internal review of coach Rene Portland's practices, and Portland and her personal media relations advisor decided to call a press conference to publicly respond. At the time, I knew I had been accepted into the Penn State media studies doctoral program and was simply holding on until I could begin talking about issues like sexuality in an open academic setting. But that March day, I was still an SID, and, therefore, my job was to stand to the side and monitor the whole press conference, help media with questions and make sure everything ran smoothly from assisting people to their seats to coordinating set-up for the TV cameras. It seemed I had little work to do; Portland had hired a personal media relations advisor and he told me the coach would not take questions and that she would simply read from a pre-written statement that I was to have copied and available for the media to read during the event.

The press conference was jammed and full of reporters I had seen only attend men's events, but being that this was a big story and Portland was a well-known figure in Pennsylvania, her press conference had attracted a lot of attention. I also suspect the drama of the story – well-liked coach vs. deviant (and possibly lesbian!) player – fueled the media attraction. After she finished reading, Portland stood up and walked to the side door to exit the press room. As I opened the door for her, a young man pushed by me and began asking the coach questions about her alleged discrimination – questions that many journalists had avoided asking in previous press conferences altogether. Portland and her entourage ignored him, but he followed along, asking her to respond to the allegations and acknowledge his marginalized voice and the voices he represented (I later found out he was from the LGBTQA at Penn State).

The experience, as troubling as it was, afforded me a front-row seat to the sexual politics at work in sports, and in many ways my experiences working as a sports information director have shaped my research agenda and this project. In thinking about my own prior experiences, I entered this project hoping to address the issue that scholars such as Pat Griffin, Helen Lenskyj and Gil Clarke have described in various ways as the elephant in the room of sports that no one speaks of, but is visible to everyone. As a media scholar, I wanted to take the ideas they have developed in sports participation and physical education and apply them to a media setting, where I can begin to think about the ways sexuality mediates relationships among women, organizes the sports information workplace and works as a system of discourse that produces what Bartky (1988) calls a specifically feminine docile body.

In thinking about sexuality, my work is strongly influenced by radical feminism and postmodern feminism. Regarding the latter, I draw from Foucault's work on sexuality, where he provides a useful tool in assessing how discourse on sexuality produces Truths that, when expressed relationally, extend power relations between individuals. In many ways Foucault is at odds with the feminist work -- especially that which values the personal experience as the starting point for the production of knowledge -- and I hope to reconcile that tension in this chapter before moving on in a project that draws from women's individual experiences to make claims about the ways in which power is expressed through sexuality discourse in sports information.

Sports, Culture and Gender

When the tens of thousands of people file into any professional football stadium on any given fall Sunday, they are witness to a series of symbolic practices that showcase dominant value systems specific to American culture. Before the game begins, all individuals stand for the national anthem; during the game, the focus is on the young men playing -- the only ones given the opportunity to do so -- while women cheerleaders support them literally and figuratively on the fringe of the action. The ultimate goal, of course, is to win the game, and win-at-all costs narratives position the value of competition as unquestionably supreme. Standing for the national anthem, or the practice of women as sexualized spectators to a bigger show featuring men, are symbols of larger cultural value systems of patriotic allegiance to the state and the accepted and naturalized subjugated status of women, two examples of the relationship between the institution of sport and wider culture.

Cole (1993), borrowing from the work of Foucault, suggests taking the technology of sport – the knowledges, practices and discourses that are a part of sports -- as the object of study in order to demystify the ways in which bodies are disciplined, reshaped and inscribed. Feminists have been particularly interested in viewing the body as a site of political struggle, especially in the context of sports where discourse naturalizes sporting spaces as male spaces (Markula, 2003; Young, 1980). Those (male) sporting spaces are a place where men learn what makes “real men” through being shuttled into sports that allows boys to exhibit tenets of masculinity like power and strength, to the lack of openly gay male college and professional athletes which constructs the idea that athlete = heterosexual male (Anderson, 2002). The Foucauldian effect of such practices, discourses and knowledge of sports naturalizes sports as a male preserve, which has far reaching implications for women. If sports are a naturally male domain, then the inclusion of women becomes illogical, and provides justification for the lack of women in high status sporting roles, such as men’s basketball coaches, athletic directors, or play-by-play announcers. Thus, when women do enter sports, they are known as trespassers on male terrain; their very presence changes the meanings made through sporting practices (Griffin, 1998; Lenskyj, 2003).

In this way, sports functions as a site of cultural production, a place where seemingly innocent displays should be interrogated as ideological practices with political and social implications (see, for instance, Butterworth, 2008; Denham & Duke 2010; Trujillo, 1991). Creedon (1994) writes, “At minimum, because professional football remains a male-only preserve, we learn that being male in our culture confers a degree of privilege. By denying women access to the game as players, we are taught that women are less qualified, powerful or physical than men” (p. 5).

Feminist Analyses

Drawing from my own experiences or those of other women to make new knowledge claims is a central tenet of feminist research, and in sports, such an approach has helped expose the gendered practices, organizations and discourses that work in often transparent ways to subjugate women (see, for instance, Caudwell, 2007; Clarke, 1998; Fallon & Jome, 2007; Griffin, 1998; Hardin & Shain, 2006; Krane, 1996; Sykes, 1998).

As a White, heterosexual female, I experience the gendered space of sports differently than an out lesbian or a Black athlete to name several oversimplified examples. Further, as a former college basketball player, I benefited from a liberal feminist agenda that values sameness and equality. For liberal feminists, the goal is access to spaces enjoyed by men, with the effects of Title IX being the most notable manifestation of that goal in a sporting context (Suggs, 2005). When the law passed as part of the Educational Amendments of 1972, women had access to spaces and funding previously enjoyed only by men and since that time, women's participation rates have exploded with numerous scholars touting the benefits of sports participation for girls and women. Along with the rise in actual sports participation, there has been a parallel rise in access to sports-related workplace spaces, including sports information (Carpenter & Acosta, 2010). Liberal feminist ideology characterizes the justification for Title IX, and the law represents fundamental American values of equality and social justice, the cornerstones of liberalism (Hargreaves, 1994).

But with the successes of Title IX, we saw the limitations of liberal feminism: Access to sporting spaces previously dominated by men did not allay struggles women faced when they did enter those spaces and in some ways, those struggles were amplified. I played intercollegiate basketball, but when I was featured on the cover of the yearly "schedule

cards” as a senior, holding tight to the ball, biceps bulging, my boyfriend was embarrassed. “Your arm looks like a guy’s,” he told me. I felt the pressure to remain feminine for his pleasure in a sport that values exhibitions of such marked masculine traits as strength, speed and power. My gay teammates, however, experienced sporting spaces differently; they felt compelled to hide their sexuality rather than highlight it.

Different feminist approaches may result in different analyses of this short story and in focusing on sexuality, I am influenced by a mix of radical and postmodern feminism to explain the relationship between sexuality and power and its related effects on bodies (specifically the female body). Taking both together can be considered a web of contradictions, but considering where feminists converge as a starting point may help reconcile gaps, especially in reference to the ways each approach conceptualizes the body and the self in relation to power.

“Feminisms”

Although feminist thought is often referred to as a singular type of inquiry, it may be more useful to think of it in the plural form as feminisms (Birrell, 2000; Scraton & Flintoff, 2002). Feminist thought has evolved throughout history, has branched out and become influenced by other theoretical areas. Still, all feminisms are grounded in the belief that women occupy a subjugated position that is worthy of interrogation. Sports have been indicted as reinforcing sexual difference, or the practice of emphasizing differences between men and women in ways that are not natural and then framing those differences as biological. A constant barrage of images, practices and organizational structures in sports reproduce sexual difference, framing something cultural (interest in sports) as essentially male (Duncan, 1990). The magazine rack in the local bookstore provides an easy lesson on sexual

difference: Sports magazines targeted at male audiences feature athletes engaged in competitive spectator sports such as basketball, football, baseball and hockey. Sports magazines targeted at women focus on feminine beauty rather than in-competition action. The messages imply women as the “Other” in an athletic context and reify gendered social identities of the weak female and strong male (Fink & Kensicki, 2002; Hardin, Lynn, & Walsdorf, & Hardin, 2002). Hall (2002) calls feminism a “fundamentally political concept,” (p. 12) and ultimately feminists are concerned with activism. The question then becomes locating the source of power and theorizing women’s response to it.

The term “women” itself is problematic and one reason for the divergence of radical feminism from liberal feminism, the latter of which failed to account for the ways its initiatives helped essentialize women as white and middle class, ignoring the power relations embedded in that movement’s equality initiatives. In sports, the most visible manifestation of liberal feminist initiatives is the effects of Title IX, the law that provided equal access and opportunity for women in sports. That initiative, of course, essentialized women as a single category for strategic purposes, but uncritically helped move women into a system defined by men and organized to benefit men. Thus, returning to my personal example, even though I was allowed into sporting spaces, my exhibitions of strength were discursively constructed as deviant and wrong. Radical feminism helps explain the ideological organization of sports and provides an argument for the ways in which women are subjugated in a power system that is expressed from the top down, from the powerful (men) to the power-less (women).

Radical Feminism

When conceptualized as an essentially male space, then, sport becomes ideal for developing, refining and showcasing standards of hegemonic masculinity, such as physical

strength and size, aggression, competitiveness and heterosexual virility. The ideal of the feminine is constructed in opposition, where frail, petite, soft and demure become the point of achievement for women. Through a variety of mechanisms, for instance, sports tells us that women are weak and when physical superiority is translated to cultural superiority, radical feminists argue that it is in the interest of the powerful to maintain the male-female/strong-weak dichotomy.

Power from a radical feminist perspective. The process by which dominant groups gain ideological consent from subordinated groups is the classic definition of hegemony, part of a Gramscian theory of power subscribed to by radical feminists. Key is the conceptualization of power as locatable, and that a binary division exists between the powerful and the power-less (Pringle, 2005). From this perspective, power is conceptualized as productive in that through power meaning and identity are made, but also purposive in that the ideological work embedded in that meaning benefits a specific dominant group (Pringle, 2005). Ultimately, hegemonic institutions such as education, government, religion and media build a stratified society that maintains divisions based on race, class, gender and other social differences (Schell and Rodriguez, 2000). In sports, this dominant group is men, and radical feminists have indicted sport as a hegemonic institution that, through its practices and organization, makes assumptions about women's inferiority seem commonsense (Hargreaves, 1994).

Radical feminist approaches have been used to articulate an argument regarding sports as reifying patriarchy through practices, accepted norms and organizational structures. A radical feminist perspective strongly critiques assimilating into the (male-defined) system and rather advocates a complete rejection of the system and a new start based on experiences

of women (Birrell, 2000). Thus, while a liberal feminist agenda allowed women like myself into sporting spaces, the gendered norms of sports will continue to be problematic for women and work to cast them as outsiders in male terrain (Duncan, 2006).

A critical perspective on the (male-defined) taken-for-granted norms of sports have manifested in the way of lesbian and lesbian-friendly softball leagues, for instance, which are built on a far different value system than what we have come to accept as the “norm.” Softball leagues that feature teams called “Dykes on Spykes” or “The Lavender Sox” showcase the possibilities for alternative conceptions of sports that include projecting a feeling of security for women, providing them with choice regarding competition, avoiding a success/failure approach to challenges and promoting collectivity (Lenskyj, 2003). These are also examples of lesbian separatism, a tenet of some radical feminists, justified by the assumption that power lies with men and sexuality is a concept that controls women (Rich, 1980; Scraton & Flintoff, 2002). However, such leagues operate on the fringe of mainstream sports, and because they are based on the essentialized identity “lesbianism,” they reify categories and do not interrogate the social implications of those sexual categories. Difference is taken as natural with the assumption that male power trivializes, subjugates and marginalizes the female “Other.”

On one hand, radical feminism has illuminated difference in ways that liberal feminists did not and could not. But in doing so, these radical feminists have essentialized difference, which is problematic considering “such an ontology denies the individuality and history of actual men and women. It implies what is important and real about human beings is some sort of a priori essence” (Tong, 1998, p. 88). Thus, I take from radical feminism the value of difference and the idea that sporting structures can be problematic for women. I

question, though, whether the origin of that oppression comes purposefully from the top down and have found postmodern feminism and ideas of sexuality originating from Foucauldian thought to provide a better answer in situating power relations within sports.

Postmodern Feminism

A postmodern approach to feminist work in sports offers an answer to the problem of essentialism while also providing an analytical framework for interrogating the formation of social categories and theorizing the effects of power stemming from those categories. At issue from this perspective is the way subjectivities are constituted through discursive frameworks and the self is understood as a product of dominant discourses and “language is reconceived as the primary means through which our consciousness is structured,” implying an inseparable relationship between knowledge and power (Birrell, 2000, p. 68). Language then becomes less about personal expression (“I am a woman!”) and more of a means through which identity is constituted and meaning is made. This process is what Foucault (1990) calls the power struggle against subjectification and that which ties an individual to him/herself and becomes known to others. This form of power is what constitutes individuals as subjects. Subjectivities are thus an effect of power techniques, perhaps the most provocative idea to come out of this theoretical perspective. These “socially and historically produced identities endanger us, make us vulnerable, and close us off from possibilities. Identities often stand opposed to freedom” (McWhorter, 1999, p. xix).

Integrating a Foucauldian perspective. Foucault’s work on sexuality illustrates the struggle against forms of subjectification and the ways in which the body is inscribed with meaning through practices that are often invisible. He traces the history of the rise of sexual discourse to argue that during Victorian times, sex was not repressed, but rather “put into

discourse” creating new knowledges with related power effects (1990, p. 11). For example, the Victorian “censorship” of sex defined sexual practices, ideas, thoughts and behaviors in various ways that led to an explosion of sex discourse in the form of categorization and classification. The “deviant” sexual subject came into focus, boundaries were drawn and the individual struggle against subjectification emerged in a new way. The effect of power relations was not to eradicate certain sexual practices, but to pathologize them, making discourse on sex an apparatus for producing truth claims that order bodies and organize society. He suggests, however, that asking how power is expressed is an incomplete question without considering what happens when power is expressed (Foucault, 2003). He writes (p. 67), “It is not power, but the subject, that is the general theme of my research,” and indeed, it is his arguments of the ways bodies are normalized, individualized and made docile through the various modes in which power is expressed that I find most compelling.

One key notion in Foucault’s early work on power is the idea of self-surveillance, a concept he explores analogously using the prison panopticon (1995). Foucault contrasts modern forms of discipline such as the prison with medieval practices of torture to critique the idea that enlightened thought has led to a more humane form of punishment. Rather, he suggests that shifts in power have shifted the object of punishment from the body to the soul. The result, then, is a body that is subjected, used, transformed and improved, or in Foucault’s words, a “docile body” (p. 136).

Foucault (2003) articulates technologies of power as techniques or strategies for influencing, shaping, normalizing and determining the conduct of individuals, which ultimately submit subjects to forms of domination. “Truths” about women’s ideal body type,

for instance, is a technique that invites women to self-surveil their own bodies and diet, or take other drastic measures, to meet a categorized standard (Markula, 2003).

Foucault's idea of the prison panopticon illustrates the concept of self-surveillance and the ways in which individuals collectively participate in the expression of disciplinary power. The panopticon is a literal prison structure that includes one central watch tower in the middle of a series of prison cells; prisoners can see the watch tower at all times, which creates a sense that the gaze is alert and everywhere (1995, p. 201). Foucault argues that good discipline is a figurative panopticon; rather than punishing the existence of something, it is the non-observance or lack thereof that is punished. Further, it is the deviant character that is under constant surveillance. As Foucault (1990) writes, "the legitimate couple, with its regular sexuality, had a right to more discretion. It tended to function as a norm, one that was stricter, perhaps, but quieter" (p. 38). Thus, the focus on the deviant defines the "legitimate" subject, creating normative discourse: In short, the normalization of bodies.

Foucault's work on disciplinary power has been applied to new ways of understanding cultural practices, including those situated in sports studies. Duncan (1994), for instance, used *Shape Magazine* to show how discourse of personal motivation disguises normative messages about complying with a feminine ideal. Thus, when women are told in the magazine to make a "solemn promise to yourself" to get fit and look like the (photoshopped) cover models, they begin a process in self-monitoring and self-surveiling in order to achieve an unattainable goal (p. 54). As she later writes, "the inevitability of failure is what creates disempowerment" (p. 63). Men's worth is not tied up in their appearance as it is for women in our culture, and her example illustrates one critique of Foucault's work often

put forth by feminists in that his ideas of the normalization of bodies through discourse overlooks the specifically gendered effects of power (Bartky, 1988, Bordo 1993).

Effects of modern technologies of power are not uniform across all bodies, and feminists have strongly critiqued Foucault's work for ignoring gender and failing to acknowledge the differing ways in which women experience the technologies of power. Dieting, applying makeup, and exercise are part of a process in the constitution of a specifically female subject that is, importantly, constituted as inferior through these very practices (Bartky, 1988). Dieting to be smaller (read: weaker), or changing one's appearance through makeup, plastic surgery, waxing and other beautification procedures all imply a fundamental deficiency in the female body that constitutes the female subject as "Other" in a way that men are not. Bartky writes,

In contemporary patriarchal culture, a panoptical male connoisseur resides within the consciousness of most women: they stand perpetually before his gaze and under his judgment. Woman lives her body as seen by another, by an anonymous patriarchal Other (p. 72).

These examples illustrate the gendered ways in which bodies are organized, exposing the ways in which masculinist authority is buttressed by language, discourse and reason (Diamond and Quinby, 1988). Clearly, men aren't colluding to subjugate women, but Foucault's ideas of power provide a way to explain why power, expressed through discourse, orders bodies in ways that benefit men (Bartky, 1988; Markula, 2003). Diamond and Quinby (1988) add that masculinist domination is supported by binary dualisms that privilege the first term over the second in the form of male/female, strong/weak, emotion/reason and so on.

Taken in a context in which the “normal” and “valued” social category is defined in relation to its opposite, the systems, practices and discourse that maintain hegemonic masculinity in sports also define its opposite, the feminine. As Birrell (2000) notes, the sports we most value in a culture celebrate skills and traits culturally marked as masculine and as an institution, sports plays a critical role in the production and normalization of hierarchized gender difference. The emphasis of differences between men and women in ways that are not natural and then framing those differences as biological essentializes gender roles, and orders bodies in ways that seem natural. Roth and Basow’s (2004) writings on the politics of physicality illustrate this process; numerous physiological studies show women exhibiting strength in a variety of ways, illustrating that “women are not weak, yet many believe that they are (because society tells them that they are)” (p. 249).

Political action. If feminists are concerned with political change, then action must be a central part of any feminist approach. Foucault’s work on the struggle against a form of power he calls subjectification poses several problems for the feminist project. If the self is merely a product of discourse and there is thus no “true” identity, this seems to negate the logic of community and identity-based politics. Further, if power is not held by an individual, but expressed relationally through discourse and practices, it is impossible to locate the source of power and dismantle it. Finally, because of the inseparability of knowledge and power, it is impossible to step outside of knowledge and make unbiased value claims, which means we “cannot justify our political agenda any more credibly than proponents of the status quo can justify theirs” (McWhorter, 1999, p. 65).

Bartky (1988) offers one answer to the problem of identity politics in her argument that technologies of power do not have the same effect on all bodies and that power relations

inscribe a specifically feminine body that puts women under surveillance in ways not applied to men. Bartky points out that radical feminists have questioned the controlling discourses of femininity and helping to open up new ways for understanding beauty. This seems to dovetail with Foucault's notion of "counter discourses." As he writes: "Discourses are tactical elements or blocks in the field of force relations; there can exist different and even contradictory discourses within the same strategy; they can, on the contrary, circulate without changing their form from one strategy to another, opposing strategy" (1990, p. 101-102).

Technologies of the self. Foucault points to what he calls technologies of the self which he describes as tools that

permit individuals to effect by their own means, or with the help of others, a certain number of operations on their own bodies and souls, thoughts, conduct and way of being, so as to transform themselves in order to attain a certain state of happiness, purity, wisdom, perfection, or immortality (2003, p. 146).

Such techniques require a shift in focus from "knowing" oneself, to taking care of oneself. This ethic of care is not about possessions or clothing or aesthetics, but rather in the activity itself, such as self-examination and conscience, "including a review of what was done, of what should have been done, and a comparison of the two" (2003, p. 159), a similar concept to the feminist notion of reflexivity, or the practice of critically reflecting on one's social location, thoughts and knowledge claims. Foucault uses the word "askesis" to imply the same idea. The goal is not preparation for an alternative, or better reality, but better "access to the reality of this world" (2003, p. 158). Technologies of the self are provocative in that their deployment is an active expression of power, something Foucault believed could be practiced over others ethically (McWhorter, 1999). Further, because the individual is constituted within

a power structure, it is impossible to step outside networks of power. Thus, “we must deploy technologies of power without fear or shame” in the way of an ethical askesis (p. 214). This implies using disciplining power to “propel us in new directions” (p. 181). Such a view allows feminists to acknowledge the lived experiences described by women and creatively look for ways to produce “counter discourses” that may (or may not) establish a different reality for women.

For example, in her quest to find political activism within a Foucauldian framework, McWhorter (1999) shows how using the power that invites docility can provide a means to exploring alternative possibilities that may create counter-discourses that shift boundaries of freedoms. An out lesbian, she notes that although the practice of coming out is often liberating for the individual, unless the practice amounts to more than simply claiming the name of a pre-conceived category, doing so simply plays into existing networks of power expressed through discourses of sexuality and leaves individuals docile through that subjectification. Instead, to alter regimes of power, it is critical to attack normalization processes, and “learn how to use at least some of the technologies of power that are available to us” (p. 215). For McWhorter, that meant altering the conduct of people around her through various strategies. She provides the example of attending a special day at the Virginia State General Assembly, where the (largely white and male) politicians acknowledge various groups. She arrived on this day with a gay rights activist group where, for one moment, the assembly – a legislative body that had largely advocated against gay rights -- would allow her group to stand and receive acknowledgement. She writes:

It’s not their approval I wanted, and it’s not their approval I got. What I got was the realization, standing there with my overcoat at my feet, that these men don’t have

complete power over anything. It's not a system of total domination I live under. For in that moment the rules worked against them. They had to do something they really didn't want to do, something that probably really galled them, in fact: They had to be polite to a bunch of fags; they had to acknowledge the citizenship of a group of people whose rights they'd prefer to ignore and whose political activities they'd prefer to subvert. We didn't change the law that day, and we haven't yet. But we did get the satisfaction of causing a room full of homophobic old boys to look into our queer faces, to share space with our queer bodies, and to greet us like fellow citizens. And that's not small thing (p. 222).

Perhaps the biggest gap to bridge in post-structuralist theory is the decentered self and what that means for the feminist project. Rejecting essentialism is a "thorny" issue because taking such a position also seems to depoliticize the feminist project. If any sense of a shared ontology is simply created for us, then any sense of unity can be understood as false consciousness. I follow Ramazanoglu's (2002) logic for a way out of this problem. She borrows from Judith Butler in asserting that despite postmodernism's decentering of the subject and the category "woman," we need not abandon the category of "women" for political purposes. The key is in political engagement and the active pursuit of new knowing subjects. In other words, it requires a political consciousness and critical evaluation of the production of knowledge. It is useful, here, then, to bring in Foucault's later work on counter discourses and technologies of the self, which can help provide answers for a research agenda that is at its core, activist.

Applying a Feminist Approach to Sexuality in Sports

Sexism in sports cannot be considered separately from heterosexism and homophobia; these oppressive systems not only prevent women from participating and working in sports, but demonize female athletes who do (Blinde & Taub, 1992; Clarke, 1998, 2002; Griffin, 1998, Lenskyj, 2003). Sports have been indicted as a space of unchecked homophobia; homophobic slurs among male athletes are common on sports teams and organizations, and a way to “maintain the virility of masculine hegemony and to prevent the acceptance of homosexuality in general” (Anderson, 2002, p. 862). In the context of tough, physical contact sports, gay male athletes challenge the notion of hegemonic masculinity because of the interchangeable ideas of masculinity, physical power and heterosexuality. Female athletes present a challenge in the context of those same physical, aggression sports because their participation raises the possibility that masculinity – and the traits associated with it -- are not essentially natural and exclusive to men.

If women in sport can be tough minded, competitive, and muscular too, then sport loses its special place in the development of masculinity for men. If women can so easily develop these so-called masculine qualities, then what are the meanings of femininity and masculinity? What does it mean to be a man or a woman? These challenges threaten an acceptance of the traditional gender order in which men are privileged and women are subordinate (Griffin, 1998, p. 17).

The sexuality of women who participate, then, is always under suspicion and in a homophobic and heterosexist culture, the lesbian stereotype is a powerful mechanism of social control (Clarke, 1998; Griffin, 1998; Lenskyj, 2003). As Clarke (1998) writes, “it’s no wonder that many women would feel uncomfortable playing in sports in an environment

where their (hetero)sexuality is likely to be questioned” (p. 152). In a climate or relationship where revealing a lesbian identity would incur a social cost, women who personally identify as lesbians must manage that claimed identity in ways that preserve their social status (Griffin, 1998, Lenskyj, 2003). In this way, the category of “lesbian” works as a stigma, or a label that provides context and information to others in relational situations (Goffman, 1963). For Goffman, the socially constructed stigma categories we live within serve as a means of social control in determining our behavior, which he argues is always in a desire to be perceived as normal. These stigma categories are dependent on social cues; tension, anxiety and fear surrounding stigmas in society arise both in terms of encountering individuals with a stigma, as well as managing and concealing information about ourselves that, if divulged, may lead to our own stigmatization.

Women who participate in sports that celebrate skills marked as masculine – such as strength in the form of hitting a softball or muscling under the basket for a rebound – may deflect that stigma by conforming to a new type of “heterosexy” femininity that cues onlookers, peers and culture in general that they are, in fact, heterosexual (read: normal) and, by extension, available and appealing to male objectification (Dworkin and Messner, 2002).

Heterosexism in Sports

The social cues in sports that are so central to how we understand stigmas and their social costs come from the broad range of discourse and relationships in sports. Open homophobia and discrimination are two examples of social cues that tell us lesbianism is a stigma. Those practices still exist, despite the growing number of schools that include sexual orientation in their anti-discrimination policies. But we also learn about the stigma that is homosexuality from systems of heterosexism, or the discourse and practices that privilege

heterosexuality as normal and “better” than its binary opposite, homosexuality. Heterosexism is different from blatant homophobia – often defined as irrational hostility toward gays and lesbians -- as it is expressed in ways that are often invisible to us, such as the privilege given to female athletes in the media who meet conditions of femininity [read heterosexuality] or the seemingly innocuous references to a male athlete’s wife or girlfriend, which confirms his heterosexuality and, by extension, his masculinity. For example, when the WNBA launched in 1997, *Sports Illustrated for Women* ran a cover story on the league with superstar Sheryl Swoopes as the cover subject of its March issue. Although Swoopes was an international basketball icon, the magazine (and presumably, the league) did not use an action photo of Swoopes winning a gold medal or in the midst of competition, but instead featured a very pregnant Swoopes in full makeup wearing her WNBA jersey. She held a basketball in her left hand, prominently displaying her wedding ring. The message from the league was obvious.

Krane (1996) suggests using the term homonegativism to describe the ways in which negative attitudes toward non-heterosexuals develop and are maintained; the Swoopes example illustrates the ways heterosexuality is privileged, thereby creating an opposite attitude toward homosexuality that does not seem irrational or derived out of fear in the way that homophobia is often characterized. The constant barrage of heteronormative references obscure the sexual Other, and the possibility of considering alternative “normal” sexual subjectivities (Rich, 1980).

When ways of knowing are taken for granted, the ideological work is hidden; in the case of discourse on sexuality, we are blind to the ways in which we are made to be sexual subjects, a term coined as compulsory heterosexuality by Rich (1980). The term refers to the set of discourses and practices that normalize hetero sexuality and essentially trap women

into following a pre-determined (hetero) sexuality script, thus denying them the opportunity to explore other sexual identities or escape a homosexual-heterosexual binary way of thinking. The sexual identity construction leaves women with two options: the socially accepted “normal” heterosexual end, or the abnormal end that threatens normative understandings of sexuality and gender (Wright & Clarke, 1999).

The Glass Closet

In the virulent heterosexist sporting culture, women who identify as lesbians face a social cost in publicly owning an identity that is constructed through everyday practice and discourse as the “Other” (Clarke, 1998). Thus, these women often live in what Griffin (1998) calls a “glass closet” where a fragile negotiation takes place: lesbians are “tolerated” by their peers in exchange for total silence on the issue (p. 100). As Sykes (1998, p. 163) writes, “Keeping lesbian sexuality safely contained within the closet is vitally important to normative heterosexuality. One of the main purposes of the closet is to discursively uphold the boundary between either/or, homo/hetero and self/Other.”

Griffin suggests such an agreement only takes place in what she calls a “conditionally tolerant” workplace climate, where individuals may tolerate someone who they believe to be a lesbian, as long as they play by an implicit set of rules that generally requires them to remain silent and invisible akin to “don’t ask, don’t tell” policies of the American military. The unspoken agreement thus brings everyone in the “conditionally tolerant” climate into the closet together; everyone is constrained by the glass walls that act as a kind of structure protecting the current status quo. The negativity associated with the lesbian label is not challenged, nor are the fundamental assumptions about gender and sports. Within this

climate, lesbians may tell trusted confidantes about their identity, but all involved carefully protect the secret from leaving the group's confines.

Although living in a "glass closet" where you are conditionally tolerated may be a better option than working in what Griffin calls a "hostile climate," where open homophobia is accepted and even encouraged, the glass closet leaves problematic assumptions intact, most notably that the problem stems from the presence of the "Other" (Krane & Barber, 2003). Writes Clarke (1998, p. 154), "It is crucial that it is recognized and publicly acknowledged that lesbian women are not the problem in sport, rather we need to redefine the 'problem' to make it clear that is heterosexism and homophobia that are the problems in sport."

Sexuality and Privacy

The secrecy surrounding homosexuality and the related lack of public discourse about gays and lesbians create the illusion that sexuality is an individual and private issue. This belief stymies political engagement with systemic issues of homophobia and heterosexism (Griffin, 1998; Hardin & Whiteside, 2010). When sexuality is regarded in this way, topics like sexual harassment and discrimination then become considered inappropriate for professional discussion. Yet, writes Griffin, "[w]hile lesbians are pressured into silence, heterosexuals won't shut up" (p. 215).

Displays of heterosexuality permeate everyday social relations, providing examples for the way sexuality is in fact very public. They are so common and "normal" that we take for granted their public presence. For example, cultural norms permit women to talk about husbands and boyfriends openly, and it is a common practice to display traditional family pictures in public spaces, such as the workplace or facebook profiles. Similarly, in the media,

the privileged position of heterosexuality in public discourse is rarely overt; rather it happens through the highlighting of attributes that emphasize dominant notions of heterosexuality (Wright & Clarke, 1999). For instance, when Lindsay Vonn finished her gold medal-winning ski run at the 2010 Winter Olympics, she embraced her husband at the end of the race, an image broadcast to millions of viewers. Sports media guide profiles of coaches often make reference to heterosexual marriage partners and children as part of a glimpse into the coach's "off-the-field" persona. Although these practices are commonplace and taken for granted as "normal," they also privilege heterosexuality by granting such displays and representations a public venue, making sexuality anything but private and apolitical (Wright & Clarke). Conversely, if a lesbian were to put pictures of her same-sex partner on her desk at work, she may be accused of flaunting her sexuality, a charge heterosexual women never face (Griffin, 1998).

I have argued that sexuality is not an essential and natural identity, but a discursive framework that orders bodies and knowledge and ultimately shapes who we are and our sense of self. From this perspective, sexuality is public and political for all individuals, as McWhorter (1999) aptly explains:

Homosexuality affects everyone, because it is that which most people seek not to be defined as, that against which most people define themselves, but at the same time that which their sexuality always threatens to become (p. 32).

New Homophobia

Although everyone in the glass closet agrees to silence as a specific strategy aimed at managing women's overall negative perception, that silence may also be justified by liberal pluralistic beliefs – even among individuals who internalize or express homophobic attitudes.

In Western cultures, especially in the United States where the national identity is invested in narratives about justice and equality, liberal pluralism allows individuals to position sexuality as a personal and private matter, but in the process depoliticizing it and stifling what Foucault would call “counter discourses” that may shift expressions of power through discourse on sexuality. Although Griffin (1998) situates various “climates” on a continuum, with athletics organizations categorized as conditionally tolerant “better” than those categorized as openly hostile, it is dangerous to uncritically celebrate this as a step forward.

In mapping the rise of tolerance discourse in contemporary American culture, Wendy Brown (2006) articulates the ways in which tolerance as a valued discourse depoliticizes difference, clouds the very power relations that create social hierarchies and essentializes difference and aversion to difference as natural. Her ideas on the effects of tolerance discourse are particularly useful in a sporting context where difference in sexuality is “tolerated” and as Brown would say, depoliticized through that very discourse of tolerance. Brown uses messages in the Museum of Tolerance to critique the ways in which we do not learn about the various social forces that enabled the Jim Crow era; rather, viewers see segregation, lynching and other forms of bigotry as the result of individual action. The disappearance of the power relations obscures the ways subjects are constituted and social differences are cast as natural, along with the aversion to difference. Learning to tolerate difference, then, becomes the goal, and in pursuit of that goal, the different “Other” is regulated and individualized, freeing the subject constituted as normal from the social surveillance pinned upon the deviant subject. As she writes:

Hence today, popular discourse treats heterosexual women as candidates for equality, while lesbian women are candidates for tolerance; the subordinating difference of the

former is secured by a heterosexual social and familial order while the latter cannot be.

Tolerance in athletics is achieved through silence and the unspoken agreement to put sexuality aside as a political subject (Griffin, 1998). That silence is what Anne Marie Smith (1994) calls a new type of homophobia masquerading as a type of liberal democratic tolerance. Individualism and choice is respected under the value of liberalism and “a just society allows individuals to exercise their autonomy and to fulfill themselves” (Tong, p. 10). Thus, homosexuality is viewed as a private choice, and homophobia the result of individual bigotry. That episteme raises problematic assumptions, including the ideas that there may be no lesbians in sports or that lesbians and heterosexual women experience sexism in the same way (Lenskyj, 2003).

Conclusion

Feminists often see the body as a site of struggle in different ways, and I have tried to use this chapter as a space to show how bodies are theorized and understood from various perspectives. For liberal feminists, the goal was access to spaces enjoyed by men, with the effects of Title IX being the most notable manifestation of that goal within a sporting context. Radical feminists have shown that simple access to space has its limitations; rules, norms and ideology constructing sporting spaces as male spaces work to marginalize women and move them to the fringe, thus protecting sports as a male preserve. Radical feminists have responded by thinking of alternative conceptions of sports where women may enjoy sports in a way that is sexually and physically liberating – the lesbian and lesbian friendly sporting leagues as one example. A radical approach in sports is also much more controversial

because it requires us to interrogate problematic issues, such as homophobia, what it means to be an athlete, or even other internalized issues, such as questioning the all-assuming value of competition that is reproduced through sporting practices.

Yet neither approach allows for an exploration of the production of difference. Liberal feminists seek assimilation with men; radical feminists seek the celebration of difference vis a vis the separation from men. A post-structuralist approach allows for the interrogation of the production of difference through the ways categories are constituted, a central issue of mine and one I try to address in this project.

I see this latter approach as an especially fruitful endeavor in assessing the cultural practices in sports media organizations like sports information. Such a perspective allows for a new way to assess cultural practices within their walls. Despite numerous “diversity initiatives,” often championed by men, women still occupy minority status. Why? Rather than viewing men as wielding power over women, we can use this approach to think about the ways in which women participate in their own oppression through practices that are normalized through discursive frameworks– a scary thought, indeed. But just as compelling is the notion that individuals can, at the same time, corral those technologies of power and deploy them in ways that can lead to personal ethical care of the self. And perhaps most exciting is the lack of a roadmap in such an endeavor, which opens up for an array of creative endeavors that may (or may not) lead to liberating counter-discourses that have the potential to alter relationships of power expressed through our collective participation.

Chapter 3

The Glass Ceiling and Beyond:

Tracing the Explanations for Women's Lack of Power at Work

In 2009, news broke that popular sports television personality Erin Andrews had been videotaped in the privacy of her hotel room and the footage posted online for a voyeuristic public to consume (Eaton-Robb, 2009). The invasion of Andrews' privacy was the latest in a string of sexually hostile incidents toward the sportscaster, who is known for her traditional good looks and occupying a position (sideline reporter) that is generally reserved for young, attractive women (Skerski, 2005). In 2009, while Andrews was reporting from the sideline of a Southern California football game, a player walked up behind her and began dancing suggestively unbeknownst to the sportscaster. A photoshopped picture of a fan grabbing her breast is still a staple on Google (Bianchi, 2009). Andrews' treatment as a sex object is indicative of a wider culture in sports in which women occupy outsider status, a point reinforced through their objectification (Duncan, 2006).

Of course, not all women in sports experience sexism in ways similar to Andrews. When Baylor basketball player Brittney Griner punched an opposing player in a televised game in 2010, ESPN showed the incident on SportsCenter and several other analysis shows and the video subsequently went viral. As Griner became a trending topic on Twitter, numerous comments referred to the 6-foot, 8-inch young woman as a "man" and "dyke." Although disappointing, such comments are not surprising: Along with her commanding physical stature, in punching the Texas Tech player, Griner also showcased the epitome of masculine performance – strength. Such an exhibition crosses a kind of line that organizes behavior based on traditional gender norms (Messner, 2002). Griner was not sexually

objectified like Andrews for the pleasure of heterosexual men, but her body was still put under a scrutinizing public eye and demonized for its lack of conformity to traditional femininity. Because Griner violated our taken-for-granted gender norms, Twitter users and YouTube posters questioned her identity: Is she a man? Is she a lesbian?

When they are not sexualized for the pleasure of the heterosexual male audience, women in sports are often demonized as lesbians or trivialized as weak, lesser versions of a male athletic standard in a space that is designed to showcase hegemonic masculinity. As a gendered institution, sports have been the focus of much feminist work, and in this chapter I outline the trajectory of scholarship on women in sports and women in the public relations workplace in order to better situate my project and illustrate its potential contributions. Researchers have also contributed a wealth of ideas and theories about women's general exclusion from positions of power at work, and the place where this review of literature begins.

Gender and Labor

It may seem strange to start a chapter on a sports-related dissertation with a section completely unrelated to sports. However, understanding how scholars have theorized women's underrepresentation in management is critical in contextualizing the ideas I offer about women in the sports information workplace. In this section I trace the major theories offered by gender and labor scholars about women's exclusion from power positions in the public sphere in order to draw conclusions about where this project fits in with the wider body of sociological literature addressed here. In tracing the leading theoretical explanations for women's underrepresentation in management, I show how the field is at a critical turn where difference must be interrogated as difference between women, rather than between

men and women, which will offer a more nuanced perspective on women's experiences, choices and work outcomes.

In a capitalistic society, power and labor go hand-in-hand; the ability to control one's own destiny when it comes to earning income, promotion and achievement in the workplace is central to securing one's economic well-being and affirming one's cultural status (Blau & Kahn, 2006). Correcting discrimination and sexism that inhibits women from reaching these goals is one reason many feminists have studied gender and labor issues with the intent of offering solutions that can change oppressive material realities for women.

But studying the organization and its norms, values and practices can also provide insights into how gender works as a social structure (Risman, 2004). Job and organizational segregation is "one of the most dramatic expressions of sex differentiation" (Reskin, 1993, p. 265). Further, the organization is a site where gender roles are not only replicated but where gendered subjectivities are created (Acker, 1990; Williams, 2000), the theoretical perspective I take in this work.

Gender and labor scholars have advanced several major theories to explain the horizontal and vertical gendered division of labor in the public sphere. Most of these theories are couched in understanding the issue from the demand-side, or the demands and/or requirements put on the worker from the job and organization itself, and the supply-side, which refers to the labor pool and the various factors influencing women as potential workers, including their own preferences and attitudes (Reskin, 1993).

Demand-side Explanations

Demand-side explanations refer to requirements asked of individual workers, such as dedication to the job, hourly schedule or even physical standards that you might see in blue-

collar jobs. Many scholars working on the gendered division of labor use Becker (1993) as a starting point for their own theoretical explanations. Becker's model is based on neo-classical economics and suggests that if the market were working efficiently, a firm would be penalized for discriminatory practices by way of the laws of supply and demand.

Specifically, gender discrimination would increase the demand for men, thus putting a premium on male labor. Assuming men and women can provide equitable services to the firm, hiring a man at a premium, then, would put a firm at a disadvantage to other firms who presumably would be receiving the same services from women, but at a cheaper rate. The competitive market would ultimately push out firms that engage in discriminatory practices. Since men continue to be chosen for management over women, Becker explains the trend with a term called "statistical discrimination," which refers to discrimination against a group, in this case women, based on information (stereotypes) suggesting the group member would perform poorly in the workplace. If the information is wrong, Becker's model suggests the competitive market would correct for the error. Because gender discrimination has persisted over time, scholars have looked for other ways to explain this workplace bias.

Goldin (2006) argues that it is not misinformation about women that is the source of discrimination, but the fear that the hiring of women in a certain profession will feminize and thus "pollute" it and devalue the profession culturally (p. 92). Goldin's approach acknowledges the way gender organizes a culture; gender discrimination does not exist simply because perceptions exist that women will do a poorer job compared with men; rather women's entry into a given profession changes the meaning of the job. Certain jobs represent masculinity and, for men, performing those jobs affirms that masculinity. Conversely, certain organizations and certain jobs within those organizations represent femininity. Goldin argues

that historical developments, including industrialization, have contributed to the typing of jobs, which has reinforced job segregation both horizontally (across sector) and vertically (within the same job sector).

The power that the meaning of the job has on excluding women is one reason that feminists have critiqued Becker's model. It conceptualizes the organization as gender-neutral and treats gender as an additional variable to the overall equation.

Acker's (1990) theory of gendered organizations and Williams' (2000) conceptualization of the "ideal" worker are useful tools for understanding the shortcomings of Becker's model, especially in terms of discriminatory practices. If, as Becker says, statistical information about women is erroneous, then the firm will be at a competitive disadvantage if it passes over women because of this faulty information. But the model not only assumes that workers with the same skills will be able to contribute at equal levels in the workplace, but it also ignores private-sphere obligations, which affect workers differently across the board.

Acker (1990) and Williams (2000) offer a feminist contribution to understanding demand-side issues and argue that gender-blind discourse obscures the ways that gender and sexuality are produced through organizational processes. Acker argues that the organization itself is gendered through various processes, beginning with constructing divisions along gender lines including divisions of labor, behavior and space. For example, Acker would argue that assigning female television sports reporters to cover "human interest" stories on the sidelines of football games is one process that genders the sports media profession; the woman not only is doing "woman's work", i.e. reporting on the "softer," off-the-field stories, but is relegated to a space that is less valued in the profession compared to the television

booth where the announcers authoritatively inform and explain the game to the viewer. Acker argues that these types of practices produce gendered identities; in other words, it is not that female reporters are relegated to working in certain spaces, but that we come to understand the category of a female reporter through her experiences. The second process in which an organization is gendered is through the construction of symbols and images that explain, express, reinforce or oppose the constructed divisions. Interpersonal interactions between men and women, women and women and men and men provide the third process. Finally, she says that gender frames underlying relations to organizations and the organizational logic – even though both appear to be gender-neutral.

Williams' contribution focuses on masculine norms in the workplace that impede women's advancement including norms about time, behavior and job requirements created to accommodate male bodies. On the latter, Williams provides examples in blue-collar jobs where machines are made to accommodate the average male body thus making it impossible for women to do the job by way of their "inadequate" bodies. As Williams notes, some jobs are constructed to favor a male body, which explains women's exclusion.

Critiquing the structure is underpinned by a radical feminist approach to understanding workplace inequality; such efforts help to expose the ways taken-for-granted assumptions, such as the way we value employees or construct our work day, not only constrain women in the current cultural climate, but also create gendered subjectivities. The organization is a site of cultural production and the symbolic order of our culture is maintained through it by how we conceptualize norms in the workplace from good manners to appropriate hair lengths for women (Gherardi, 1994).

Work-family issues. Perhaps the most-chronicled implication of gendered organizations and masculine norms in the workplace for women are their effect on working mothers. As long as women are the primary caretakers in this culture, they simply cannot compete with men in the workplace when the organization values long hours, unbroken career tracks and giving priority to the job over private sphere responsibilities; Rutherford (2001) explicated the “long hours” culture through interviews with women managers and noted that although many of them acknowledged the difficulties working mothers faced, few of the female managers were will willing to challenge the culture. Attending meetings — even when their presence was not needed — was crucial to avoiding becoming invisible. For women, who must constantly fight to overcome stereotypes about perceived incompetence in managerial roles, going home early was simply too costly. The opportunity to telecommute (worker exploitation arguments, aside) does not help women in that regard; being at the office is too important.

Family-friendly policies. That being said, popular rhetoric about family-friendly policies at work may not assist women all that much in terms of changing their collective status. Blau and Kahn (2006) argue that the United States is the “homeground” (p. 18) for political narratives because it enacted anti-discrimination policies before other countries. Although this should be commended, the United States’ policy enactments should also be understood as the product of liberal feminist initiatives in that they are concerned with equal opportunity rather than with the “equalization of outcomes” (p. 19). In other words, we can enact fair hiring practices, but until the structure of the job and organization change in the ways pointed out by Acker and Williams, women will continually be at a disadvantage because of their responsibilities at home. Not only are they unable to participate in the “long

hours” culture outlined by Rutherford (2001), but others also perceive them as unable to live up to the demands of the workplace culture. These perceptions may manifest into a “motherhood penalty” in which women with children are paid less and evaluated on harsher standards in the workplace. In an audit study in which researchers sent out resumes coming from both moms and non-mothers to potential employers, Correll, Benard and Paik (2007) showed how simply revealing the presence of children puts women at a disadvantage. Resumes that suggested women had children received fewer call backs than those that omitted information about family. Furthermore, in an experiment in which she asked participants to assign a starting salary to four groups of individuals — fathers, mothers and childless men and women — mothers were assigned the lowest salaries; participants assigned the highest salaries to working fathers. Correll et al. argue that women with children experience a motherhood penalty and that cultural expectations about men and women may have guided the participants to assign a higher salary to working fathers; after all, they are meeting standards for appropriate masculinity in performing the breadwinner role and thus should be rewarded. Women, on the other hand, achieve the pinnacle of femininity when they become mothers; participants may have assigned them lower salaries because they expected that their priority would be or should be with their families rather than at work. The results speak to cultural assumptions about gender identities and roles and provide a strong argument for acknowledging that liberal feminist policy initiatives are simply not enough to correct for gender inequality.

Ridgeway and Correll (2000) argue that in order for such policies to work, organizations must encourage everyone to use them; if men do not take advantage of a flex-time option, for instance, the link between domestic work and women is maintained. In

theory, we can force firms to hire and promote women and enact family-friendly policies, but until cultural narratives about gender roles and identities change, the logic of those policies may be undermined by cultural values.

Supply-Side Explanations

Supply-side factors are those that relate to women as potential laborers. Often, they include attitudes and preferences among women and other factors outside the workplace that affect women's ability to join the workforce – most notably domestic labor issues.

If we see the job as inherently gendered (Acker, 1990; Williams, 2000), we can better understand why men and women may choose various careers and better explain horizontal occupational segregation. Some women may choose jobs that value the skills they see as natural to their bodies—most notably care work or other female-typed jobs. Becker's model posits that horizontal segregation may be based on specialization; if women must leave the career track, it is economically advantageous to them to choose a career in which they will not see their skills atrophy if they leave paid labor to take care of children. Other analyses suggest that women may seek out jobs that are “women-friendly” because those organizational cultures recognize and value the responsibilities women have at home (Frome, Alfeld, Eccles, & Barber, 2006). Jobs that are dominated by men – such as sports information and other sports media professions -- may operate on masculine norms more so than jobs dominated by women. If those norms include structural barriers to women, then women — and especially those women who prefer not to prioritize work over family — have little incentive to enter those professions.

Research has also focused on where women are not –most notably technology, which is considered a growth industry in this country and a valued profession, as evidenced by high

salaries. Correll's (2001) work suggests that it may be less of a structural impediment problem and more girls' own perceived aptitude at tasks related to those types of professions. In her study, Correll found that boys rated themselves higher in math and science compared to girls, even when controlling for actual competency levels. The implication is that cultural beliefs about the gender typing of jobs lead young men and women to believe that they are more competent in jobs that match their gender in type; since we may be more likely to enter professions where we feel confident, such cultural attitudes may shape individual preferences for work. Her findings not only illustrate the limitations of focusing only on aptitude, but point to the importance of cultural discourse in the creation of subjectivities.

Catherine Hakim (2002) argues that it is less one's perceived aptitude for a specific task and more a woman's desire to work in general that will predict women's work rates. Hakim's "preference theory" (p. 433), based on longitudinal survey data on women's desire to work, suggests that women generally fall into three groups that she calls 1) home-centered; 2) work-centered; and 3) adaptive. Work-centered women prioritize work and make up a minority of overall women; this is compared with men, who most often fall into this category. Home-centered women, conversely, prioritize their domestic duties and prefer not to work. Adaptive women prefer both, prioritize neither and make up the largest of the three groups. Hakim's theory is controversial, given that it suggests discrimination in the workplace has not persisted due to demand-side issues and organizational bias but because of women's own lifestyle preferences. Simply, the theory appears to indict women for their own positions in the workplace. Furthermore, and most troubling for feminists, because so few women are willing to prioritize work, her theory predicts that "men will retain their dominance in the labor market, politics and other competitive activities" (p. 437).

Despite its controversial nature, Hakim's work does privilege women's own attitudes. Caven (2006) argues that feminist researchers are too focused on changing the head count in management positions and are ignoring women's own preferences for work. These preferences may explain horizontal segregation; if most women are adaptive, then it seems likely they will seek jobs that reward those attitudes.

Choices are not made in a vacuum, something Hakim acknowledges, but it will be important for future research to acknowledge women's own experiences, preferences and attitudes while at the same time recognizing that they are not created independent of experiences and cultural discourse.

Sexual harassment. A workplace culture that accepts sexual harassment as a norm is an inherently hostile space for women, who are reminded through that harassment about their unwanted presence. Women may decide not to enter a specific profession because they simply may not want to deal with the anticipated harassment.

In the United States, sexual harassment is defined as a gender-specific law that allows sexual harassment to be seen as an assault on women in general and leads to economic consequences for *all* women (Zippel, 2006). As a point of contrast, in Europe, laws are constructed as a violation against worker dignity and are not regarded as gender specific; it's not the sexual conduct that is inappropriate, but the "exclusionary" effect of the conduct (p. 9). Regardless of its definition, sexual harassment can be considered a form of violence against women and a problematic effect of discourses that naturalize women's sexual availability to men.

A second strength of exploring women's own experiences and attitudes is that such an approach can also help differentiate *between* women; understanding women as a

monolithic group is problematic because it denies difference and assumes all women similarly engage with structural forces and are impacted by them in the same way. I think a larger focus on difference may be one key to the future of gender and labor scholarship, as some research seems to indicate growing divisions among women that should be investigated.

As England (2006) argues, sexist attitudes about the aptitude of women in positions of authority may be changing (notable is Hillary Clinton's mass appeal to both men and women during the Democratic primaries). Telecommuting and flex-time (despite their limitations) have in some ways changed the structure of business. In sum, women are doing more in the labor force and have more options open to them than ever before. However, they are still largely responsible for domestic labor duties, a job that does not change even when women become successful in their careers (Brines, 1994). Further, wage data suggests household income in female-headed households is falling relative to that of other women (Blau and Kahn, 2004).

At work, women with familial responsibilities are faced with a motherhood penalty in the form of opportunity and wages while single, childless women are seen as extremely devoted to their jobs — after all, they have “given” up on their “natural” path to become mothers (Correll, et al., 2007). These studies indicate a possible growing division between single/childless women and mothers.

The friction, then, may not be between men and women in the future, but between women who do and do not have familial responsibilities. This could have major implications for how we conceptualize the problems for women in the workplace and the possible solutions for rectifying those problems. Further, a potential woman vs. woman division could

undermine collective efforts by women who struggle to either enter men's informal networks or make large sacrifices to do so.

Femininity in a Feminine Profession: Women, Gender and Public Relations

In many ways, public relations is an attractive position for women; not only is the profession dominated by women, but its inherent values – listening, helping others, collaborative projects – reflect attributes commonly marked as feminine, thus making women's participation seem natural. Despite the seemingly welcome environment, though, the industry's hierarchy is largely organized around gender lines. Women dominate the “technician” or lower-level roles (Grunig, Toth & Hon, 2001). Further, women often report feeling more comfortable in smaller agency firms compared with large corporate environments, and see smaller firms as representing more potential for advancement among women (Wrigley, 2002). These differences reflect the complexity and hierarchy of the industry itself, which makes the term “public relations” somewhat simplistic (Curtin & Gaither, 2005). They also illustrate the ways various public relations workplaces function around gender, and scholars have looked to public relations as a space to theorize about gendering of media professions and roles. Given that sports information is a public relations profession, it is useful to reflect on the ideas furthered among scholars researching the gendered public relations workplace, in order to better situate this work, as well as think about the ways in which the introduction of sports – an activity commonly marked as masculine – changes the trajectory of theory seeking to explain women's lack of power in the public relations workplace.

With the exception of a few notable studies (Pompper 2007, 2005, 2004) research on micro-level cultural processes in the public relations workplace has largely focused on difference between men and women, a concept reflected in the wide breadth of research seeking to describe women's underrepresentation in management positions, as well as scholarship theorizing on the explanation of that difference. Largely common in this research is the articulation of women as single category with little attention given to the variety of women's experiences, nor the constitution of the category "woman" and what that means within a gendered industry (Aldoory, 2007). Still, the emergence of research on women, gender and public relations has helped develop a variety of theories explaining women's exclusion from positions of power, as well as a strong argument for the value women bring to the industry in the form of ethical and effective PR practices, called "excellence theory" (Grunig, Toth & Hon, 2001).

Descriptions of a Gendered Industry

Over the past several decades, public relations has grown increasingly female-heavy, with women currently occupying 70 percent of all available jobs in the industry (Aldoory & Toth, 2002). Survey data has shown a consistent gender bias against women, however. For example, men are generally older than women and have longer career tenures, which may suggest that women do not stay in public relations for the entire course of their working lives and often leave to have children without ever returning (Dozier, Sha, Okura, 2007; Grunig, Toth & Hon, 2001). Furthermore, women earn significantly less than their male counterparts, even after controlling for age, education, job interruptions and years of experience (Aldoory & Toth; Dozier et al.).

Descriptions of a large pay gap, combined with the lack of women in management, has also been used as evidence of a glass ceiling (Grunig et al., 2000). In offering ideas for change, scholars have largely situated their solutions from a liberal feminist position (although they do not always characterize it as such). Grunig et al. suggest that women advocate for flex-time and maternity leave, which would help women meet their varied demands in the private sphere. The authors call this solution a “radical feminist solution,” but unless everyone takes advantage of such programs, including men in visible positions of power, the workplace norms that make it difficult for women to meet male-defined standards like devotion to the job and unbroken career tracks will not change (Hon, 1995).

Explaining and Assessing Gender Bias

Such dire pessimistic descriptions of the potential for growth among women PR practitioners has led to a variety of theories seeking to explain this phenomenon and provide a prescription for change. The influx of women has been paired with a so-called fear of the feminization of the field, a term that Creedon (1991) has criticized intensely as a way to devalue the work and contributions of women, and thus create barriers to their advancement to management. Toth and Grunig (1993) found that early on in their careers, men often complete “more activities and a variety of activities, perhaps to prepare them for the more advanced managerial role” (p. 171). Aldoory, Jiang, Toth and Sha (2008) found through interviews with men and women practitioners that most saw balancing work and personal life particularly problematic in public relations. In constructing the “work-family balance,” participants saw it as a woman’s issue, illustrating “how the conflict between work and family is a site of struggle for women” (p. 13).

Aldoory and Toth (2002) used survey data and focus group interviews to articulate three areas from which to develop explanatory theory: 1) sex discrimination; 2) biological determinism and 3) socialization of men. On the first, their survey showed salary bias and shorter career tracks; other factors included bias against women with children and perceptions of a “good ‘ole boy” network that exclude women from opportunities for advancement. On the second factor, biological determinism, comments from the interviewees showed that participants saw men as more naturally equipped for leadership positions and that the few number of men in public relations has led to a general sense that men should be recruited and favored in order to keep them in the business. Finally, participants saw men as socialized into feeling more “entitled” to management positions and thus more comfortable in simply asking. As one of their participants said, “Women I think sometimes think, ‘Oh, gee, I’ll ask, but, oh, gee, I don’t know if I deserve it.’ And guys expect they deserve it.” In synthesizing their findings, the authors ultimately argue that sexism, biological determinism and socialization factors contribute to essentially what Goldin (2006) calls the pollution of a given industry through the influx of women. Thus, favoritism toward men – in terms of salary or opportunity – becomes essential for retaining men, neutralizing the perceived “feminization” of the industry and ultimately saving the profession’s prestige.

Scholars, however, working in the excellence theory paradigm, have advocated that attributes associated with femininity, such as listening skills, collaboration and moral consciousness, lead to better and more ethical public relations approaches (Grunig, 1992). Grunig, Toth and Hon (2000, 2001) have further argued that feminist values, such as collective action, collaboration, equity, justice, sensitivity are actually conducive to effective

public relations practices, thus making the “feminization” of the field not a pollutant, but a path to better industry practices and liberation for women.

Limitations

Across the scholarship, women are largely treated as a monolithic group, and Pompper (2005) has strongly critiqued public relations scholars for giving a nod to diversity but generally failing to incorporate it into research. Pompper (2004) argues that ethnic diversity should be considered in the formulation of “excellence theory.” Using focus group interviews with African-American women, Pompper suggests that when African-American women practice ethnic solidarity, “organizations’ public relations potential is enhanced” because White practitioners may become educated about diverse approaches to the various tasks and challenges that are part of day-to-day PR life (p. 204). Although her research is important – as she rightly notes, public relations scholars have largely ignored diversity and painted “women” with a wide brush -- she articulates her arguments in ways that essentialize the “African-American woman” identity in the same way that prior work essentializes “woman.” Furthermore, she assumes that female African-American public relations practitioners will (naturally) advocate for multi-culturalism at work, and in turn educate their White counterparts and help set new and diverse agendas. Since African-American women are often tokens (she notes they comprise 6 percent of the profession), token theory suggests that rather than highlighting their otherness, tokens may seek to assimilate into the mainstream culture and value systems as a way to become invisible (Kanter, 1993). Indeed, her interviewees discuss “working harder” to overcome discrimination, another key component in token theory.

Sexuality has been briefly touched upon in this area of scholarship. Grunig, Toth and Hon (2001), for instance, have advocated exploring the “lesbian experience” in public relations: “[L]esbians face discrimination because they are women. Given the growing feminization of public relations, we should be aware of this double burden that lesbians may face” (p. 125). Aside from the misguided assumption that discrimination is additive, the characterization also takes “lesbian” identity as a given. However, they do note that the feminization of the field implies a gendering of the organization. Because gender and sexuality are inextricably tied, thinking about sexuality would be a fruitful area of scholarship for this field and one I hope I can inform.

A Critical Turn

Although institutional critiques are certainly salient, Aldoory (2006, 2007) has suggested that scholars seeking to explain women’s lack of institutional power begin to think about the way difference is produced and subordinated through workplace practices and discourse. She critiques scholars for relying too heavily on the ways women adapt to standards in the workplace, which leaves intact male-defined practices and norms. Rather, she calls for research to not just take identity as a given and work from comparisons, but interrogate the production of difference through discursive frameworks and workplace practices. Further, such an approach would allow researchers to think about difference in a more sophisticated way and peel back the illusion of women as natural/different in public relations. As she laments, “what is missing is an examination of the ‘multiplicity of relations of subordination’ and an analysis of how these relations are being constituted” (2006, p. 673).

This dissertation dovetails with a growing area of public relations scholarship critiquing excellence theory and its related two-way symmetrical model as overly simplistic and ignoring important questions about power. Two-way symmetrical public relations is a model for the practice of effective and ethical public relations and falls under the notion of “excellence theory” (Gower, 2006). Although it has evolved and grown over time, two-way symmetry is defined by certain values, such as collaboration, negotiation and compromise (Gower). As Gower points out, the incorporation of such values require change in the organization, a notion behind much related research, including scholarship advocating for the valuation of feminine ideals in the PR workplace.

Recently this area of scholarship has come under scrutiny from scholars who seek to integrate theories of power with theories of public relations practice. Motion and Weaver (2005), for instance, write that excellence theory, which focuses on relationships and stems from a “functional management perspective,” ignores power relationships between public relations practitioners and the various publics that which they engage. The authors borrow from Foucault to assert that in assessing the ethics of PR, scholars must consider the ways such practitioners participate in a “discursive struggle to establish the status of truth” (p. 64). Curtin and Gaither (2005) have further noted that in an effort to better assess the ways in which power is wielded by those that control the message researchers must consider the organization itself as embodying an identity. This may help answer the question of “why” any one individual practices public relations, another issue that excellence theory ignores (Gower). Although critical, postmodern and political economic theory are not new in cultural studies scholarship, they are new to studies of cultural processes in the public relations

workplace, and this dissertation serves as an answer to the call for analyses from these various perspectives articulated by Aldoory (2006) and others.

Treading on “Male Terrain”: Women in Sports Media

Sports media workplaces are not immune to the culture and value systems of sports and, not surprisingly, women represent a small minority of those in the profession, from staffers to decision-makers and other authority positions (Claringbould, Knoppers & Elling, 2004; Creedon & Smith, 2007). Girls’ and women’s sports receive little media coverage and sports advocates have speculated that if more women served as media gatekeepers, more and better coverage of girls and women’s sports would see daylight (Cramer, 1994; Skwar, 1999). Since so few women work in sports journalism, and even fewer stay in the profession over the long haul, feminist research has thus focused on exploring women’s experiences in sports journalism and explaining the factors that may impede women’s advancement, or discourage them from staying in the profession over the course of their careers. A compelling critique of structural factors that work as barriers to success and longevity has emerged, along with theories explaining the cultural processes at work that naturalize the logic behind those structural impediments. Underpinning the analyses is the notion that individuals interact with the value systems of sports and sports journalism and make choices about internalizing those value systems or challenging them. In a sense they are described as reacting to systems of hegemonic masculinity that make men’s involvement in a sports-related profession natural with the opposite true for women.

Sports Journalism

The most recent release of a longitudinal report tracking hiring practices in newspaper sports departments showed women make up just 6% of sports editors, 10% of assistant sports editors and 9% of sports reporters (Lapchick, Little, Mathew, & Zahn, 2008). According to the study, only two newspapers in the largest circulation category even employed female sports editors. The research re-states what has been largely documented: that women are routinely shut out from all positions, especially those of authority in the sports journalism (Etling, 2002; Hardin & Whiteside, 2006). Women fare slightly better in television where they make up about 8% of sports anchors and 20% of sports reporters (Papper, 2008).

The Culture of the Sports Journalism Workplace

Reports of these low numbers have elicited the expected response from advocates for women in the sports media workplace: editors, producers and managers must work on broadening their hiring pool and begin diversifying their sports media staffs. Such a call represents a liberal feminist approach to solving issues of inequity because it is concerned with sameness in terms of opportunity (Tong, 1998). In some regards, that theoretical approach to change has created a better situation for women; it was only a mere 20 years ago that women were routinely banned from locker rooms. Further, advocacy groups, such as the Association for Women in Sports Media (AWSM), have helped bring voice to the problematic issue of sexual harassment from players, coaches and even fellow sports reporters (Creedon & Smith, 2007). AWSM also has several initiatives in place to aid the hiring of young women in the field, which would potentially help the problematic coverage given to girls' and women's sports. Recent research suggests this thesis may simply be wishful thinking. Everbach (2008) analyzed coverage produced by sports departments

headed by male and female editors, finding no differences in the amount of coverage afforded women's sports. This may be because female editors internalize dominant value systems in order to "fit in" in a profession where they are clear minorities. Still, although more female editors may not change the quantity of coverage, women in gatekeeping positions may affect the quality in the form of coverage that rejects stereotypical frames of female athletes (Kian & Hardin, 2009).

Hiring more women, however, is incomplete as doing so will not necessarily change the culture of the sports media workplace, which naturalizes male-defined norms about sports that position women as outsiders (Hardin & Shain 2005, 2006; Miller & Miller, 1995). In a survey Hardin (2005) found about a quarter of sports editors saw women as naturally less athletic than men; such ideology allows those in power to justify the low level of newspaper sports coverage afforded girls' and women's sports.

Outsiders on Male Turf

Ideology that naturalizes women as outsiders in sports may also contribute to the lack of advancement opportunities for women as research has illustrated the various expressions of a glass ceiling in this industry (Ricchiardi, 2005). For example, survey data has shown that women feel pigeonholed into covering women's sports; in the male-defined culture of sports journalism, such sports are considered lower value, and thus low status beats (Cramer, 1994; Miloch, Pedersen, Smucker & Whisenant, 2005). They are often overlooked for the "glitzy" assignments, like covering the Superbowl or World Series (Ricchiardi, 2005). Female sports journalists see the potential for promotional opportunities as bleak, a sentiment that gets stronger as they progress in the profession (Smucker, Whisenant, & Pedersen, 2003). This pessimistic outlook may contribute to their low numbers. "Women in sports media must be

able to see opportunities for advancement, lest they become discouraged and leave the field, perpetuating the prevalent ‘revolving door syndrome’” (Hardin & Shain, 2005, p. 816).

Smucker et al. (2003) suggest that the lack of advancement opportunities for women in sport and sports journalism reflects the system of male hegemony in which those in power (men) actively work to retain that power, writing: “The male hegemonic structure of sport and sports journalism is such that entrance can be gained and initial promotions obtained, but the glass ceiling is still firmly in place in terms of upper editorial positions within the sports department” (p. 405).

Hardin & Shain (2006) illustrated the production of women’s outsider status using long interviews with female sports journalists. They suggest that women negotiate a constant “tension” between their gender and professional identities. In short, sports and sports journalists are so synonymous with men and masculinity that the identities of “female” and “sports journalist” are difficult to reconcile. As one woman told them,

You never actually feel like you’ve arrived for whatever reason, you know...you just second-guess when you get hired because you hear whispers that you [were an] equal opportunity hire. Unless you have skin this thick, which I don’t have, there’s always a seed in the back of your mind.

Women who do enter sports media generally do not finish their careers there (Etling, 2002; Hardin & Shain, 2005; Hardin & Whiteside, 2009a; Whiteside & Hardin, 2010). In qualitative interviews, women often indict the long hours that seem incompatible with life as a mother and/or wife as the reasons for leaving (Claringbould, Knoppers & Elling, 2004; Hardin, Shain & Poniatowski, 2008; Hardin & Whiteside, 2009a).

Other research, however, suggests that the difficult schedule may be but one challenge women face working in sports media, a workplace that members have described as “a profession built on macho behavior which is reinforced by traditions of misogynist and racist jokes” (Claringbould, Knoppers & Elling, 2004, p. 715; also Hardin & Shain, 2005; Staurowsky & DiManno, 2002). Further, across the literature women tell stories of humiliating instances of sexual harassment and report in survey data that they have experienced such behavior. For instance, Creedon (1994) notes that women may be more comfortable entering the locker room of sports with small teams (basketball, for instance) where they are less outnumbered and can avoid locker room “difficulties.” As she writes, “it’s an uncomfortable place for these women to conduct business, made all the more so when they’re harassed” (p. 164).

Sexual harassment is more than just about sex; it’s about control and power and that discourse and related intimidating behavior reminds women that they are outsiders treading on male turf. Thus, it is not surprising that women often report feeling that they don’t belong and noting the feeling of needing to “prove” their aptitude to work in sports is a common trope in qualitative research (Hardin & Shain, 2006; Hardin & Whiteside, 2009a; Miloch, Pedersen, Smucker & Whisenant, 2005; Staurowsky & DiManno, 2002). If women internalize ideology that they are ill-suited to work in sports, and do not see themselves as a “natural fit, it is their burden to ‘fit in’ on men’s terms” (Hardin et al., 2008; p. 76). That may translate into a desire to separate from a gender identity and blend in, with the ultimate goal of becoming “one of the guys.” For instance, qualitative interviews have showed the ways in which women accept discrimination, leading Hardin and Shain (2005) to argue that masculine value systems in sports are so culturally entrenched that women may see sexual

harassment and discrimination as “routine” (p. 814). Failing to challenge a sexist joke, for instance, “seems to be an effective way for them to achieve acceptance, although the same dominant macho culture still prevails” (Claringbould, et al., p. 716).

Research exploring attitudes and experiences of women in sports media shows that few are willing to acknowledge — much less blame — hostile workplace environments as problematic for women. In fact, many women outline ways in which their gender is an advantage (Claringbould et al., 2004; Cramer, 1994; Hardin & Shain, 2005; Hardin & Whiteside, 2009b; Miloch et al., 2005). As one sports journalist in a qualitative interview noted, “if you’re a 21-, 22-year-old college football player, would you rather talk to: me or would you rather talk to a scruffy 45-year old kind of obnoxious guy who is every other writer on the beat?” (Hardin & Whiteside, 2009a). Thus femininity is presented as ideal for carving out a niche in a profession that confirms women’s outsider status in every way, from sexual harassment to dominant value systems that see women’s athletic participation as inferior.

Sports Public Relations and Sports Information

Scholars have produced a wide body of public relations research exploring effective practices to women’s experiences in a gendered and “feminized” industry. Similarly, although sports journalism has been interrogated from a variety of angles, scholars have largely overlooked sports public relations as a field of inquiry (Neupaeur, 2001, 1998; Stoldt, Dittmore, & Branvold, 2006). The field has recently received some attention, most notably from a strategic communication lens. Although sports information has received spotty attention, a trajectory of research has emerged, from describing women’s relative exclusion

to critiquing structural barriers and finally to an assessment of the production of gender difference and related implications.

Introduction to the field. In general, college sports public relations practitioners, or sports information directors (SIDs) as they are commonly called, promote a university's sports teams to the media and community. They complete numerous public and media relations-related tasks including writing press releases, coordinating interviews with players, managing the athletics Web site and producing game programs (Connors, 2007; Mullin, Hardy & Sutton, 2007; Stoldt, 2000). The 2010 conference included items on the agenda such as strategic communication, crisis communication, and using new media for message dissemination. SIDs also go beyond traditional public relations activities and often oversee game management duties, keep and archive athletic statistics, and manage information archives on players and teams (Connors, 2007; Mullin et al., 2007). They are assigned specific sports to promote and manage, often travel with high-profile teams or to major events like conference championships, and maintain a regular working relationship with coaching and administrative staff (Connors; Mullin et al.). They usually report to an institution's athletic director (Stoldt, Miller & Comfort, 2001) and are part of an internal hierarchy that includes the sports information director (often the head of the department), followed by associate, assistant and graduate assistant levels (Stoldt, 2000).

Gender and sports information. Research on women in sports information has paralleled Aldoory's (2007) assessment of the arc of scholarship on gender in public relations. Similar to Aldoory's conclusion about early work on gender in public relations, scholarship in sports information is really about women rather than gender. Scholars have produced a series of descriptive studies to highlight women's relative underrepresentation

both in the industry overall as well as in positions of power. For instance, Carpenter and Acosta's (2010) longitudinal survey tracking women's representation in sports organizations showed that 12% of head sports information directors are women, down from a high of 15% in 1998, a number echoed by the work of previous researchers (Hardin & McClung, 2002; McCleneghan, 1995; Neupauer, 1998; Stoldt, 2000). Stoldt et al., (2001) found in their survey of Division I SIDs that men tended to be older than their female counterparts (37 to 32 years old, respectively), earned more than every woman at every position except "assistant SID," more often worked in manager roles and were also more likely to report aspiring to such roles. As a first step, the descriptive information was useful; in response to the Stoldt et al. (2001) survey, a group of female SIDs formed Female Athletic Media relations Executives (FAME) to help advocate for women in their field. Still, descriptive studies only provided information about the extent of women's underrepresentation and relative lack of power in sports information. They ignored structural constraints to women's advancement and took identity as a given.

A second area of research has recently emerged seeking to explain that underrepresentation and critique systemic processes contribution to women's marginalization. Using findings from an audit of head SIDs and the athletic directors who hired them Whisenant and Mullane (2007) argue that women may not be getting the chance at leadership that they deserve. Their results showed that SIDs are hired within a broader process of homologous production, or the practice of hiring individuals that match the physical attributes of the interviewer, which in the case of athletic directors, is largely white and male. Whiteside and Hardin (2010) used a survey of sports information directors to assess the division of labor and its related implications, finding that sport assignments were

divided along gender lines; in fact, the top seven sports most likely to be assigned to women were women's sports. Top-tier men's sports like football and men's basketball were more often given to men. The survey also showed that many "head" SIDs often oversaw football or men's basketball leading the authors to argue that without access to sports in which they will receive high-profile experience, women may not earn the requisite experience needed to qualify for leadership positions. They suggest that decision-makers re-assess their allocation of responsibilities and critically evaluate whether denying women access to sports like football is based on stereotypes of gender differences and ideology that equates men as more naturally suited to work with high profile men's sports.

Along with a structural critique of the values and norms of sports information, Whiteside & Hardin (2010) also applied Acker's (1990) theory of gendered organizations to argue that workplace norms contribute to the production of difference, writing "because women SIDs are relegated to spaces where they work with [devalued] women's sports, we come to understand women as only capable of working on the fringes of athletics" (p. 42). These comments reflect a focus on the production of difference, a third area of scholarship that as Aldoory (2007) suggested, should be the focus for the development of theory understanding power relations in the workplace. Hardin and Whiteside (2009b) also sought to explore the production of difference through group interviews with women in the profession. Despite their relative lack of power in the workplace, many saw their gender identity as a distinct advantage and a way for them to carve out a niche in a workplace that is generally hostile to them. For example, many noted in group interviews that their (natural) empathic (feminine) natures allow them to better communicate with the athletes and teams they are working to promote. The authors argue that the women fall into what Frohlich

(2004) calls the “friendliness trap,” or the process of using perceived natural feminine traits to gain initial favor in the workplace. The trap occurs when women are then evaluated for management or leadership positions and are penalized for those same traits. Leaders are assertive, strong and powerful, all antitheses of mainstream femininity. Using the friendliness trap allows for an assessment of the way socialization contributes to women’s marginalization in this industry, which adds a new dimension to structural critiques largely focused on the ways problematic gendered workplace norms inhibit women’s advancement.

Future Directions of Sports Media Research

Research on women in sports media has provided a compelling critique of the hegemonic processes that naturalize women’s outsider status and a call to action to challenge the taken-for-granted norms that underpin such logic. As Miloch et al. (2005) write, “Through hiring practices and the maintenance of hegemonic masculinity within this institution, this strategy ensures that males will continue to hold the positions of power and influence” (p. 231). The sentiment of challenging hegemonic processes is a common one across the sports media literature, and largely seen as the path for liberation for *all* women in sports journalism (and presumably, sports-related professions).

Other lines of inquiry remain to be interrogated, including an analysis of the power differentials among women. Intersectionality and the concept of difference among women has yet to be explored; for example, Cramer (1994) briefly alluded to the experiences of black female sports journalists and the notion that some report feeling black (male) athletes uniquely understand the difficult situation they face in entering the locker room. Studies focusing on difference should provide a more nuanced picture of women’s experiences and perhaps provide varied solutions to women’s collective disempowerment.

Further, as theoretical work on sports as a cultural practice has shown, discourses of sexuality have a chilling effect on women's overall advancement and can create divisiveness between women. All women do not experience sexism in the same way, and it will be critical to apply some of the ideas furthered in the sports and sexuality literature, including the ways in which sexism, heterosexism and homophobia, experienced in diverse and varied ways by women, work together in ways detrimental to all women.

A Missing Component: Sexuality in Sports

I end this review of literature with a discussion of research regarding sexuality in sports. As was outlined in Chapter 2, sexuality is an important component of sports studies yet has not been incorporated by scholars studying media workplace cultures, a gap this project begins to address. Much of the research on sexuality in sports arose from a radical feminist perspective that takes identity as immutable and offers solutions for recasting sporting spaces as friendly for lesbians and gay men. A growing post-structuralist perspective considers sexuality as a product of discursive power relations expressed relationally, with a renewed focus on the production of identity, the perspective I take in this work.

Understanding that we live in a largely homophobic society, the threat of being labeled a lesbian hangs over women like a perpetual cloud and functions as a disciplining mechanism that controls women's behavior and bodies (Lenskyj, 2003; Griffin, 1998). Survey research among future sports industry professionals indicates persistent homophobic attitudes and such findings, along with obvious cultural indicators such as the lack of openly gay professional athletes, illustrate the need for attention to sexual minorities in sports

organizations, a perspective championed by radical feminists (Gill, Morrow, Collins, Lucey, & Schultz, 2006).

Scholars argue that because women are seen to violate gender norms when they engage in sports, they are viewed as gender deviants (Kolnes, 1995). Gender cannot be understood separately from sexuality, and we understand femininity and masculinity within a “heterosexual paradigm – a paradigm which institutionalizes certain images of femininity and masculinity as well as male domination and female subordination” (p. 62). In sports, the relationship between gender and sexuality is evident in narratives about female athletes. The “failure” to be meek, passive or beautiful in the course of physical action in sports is read like a rejection of femininity – and thus a rejection of heterosexuality. Scholars researching women’s sports have noted the common stereotype that all female athletes are lesbians (Cahn, 1994; Fallon & Jome, 2007; Griffin, 1998; Kauer & Krane, 2006; Kolnes, 1995; Krane, 2001, 1997; Lenskyj, 2003).

For example, in their interviews with college athletes, Krane and Kauer (2006) found that all recognized the lesbian stereotype; many noted being asked by their non-athlete friends which of their teammates were gay, and pressure to accept the sexual advances of men for fear of being labeled lesbian. Fallon and Jome (2007) noted how the female rugby players in their study reported friends and family as suggesting their participation “detracted from their feminine appearance” (p. 315). Halbert’s (1997) study of female boxers reflected similar sentiments, and she calls the lesbian stigma “the most popular stereotype of female prizefighters,” not surprising that boxing – defined by the raw display of physical aggression -- is at its core a fundamental representation of hegemonic masculinity (p. 17). But athletes in non-contact sports that do not exemplify hegemonic masculinity have expressed similar

sentiments. Kolnes (1995, p. 64) writes, “Women who appear strong and in good physical shape are not accepted without objections. The implicit message is that one cannot be a ‘normal’ woman if one is extremely strong.”

Distancing: Image Management Strategies in Negotiating Through the Lesbian Stereotype

Research has shown various ways in which female athletes, coaches and administrators “distance” themselves from a lesbian stereotype. Perhaps most common strategy is the practice in performing femininity to imply heterosexuality. The boxers in Halbert’s (1997) study wore pink trunks, sometimes with fringe to look like a skirt. One collegiate swimmer told Kauer and Krane (2006) that she prefers not to wear her letter jacket in public. Griffin (1998) has talked at length about the practice of lesbians “passing” as heterosexual by talking about imaginary boyfriends or wearing markers of femininity, such as bows or makeup during competition.

Blinde and Taube (1992) call the full range of efforts to imply heterosexuality as “distancing” strategies. Such strategies can also include making fun of lesbian athletes, criticizing them through disparaging comments like “dykes” or gossiping about them (Krane, 1997). Halbert (1997) further notes the manifestation of distancing strategies in the practice of not associating with women who meet the stereotyped image. This may also extend to a general distancing from other women, given the association between female activism/feminism and lesbianism (Griffin, 1992). In making fun of lesbians, athletes (gay or straight) imply that they are 1) not lesbian, and 2) do not approve of lesbians (Krane, 1997).

These studies have provided important assessments about divisions among women and the prejudice and secret lives experienced by lesbian athletes. Radical feminists have

employed social identity theory to explain the image management strategies of lesbian athletes.

Social identity theory explains how a norm like “silence” is communicated to group members among the lesbian sporting community (Krane & Barber, 2003; Sartore & Cunningham, 2009). Social identity theory takes categories as a given (i.e. interrogating those categories is not the focus) and instead looks at the groups that are formed based on those categories and the rules and norms that govern group behavior. Krane & Barber (2003) draw from Timothy Curry’s work on locker room cultures to offer the example of a young male athlete, who learns that bravado and sexual aggression will earn him esteem among his teammates. Similarly, “so deeply ingrained is the belief that to be lesbian, or be perceived as lesbian, will be career threatening, that lesbians in sport have co-opted the notion that it is imperative to hide their lesbian identity” (p. 336). Silence, then, becomes the norm among group members in the same way that aggression becomes a norm among male team sport athletes.

Although in today’s current climate it is more acceptable for women to identify as lesbian in sports, they still face pressure to conform to “prevailing standards of heterosexual attractiveness” (Lenskyj, 2003; p. 36, Pronger, 2000). Female athletes (whether they identify as lesbian or not) are rewarded culturally when they perform a “feminine” gender identity, a word that Lenskyj (2003) argues is code for “attractive to men” (p. 49). Conversely, they are punished when they do not. For example, Theberge (2000) notes that female professional golfers face pressure to perform an “acceptable” (read: heterosexual) image in order to secure necessary sponsorships. Other athletes who have effectively “sold” a heterosexy image to the

public have reaped financial rewards. As one journalist noted in describing the financial rewards given to tennis star Venus Williams:

Would Venus Williams have scored a \$40 million endorsement contract from Reebok—the highest ever for a female athlete—if she dressed in the baggy shorts of a WNBA or LPGA player? Unlikely. Her earning power depends mainly on winning matches, but looking stunning in a tight yellow dress helps (Truitt, 2001, para. 5).

Changing the Climate?

Kauer and Krane (2006) argue that the stronger an athletic team bonds and identifies as part of a collective group, the greater promise for social change in challenging a homophobic environment. All but one of the athletes in their study described feeling “accepted” within the inner circle of their team, but once team members shared experiences and “bonded,” lesbian and bisexual women reported feelings of acceptance. Along with the athletes’ growing into their own sexual identities, these various factors “merged to create a hospitable team climate in which teammates openly discussed their varied sexual identities and in which they were able to learn from one another” (p. 53). Indeed, compassion from others in support networks, as well as the development of community, has been noted as a key element in the process of coming out (Bredemeier, Carlton, Hills & Oglesby, 1999). Thus, change may happen from within small pockets, but must also be supported from those in leadership, where examples can be set and new narratives put in action (Griffin, 1998; Krane, 1997).

One main division between radical feminists and those situated from a postmodern perspective is the way each situates identity. Radical feminists have long celebrated lesbianism and indicted male hegemony as for the demonization of lesbians – and women in

general who do not conform to traditional notions of femininity. This has resulted in prescriptions for change such as the lesbian and lesbian-friendly sporting leagues and the ongoing critique of sporting structures that favor men, such as the resistance to women's inclusion in leadership positions, for instance. This perspective has provided an important facet in sports studies scholarship, most notably giving a voice to lesbians in sport who are marginalized and silenced while living in fear of being outed in a homophobic culture.

By recounting the experiences of lesbians, we have come to better understand various distancing strategies and cultural climates for lesbians in sport. Most notably, this research has been critical in advocating for anti-discrimination as a given and immutable category. Of course, radical feminists would certainly not efforts based on sexual orientation. The limitation, however, has been the acceptance of identity consider this a "limitation" – indeed, lesbian sporting leagues are indicative of the *celebration* of lesbianism.

Poststructuralist Analyses

Considering the constitution of identity from a post-structuralist perspective, however, allows for the analyses of the relationship between knowledges of the self and discursive power relations, opening up the possibility for new ways to experience and understand the self and others (Pringle, 2005). A post-structuralist turn in sports studies is fairly recent and has developed over the past 15 years, but studies emerging from this perspective that take discursive practices as the object of study have offered a compelling argument about the ways bodies are ordered through these very practices, thus opening up new prescriptions for change and activism.

Wright and Clarke's (1999) work offers an example of this theoretical turn. In analyzing coverage of women's rugby in Australia, the authors note the consistent

presentation of the women as feminine (and heterosexual); for instance, a full-page newspaper spread of one team featured just a single small photograph of the women in action among multiple off-the-pitch photos -- including one of a woman in the locker room with combs and shampoo in the foreground. Like radical feminists, the authors lament the lack of visibility given to lesbian athletes. But Wright and Clarke consider the texts as a discourse that “publicly sanction heterosexual beliefs about femininity, thereby contributing to the maintenance of compulsory heterosexuality” (p. 240). This statement alludes to the provocative notion that sexuality is not an innate “thing” inside each of us, but an effect of discursive power relations.

Others have continued to think about sport “as a technology in the Foucauldian sense, an ensemble of knowledges and practices that disciplines, conditions, reshapes and inscribes the body” (Cole, 1993, p. 86). Anderson (2002) interviewed male college athletes who had recently come out, taking the discourses about the process, and specifically their expectations and fears, as the object of study. In the interviews, many described the experience as “easier” than they thought it would be and Anderson suggests that discourse of fear is a policing mechanism to keep gay athletes in the proverbial closet and prevent discourses in which homosexuality and athlete can be part of “one identity.”

As discussed earlier, Duncan (1994), for instance, used *Shape Magazine* to show how discourse of personal motivation disguises normative messages about complying with a feminine ideal. Thus, when women are told in the magazine to make a “solemn promise to yourself” to get fit and look like the (photoshopped) cover models, they begin a process in self-monitoring and self-surveiling in order to achieve an unattainable goal (p. 54). As she later writes, “the inevitability of failure is what creates disempowerment” (p. 63). In a similar

study, Schultz (2004) assessed images of the sports bra in mainstream media to argue that narratives about the strong empowered female athlete obscure the ways in which female subjects are disciplined into achieving a normalized type of femininity represented through those images.

Technologies of the self. Johns and Johns (2000) interviewed elite athletes to think about the discursive practices of sport preparation, such as dieting and training. On one hand they suggest that such practices result in self-surveillance and docility in the form of a normalized body. As one gymnast told them, “[the pressure to lose weight] gave me insecurities about my body image and I remember thinking I looked like a whale. I look back at pictures and remember thinking how fat I felt” (p. 227.). On the other hand, Johns and Johns also argue that at times the athletes engage in a process of care of the self, in which dieting was a practice in preparing to push the boundaries of the body’s limits and actively creating athletic (and possibly transgressive) bodies. Markula (2003) argues, however, that such an assessment may be more of a coping strategy than an example of technologies of the self. As Foucault (2003) suggests, the latter involves critical self reflection and active care of the self which may result in transgressive counter-discourses. There is no “clear formula that will detect which sporting practices serve as practices of freedom” (Markula, p. 104), but attention should be given to the concepts of critical self-awareness and ethical self care when making such assessments (Markula). Thorpe’s (2008) study of female snowboarders is one example. In her ethnographic study, Thorpe argues that images traditionally labeled “sexist” such as pictures that hypersexualize female athletes, are not necessarily oppressive to all women. For instance, in asking one snowboarder about an athlete’s decision to pose provocatively in two men’s magazines, the woman told Thorpe: “Good on her. She has a

strong, fit and athletic body, so it's probably good for guys and other women to see that she is not a stick figure with balloon boobs" (p. 213). Thorpe takes these comments in a Foucauldian context in which the woman demonstrates a critical self awareness about gender and sexuality, and assesses the image in a way that offers an alternative to discursive constructions of femininity, one component of a practice in care of the self. When power is understood as relational and expressed through discursive practices, then theoretically, all subjects have the opportunity to engage with power relations and produce potential counter-discourses, such as the example given.

Conclusion

This project touches on a wide variety of scholarship emanating from various theoretical positions – not all even feminist. The common strand drawing this literature together is the lived experiences of women in the public sphere when they engage in activities culturally marked as masculine. This is true in the form of striving for leadership and authority positions at work, to tackling an opponent on the rugby pitch: When women deviate from traditional notions of femininity, they suffer consequences, ranging from a lesbian stigma in sports to lower salaries and exclusion from high status assignments at work. Together these consequences are bound by a common thread: Failure to conform to hegemonic femininity.

I have used this literature review as a space to supplement Chapter 1 in reviewing how women's lack of power has been studied at work in general, public relations and sports journalism. Sports information lies at the intersection of all three. Clearly, structural barriers exist in preventing women in sports information -- and other similar professions – from

reaching inclusion, success and “legitimacy.” But as a new and emerging wave of scholarship has shown, understanding the cultural processes at play that work to undermine women’s contributions are important to consider, as well.

Drawing from sexuality literature will help advance our understandings of women’s experiences in sports media professions and offer a more nuanced way of understanding women’s marginalization. The ultimate goal, of course, is to offer prescriptions for change. Those in power and leadership positions have touted the benefits women bring to media organizations. Yet, women have not made great advances. Why? This dissertation seeks to build on the existing literature laid out here and provide another dimension from a cultural studies position that may offer another perspective.

Chapter 4

Actively Creating Knowledge with an Activist Agenda:

Reflections on Doing Qualitative Feminist Work

In many ways this research project began before I ever took a seat at my first graduate seminar. It is grounded in my own experiences working in sports media and participating in an athletics culture that often troubled me in ways that I could not fully articulate at the time. As a sports information director, I made a point to attend the annual industry convention each year, where I also attended the meeting of Female Athletic Media relations Executives (FAME), a kind of support and mentoring group for female sports information directors (SIDs). It was at these meetings where I first met some of the more visible women in the field; it was also at these meetings where I was struck by what I saw as a decidedly non-political tone and lack of engagement on what I would call “women’s issues.” At the large convention meetings, I also began to notice something else: women were a very small minority, but seemed to relish being the “only girl” in a group of men. To what end did this unofficial “title” offer women in a field where they hold little power? These questions helped build the research problem for this project as I sought to better understand the sexual politics in sports information while also reflecting on my role in the research process. Research is never produced independently of the researcher, and my role as a former sports media professional, as well as my claimed feminist agenda have played a critical part in shaping this project’s objectives and goals (Baptiste, 2001).

This project also builds on previous research exploring women’s experiences in sports information; although the research objectives for those studies were somewhat different from those interrogated here, the path to knowledge went through women’s shared

experiences (see Hardin & Whiteside, 2009b; Whiteside & Hardin, 2009). This project is equally grounded in women's experiences, a methodology heavily influenced and justified by my reading of feminist standpoint theory, an approach to research that that assumes all knowledge is historically, culturally and politically constructed, and thus values women's personal experience and the *achieved* consciousness relating from those experiences as a starting point for the production of knowledge and as a way to encourage new understandings of reality (Markula, 2005). In that vein, I chose to use one-on-one in-depth interviews with women in sports information as a specific method for exploring the topic of sexuality in the sports media workplace. To supplement those interviews in crafting an explanation about the ways sexuality works as an organizing principle in sports information, I analyzed texts produced by women in FAME in the way of the FAME newsletter, a document published once to several times a year. The newsletter includes a variety of information about FAME members, including member profiles, first-person accounts about working through various challenges, articles about award winners, convention recaps and "person on the street" type stories where member opinions are gathered about a specific issue. In this chapter I review the assumptions guiding my research choices, the role I played in the production of knowledge, and a justification and explanation for using long interviews as my chosen method.

Activism Through Research: Feminist Methodology

In some ways, defining feminist research is easier than defining feminist theory itself; most scholars agree that although feminists enter into their research with differing theoretical assumptions that often contradict the work of other feminists, all can agree that such research

starts with a socially conscious feminist researcher with an activist research agenda. Individuals who experience oppression, stigmatization and alienation are “experts” in their own subjugated social standings and can provide alternative views of “reality” that may lead to social change (Wahab, 2003). In this regard, I am strongly influenced by standpoint epistemologies because feminist standpoint theories not only recognize, but also privilege women’s experiences as a starting point for the production of knowledge (Harding, 2004; Hartsock, 1987). Postmodern theorists have criticized this perspective, however, with charges of essentialism and universalism. I consider these points in light of the post-structural theoretical perspective I am using in this project, using Hirschmann’s (2004) notion of the “materialist moment” to reconcile postmodern discursivity and material reality.

Feminist Standpoint Theory

Standpoint epistemologies can bring to the surface previously hidden or disregarded experiences that can change our taken-for-granted assumptions on a topic; thus, such knowledge claims have the potential to radically change cultural understandings of gender and other subjectivities. One example often used by standpoint theorist Nancy Hartsock is the cultural shift from understanding women’s household labor not as a labor of love, but as actual, hard labor (Jaggar, 2004). Betty Friedan called it the “problem with no name” and, by recounting the experiences of women, helped shift the discourse on household labor. These examples illustrate the knowledge that can be gained from using women’s experience and achieved social consciousness from those experiences as a starting point in the research process.

Standpoint epistemology also challenges dominant ways of evaluating knowledge. As Harding notes throughout her work on the value systems embedded in knowledge

production, standpoint theory problematizes the dominant social science paradigm, including the grouping of people into categories that assign social and causal relations, which in turn govern our everyday behavior (Harding & Norberg, 2005).

In explaining standpoint epistemologies it is important to make several points. First, standpoint theory is based on the Marxist notion that the proletariat has a unique outlook on social systems because of his subjugated position; in this regard his oppression is an advantage. The feminist contribution brings gender (and other subjectivities) into the equation — the laborer may in fact have a unique standpoint, but the laborer’s experiences, as understood in a Marxist paradigm, are really understood as a male experience. For feminists, the gender-blind theory ignores gendered social relations, an important, if not fundamental, aspect of one’s social reality (Ramazanoglu, 2002).

Second, feminist standpoint theory sees individual standpoints not as simply a given, but as an *achievement*. Those standpoints are achieved out of a struggle. Not all women see themselves in a subjugated position and indeed, it takes social consciousness to critically evaluate one’s standpoint. Thus, it takes more than simply a female doing research on women to produce feminist knowledge – it takes a woman who has achieved that feminist position to produce knowledge from a feminist standpoint.

Third, standpoint theory acknowledges intersectionality and further deconstructs each standpoint, allowing us to understand what Patricia Hill Collins (2004) calls the “interlocking nature of oppression” (p. 100). All women do not experience sexism in the same way and women can simultaneously occupy a position of power and a position of subjugation, a concept that helped expose the ways second-wave feminists often privileged the experiences of White, middle-class women (Hill Collins). Such a position allows us to move away from

using race, gender or sexuality as analytical categories that can be understood separate from each other and toward a perspective that acknowledges how various women might experience sexism in different ways, and the implication of that difference.

Standpoint theory critiques. Postmodernists have long argued that experience and identity is mediated through discursive frameworks, making any potential “Truth” claims simply a product of power relations. If identity is the product of power relations, then an assumed identity can be understood as simply an effect of the struggle of subjectification (McWhorter, 1999). Further, critics have charged that various standpoints – even when modified as a “black feminist standpoint” or “Mexican immigrant standpoint” – still fail to acknowledge the differences and potential power relations among black feminists or Mexican immigrants, for example, illustrating the trap of universality pointed out by standpoint critics (Hirschmann, 2004). Thus, the usefulness of knowledge produced from a specific standpoint must be considered in the context of the postmodern arguments of identity and power. Hirschmann suggests considering material reality as a “moment,” which she compares to the postmodern notion of an achieved consciousness in which an individual rejects a certain claim as “true” and thus opens up the possibility for transforming, shifting or challenging dominant discourses. This “material moment” stems from lived experience, and thus “provides an interface between the possibility of a prediscursive ‘concrete reality’ on which standpoint feminism logically depends and the postmodern emphasis on the constantly shifting discursive character of such ‘reality’” (p. 325). In the end, although she acknowledges (and I agree) that we cannot step outside of discursive frameworks to make knowledge claims, at the same time, thinking about the possibility of a “material moment” suggests, as Hirschmann (p. 326) writes, that women’s experience awaits “its articulation in a

new discourse to give it meaning.” What this discourse is, or can be, cannot be mapped, lest we run into the problematic of categorization and normalization that we are trying to deconstruct in the first place. But the possibility exists, thus providing for the libratory potential critical to feminist work.

Producing Feminist Research

Throughout the first two chapters I have tried to outline the ways ideological assumptions in sports naturalize sports as a problematic space for women. When women enter sporting spaces, they are treading on “male terrain.” In doing so, they can be demonized with a lesbian label, which, in a homophobic environment, works as a policing mechanism to curtail women’s involvement and preserve sporting spaces as male spaces. Thus, one central assumption of this research is that the value systems and discursive frameworks that are expressed through sporting practices normalize sporting spaces as inherently masculine, making women’s involvement problematic. My aim with this project is to further illuminate the ways in which such value systems are expressed, and the related implications.

For research to be considered feminist, it takes more than just a woman doing research; such a position has essentialist underpinning in that it assumes that women know better simply by way of their bodies (Ramazanoglu, 2002, p. 15-16). Further, as previously mentioned, a socially conscious feminist has *achieved* that standpoint. As standpoint literature argues, a standpoint is characterized as an achievement because it requires a critical evaluation of one’s social location. It takes an individual who actively struggled against sexism and critically engaged with the implications of patriarchy to produce research questions and subsequent knowledge that is not corrupted by existing sexist frameworks (Harding, 2004).

This brings up the oft-debated question of “can men do feminist research?” Many feminists (see Stanley and Wise, 1993) argue that men cannot do feminist research because they can never share in women’s experiences and generate ideas and knowledge grounded in those experiences. Others, including Harding, argue that anyone, including men, can produce feminist knowledge if they meet three criteria: 1) grounding their research in women’s experiences; 2) designing their research so that the knowledge is produced *for* women; and 3) locating him/herself within the research process (also see Harding & Norberg, 2005; Kelly, Burton and Regan, 1994; Ramazanoglu, 2002).

The first criterion is the most discussed in feminist methodology literature. Many feminists argue that social science research has historically been gender-blind or masculinist in that it produces knowledge by and for men that preserves the gendered power structure. For instance, men have had little to gain economically from research on domestic labor. Scholarship on domestic labor, work traditionally dominated by women, can be seen as feminist in that it is grounded in a common women’s experience. Harding (1987) argues that research that explores the lives of women can lead to important social changes. Grounding knowledge in the experiences of young girls at schools, for instance, may change pedagogical approaches in the classroom which many argue have historically privileged boys. Research on sex from a woman’s perspective has notably changed rape and marital rape laws in ways that help women. In sports, this could include sporting experiences; work by Helen Lenskyj and others, for instance, have helped trouble the definition of sports by telling the stories of women who have creatively found new ways to experience athletic activity that differ from the competition-oriented type of sporting experience we associate with mainstream sports.

Conversely, grounding knowledge in experience can run into the danger of essentialism. As Scott (1999) argues, by simply starting and ending the research process from the experiences of women, we ignore the social construction of the category “woman” and naturalize it at the same time. She rightly notes that it is not individuals who have experiences, but individuals who are constituted through experiences. I do not see this, however, as a reason to ignore the lived experiences of women. Rather, it is important to recognize what knowledge that starts from women’s experiences does not do – primarily in ignoring the constructed nature of experiences. But qualitative research from the point of view of women’s lives can trouble categories that are created in social science research by emphasizing difference and contesting categories like “woman,” which historically have referred to middle-class white women within feminist circles.

In their review of sociological work, Stanley and Wise (1993) argue that women’s experiences are often essentialized or simply ignored in social science research. Gender is too often simply taken as an analytical category rather than an effect of power relations, and feminist research should be produced for women, Harding’s second criterion.

Harding’s final criterion for feminist research is the process of actively acknowledging one’s own role in the production of knowledge. Code’s (1993) model of “S knows p” is useful in understanding the researcher’s role. She argues that S (the knowing subject) and p (knowledge) are not mutually exclusive and that the knowing subject (S) brings their own subjectivities to the process. “p” then, is not produced independently of S, but because of S. This is also useful in thinking about the production of knowledge for women. It is easy to see how we occupy the S position, but we can also occupy the “p” position and become objects of knowledge production. Because social science research has

often been understood as historically sexist, the problems for women become obvious. Thus, acknowledging one's own role in the process also acknowledges the production of subjects; understanding how discourse works in the production of subjects also gives women critical insight into their own subjectivities.

Many qualitative researchers make this claim as well and it may not be a uniquely feminist position to locate oneself in the research process. Qualitative research allows and even embraces discussion of the researcher's role in the production of knowledge. Wahab (2003) calls it an exploration of the "hyphen" – the place "where the participants and I met in the production of knowledge" (p. 629). Thinking reflexively about that position challenges the notion that knowledge is waiting to be discovered (Wahab).

Using the Long Interview: Justification and Review

The Long Interview

Qualitative research covers diverse methodologies (the theory of analysis) and subsequent methods (techniques and tools for gathering data). It has risen out of multiple disciplines and is difficult to situate within one philosophical tradition. Despite the diversity within the qualitative paradigm, it can broadly be understood as "concerned with how the social world is interpreted, understood, experienced, produced or constituted" (Mason, 2002, p. 3; also see Lindlof & Taylor, 2002; Warren & Karner, 2005). In a word, qualitative research is concerned with *meaning* and the process by which it is created, shared and understood among individuals. Inherent in the definition is the assumption that meaning-making is a *process* and a strong qualitative inquiry acknowledges that assumption in its questions and application of method.

McCracken (1988) calls the long interview a “powerful” tool for qualitative researchers because of the way the method can provide access to an individual’s lived experience. The epistemological assumption, then, is that, long interviews can produce knowledge related to those experiences, which is why long interviews are often called a feminist method (Maynard & Purvis, 1994).

There are several other assumptions a researcher undertakes when using the long interview including viewing knowledge as situational and seeing contextual cues as providing better information than that which can be elicited from a survey. A researcher using this method must also recognize her/his location in the research process, value the nuance that cannot be quantified and understand the unique power relations of the long interview between researcher and researchee (Mason, 2002). Lindlof and Taylor (2002) add that a researcher should use long interviews when information is needed that cannot be obtained through observation, when we desire to understand the conceptualization of communication, when we seek to elicit language in the form used by social actors in their natural settings, and when we are seeking to verify or validate information obtained from other sources. In sum, if they are conducted effectively, long interviews can provide rich, thick description of individual experiences, something that is especially important as a feminist researcher, in that the method can give voice to women, and they way they might experience various social relations.

Although I take an epistemological position that experience and achieved consciousness can provide insight to a perceived reality, as Lindlof and Taylor (2002) rightly note, the people I interviewed told me their version of a story; they may forget, ignore or lie about details. Although the authors describe an interview as “the rhetoric of socially situated

speakers” (p. 172), I do not, however, see this as a drawback. I am trying to understand an individual’s lived experience; I am not trying to access a True reality. As standpoint theory literature argues, we experience events from socially situated locations, and I was interested in hearing the stories of women and bringing their experiences — as they interpret and then describe them to me — into sports- and gender-related discourse.

Recruitment

After receiving IRB approval to begin contacting potential research participants, I recruited women for interviews using several different strategies.¹ First, I contacted Melanie,² a longtime member of the large, formal organization of sports information directors called the College Sports Information Directors Association (CoSIDA). She is also involved with a smaller group within CoSIDA called Female Athletic Media relations Executives (FAME). Melanie sent an email out on my behalf to the FAME listserv asking for women to participate in long interviews about their experiences in the profession.³ I received about 30 responses within 48 hours of the initial email and responded by asking each if they would be at one of two conferences I planned on attending: the national CoSIDA convention in San Antonio in July, or a smaller regional June conference in Avalon, N.J. (both in 2009). Three said they would be at the conferences as many cited the economic downturn as a reason for not attending the convention.

¹ See Appendix A for IRB materials

² Participants were promised their confidentiality in the informed consent form approved by Penn State’s Institutional Research Board (IRB). Thus, pseudonyms are used throughout this project.

³ See Appendix B for email script and Appendix C for recruitment flier.

I then contacted a FAME board member for permission to speak and recruit potential interviewees at the FAME meeting in Avalon, to which she agreed. I attended the meeting and interviewed four women on-site in Avalon. I received permission from the board member to also speak at the FAME meeting in San Antonio and conducted eight additional in-person interviews there.⁴ Shortly after the conference, I traveled to the nearby hometown of an SID who had offered to meet with me for the 11th in-person interview. I added four additional phone interviews, including one with a woman who identified as lesbian. Although I did not pay participants, I made a donation to FAME for each interview I conducted using money received from a dissertation award, which may have motivated some women to participate.

Recruiting lesbian SIDs. Griffin (1998, p. xvii) calls the need for secrecy an “important piece about the story of lesbians in sport” and the interview recruitment experience reflects her assertion. Her notion of a “glass closet” in athletics was so salient in sports information that it impeded the recruitment of women who identify as lesbian for this project. It became clear early on that finding a sizeable number of gay women to interview would be a difficult challenge largely because sexuality is strictly not discussed among female SIDs – lesbian or not. Simply put, even the “out” lesbians did not feel comfortable contacting other gay women for this study.

I started the recruitment for women who do identify as lesbian by contacting Erica, whom I had a prior working relationship from a previous research project and was well known in the business. I explained my request to her and she responded with a long pause: “That will be tough,” she said. Erica returned back to me with two names and offered to call

⁴ The formal permission is on-file with the Penn State Office of Research Protections

them first, explain my project and assess each woman's interest. One woman agreed to do an interview (Therese) and another did not wish to participate. I eventually met with Therese at the national CoSIDA convention in San Antonio although we were not able to conduct an interview on-site. We later connected over the phone and after our interview, I asked her to help recruit other gay women (her preferred term) for the project. Her comments illustrate the level of discomfort she felt in helping me in that regard:

E: Well here's my last question. I really want to continue exploring kind of the lesbian experience in the sports information workplace.

T: Uh-uh

E: If you know of anyone else who might be interested in sharing their story with me—

T: [big sigh]

E: --it would be great. If there was someone you felt comfortable mentioning—

T: I don't know. How many people have you talked to that have been, you know, chatting with you about this part of your...

E: Well...two. You and one other person. It's not—it's not.

T: Well why don't you talk to. Have you ever thought about—does it have to be a female?

E: Um...[long pause] No.

T: It doesn't?

E: Well. Well [sigh] I'd have to talk to [my advisor] about that.

T: The most openly gay person that I know who I think still works in media relations is [name] at [school].

E: Hm. Okay.

T: He has actually publicly come out and written articles on it a couple years ago. Go do a little research. I think it's spelled [spells out name]. I think he's still there. I haven't really talked to him for a long time. I don't really know him that well. Um, he's actually—it was pretty interesting, his whole take on things a few years ago I remember.

E: Interesting

T: But really...ahhh...whew. Gosh, I—Erin I'm a little...you know, here's the problem, okay? I'll have to think about that because I've stepped away a little bit and I'm not real sure--I think that might be pretty guarded--a pretty guarded situation.

Shortly after initially contacting Melanie (who put me in touch with Therese), I also contacted Dora, who had participated in an earlier focus group study that I had been a part of. In those interviews, Dora alluded to her sexuality and shared with us information about her same-sex partner – the only one to openly do so (it should be noted that her focus group included just one other person, a longtime friend). Prior to the CoSIDA convention I contacted Dora to reconnect and mentioned what she had shared with us during the group interviews. I added that I was interested in hearing more about her experiences in that regard and whether she would be willing to do a one-on-one interview, to which she agreed. We met in San Antonio and at the end of our interview, I asked her about helping me find other lesbian women and she said she was happy to help me find other interviewees, although it became clear that she was directing any women (i.e. all straight) my way. At our follow up interview, I asked her again, and her response reflected the sentiments of Melanie and Therese: Sexuality was simply private and although there were other women she *assumed*

were lesbian, she did not talk with anyone openly about sexuality in a way that she would feel comfortable suggesting that they contact me for the project.

I pursued one other opportunity to find an additional woman who identified as lesbian to participate in this project. In my interview with Rachel, she mentioned she had a good friend who was “out.” In our follow-up interview, I asked her about contacting her friend with my project information, but Rachel said she was not comfortable doing so, again illustrating the very private nature of (homo) sexuality.

Through my discussions and these specific requests, it became clear that sexuality was such a taboo topic in sports information that it is simply not talked about among women—even those who identify as lesbian. Scholars exploring the experiences of lesbians in sport have indicated similar challenges (see Krane, 1997; Krane & Barber, 2005). In their work with lesbian coaches, for example, Krane and Barber (2005) talked at length about the difficulty in recruiting participants.

Despite guarantees of confidentiality and protection, many [lesbian interviewees] remained concerned about their participation. For example, the interviewer knew two of the women for almost 10 years prior to the study. Even with this high level of rapport, these women were reticent and concerned about the possibility of their lesbian identity being revealed. Further, some coaches asked if the telephone records could be traced and if the tapes could be subpoenaed. *Most likely, without the prior personal relationship and high level of trust and rapport, some of these coaches would not have agreed to be interviewed* (p. 69, emphasis added).

After conducting, transcribing, interpreting and analyzing the interviews, it became clear that sexuality is an extremely taboo topic and that an (unwanted) lesbian stigma works

as a powerful mechanism of social control. Such a desire to remain in the glass closet may have prevented some women from reaching out to me, even as I worked through familiar in-group networks.

Participant demographics. I conducted interviews with 14 different women. The SIDs ranged in age from 24 to 56. Twelve identified as heterosexual, two as lesbian. Eleven were White, one was Hispanic and two were African-American. One was married, and the two gay women were in long-term, committed relationships. These figures also reflect a wider industry trend of young, unmarried women comprising the majority of women in sports information (Whiteside & Hardin, 2010). Twelve worked for Division I programs, the highest level in sports. One worked for a Division III program and one worked at the NAIA level. The woman at the NAIA school reported her title as sports information director; the rest were associate athletic directors (1), associate SIDs (3) and assistant SIDs (9). Following is a brief biographical sketch of each woman that includes age, job title, athletic institution division (Division I, II, III or NAIA), career tenure, race, sexual orientation, marital status, primary sport responsibilities, and additional relevant biographical information.

Anna

43, Assistant SID, Division I school, 18 years in the business, White, heterosexual, never been married, works primarily with women's volleyball and also baseball and men's tennis and has prior experience working with football.

Barbara

58, Associate SID, Division I school, 25 years of experience, White, heterosexual, married with children, works primarily with women's basketball. Was married before entering the profession.

Chrissy

45, Associate SID, Division I school, 21 years of experience, White, heterosexual, single, works primarily with football. Has prior experience working with women's basketball.

Dora

53, Associate SID, Division I school, 29 years of experience, White, homosexual, never been married but in a committed relationship, works with a variety of Olympic sports.

Heather

31, Assistant SID, Division I school, 8 years of experience, White, heterosexual, never been married, works primarily with women's basketball and men's soccer.

Krista

25, Assistant SID, Division III school, 3 years of experience, White, heterosexual, never been married, works primarily with women's hockey.

Lisa

28, Assistant SID, Division I school, 6 years in the business, White, heterosexual, never been married, works primarily with women's basketball and assists on football.

Melissa

26, Assistant SID, Division I school, 6 years of experience, African-American, heterosexual, never been married but currently in a relationship, works primarily with women's basketball.

Melanie

Not part of the study, but assisted in recruiting women for the project and is mentioned above.

Leslie

Dora's partner. She is not an SID. I did not expect to interview Leslie, as she joined Dora and I about halfway through our interview and a comment from her is included later. (Because she is included in the dissertation, she signed the IRB informed consent form like all the others).

Nadia

48, Assistant athletic director, Division I school, 23 years of experience, White, heterosexual, never been married, works primarily with men's basketball.

Pamela

28, SID, NAIA school, 4 years of experience, Hispanic, heterosexual, never been married, works with all sports, including men's and women's basketball and volleyball.

Rachel

36, Associate SID, Division I school, 10 years of experience, White, heterosexual, never been married/in a long term relationship with her boyfriend, works primarily with women's basketball. Has previous experience working with men's basketball at a small Division I school.

Sherry, Assistant SID, 12 years of experience, Division I school, African-American, never been married, works primarily with women's basketball and women's volleyball.

Susan

48, Associate SID, Division I school, 26 years of experience, White, heterosexual, never been married, works primarily with men's basketball.

Therese

51, Associate SID, Division I school, 26 years in the business, White, homosexual, never been married, works primarily with women's basketball.

Conducting the Interviews

I conducted the interviews in several different locations. In Avalon I secured a table in the corner of the conference hotel restaurant where we were able to talk openly as the restaurant was empty during the interview times. In San Antonio the conference hotel donated a suite to me where I could conduct the interviews in private.

I started each interview with general ice-breaker questions including "walk me through your career path in sports information," and "what do you like about working in sports information?" I then moved on to a series of non-directive questions aimed at eliciting discussion about sexuality. After the first few interviews, I realized I needed to tread lightly on this topic as it was generally not something the women felt comfortable discussing without a "warm up" period and I adjusted my approach to work on building rapport during the interview, a critical step in creating a safe and trusting space where interviewees feel comfortable disclosing personal information and stories (Pitts & Miller-Day, 2007).

The most fruitful questions were "How are women perceived in sports information?" and "what are the stereotypes of women in this industry?" These questions generally opened the door for women to discuss sexuality, where I was then able to probe further with more specific questions and work through the ways discourses of sexuality mediated their everyday work experiences and affected, challenged or shaped their sense of self.

Although I came in to the interview with a list of main questions that worked as the kind of “interviewing scaffolding” or “skeleton” of the interview (Rubin & Rubin, 2005, p. 134), it was the “unstructured” follow-up questions and probes that elicited the richest responses. For example, after asking Anna one of my pre-prepared questions (What are the stereotypes of women in this industry?), she responded by articulating her feeling of being perceived as lesbian. I then asked “How are you aware of that?” She explained the various ways she felt that perception and then provided a story about growing out her hair in an effort to deflect the stereotype. I followed up with “Is there anything else you would do, even if it was subtle, to let people know that [you being lesbian] was not the case?” After some discussion about boyfriends and “water cooler” talk at work about heterosexual relationships, I then asked: “Is [sexuality] talked about a lot at work?” Other times fruitful discussion about sexuality arose from discussions about being the only woman in the office, or feeling like a minority in the profession. Rachel talked at length about the ways she used her (hetero) sexuality as an advantage, including flirting with male journalists to promote stories or using her sexuality to gain favor with coaches. This allowed me to ask “Okay. So you said in some ways it helps that people know you’re straight if you’re dating...Has there ever been a thought process in your head, ‘I don’t want to do ‘x’ because I don’t want someone to think I’m a lesbian?’” This question then led to the image management strategies Rachel undertakes in the workplace. Other times women answered the “stereotypes” question by offering the notion that women do not know enough about sports to effectively work in sports information. If sexuality in any way still did not arise through probing, I would ask in a more direct way as I did in the interview with Lisa, a woman who did not bring up any sense of a lesbian stereotype on her own: “Going back to the idea of stereotypes of women, is

there on the flip side, have you ever been aware of any kind of lesbian stigma?” From there I was able to probe further about the ways the various women situate sexuality in their day-to-day experiences.

The initial interviews lasted from 45 minutes to two hours. Some women were clearly more comfortable sharing than others, which was reflective of the differing time periods of the interviews. After typing out the transcripts, I conducted follow-up interviews on the phone. During the follow-ups I asked each SID if there was anything she had thought about from our initial interview that she wanted to talk with me about, although none offered anything specific. I then worked through a prepared set of questions that was largely unique to each woman, and based off my initial interviews.

Some included questions that I found in later interviews to be especially fruitful; for example, about halfway through the first round of interviews, I started asking women “why do you think this stereotype exists?” in reference to their comments regarding any perceptions they felt were applied to women in their profession. If I did not ask that question in the initial interview, I made sure to pose it during the follow-up session. Still, most of the follow-ups were generally unique in that they referred to comments from the initial interviews. For instance, I asked Nadia the following follow-up questions based on her initial interview:

- 1) You mentioned that you have worked with men’s basketball for about 10 years now and came to the men from the women. Can you talk a little bit about the differences in terms of just the climate, relationships with the people you work with, the players, etcetera?
- 2) We spent some time talking about a stigma in athletics, that if you’re single and working in athletics there is a stereotype of being gay. And you said people have asked you outright. Where do you think that stereotype come from?
- 3) I’m wondering, is it easier to deflect that stereotype working with men’s sports than women’s sports?

- 4) You mentioned you worked with women's basketball before the men. How is it different working with men on a personal level?
- 5) Are there situations, like going into the locker room, for instance, that make it easier for women to work with women's sports?
- 6) Have you always been comfortable working with men's sports? Were their challenges at first?
- 7) Is sexuality of women coaches, athletes, administrators, etc. ever talked about at work, like informally? What kinds of comments are made?
- 8) Does being heterosexual make your job easier in any way, with regard to relationships with coaches, for instance?
- 9) You mentioned this stereotype, is this something you've ever discussed with anyone?
- 10) Do you think sexuality issues should be a topic at CoSIDA or FAME meetings?

Developing rapport. The focus of this research was not to discover the "Truth" of women in sports information, but rather to create knowledge with them collaboratively. Effectively reaching that goal is a project in developing rapport with research participants and reaching a level of intimacy in which individuals feel safe in disclosing private and personal experiences (Pitts & Miller-Day, 2007). Rapport is generally defined as the process in which researchers develop a trusting relationship that is conducive to sharing personal stories, an especially important step to consider when conducting sensitive research (Dickson-Swift, James, Kippen, & Liamputtong, 2007).

From my prior research and personal experiences in sports information, I suspected that discussing sexuality would be difficult – and in many ways it was. In relaying stories of sexual harassment, some of the women seemed embarrassed, which was not surprising considering the stories *were* very much humiliating experiences. Others seemed unsure about how to speak of sexuality; often they whispered words like "lesbian" or omitted the word altogether, suggesting a level of discomfort in discussing the topic.

In order to create as safe a space as possible for sharing personal stories, I sought to develop "rapport" in various ways, something I became more conscious of as I progressed through the first several interviews. Pitts and Miller-Day (2007) argue that rapport-building

happens through a series of phases that are not entirely mutually exclusive and range from a low level of intimacy to extremely high. My process in building rapport reflected several of the phases outlined by Pitts and Miller-Day. They call the first phase “Other-Orientation,” and describe it as the initial meeting between researcher and potential participant. There is a minimal interpersonal connection and the focus is on the researcher’s attempt to acquire something from the audience. Pitts and Miller-Day’s second phase is called “Self-In-Relation-To-Other” and reflects a move toward understanding how both the researcher and participant may benefit from the potential relationship. During each FAME meeting I spoke about my research and my interest in speaking with various women about their experiences, part of the first phase in rapport building. Wahab (2003) suggests that effective rapport building also involves the breaking down of power relationships, a common theme among feminist qualitative researchers. Like Wahab (2003), I made a conscious effort in my initial “recruiting pitch” at the FAME meetings, as well as during our interviews to emphasize that the individual SIDs were “experts” in their own experiences. I also introduced myself as a former SID; this seemingly innocuous comment may have also helped build rapport as I could separate myself from the role of “outsider researcher” that can create a problematic power dynamic (Wahab, 2003). In her research with sex workers, for instance, Wahab spent time performing in a strip club to actively experience the sex worker culture and blur the line between “voyeuristic” researcher and exotic “Other” to be researched. This helped her gain trust with the individuals she researched and in a similar way, my status as a former SID achieved the same goal. The FAME meeting leaders knew me, warmly introduced me and talked in a way that cued others that I should be accepted as “part of the group,” something I believe helped immensely with the research process.

A flow of information that is multi-directional also helps to build rapport (Wahab, 2003). Although I left the interviews thinking that the “flow of information” went rather uni-directionally, in transcribing the interviews and reviewing the comments, I saw how I shared my own experiences in ways that facilitated a connection – even in the relatively brief time we had together. For instance, I sometimes asked questions or responded to answers in ways that referenced my “in-group” status as a sports information director.

Most interestingly, though, were the questions the SIDs asked of me about my research; I answered each one honestly and the resulting discussion fostered mutuality (Wahab, 2003) and was also a practice in developing consciousness about the issues we were discussing. For example, at one point in her interview, Nadia said she thought fewer and fewer women would be entering sports information. She asked me if my study had indicated anything in that regard and my answer led to her sharing feelings of how she felt she had given up her life; given that Nadia felt stigmatized as an older single woman in sports information, this collaborative moment helped further contextualize her comments. Therese spoke at length about her own feelings of being oppressed, but stopped at one point to ask:

Am I just envisioning and being really paranoid that there’s still a lot of barriers out there for women?

I answered her question by relaying some of the stories other women had told me about their feelings of oppression and we then discussed some of the real problems for women in this business, an interesting discussion given that so many fiercely guarded the idea that as long as women work hard, they can “make it” in sports information.

Analysis

Claiming that women's experiences produce a "Truth" on any topic, including those central to women's lives, is no different than claiming male experience is "True" because it is rational and objective (Ramazanoglu, 1993). Thus, comments from interviews in the case of this research must always be interpreted, contextualized and "embodied" (p. 8), a process I describe and reflect upon here in terms of my place in the research process. Lindlof and Taylor (2002) describe five challenges in this interpretive analysis phase: 1) working with a large volume of textual data; 2) evaluating data and deciding on interpretations; 3) grappling with the fluidity of the research problem; 4) balancing the academic audience with the personal audience which includes research participants; and 5) acquiring skills in qualitative data analysis. In explaining my analysis, I address how I addressed each problem in an effort to produce a thorough and thoughtful analysis.

Although replicability is not the goal in a qualitative project, outlining the analysis should not be skipped; it is a demanding and time-intensive part of the process, yet a step that McCracken (1998, p. 41) argues is one of the least discussed within qualitative research circles. Warner and Karner (2005) suggest that the "thick" description (of Clifford Geertz fame) is what persuades the reader that the researcher's interpretation is plausible. Baptiste (2001) further argues that a transparent and explicit analysis makes the author's assumptions, choices, descriptions and arguments clear, thus giving the reader the tools to evaluate the author's claims. Simply, Baptiste suggests that a researcher's interpretations and theoretical arguments are of no use if the if others cannot effectively assess them.

Baptiste (2001) proposes four phases to trustworthy qualitative data analysis: 1) defining the analysis; 2) classifying data; 3) making connections between and among data

categories; and 4) conveying these ideas on paper. Lindlof and Taylor (2002) further suggest that data analysis begins when the data — the transcripts, personal memos and observational notes—are created.

Personal Memos

Personal memos and notes, which Lindlof and Taylor (2002) call “asides” and “commentaries,” (p. 212) are initial interpretations that the researcher can return to at various points in the analysis. The example underscores the iterative or back-and-forth process that is qualitative data analysis. Memos and notes also assist in meeting the challenge of working with the many pages of transcriptional data because they help organize the process and provide initial direction.

I recorded initial reflections after each interview and notes that helped shape the themes presented in this dissertation’s subsequent chapters. For example, I recorded the following comments after an interview with Barbara, who I nicknamed the “old grizzled veteran” to cue myself about the context of her words:

Interesting comments about FAME—“too militant” she said. She doesn’t identify with feminism or the “women’s lib” movement and backed off of FAME. Saw it as a place to network, and a place to share concerns but couldn’t really articulate those concerns other than the existence of the “old boys network.”

In reflecting on her general attitudes toward FAME, I wrote the following in my post-interview memo in regard to a pervasive lesbian stereotype that many of the women, including Barbara, articulated.

In general, the big “stereotype” is women who work in SI are lesbians or don’t want families (read: lesbian). I think in order to get away from that stereotype, they connect

with guys. It's a way to separate themselves from that "woman power (lesbian)" label.

The post-interview memo comments are indicative of Lindloff & Taylor's (2002) notion of "data" analysis happening throughout the research process and reflects the iterative style of qualitative analysis and theorizing. I also sought to thoughtfully observe the two FAME meetings I attended, noting the subject matter, and any interactions between women. This reflection allowed me to develop several interview questions based on my observations. In Avalon, for instance, the FAME meeting organizer grouped the chairs in a circle to provide for a more intimate setting. Although men are invited to the meeting, none came to the gathering in San Antonio. In Avalon, however, one man sat on the outside of the circle during the entire meeting. He declined to join the group when asked, but stayed in the room to observe the discussion and then offered his reaction at the end of the meeting from his position outside the circle. I recorded the following comments as an initial reaction to what I perceived as authoritative statements delivered from outside the symbolic boundary of FAME membership:

Interesting that this man is acting as authority from the outside. Does this bother these women? Why didn't he join the group? Do men not want to join FAME or do they feel unwanted? Too good for it?

I later incorporated these thoughts into questions, and asked the women I interviewed in Avalon about this man and why they thought he might have preferred to sit on the fringe. This observation also sparked ideas about perceptions of FAME among men and the wider CoSIDA membership.

Textual Analysis

Although not meant to be seen as discrete or linear, Baptiste's (2001) four steps to analyzing texts, however, are useful as a guideline. He suggests in phase 1 that researchers define their ontology, epistemology, and axiology, assumptions I have tried to make clear in the first part of this project.

After transcribing the interviews myself, I began the process of analysis. In entering the texts, Baptiste (2001) suggests researchers first think about the type of data they have and then choose a specific analytic approach. Choosing one type of textual analysis over another can shift the focus of the analysis and, because it is interpretive, change the direction and argument of the research. Making one's own biases and assumptions transparent and critically reflecting on the analytic approach address a challenge outlined by Lindlof and Taylor (2002) in terms of evaluation and interpretation. They suggest that different researchers may come to different conclusions and this may very well be the case; making the analytic process transparent, however, allows others to effectively evaluate the interpretations and come to their own conclusions. I used a theoretical thematic analysis to assess the interview comments as well as the newsletter texts.

Thematic analysis. Braun and Clarke (2006) define thematic analysis as "a method for identifying, analyzing and reporting patterns (themes) with the data" (p. 79). A theoretical thematic analysis differs from a purely inductive thematic analysis in that it is driven by the theory. Inductive analyses can be categorized as similar to a grounded theory approach; simply, it is an analytic process that lets the data speak for itself (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Initial codes are "grounded" in the data (Charmaz, 2006, p. 49) and lead to theoretical categories. In contrast, a theoretical thematic analysis is driven by the theory from the outset

and thus should be used when trying to interrogate a specific theoretical concept. In the case here, the analysis was driven by a post-structuralist view of sexuality and a critical perspective on the disciplining effect of discourses of sexuality. Starting the analysis with a chosen theoretical agenda does not mean that the researcher molds the data into what she/he wants; rather, it acknowledges that interpretations can go myriad directions and situates the interpretations around the initial theoretical underpinnings of the project. I see a theoretical thematic analysis as particularly useful in this project because it is close in style to critical/cultural analysis where the method is driven by the author's application of critical/cultural theory. Staying open to the directions the analysis may go, however, is part of recognizing the fluidity of the research problem and staying open to alternative possibilities (Lindloff & Taylor, 2002).

Unlike a critical theory argument, however, a theoretical thematic analysis is useful when qualitative data is collected in the form of dialogue. It can help manage and organize the pages upon pages of transcripts and provide an approach for analyzing the dialogue. Since it is a thematic analysis, key, then, is a clear definition for the concept of a theme.

“Counting” something as a theme is not dependent on its prevalence in the data set but rather on its relationship to the research question; in this sense, the analysis is driven by the project's theoretical underpinnings. Braun and Clarke (2006) note that researchers often write “*many* of the participants said...” or “*most* noted that...” which suggests that a theme actually exists independent of the researcher. Like Braun and Clarke (2006), I do not see themes as existing and waiting to be discovered and do not agree with phrasing themes as “emerging” through the analysis, a common presentation tactic (see, for instance, Kian, Vincent and Mondello, 2008). Common ideas may be expressed among various participants,

but I am still interpreting and labeling them as themes; in a sense, I, as the researcher, am making them “real.”

Identifying themes is Baptiste’s (2001) third phase of data analysis. Braun and Clarke suggest labeling segments of the data with initial tags or codes that describe what is being said, an approach I adopted in my own analysis. “Tags” in my own analysis included notations like “lesbian stigma,” “single women,” “sex discrimination” and “Sexuality is private.” As Baptise (2001) suggests, initial tags should stay “close” to the text, meaning that tags should be descriptive rather than explanatory or theoretical.

Baptiste suggests then taking the tags and grouping them into categories, defined as an idea that includes a set of codes with similar characteristics. In my analysis, I created several categories, including “Privacy,” “Justice,” “Lesbian Identity,” “Sexual Harassment” and “Heteronormativity.” The final process involves making theoretical connections between categories and are reflected in the heading and subheadings in the following chapters. According to Baptiste, strong themes are more than just what he calls a glossary or list of descriptives. Rather, they provide a depth of understanding that builds on the theoretical underpinnings of the research. The key for a robust theme, then, is to provide a deeper and broader understanding of the experience being investigated.

The final phase of data analysis involves writing these ideas on paper. This phase requires re-visiting the assumptions made in phase 1; most notably it requires acknowledging again the researcher’s role in the process. If we reject the notions of an objective observer and a pre-existing reality that can be discovered, the themes must be conveyed to the reader in a way that includes the researcher’s own subjectivity. Baptiste (2001) suggests reconceptualizing the researcher’s position from mere consumers of knowledge to the

subject, or participants in the construction of knowledge. In this study, I located myself inside the project by 1) situating myself as a former SID; 2) drawing off my work experiences for research ideas and questions; 3) applying an explicitly feminist analysis to my interpretations; and 4) attending and participating in FAME meetings.

Trustworthiness in Qualitative Research

Lincoln and Guba (1985) are widely cited in discussions of trustworthiness in qualitative research and advocate four concepts which are related to four quantitative measures in research: “credibility” is understood as analogous to internal validity in quantitative work, “transferability” as analogous to external validity, “dependability” relating to reliability and “confirmability” the partner to objectivity.

It is problematic, however, to hold qualitative work to similar standards as quantitative work because the two paradigms originate from different epistemological assumptions. The terms and criteria all suggest an accessible reality and the possibility of Truth. Such standards minimize the role the researcher plays in the production of knowledge and forces the qualitative paradigm to abandon its strengths. I am less concerned whether someone agrees with my interpretation than I am with that same person being able to construct a counter-argument based on the assumptions and transparent analysis I put forth.

As such, I take Baptiste’s (2001) argument that a transparent and explicit analysis as one step in achieving trustworthiness in academic research. Edwards and Ribbens (1998) suggest that constant reflexivity and openness about our assumptions better illuminates how knowledge is constructed, and again, makes transparent the researcher’s assumptions. Other researchers refer to member-checks, or the act of giving the transcripts and/or findings to the people being studied in order to give them a voice in the process, another step I took to aid in

the critical reflexivity stage. I sent the transcripts to each woman with a note that they could read, revise, or add to their comments, although none did. Further, I had discussions with several women about the general ideas I was crafting. In particular, I spoke with Therese and Nadia about their perspectives on my research arguments. Our discussions were largely enlightening for those two women; Therese, for instance, was a big advocate for the “advancements” women had made in the industry. I relayed to her several stories other women told me about their encounters with men and asked her opinion to which she responded “That’s sexual harassment!” In my follow-up interview with Nadia she made several comments to the effect of “Maybe it’s just me” after sharing a personal perspective. I used this opportunity to share with her sentiments from other women in regard to their experiences with discourses of sexuality, and she affirmed my ideas with respect to the common perceptions many single women in sports information may face and deal with (see Chapter 4). Nadia also works with a major men’s sport, and although she never mentioned experiences of sexual harassment or ways in which she had to “manage” her sexuality in the manner that other women described, I told her what I had heard in my other interviews. In that case she did not affirm the story, but noted that it *could* be the case for some women, although it was not something she experienced or thought about.

Conclusion

As a feminist researcher acutely aware of power structures and my own place in reproducing oppressive forms of power, this project presented a host of challenges, not the least interviewing and writing on a topic that the women in general seemed uncomfortable in discussing openly, a sentiment I assess and describe in subsequent chapters. Further, in

asking the various questions I did, I was also asking the women to critically reflect on their experiences, a process that was also uncomfortable and illuminating at the same time. Many made comments to the tune of “This may just be me...” or “I don’t know if anyone else feels this way...”; as I argued above, comments must be theoretically interpreted, but at the same time, it became very clear that these women did in fact not talk about sexuality at all, yet experienced it at a fundamental level in their every day work lives. Thus, creating a comfortable space and entering the research project in an ethical way were critical. It was important to me that I thoughtfully and reflexively engaged with the research process and allowed this project to develop collaboratively with the women I interviewed.

I do draw from radical feminist theories in that I see sexuality as a system of oppression. Taking a post-structuralist view of sexuality, however, allowed the focus to turn to the production of subjects and the effects of sexuality discourses on bodies within the space of sports information. This perspective also helped reconcile my discomfort with making public something the women I interviewed prefer stay private. These discourses are expressed whether they are verbalized or not and understanding the struggle against subjectification can illuminate these transparent expressions of power.

Learning from the Interviews

I started this chapter by discussing my perceptions and early research questions stemming from my time in sports information. I was never a “lifer,” to use the term some of the interviews expressed to describe individuals in sports information who stay in the business over the long term. For various reasons I struggled in the profession and was admittedly happy to leave for a career in academia. Many of the women I interviewed expressed a very real sense of joy and pleasure achieved through their job. In critiquing

systems of power, it is easy to overlook the small ways in which individuals exert agency within them. Yes, they recognized their minority status, but found ways to enjoy their work experiences, while also noting some of the very real ways they were subordinated. These narratives were an important reminder about the nuance and complexity of such issues.

I entered into this research process by acknowledging my own subjectivity and role in creating research questions and the critical perspective in which I engage with those questions. This is an important step in situating this knowledge not as something waiting to be discovered, but something created through a collaborative experience. This epistemological outlook reflects my approach toward other knowledges, as well, including identity, a fundamental concept discussed in this project. Thus, this chapter is not offered for the potential replication of any arguments made in this dissertation, but as a roadmap for the production of knowledge claims put forth here.

The Style of Qualitative Research

This chapter also illustrates the inherently “messy” style of qualitative research with participants. It is not a linear process, and in fact is improved through constant critical reflection. The development of my interview questions, analysis that began not only after each interview but during the initial recruiting process, along with my increased focus on rapport as the interviews progressed reflect the value such introspection brings to the qualitative research process. A reflective outlook allowed me to better think about the questions I asked and the way that I asked them in a manner that led to new routes of discussion with my interview partners. Further, the analysis developed in partnership with the interviewees; I made initial notes after each interview, developed those ideas in the

transcriptions and was able to then bring those ideas back to the participants during the follow-up interviews to build research collaboratively.

Finally, it is important to underscore the point that this research begins from the experiences of women and speaks to women who work in an environment that can be hostile to them in ways that aren't always visible. These are ideas I try to illuminate in the subsequent chapters while offering prescriptions for change that are in line with the feminist objective of not only producing research, but producing political research with the potential for making change.

Chapter 5:

“I Am *Not* a Lesbian!”:

Negotiating the Lesbian Stigma in Sports Information

As a topic of study, sexuality has not been the direct focus in mass communication literature about media workplace cultures and in a sense I entered this project a bit blind. Previous work on sporting cultures and physical education has provided a compelling argument about the importance of considering sexuality, but I was not entirely sure how such ideas would translate to the media workplace – sports information in particular.

As a former SID and self described feminist, I strongly subscribe to the notion that women must be given opportunities to compete and work in sporting spaces -- and feel comfortable in doing so. Inherent in the statement I just provided, however, is a problem. Taking “women” as a monolithic category ignores difference and the varying ways different women might engage with systems of power. From this perspective, any prescription for change I – or anyone else might offer – in this regard, certainly cannot be applied to all women. Furthermore, offering any solutions based on identity as a given may simply reify the very problematic categories we are trying to deconstruct.

Research seeking to explain women’s underrepresentation in management in public relations, for instance, has largely focused on difference between men and women. Women have been presented as one group moving in lockstep, collectively interested in breaking through the glass ceiling. Further, such research has largely taken various groups – including the notion of “Women” – as an essentialized given. This chapter on women in sports information – a subset of the broader field of public relations – shows the complexities of the notion of “Women” and, most importantly, illustrates how various cultural processes

essentialize the categories of women and femininity – an important step in understanding their collective subordination (Aldoory, 2006).

In that vein, part of this project was to offer one glimpse at the production of difference and this chapter begins that discussion with a look at how cultural understandings about sports and gender produce related narratives on sexuality that mediate women's experiences at work – and overall sense of self. Specifically, I first address how as occupying the deviant subject position in sports – “woman” – these female SIDs experienced a gaze that puts their sexuality under suspicion. I expand on this so-called “lesbian stigma” by illustrating how various factors contribute to that perception, including high school or collegiate sports experience, the common practice of women working with women's sports, and finally marital status. I then show how these discourses of sexuality invite women to adopt a specific embodiment that meets heteronormative standards, such as long hair and other feminine markers that in turn highlights their “otherness” in a profession where they are already tokens. I conclude by discussing the constitution of the feminine subject in sports information as well as the implications of privileging heterosexuality as “normal.” In doing so, I address the ways various women engage with these narratives and suggest that we begin to create a more complex picture of “women” in the media workplace.

A Pervasive Stigma

Overwhelmingly, sexuality was a difficult topic to discuss through the course of the interviews. Speaking in hushed voices or whispers to say the word “lesbian” even in the privacy of the interview room was not uncommon. In fact, many often avoided using the word “lesbian” altogether, resulting in grammatically awkward phrases like “people ask me

if I am, but I'm not." That silence, however, was not indicative of a lack of relevancy or knowledge on the topic; rather, most saw themselves as unfairly cast as lesbian and thus consciously worked to deflect that "stigma" by exuding a traditional form of femininity that was, above all, underpinned by heterosexuality.

Through stories and anecdotes, most of the women articulated a consciousness about women in sports information perceived as lesbian and described the ways in which their sexuality and that of other women in sports was constantly under suspicion: Some mentioned curious coworkers inquiring about their sexual orientation. Others noted joking comments colleagues made about women in sports media. For most, though, they described a kind of nebulous but palpable "sense" from others that they, as women with an interest in sports, are presumed to be lesbian.

Pamela, a single, heterosexual SID from a small NAIA school, explained the stereotype simply: "I think a lot of people think it's, 'like maybe they're butch, or you know, they have to be like gay or that kind of thing to be really into sports.'" Added Rachel, a single, heterosexual SID at a large program working with a high profile women's basketball team: "Let's face it, there's a [lesbian] stigma whether you like it or not." Like Rachel, many resisted saying the word "lesbian" outright, preferring to lower their voice or simply omit the word altogether. An exchange with Chrissy, a single, heterosexual SID in her mid-40s working at a small Division I athletics program, reflected the kind of discomfort that many women struggled with in articulating a stigma they clearly were working hard to separate themselves from:

E: What do you think the stereotypes of women are in sports information?

C: Do I have to say that out loud?

E: Well, remember, this is confidential.

C: [real quiet voice]: Well I think that when I started, a lot of the women were former athletes, So I think if anybody thought you worked in sports and you were a woman, you were gay [End quiet voice]. Automatically, oh absolutely.

Magnifying the Stereotype: Sports Experience as a Betrayal

Logic underpinning women's exclusion from sports media jobs – and especially jobs involving men's sports -- has partially stemmed from the notion that a lack of actual sporting experience categorizes women as unqualified. FAME addressed this issue in its newsletter via a column advocating “certification” for SIDs as a way for women to gain credibility in a profession where the common mantra is “you can't understand any sport in which you haven't participated.” Many of the interviewees echoed this problem and spoke of the challenge they faced in trying to “prove” their aptitude on the job. Anna, a single, heterosexual SID who had spent a significant part of her career working at small athletic institutions where she handled sports information duties for a variety of sports, including football and men's basketball, felt a kind of extra burden created by her overall lack of actual sports playing experience, not to mention football specifically. She summed up the problem:

I think initially the big thing was credibility. What do you know about sports?

Especially 'cause I didn't play sports in college....So you know, you were never part of a team, you didn't put on pads and get hit on the football field, you didn't play basketball, just things like that.

Anna felt her lack of actual sports experience as a burden in proving her worth, but previous sports experience brought a different kind of burden to women who had played sports – and excelled at high levels. The women who brought high school or collegiate

organized sports experience to the workplace on the one hand saw it as useful in their day-to-day job responsibilities — such as better understanding the temperament of a demanding coach, for instance. Melissa, a former college basketball player working with a women’s basketball team, described the enjoyment she felt from talking with players about the challenges of Division I basketball. “We have six freshmen and they’re still trying to find their way. And they come to me and say, ‘Was it like this when you were in college?’ and ‘what did you do when you were in a shooting slump?’ Melissa experienced a sense of pleasure when the players on her team sought her out for advice and saw herself as a role model for the young women on her team. On the other hand, however, that prior sports experience also came with a burden. Lisa, a former college softball player explained: “One of my coworkers will always introduce me as, ‘This is my friend Lisa, she played softball in college, and she’s not gay.’ And that’s literally how she’d introduce me.”

Like Melissa, Lisa saw her athletic experience as useful throughout her career as a sports information director, earning her what she called a “cred” with her coaches and athletes, who she felt saw her as better able to relate to the team. Yet, for Lisa, the “cred” that came with her athletic experience also invited scrutiny into her sexuality. She explained her engagement with the stereotype early in her career:

I’m not going to lie about it. It was very hard, especially my first year graduating because I mean, the other thing is you go through such an intense weightlifting program...I was bulky. I looked—I mean, I had shoulders, like broader shoulders. I dropped 25 pounds after college, like weight and all this other stuff. So you know, I kind of looked a little chunky, like you could tell that I played softball.

Melissa echoed Lisa’s sentiments.

People have asked me flat out if I'm a lesbian. And that's not an issue with me. I have tons of friends that do actually happen to work in athletics and do happen to be lesbian, but I also have tons of friends that aren't.

E: So people just asked you flat-out?

M: yeah, yeah.

E: And how does that make you feel?

M: I hate to say this, but I think I'm a little bit used to it, being a female. Sometimes female basketball players without boyfriends kinda get that stereotype, as do softball players, so I've just kind of grown up around it, so it doesn't really bother me.

Magnifying the Stereotype: Working with Women's Sports

Many of the women who worked with women's sports expressed a similar sense of an intensified gaze regarding sexuality because of their affiliation with female athletes. None of the SIDs who worked with men's sports said they preferred to work with men in order to separate themselves from a lesbian stigma, but some wondered how aligning with a women's team contributed to that unwanted perception. Rachel, a confident, assertive and outspoken woman who said she was still "fighting" the stigma every day, explained: "I think [a lesbian stigma] is especially prevalent. In that—especially in women's basketball nowadays, that 'oh, they're working with women, they must be lesbians.' And then you hear, I mean, you hear that." Of all the women interviewed, Nadia, a 45-year-old heterosexual SID, was perhaps most cognizant of the stereotype. Early in her career someone had asked her outright about her sexuality, and that interaction weighed heavily on her mind. She described her work to deflect the stigma as a "conscious effort" over the course of her career, stemming from the moment she was initially "asked the question," as she put it. Nadia used to work

with a highly successful women's basketball team, but is now the SID for a men's team.

Although Nadia left her position with the women's team because of a rocky relationship with the coach and explicitly stated that partnership with women's athletics was *not* the reason for her departure, she did note how association with the men's team relieved her of what was clearly a stifling stigma in her mind: "I think if you're a woman working with a woman's sport, there may be even more stereotypes, you know?"

For many, it appeared to be simply an association with female athletes – whether as a former player or current SID, that seemed to invite increased scrutiny. Therese provided a story that illustrated the culture female athletes face within one major athletic program where football reigns supreme. In charge of women's basketball and several lower-profile "Olympic sports," as they are called, she helped earn her track team a big spread in a major newspaper. Given the paucity of coverage awarded to women's sports, such placement is big coup for any women's sport, and an achievement Therese particularly relished in an athletic program dominated by a successful football team. She recounted the comments she heard around the office about the article: "It was like, you know, that's a waste of space and you know...nobody wants to read about those dykes." Comments from the interviewees suggest that accepted "truths" about women in sports intensifies the general panoptic gaze on female SIDs associated with those athletes. Yet, the environment within the circle of women's athletics may be somewhat more inclusive and safe as Rachel, who previously worked with men's basketball before working with the women's team, explained:

Now that I'm on the women's side, [dealing with the stereotype] is not as bad. It doesn't matter whether you're gay, whether you're straight. It's much more a loving atmosphere. It's not as accepted, it doesn't feel like, within the men. So let's say

[voice gets soft and quiet] if I'm bi or if I'm a lesbian. I don't think, in my personal opinion, that would have ever been accepted.

E: So it's more accepted around—

R: --Women! Yes!

Magnifying the Stereotype: Single and Working in Sports

Across the board, interview participants all said they loved their job, elicited a great deal of satisfaction from working with student-athletes and genuinely enjoyed the relationship-building dynamic that was central to their job. Participants talked about “my kids” in reference to the players on their teams, which reflects earlier research on the ways in which female SIDs may often take on a “mothering” role in the office and through the course of their jobs in order to carve out a unique niche for themselves within this male-dominated profession (Hardin & Whiteside, 2009b).

Further, on a day-to-day basis, sports information directors are increasingly being asked to take on more responsibility. Many mentioned the ways technology had extended their work day. As Chrissy explained, “Now [media and coaches] have your cell phone. They can get you 24-7.” Others noted new demands like updating web sites, posting to twitter feeds, filming video blogs and finding other creative ways to engage publics via new media. The increases in work translated into an increasingly negative outlook on the possibility of balancing work and family, and many noted the problematic situation of working in a job that requires weekend and evening hours with extensive travel while living in a culture where women are usually responsible for childcare and household responsibilities. As Pamela said:

Everyone I've met has been single. That's interesting because a lot of guys you see are married and the women aren't...it's kind of almost a little bit discouraging

because you don't know if you can do this and get married and have a family and, you know, raise your family.

This sentiment contrasted with what they saw as an easier road for their male colleagues, and several credited “wives” for the success and longevity of men in the business. Chrissy explained why male SIDs may have an easier time reaching longevity:

They go home and their wife has dinner ready. They don't do their own laundry. I have that argument with my coaches all the time. They're like, 'um, why are you late today?' And well I had to go do this. I'm like, I know you didn't iron your own shirt. I know you didn't walk the dog or mow the grass. I have to do that stuff at my house.

All but one of the women I interviewed were unmarried and some articulated how their single relationship status alienated them from their male coworkers. Most mentioned male bosses or coworkers with a wife and kids and sometimes noted the outsider status they felt as Chrissy did:

It's kind of weird in our office. All the men are married, but all the women are not. And, um, like I'll give you an example. One of the women I work with, her sister had a baby so she had to go home to help, you know, family stuff. But because it's not her child, our boss is like—cause he's married and has kids. If it's any of the guys who has something with their kids, fine, take off. But if it's somebody else who has to take off family time and it's not your own child, it's different. And it's a double standard, and we've both complained about it because that's just not right.

Although all were deeply invested in their jobs and valued the sense of fulfillment from seeing their teams and “kids” succeed, the older (45 years or so and older) heterosexual women expressed a sadness about the life sacrifices they made and saw the job as a

problematic obstruction to their social life and heterosexual marriage – and normative notions of femininity. Chrissy explained her anxiety about the seemingly incompatible goal of job and family:

I love my job, but I think I have given so much to my job that I'm sure a lot of women complain we don't take enough time for ourselves. I was 38 before I realized, oh my God, I'm not married and I don't have a family. And then I ended up rushing into it and marrying the wrong guy. And now I'm at the point where it's now or never. If I don't have a kid now, I'm never going to have one. I waited too long. 'Cause I poured everything into work. Well work doesn't keep you warm at night. You know? And it's not going to keep me warm when I'm 60 and retired.

The perceived incompatibility between job and marriage was particularly problematic for older women in negotiating the lesbian stereotype. Although being single generally invited scrutiny for *all* the women (as Melissa said, "If people don't see you with someone of the opposite gender they automatically are gonna think 'oh, maybe she's dating someone of the same gender'"), the older, unmarried heterosexual women experienced the effects of that stereotype in a more pronounced way. Knowledges about what women should aspire to – heterosexual marriage and motherhood – brought a gaze to those not meeting those standards, i.e. the deviant subject of the "older single woman." Comments from Nadia, Chrissy and Susan, all single women in their 40s, reflected the intensity of that gaze. Nadia articulated the discursive processes at work:

"I [low voice] just think that it's tough being a female in athletics sometimes because....[long pause] ...there's certain perceptions.

E: Like what?

N: If you're not married you are ... [long pause] ... gay.

E: You are a lesbian.

N: Yes. I think people have said, like have wondered about me because I'm not married.

Susan echoed Nadia's sentiments: "I'm not married. People could think that I am [a lesbian]. But I'm not." Susan and the other older, unmarried heterosexual women struggled with systems of normative sexuality in ways that the younger women could more easily deflect. At 45 years old, being unmarried women in sports provided more "evidence" that they met the "lesbian" criteria, something Nadia, Chrissy and Susan were particularly cognizant about. Younger women, on the other hand, could more easily justify their single status (and thus more effectively manage the lesbian stigma) as a product of their age. Said 29-year-old Krista when asked about whether she hoped to start a family:

"I'm young! ... my friends know that I don't want to be alone forever and at some point in my life I'd like to have a family and be able to have those things, but really, I enjoy where I'm at in my life right now –for how busy it is, I enjoy where I'm at and like I said before, if these things are gonna happen, they'll happen for me.

Among all the interviewees, only Barbara was married. A 56-year-old SID working with a high-profile women's basketball team, Barbara was married with children before entering the profession. She, like most of the interviewees, articulated the kind of "palpable" sense that women in sports information may be lesbian, a perception that bothered her. She used narratives of justice and fairness to explain her frustration with the stereotype: ("I mean, just because two guys live together and are roommates, no one thinks of them being a couple," she said. "But if two girls live together, that's the first thing that comes to mind.

‘Ohhh, they must be gay.’ That irritates me.”) Barbara’s status as a married mother relieved her from that stereotype, however, and she did not articulate feeling a pressure to prove her sexuality. In fact, Barbara wore short hair, no makeup, no jewelry beyond her wedding ring, and rather non-descript clothing at our meeting -- hardly markers of overt femininity. But as she noted, her social status excused her from worrying about such overt displays: “Being married and having kids, I’ve never had to deal with it [a lesbian stigma].”

Docility Amidst Constant Surveillance

The pervasive feeling of having their sexuality under suspicion led many of the women to make conscious choices about self presentation at work to *directly deflect* perceived lesbian stereotypes and showcase conformity to a traditional notions of femininity — underpinned at its core by heterosexuality. Nadia called thinking about managing this stigma a “conscious effort” and Rachel bluntly explained the problem as such: “I think that [lesbianism] is a stigma on female SIDs, yeah I do. Very much so. And I think you’re fighting it every day.” Chrissy and I had the following exchange:

E: Is it important to you that people know that you’re not—

C: --[cuts me off] Yes! Because I don’t want to—you know, I have some friends who are gay that I’m very close with, like [whispers name]. You know, there are people I respect who are. It has nothing to do with that. It’s just the fact that I just, for me, felt more comfortable, you know...

For many of the women, “fighting” the stigma included wearing feminine markers that implied heterosexuality or strategically working in comments to cue coworkers, media members or other individuals that they were in fact, heterosexual. Others, including the

women who identified as lesbian and those who did not conform to traditional notions of femininity, worked to overtly make it clear they fit in within the matrix of heteronormativity by publicly showing they valued a traditional notion of “family.”

Showcasing Heterosexuality Through Femininity

In interviews, some described themselves as specifically feminine in response to questions about how people knew they were not gay, illustrating the way “feminine” and its various synonyms works as a code word for “heterosexual.” As Rachel, who was wearing a skirt, strappy sandals and a fitted top during our interview explained when I asked why people didn’t suspect her to be lesbian: “I’m kind of girly girly. Look at me now!” Nadia said, “I go out of my way to wear jewelry,” and Lisa described consciously choosing to wear “cute tops,” which for her signified “feminine.” Conversely, Anna learned quickly in her career the suspicion a non-feminine look attracts. She recounted the story of what she told her family when they asked why she was growing out her hair, despite knowing that she preferred a short, manageable cut.

It’s because I’m tired of being—you know, that people assuming right off the bat that I’m a lesbian. And I’m not. And it was frustrating that I felt that I had to change a part of me — which, it’s a little thing. It my hair, big whoop, it grows out — because of that perception. So that was frustrating.

Many of the women were aware that their choice of clothing and hairstyle specifically mattered in a sporting context. SIDs often travel with the teams they work with and as many noted, the common practice is to wear “travel sweats” — matching team warmups — on planes and buses, and at pre-game practices (called shoot-arounds). Several of the women explained the gendered implications of wearing sweats, an industry “norm” that is followed

routinely by men in the business, but contrasts with the conspicuously feminine image some of the women worked hard to maintain. Nadia provided the example of postseason tournaments to illustrate a dilemma she often faces. During such tournaments, SIDs accompany their teams to mandatory press conferences with coaches and athletes the day before the game where the common practice for SIDs to wear the team's "travel sweats" at the event, something she resisted given the implicit meaning of non-feminine clothing (sweats). She explained the problem:

I didn't want to be in sweats. But there were some males there that were comfortable being in sweats and you know what, that looks fine for a guys. But that's not the image I want to portray on my end.

That "image," of course, is a non-feminine (masculine) one, and created a problem for Nadia: Follow the accepted norm of wearing travel sweats, or forego the sweats and highlight her femininity in a space — men's basketball — dominated by men and masculinity. Lisa, the SID whose friends introduced her as "not gay," chose to follow the accepted norms of wearing travel sweats on the road with her women's basketball team, but neutralized the more masculine clothing with other feminine markers: "When I put on my sporty gear, my warm-ups, I also throw on big hoop earrings, my little headband to put my hair back and always wear makeup."

For Nadia, a 51-year-old single woman acutely aware of how her single status in sports could be interpreted by others, dress and outward appearance was particularly important. Further, she described herself as very private at work, which gave her little opportunity to vocally let others know if she was dating someone, for instance (which

seemed to stem more from a lack of connection with her coworkers, most of whom were younger men). Thus, appearance became of utmost importance to Nadia:

N: See, you're always careful as to how you're dressing. At least I am. I--I kind of go over the top.

E: What does going over the top mean?

N: It means you're wearing a skirt all the time or something, you know what I mean? Even going to shootarounds with men's basketball, and you know you're going to meet with the media before a game, you know if it's a TV game and they're usually there at shootaround. I very rarely, when I'm on the road with men's basketball, am in sweats. Like very rarely...I just feel uncomfortable if I'm not projecting a good image.

Strategic discourse. The SIDs employed other tactics, including consciously and strategically injecting certain comments into discussion that revealed their sexual orientation. A heterosexist culture where talk of boyfriends and families is an accepted norm of “water cooler talk” aided this strategy, which at some times is overt, and others times unconscious, illustrating the transparent visibility of heterosexuality. This was especially useful among the women who did not ascribe to typical notions of femininity. Susan was one such woman. She wore khaki pants and a non-descript, plain, baggy shirt during our interview. She wore no makeup and kept her hair short. In some ways she fit in with the largely male conference membership. At both the regional and national conference, the common practice was to wear an athletics polo with the name and logo of your respective school emblazoned on the front. The shirts helped vendors identify the conference attendees as SIDs and I observed different publishers, multi-media organizations and web hosting companies often approach SIDs to

talk about their products. For the women, although many looked perfectly professional in skirts or dress pants with tailored tops, not wearing the polo shirts separated them from the dominant practice, again highlighting their otherness in a profession where they are tokens.

When I asked her about dress codes for women in sports information, Susan joked: “I’m like not a fashion plate at all. I mean [points to herself,] I need an overhaul of my wardrobe.” Yet Susan, as an older, single woman, was also aware of the stereotype and explained her strategies in claiming her heterosexual identity:

E: Do you ever purposefully try to let them know?

S: Oh yeah, you do it. You can do it in...like in a subtle way. Like you know, like ‘you got anybody eligible?’ Or, you know, you make those kinds of comments and stuff like that.

Many mentioned ways that, like Susan, they “let people know” they were interested in (heterosexual) marriage and relationships and traditional notions of family; such discourse worked to communicate their sexual orientation more than actually help find a date. Chrissy described how she consciously dealt with the issue before getting married:

I made it known that I wasn’t [a lesbian]. I talked about a boyfriend whether I had one or not. And just, I don’t know. Like I always had—whenever I was seeing somebody, I always had a picture of us in my office. Just subtle hints, stuff like that.

The advantage of a heterosexist culture. Others in relationships were aided by a heterosexist culture where talking about boyfriends or husbands is part of general “water cooler talk.” Melissa described her women’s basketball coaches as “family friendly,” urging her to bring her boyfriend on road trips with the team. Like all the SIDs, Melissa expressed some frustration about the lack of time she had to spend with her boyfriend during basketball

season, a problem they fixed partially by his attendance at events, giving her visible “evidence” of her heterosexuality. Others referenced the transparent ways they benefitted from heterosexist ideology. One exchange with Rachel illustrated this idea:

E: Do you ever say anything or do anything, even if it’s subtle, to let people know about your own sexual orientation?

R: No. I don’t think I even state it. I don’t think I ever do that. If it’s a writer they already know because *my boyfriend’s in the business* and works for a top team (emphasis added).

Heterosexism allows heterosexual women to share key parts of their personal lives at work and in doing so, separate themselves from a deviant subject position. Rachel enjoyed the ability to talk about her boyfriend and easily used her dating status to participate in a culture where talking about opposite-sex partners is an acceptable norm: “Because I’m dating someone else in the business, people think it’s cute. So other SIDs in the conference will go, ‘How’s Ben?’ Lisa, the former softball player, was similarly aided by the freedom to talk about her personal life.

E: How would [your coworkers] know that you were straight?

L: I guess they just took my word for it or they would ask me. Or you could just kind of—I feel like people could just kind of get a sense of, you know, based on comments that you made. Or, I mean, I had a boyfriend, I was dating somebody when I graduated, so I would talk about him through the nature of [other] conversations or whatever.

Unspoken rules. Homophobia in sports information prevents gay women from speaking about their partners and personal lives because the social cost is too great, something Therese had especially experienced at her university. She recognized the risks in doing so, and over the course of her long career, had developed a survival strategy: “I just don’t bring a lot of my personal life to the workplace because I felt like, quite frankly, in that environment I’ve been burned too many times.”

Dora’s experience as an implicitly out lesbian was less hostile than that of Therese, but like Therese, she also kept her sexuality relatively private. Dora situated that privacy as a personal choice and fiercely believed that sexuality is and should be private. As she put it, “I honestly believe, and I’m probably a diminishing minority in this, but I really believe that there are certain things in people’s lives that is their personal private business.” Yet, she described instances in which she has allowed her own sexuality to become more public, which invited comments about her partner, Leslie -- something she appreciated. For instance, before I even had a chance to ask her a question, she started the interview by proudly relaying a story in which an SID at the conference acknowledged her partner. She also noted how several years ago she asked a coach with a same sex partner and a son why only her little boy was mentioned in the “personal information” section of the media guide, happily noting that the next year, the coach used a picture with the full family. Dora described a culture at work where people assumed her sexuality, but did not openly discuss it. Dora brings her partner, Leslie, to events and games and said she has never felt any animosity from colleagues toward her. As Leslie put it, “We don’t say to people that we’re gay. They don’t ask us if we are.” Dora added: “People see Leslie and expect to see her with me ... it’s not

ever something that's discussed. But they're not stupid." For Dora "not stupid" meant that people assumed she was gay, but did not ask her.

Showcasing Heteronormativity Through Adherence to "Family Values"

Therese and Dora did not opt to "pass" as heterosexual by talking about imaginary boyfriends or exuding an overly feminine look in the traditional sense. Both wore the short hair that Anna saw as a giveaway for lesbian identity, but both were keenly aware of the negative associations with lesbians in sports. Still, both participated in producing narratives of heteronormativity by a very public and vocal devotion to traditional notions of the family at work.

Therese adamantly explained her work persona ("I'm a really private person," she said, "like I am really really, really a private person") but also articulated ways in which she invited scrutiny into the "accepted" part of her private life – the life that reflected heteronormative standards. She explained:

I think if you walked into my office I think you'd know—well actually you'd know a lot about me probably just because the fact that I have photos of my family all over the place.

In contrast to the notions of privacy in relation to her personal family with Leslie, Dora reflected the sentiments of Therese in regard to her extended family, noting the importance of taking off work to attend her nephew's baseball games, for instance. Perceptions of not adhering to that narrative brought the potential social cost in the way of stigmatization and stereotyping. I asked Anna, who at 45 years old, conveyed throughout the interview her disappointment and sadness at not being married with children. I asked whether

it bothered her if people assumed she did not want a family, and her response illustrated her expression of devotion to traditional family:

Um...yeah. It bothers me a little bit. But the thing is, too, they also see the big picture of my 12 nieces and nephews on my computer screen every day.

Conclusion

Foucault (2003) has long emphasized the individual subject's struggle against subjectification and the ways discourse constitutes categories and the ultimate docile body. This chapter shows one dimension of that struggle and the ways power is expressed through the technology of sport — its knowledges, practices and discourses (Cole, 1993). Knowledge about sport and gender works in a unique way for women in sports information and invites production of the gendered body described by Bartky (1988). Further, the effect of those power expressions – docility – reifies sexual identity categories and supports the visibility of (hetero) sexuality.

Constituting the Feminine Subject

Research has articulated the ways women perceive tension between their feminine identity and an identity as “sports media professional”; the two are often perceived as incompatible and because of that tension, women may “leave the profession in search of careers that involve less cognitive and emotional dissonance” (Hardin & Shain, 2005, p. 335). This “revolving door” depends on the naturalized idea that women are ill-suited for working in sporting spaces. It also depends on essentialized notions of identity and the idea that femininity is natural.

Comments from the women I interviewed show that knowledge about women in sports expressed through discourses on sexuality *invite* women to adopt a feminine embodiment that meets male-defined standards of beauty and sexual attractiveness in order to escape the gaze and related truths about women in sports as lesbian. The cost of not conforming to such ideals meant weathering constant scrutiny into their sense of self, not to mention potential hostility stemming from the homophobic culture. Furthermore, through the expression of such displays and public discussion of boyfriends/husbands, the categories of femininity and women are naturalized, creating standards that women are expected to meet to be “normal.”

Effects of Discourse

A heterosexist culture allows for the public display of heterosexuality in transparent ways. Thus, it is no wonder that Rachel, for instance, did not worry about perceptions of her sexuality – she was aided by the ability to talk about her boyfriend in public spaces. The norms regarding pictures displayed at work or the type of conversation that is acceptable also establishes the “normal” and “deviant” categories of heterosexual and homosexual. Many scholars have critiqued homophobic cultures as those in which hostility is expressed toward those that identify as gay and lesbian. Here, only one SID – Anna – expressed openly homophobic views. But through the discourse and behavior that privileges heterosexuality as “normal,” all the SIDs naturalized the problematic dichotomy between heterosexuality and homosexuality. This is not to suggest that this is even a conscious practice on behalf of the women interviewed here; rather, the categories are the effect of discourse on sexuality and should be interrogated as such.

Power expressed through discourse about sexuality in sports information benefits men by naturalizing men's place in sports. Researchers have strongly critiqued the common perception that women are less able to cover and work with high profile men's sports because of a lack of sports experience. My interviews suggest that women's acceptance into sports media workplaces is more complex than just gaining perceived credibility. Sports experience did not translate into acceptance; rather than a useful tool to "prove their worth" and help them earn the necessary credibility to do their job and gain acceptance, that sports experience was a betrayal to their sense of self. It became additional "evidence" that they met the lesbian stereotype and shifted their energy from "proving their worth" to "proving their heterosexuality."

Further, the knowledge of sports and sexuality created discourse that stigmatized the partnership of female SIDs and women's sports. Not only are women's sports low on the media radar but working with women's basketball or softball can contribute to a "guilt by association" perception. An increase in images and media coverage depicting strong female athletes may contribute to the production of Foucauldian counter-discourses that can shift knowledge about sports and gender in ways that *could* be liberating for women. Thus, these findings must also be considered in the context of the promotion and subsequent media coverage of women's sports. If association with women's athletics contributes to an unwanted lesbian stereotype, this may offer another explanation for the low value of women's sports. Future research should interrogate how the disciplining effects of sexuality discourse translates into work output, including the ways female SIDs brand and sell their teams to the public. Do they advocate emphasizing the femininity (and by association,

heterosexuality) of their athletes, for instance, in the same ways they emphasize their own femininity?

The Glass Closet

The discomfort in talking about lesbians in sports and the stories from Dora and Therese reflected Griffin's (1998) concept of the "glass closet" in sports information. Sykes (1998) calls such a closet a paranoid closet because a woman's sexuality is under suspicion when she is working in sports information. When someone comes out, that suspicion is confirmed, intensifying the gaze on all women.

Griffin (1998) argues that lesbians are deviants in the world of sport, and I do not aim to dispute that here, especially given the generally hostile and homophobic culture of sporting spaces. However, this chapter also shows that the technologies of sport constitute women in general as deviants in sports information. Foucault argues that the gaze does not fall on the normal subject, but the deviant one. Thus, it is women in general who are uniquely affected by the technologies of sport, and this chapter shows the clear perception of that gaze across the board.

It seems to be in women's best interests to stay in the closet and protect the silence surrounding homosexuality. Therese and Dora recognized the social cost of making their sexuality public, and neither spoke about it openly – even to their own friends. The silence prevented the women from expressing shared experiences and making public their struggle against subjectification. Furthermore, the silence upheld a division among women that prevents new counter-discourses from emerging that could destabilize or shift power relations that result in sexism.

Chapter 6:

From Inept Intruders to Suspicious Sex Vixens:

The Problem of Heterosexuality

Women's inclusion in sports and sports workplaces threatens the gendered meaning-making within those spaces as something natural for men and a space where normative masculinity is showcased. Cahn (1994), Lenskyj (2003, 1986) and Griffin (1998) have been at the forefront in arguing that the lesbian label works as a policing mechanism to preserve sports as an exclusive male terrain that celebrates hegemonic masculinity. In a homophobic culture, a lesbian label carries a negative connotation and thus we see the conscious effort of women to prove false the immediate perception that they are lesbian, a label made "true" by knowledges relating to their very presence in a sporting space.

Through the course of the interviews, the SIDs referred to various stereotypes of women, including the pervasive lesbian stigma. Actively working to deflect that stereotype was a common sentiment and strategy in order to achieve acceptance among male colleagues. Discussions about the SIDs' experiences in the workplace, however, do not suggest that proving one's heterosexuality makes for an easier work environment.

This chapter focuses on what I call the "problem of heterosexuality," or the costs that come with successfully proving that one is in fact, straight. Again using excerpts from the interviews, I show how the SIDs often saw proving heterosexuality as one way to earn "acceptance" from men. However, such acceptance often comes with a price via questions to their professional credibility and ethics. As many of the women noted, heterosexual women are often situated as using sports information as a tool to meet men for romantic relationships. Thus, instead of liberating them from an unwanted label, their heterosexuality

became justification for questioning their credibility and virtue as ethical sports information directors. It affords them access to certain spaces and the freedom to talk about their personal lives at work, for instance, but cages them in other ways, forcing female SIDs to walk an impossible line of managing their heterosexuality so as not to invite comments that question their motives about working in sports information. I conclude by arguing that women must be “feminine” (not lesbian), but not too feminine (sexy), creating a situation where female SIDs are in a constant state of angst in trying to find a “safe spot” in which they might escape scrutiny.

Seeking Inclusion: Women in Sports Information

Like other sports media professions, sports information is male dominated and organized around traditional masculine norms. Traits culturally marked as masculine – such as a tough exterior, confidence and individuality – permeated discussions of everyday work experiences. The women saw being too emotional as a mistake and admonished other women to not back down from confrontation. The women recognized they worked in a male-dominated industry and saw success for women as difficult, but possible. As Chrissy explained, “I was once told, and I believe this, that women, no matter what profession it is, you have to work twice as hard to get the same thing a guy has. And in this profession it’s definitely true.”

Many of the SIDs described stories in which colleagues, media members or peers bypassed them in order to speak with men in their office. Krista struggled with gaining acceptance in a small three-person office where she occupied token female status.

K: Coaches, especially the male ones, would walk into my office, say hello to me and go right to Brian [my male boss].

E: So you were not getting the respect you thought you deserved from male coaches?

K: No. I wasn't. And I knew I wasn't, you know? There were some that were just old school. Like you know what, Brian is the boss, I want Brian, Brian's got all the answers.

Proving Ground

Sports information has evolved from a profession marked by record-keeping and information dissemination to one defined by efficient communication, brand management and strategic communication, changes many of the women noted. The SIDs recognized these new roles (and in some ways saw themselves as better suited as communicators by way of their gender), but described a culture in which a backwards-and-forwards knowledge of sports news and statistics served as an elite status symbol and pathway to perceived “acceptance” from male peers. Further, the women recognized that for men, that knowledge was presumed as a given, because, as Chrissy explained: “I think everybody assumes that every male on the planet has grown up playing sports.”

Conversely, the same is not true for women, and the interviewees talked in various ways about the need to “prove” their aptitude in “sports knowledge” and by extension show themselves as worthy and capable sports information directors. Susan described the culture as requiring her to be on her “A’ game” at all times with little room for error. Pamela explained it simply: “A lot of women I think are perceived as not knowing much about the profession. Like they *shouldn't* know much about sports.” Pamela’s comments illustrate the “starting point” for women in sports information: Because sports are culturally positioned as

antithetical to femininity, women's knowledge of sports is not presumed as natural in the way it is with men, something Lisa was aware of as being prominent in specific sports where masculinity is especially celebrated:

[T]here's always um, something where women are looked down upon or we always have to prove ourselves. Like because we are a woman, people automatically assume that we don't know what we're talking about or that we don't know anything about athletics, especially in a male dominated, you know like football is what I think of.

Barbara lamented the manifestation of this ideology in describing an instance in which the football position came open at her school. She applied for the job and, although she had the most experience among the remaining staffers at her university, did not receive an interview, attributing it to the "old boy's network." She noted the way men's sports are guarded as spaces for men: "That's probably one of the reasons that I did not get an interview. They probably didn't want a woman as a football SID."

Many of the women spoke about the need to "prove" oneself as a process with a finite ending. The logic goes as follows: Once they adequately prove themselves, then they will gain acceptance. Yet, even the most experienced women described stories of feeling the need to continually demonstrate their aptitude.

Although Susan described herself as confident and possessed more than 20 years of experience, including more than 10 with a Division I men's basketball team, she still noted being questioned about her aptitude. She described an instance at a recent men's basketball NCAA Tournament in which she met with a high-profile television announcer who had a reputation as generally hostile to women. In meeting with him to review the team, give him

talking points and answer questions, she described how proving her aptitude, knowledge and ultimate worth “was totally on the back of my mind,” adding:

Being that you’re in a man’s world, I think you just always have to try a little harder and you just have to—there’s always like, some proving. You gotta prove yourself. With some, some guys, it—it doesn’t matter. But then there’s some other people that it does or you feel like you kinda have to prove yourself a little more that you know what you’re talking about.”

A Heterosexual Advantage

Knowledges about sports and gender naturalize women’s outsider status, thus resulting in the pervasive feeling often expressed by women in sports workplaces to “prove” their aptitude and gain acceptance. One pathway to acceptance and inclusion is through connections with men via heterosexuality. Indeed, through discussions on sexuality as well as those related to everyday work experiences, heterosexuality was positioned as advantageous. And in some ways it clearly is. Therese and Dora, the two lesbian SIDs, both described experiences with homophobia and saw their sexuality as something that should stay private for the benefit of their careers. For Therese, situating sexuality as private was especially important as she recounted several stories of being “burned” in instances where she chose to politicize the topic at work. Because of the homophobic culture, heterosexuality clearly *is* an advantage. That advantage, however, extended past the obvious escape from overt prejudice. It afforded the SIDs I interviewed a feminine identity, which they saw as useful in day-to-day interactions and a justification to coyly flirt in order to gain favor with media or coaches.

Of all the women interviewed, Rachel most saw her heterosexuality as an advantage. Rachel currently works for a major Division I institution for a successful women's basketball program and was aware of the lesbian stereotype and how working with a women's team magnified that stereotype. Deflecting the stigma was especially important for her as she saw the lesbian stereotype as not only a threat to her own identity, but a threat to her success; for Rachel, heterosexuality was an advantage that she consciously worked to use in her favor. At one point she asked rhetorically in reference to the "lesbian problem":

Randomly thinking about all the SIDs that do women's basketball in [my conference] right now, when you think about it, there are a lot of males. A lot of males. Why is that? Is that because the coach doesn't want to work with a female on a female team?

Rachel also described her coach, a single, heterosexual woman whom she explained was frustrated with the "lesbian clique" among women's basketball coaches:

R: [My coach] doesn't always feel like she's accepted by the group of lesbian coaches because she's not one.

E: Really?

R: She and I have had conversations about that. Because she feels like they don't accept her because she's not one. Because there's a lot more than people realize. I mean, in women's basketball. I mean, some are married! But you're never gonna come out, you know?

For Rachel, her heterosexuality gave her a unique connection with her coach, who felt alienated among her peers. It also aided her in other ways, including dealing with men's coaches and media. She described a successful period working with the men's basketball

program at a small Division I school. Although the school was smaller than her current institution, working with a major men's sport brought challenges in the way of demanding male coaches in a pressure-cooker environment where one bad season can lead to being fired.

R: To be honest with you, I think it helped, too, that, and I don't know whether to take this in a bad way or not, but I think it also helped that they knew I was a heterosexual, that they knew I liked men.

E: That matters to them?

R: I think so, I think so. I think, just because of what they—they like knowing—it makes them feel like you're one of the boys, but yet you like the boys. Does that make sense?"

Other women echoed Rachel's sentiments about the desire and advantage to be one of the boys – yet *liked by the boys*, a social position achieved by exuding heterosexual availability to men. Krista was one such woman. Krista absolutely loved her job yet saw herself as fundamentally unqualified, saying, "I would be the first one to admit it – I don't think I was the most qualified. There were so many areas that I lacked in." It was important to Krista to earn the respect from her male colleagues and she strove to be "one of the guys"; Krista told stories of being the only woman at dinner at the CoSIDA conference, or being the only woman in a group of other SIDs out at the bar for drinks. Yet, she expressed frustration when she was accepted by the guys, yet not "liked" by the guys in a story about an event at the regional conference, called East Coast Athletic Association Sports Information Directors of America (ECAC-SIDA):

Monday night actually we went back to the suite and they were all talking and they were like 'God I can't wait for tomorrow. More, you know, more ECAC-SIDA girls

are gonna show up and I wonder how many hot ones are gonna be there?!’ and I’m looking at ‘em, going [arms slap to the side], ‘Thanks, guys, that’s nice.’

Exposing the Illusion of the Heterosexual Advantage

Heterosexuality affords women in sports information a certain kind of advantage – certainly a release from stigmatization and prejudice. Yet, proving their heterosexuality did not relieve women from a suspicious gaze. Rather, as heterosexual women, their presence brought upon a new form of skepticism, largely by the perception that they worked as SIDs in order to meet men, thus forcing women to manage their heterosexuality in a way to not invite scrutiny into their ethics or “ulterior motives” for working in a sports-related field such as sports information.

Suspicious Sex Vixens

Women’s lack of fit in the sports information office is in some ways explained by a pervasive narrative that women enter the profession to meet men for romantic relationships, a perception that positioned women as seductresses. Melissa described the perception:

I just know so many people, females, that, younger females, you know, from 20s to mid-30s that are always being—always sharing stories about everyone thinks I’m in this business to date or find a rich husband or something like that.

For Melissa, a former college athlete who loves working in sports, this perception seemed to resonate the most as a direct attack to her sense of self. Lisa explained the dilemma such ideology creates for women:

L: Some coaches have asked me this, too. They're like, 'How, if you weren't a former college athlete and you're a female, why would you want to get into athletics? Like why would you get into college athletics?'

E: People have asked you that?—

L: -- What appeal does that have to you?...That's a hard question. But I think that is one of the perceptions, is that sometimes women are just—especially at the entry-level positions—are just in it because they think that, you know, you get to hang around the basketball team or whatever.

Why would you, as a woman, want to work in athletics? In discussing this general sentiment, comments revealed the ideological work behind the question. It says much more than it asks and implies that a woman's desire to work in sports cannot start and end simply with an interest in sports. This perception is fundamentally unique to women and an additional example of the gendered effects of disciplining power.

Susan explained the differing perceptions by first describing the men: "There are a lot of guys in this profession that weren't good enough to be athletes... You know, they're geeks, into statistics." Conversely, Susan went on to note that women are not similarly characterized as "geeks," for *occupying the exact same space as men*. Rather, their interest in working in sports information could be explained by a) their lack of femininity ("she's a lesbian) or b) a desire to meet men. Barbara further articulated the suspicion heterosexual women face: "If you want to be still involved in athletics as a woman, there must be *some* reason."

The SIDs were aware of the implied reasons, and comments from the interviews showed they answered that rhetorical question by engaging in a constant state of managing the heterosexuality they worked so hard to portray in deflecting the lesbian stigma. In sum, if

they successfully convince others that they are not “masculine” (i.e. lesbian), they must then manage their heterosexuality among male coworkers, coaches and athletes in a climate where their motives are suspect from the beginning – especially as young (and presumably unmarried) women. Melissa explained the problem of heterosexuality among male coaches and teams:

I think sometimes you kind of feel like you can't be yourself and let your guard down with those staffs and with those players because there's always going to be the, 'are you dating one of them? What's really going on? Like why do *you* get to work with them?' So I think that permeates our business.

The careful line women must walk between being “professional” and being “yourself,” is a discursive construct that implies women’s bodies are at fundamental odds with workplace professionalism, a type of knowledge that created a problem for single women working with men’s sports. This challenge was salient for Anna who has a variety of experience working with men’s programs – and men’s coaches -- including Division I football. Working with football is a highly sought-after position and one that Anna relished and saw herself as extremely capable of handling. Despite her wealth of experience and confidence in her own abilities, she expressed a pressure to prove her ethical motives in working with men as a single woman, the result of which was extra emotional work on her part:

A: The one thing that I've tended to do more, especially if [the male football coaches] are married and have kids, I get to know their families. So I know their wives. And I think building a good relationship with their wives is a good thing because they understand that you're there to work with their husbands, you're not after their

husbands. It's one of those things where you develop a friendship with the family, not just with the coach.

E: Is that a perception of women? That you might be there—

A: --That you're just there to snag a future NFL player or future NBA player. I think that is especially true with the younger women when they get in the business. And that's why you have to be very careful and be as professional as possible and still be able to be yourself.

Krista, the only woman who did not recognize or feel a perception of a lesbian stigma in sports information, saw the "sex vixen" stereotype as much more salient. It was not just a perception to distance herself from; rather she saw it as detrimental to all women:

K: I think there's a stigma on women that, ah, for instance, one of the people I worked with [a fellow SID], when she was at one school, she ended up, um, having relations, um, a one-night stand with a high-ranking person who was in the department.

E: Guy or woman?

K: She had a one-night stand with I think the AD. So it was a male. And that never left her. Ever. And I think that's one of the things—I really, that is one, that is actually one thing that I think is a big difference is when—when guys do it, it just gets passed off. When girls do it, everybody remembers. Because I am more than certain it has happened before. I mean I have heard of soooooo many – between hook ups and one-night stands. I could tell you stories. But you don't hear it on the guys' side. Like it fades and it's gone. But for that woman, we all knew. The minute it happened we all knew.

Managing Heterosexuality

The SIDs' presence as (available) heterosexual women created a problem that they then had to manage and attend to. Melissa, a young African-American SID, recounted an instance she faced at a school early in her career. In a city where she knew no one and was new on the job, the former college women's basketball player became friendly with several of the African-American men's basketball coaches, which brought unwanted inspection into her motives for the job. "People always thought I was dating somebody on staff and, you know, I laughed it off, but then after awhile it gets a little bit annoying when people are always like, 'Well, you're always at their games...' I mean, we're friends! I support them and things like that."

The perception that women enter sports information in order to meet a future husband manifested into a kind of tightrope walk. On the one hand, they wanted to cue others via feminine markers that they were, in fact, heterosexual. On the other hand, skirts, fitted tops, even long hair are part of the sexualization of women; taken in the context of sports, some women were left in a constant state of angst about self-presentation. If they did not wear skirts, they risked being perceived as lesbian. If they did wear skirts, however, they risked being judged as immoral or unethical. Rachel explained:

E: One question I did have from earlier is do you think women have to be careful about anything at work in ways that men do not?

Rachel: Oh without a doubt. I think um, They don't want to be perceived as flirts. Or, the way they dress. We get by with a little bit different dress codes than—I mean, look at me today, I'm pretty casual. Yeah, we have a very lenient dress code because men can wear golf shirts. I know at like other schools like Columbia, they have to

dress up in a shirt and tie every day. I think you, uh, you don't want to be perceived as too sexy, um, whereas how many men have that problem because it's pretty basic for them.

E: What's wrong with being too--

R: -- You might not be taken as seriously as you want. Um...and you want to be taken seriously. You don't necessarily want to 'one of *the* guys' but you want the same respect that they do. And um if you're dressing too provocatively, you might not be.

A Sexually Charged Workplace Culture

Sexuality mediated women's experiences in other, more overtly hostile ways, as well. Women who worked with men's sports described instances of humiliating experiences with sexually aggressive men's athletes and coaches. Lisa, who works primarily with a women's basketball team but assists with football in the spring described how the team and coaches communicated to her that she was literally treading on their turf.

I also deal with football a lot, and I think that my first experience with feeling like oh my gosh, I'm out of place here. Like, I'm a woman, and I am out of place for the first time in my life that I've ever felt out of place was on a football field. It was me and like the entire football team. And I had to go up to them and you know, like, tell them who they had for interviews or whatever. So I went up there, and like the whole football team is sitting around, down on one knee in front of coach or whatever and my boss was not there and so he said just go out and tell them who they have for interviews. And I remember going out there and them like hooping and hollering and like, I don't know. I was like not wearing anything—any clothing that would make

you think that I was being anything but professional. In fact I had a coat on ‘cause it was spring. And I went out there and I read the names off and whatever and the head coach made some comment that was like ‘well you’re DEFINITELY not John!’ – who’s like, you know, one of our other SIDs. And I remember going out to dinner with a friend that night and just being like ‘I felt like I was visually raped.’

Lisa’s comments about her clothing reflected the sentiment that professionalism and femininity were at odds in sports information. Although she said she was not wearing anything unprofessional and was even “covered up” by a coat, her very body created an unprofessional situation. Heather recounted a similar ongoing “issue” she must contend with when working alongside her men’s soccer coaches: “[A] lot of times, the breasts, like they’ll make comments.....” Later she pointed to her chest and said she had decided that her breasts were inevitably going to attract attention, saying, “They’re not the first people to make comments about it and they won’t be the last, so just let it go.” Others described instances of players asking them out on dates although none seemed annoyed at the questions. As Anna explained, “I always just kind of laughed it off as them trying to flirt.”

Conclusion

Feminine but not Too Feminine

In Chapter 5, I reviewed some of the “distancing strategies” that women employed to separate themselves from a lesbian stigma. Avoiding those that are stigmatized (women) tells others that one does not ascribe, nor approve of the stigmatized image (Krane, 2004). This may explain the desire to “be one of the boys,” a common mantra among the interviewees.

However, being one of the boys and being liked by the boys presents a difficult challenge for women and is part of the problem of heterosexuality faced by female SIDs. Interview comments suggest that the culture of sports information values a woman that is feminine (read: not lesbian) but not too feminine (read: sexy). By meeting standards of heteronormativity, women can effectively deflect a lesbian stereotype, but in doing so, they run the risk of hurting their own credibility as ethical sports information directors. What is unclear is whether such a “safe spot” exists. Barbara, the one mother in this study, offers one answer. Although she recognized the full spectrum of stereotypes placed on women in sports information and was frustrated by the way those stereotypes problematized the work environment for women, she did not see them as problematic for her in ways that the other women did. Her married status and mother role alleviated her from addressing these various stereotypes on a personal level, suggesting the “safe spot” may be motherhood. Yet, as I discuss more fully in the next chapter, women see work and family as incompatible, meaning that potential “safe spot” is also a pathway out of the industry.

Considering Women’s Opportunities in Sports Information

On a very practical level, this chapter can offer insights to women’s exclusion from top-tier sports, like football and men’s basketball. Scholars and advocates alike have long called for decision-makers to give women opportunities for advancement in sports media through access to high profile experiences. Yet, in sports media, women still toil on the fringe, given few opportunities to cover or work with major men’s sports. A focus on the knowledges, truths and discourses about women in sports offers another perspective on this exclusion.

None of the women in this study saw themselves as sexual vixens, but whether or not they exemplify that image is less important than interrogating the knowledges about women within this particular space and the power effects from that discourse. It is enlightening that the issue of heterosexual relations was not presented as “Male coaches see women as potential mates.” Rather, heterosexual women were situated through discourse as working in sports information to meet men.

This sentiment has the potential to underpin logic about women’s exclusion and certainly reinforces age-old mantras about the female seductress. Furthermore, such narratives constitute the female subject as problematic in sports for men; she is not just ill-equipped for work in sports, but she is a threat to the professionalism of the office. Women’s inclusion doesn’t simply just “pollute” the meaning of sports media professions and change the way sporting spaces are understood (Goldin, 2006). Rather, women’s inclusion is a threat to harmony and well being.

Chapter 7

The Politics of Activism:

Assessing Potential for Change Through FAME

In Avalon, N.J. at the regional meeting of the national organization of collegiate sports information directors, several women readied a room for a small meeting of Female Athletic Media relations Executives (FAME). They moved the chairs into a circle to provide for a more intimate setting and talked about a “plan of action” for the upcoming hour.

As women filed into the room, various men remaining from the previous session filed out, although a FAME organizer advised them that they were welcome to stay. One did, although he took a seat on the outside of the circle and remained there for the duration of the meeting.

Although I was there to meet with the women and assess interest in participation in this project, the group leader asked me to present some of my previous research on sports information, which I did, reviewing the contents of a previous study that included information about women’s lack of representation in management, high reported rates of desire to leave the profession, and the gendered division of labor.

Following my presentation, the group leader asked everyone to introduce herself and describe something positive that happened to her in the previous year. Stories ranged from the excitement of working with a championship team to a woman whose boyfriend had proposed earlier in the year. Most of the stories brought laughs and rounds of applause and after the 16 SIDs in attendance had taken their turn, the leader reminded the women to take

the time to get to know each other and use the conference for important networking – “not just with women, but with men, too.”

At that time, the man on the outside of the circle asked if he could speak and offered his opinion on the research I had presented, telling the group that women had made much progress in the profession, but that they must continue to work hard, use the networking opportunities available at the conference and show their willingness to “try new things” and get involved with important opportunities at the conference. The meeting then adjourned.

Women are a small minority in sports information and comprise just about 12 percent of all department heads at athletic institutions (Carpenter & Acosta, 2010). Only a handful work with the premier and most visible collegiate sport – football (Whiteside & Hardin, 2010) and few occupy positions of power on the CoSIDA board of directors where policy, initiatives and strategic messages are put in motion. In 1998 when a study came out showing a precipitous drop in female sports information directors, a group of women came together to create FAME, with the intention of providing a support network and advocacy group to help retain women in the profession. In doing so, they wrote a mission statement, which reads as follows:

The mission of FAME (Female Athletic Media relations Executives) is to discuss issues facing women in the sports media relations field and to develop appropriate strategies to deal with those issues. FAME members are committed to encouraging and mentoring all women working in athletic media relations as a career.

As the mission statement states, FAME exists for women and thus serves as a visible representation of all women in the wider forum of sports information directors. When women are a small minority in a profession, they may feel like tokens; finding a collective voice is

critical to establishing a sense of group identity and in some regards, FAME may facilitate that goal. In this chapter I draw from both interviews, as well as articles and images from the official FAME newsletter, to address the forces facilitating and/or impeding women's collective activism. In doing so I consider how women situate their relationships with other women and FAME in the context of the sexual politics reviewed in the previous two chapters. Finally, I reflect on the discourses about women that are put into motion and those that are repressed, ending with a discussion of the illusion of privacy in regard to sexuality.

The Politics of Female Networks

In general, the women I interviewed saw networking with other women and female support systems as useful. This surely is not a surprising conclusion given that all the interviewees were involved with FAME to some degree. Further, the SIDs believed they occupied minority status in this male-dominated profession and hinted at supporting changes reflective of a liberal viewpoint, a sentiment also expressed through various messages in the newsletter. In asserting their minority status, many of the women saw partnership with other women as ideal. Exchanges like the following with Barbara, a longtime SID, were common:

E: Talk to me a little bit about your involvement in FAME. What brings you to the meetings?

B: Just networking with other women and being able to know that there are people out there that I can call if I have a question. And people that I've talked to I know on a personal basis, you know. That's good with FAME; you can put faces with names. You have a smaller setting, a more intimate setting to do that in.

Like Barbara, many saw FAME as a place to recognize other women in the profession and make friends. FAME and the related newsletter also served as a vehicle to acknowledge the presence of women, which was indicative of a liberal feminist agenda that FAME seemed to embody. In discussing the group, others added the goal of sharing “common experiences” and issues specific to women, which most notably focused on motherhood and career.

The Meaning of Activism

Although Barbara saw FAME and female networking as useful, she said she left the informal group for several years after becoming disillusioned with its objectives, including a campaign to create an award given to a female SID each year in an effort to provide visibility for women at the male-dominated awards banquet each year (“I want the award because I was the best person,” she said, “not because I was a woman.”) She added:

B: I know I kinda backed off a little bit—and this was several years ago—I thought they were becoming a little too militant and that’s not my style.

E: What do you mean by that, militant?

B: Well they were just—not militant, but really into the women’s lib type thing, really hot and heavy. And that’s not my style.

The comments from Barbara suggest that association with FAME fits within a broader matrix of sexuality, gender and work discourses that together may attach a negative meaning to women’s activism. In describing a former boss, Rachel similarly touched on the issue:

R: I had a female news director and she was freaking all about women.

E: What does that mean, ‘all about women?’

R: She wasn't a lesbian. She was straight. Her husband I knew very well.

E: She wasn't a lesbian?

R: No. *But* she was very much about women having power. [emphasis added]

Including the word “but” before describing this woman as “very much about women having power” implies the standard implication is that for one to be very much about women having power *is in fact* for one to also be lesbian. This association is a dangerous one when considering the prospects of women's collective activism in a climate where women actively work to distance themselves from situations that may invite an unwanted label.

Lisa similarly encountered this association when she attended several leadership conferences geared toward helping women achieve management positions in college athletics. She sought out the opportunity, received funding from her boss -- who she saw as not particularly supportive -- and found the workshops and conferences to be empowering. However, her (all male) coworkers trivialized her for attending the conference, and she responded using humor to distance herself from the stereotype:

I'm not gonna lie, I made a joke out of it. I'm like 'I'm going to the lesbian conference' or whatever. I mean, just you know--just casually throwing it around. I mean, obviously knowing that wasn't the case.

Female Networks and Mentorship

If association with other women – especially women with a political agenda – can be interpreted as association with lesbians, what does this mean for potential relationships among women in sports information? All saw networking with other women as “ideal,” and female mentorship and connections as positive. This idealized notion of female mentorship was underpinned by the recognition that they worked in a male-dominated profession and

that some sort of female-to-female connections were necessary. Comments like the following from Heather were common: “I think [connections among women] are good, just because we’re such a minority in this business. I think that obviously we’ve grown in this business. But I think to have that network and have that support is important.” At the same time, however, most described preferring to work alongside men. Perceptions of women as too “moody,” “emotional,” “catty” and “difficult to work with,” supported those preferences.

Rachel explained:

R: I also tend to work better with males. I’ll be honest with you.

E: Why do you think that is?

R: I also—I think females tend to make excuses. I’m not—can I be emotional? Yes. Like, will I watch the American Idol rerun on TV last night and cry over that? Yes. But I don’t really like cry on the job. And sometimes I’m such a stickler for perfection that I feel like males can deal with me coming down hard on them better than females can.

Networking and communication is part of what defines effective sports information practices, but the need to network specifically with women was not privileged or highlighted in any way. Comments from Heather illustrate this idea:

I think if you’re a professional and you just do your job, no matter what job you’re in, you’re going to be dealing with whomever. It could be a female; it could be a male. So I don’t really think it’s—I think [female mentorship] would be nice, but I don’t think it’s a need, ‘cause you just need to go out there and do your job.

A newsletter re-print of an acceptance speech by a woman named Chris Anderson, who gave the speech for being inducted into the CoSIDA hall of fame, echoed this general sentiment. In the speech she said:

Personally, I get a lot out of each CoSIDA, but it's really whatever you make of it. I've enjoyed participating in sessions, the travel, food and drink and softball and I make it a point to always sit at a different table every day, enjoying the opportunity to meet new people – young and old, *male and female* [emphasis added].

Emphasizing the connections -- not just with women, but with men as well -- rhetorically works to cue others that connections with women do not hold special, meaningful or useful value. (Later in the speech, Anderson did single out other women -- mothers -- saying “Most of all I respect and admire SID moms, Sue, Linda, ML, Nancy and June, there are so very few of us, but you have my respect and I have appreciated your advice.”)

Many of the interviewees explicitly noted connections with men as their self-proclaimed “network,” which dovetailed with discussions of a desire to be “one of the boys.” Ultimately, few noted strong connections with women, which was partially from a lack of fellow female SIDs altogether. This was the case for Heather, who explained her relationships:

E: Do you feel connected to other women in this business?

M: Um...I don't think so. Like when I'm here [at CoSIDA] I mainly hang out with guys, just cause that's who's either—who I've just met through the years, or like at our [athletic] conference now, I really think I might be the only female.

Therese and Dora were two notable exceptions among the women interviewed. I describe their comments and career narratives here not to suggest a fundamental difference

between lesbian and heterosexual women, but to articulate the argument that networking among women may be more embraced by those not entirely fearful of a lesbian label.

Therese and Dora were both “implicitly out” in that they allowed others to see themselves as lesbian without directly naming themselves as such publicly. Since neither were actively “covering,” association with other stigmatized women may not be as problematic for them compared with heterosexual women or gay women who prefer to stay completely closeted, pass as heterosexual or cover a lesbian identity. A story from Therese provides context. Therese described at length a difficult situation at work that she saw stemming from a personality clash between herself and her male boss that included sexist and homophobic undertones. She struggled to recount the experience, something that frustrated her and made the office an uncomfortable space. She described the work culture as homophobic and negative attitudes toward gays and lesbians in sports as “the last bastion of acceptance in my book. It really is.” In describing her workplace challenges, she noted the various women she called or leaned on for support. I followed up:

E: I was wondering if you could kind of talk about your network with other women in the field. Is that something you feel you have? Do you feel connected to other women?

T: Yeah. I feel like I’m connected to women and men. But I really feel really connected to a lot of women because there were some of us, Beth, a little bit older than me, Catherine, is—they really mentored me and I feel like with women there’s a very big spirit of collectivity and mentoring.

Dora expressed similar views. She described an unofficial “listserv” that her and various other female SIDs used to send group emails out that served to keep them in touch

with each other. She also situated women in positive terms and saw FAME as fundamentally important to developing relationships among women that, most importantly, are useful. Like Therese, Dora had benefitted from networking relationships with other women and saw that support as critical for success in a male-dominated industry. Perhaps most interestingly, though, were her attitudes toward “being one of the guys,” a sentiment commonly addressed by many of the women in this project.

I would be willing to bet that the people who come into this profession and have that attitude of being one of the guys, they won't stay in this profession for a long time.

They'll find some other way—some other job. Some other profession. Some reason to leave. They're—they, after a while, that will wear off. And they can never be guys.

And if that's their whole opinion that they have, then they're gonna be out. It won't take long to find out reality.

Embracing Individualism

Female-to-female networks and seeking help from other women were not overwhelmingly manifest in the everyday lives of many of the women I interviewed, but all still identified with a kind of uphill climb female SIDs face. Despite the stacked deck, most saw reaching the top as possible – through personal ingenuity and individual fortitude. These attributes were embraced, touted and favored as the ideal way to “get ahead” at work. For example, the newsletter regularly uses the word “trailblazer” to describe various women, showcasing the individual efforts of women. This is not meant to imply that such efforts are misguided, or that the newsletter unfairly represents various SIDs. But the prevailing message underpins a narrative related to the practice of “proving oneself” through *individual dedication*.

An example from the 2006 edition of the newsletter provides context. The article included seven first-person stories related to the topic “How to Get Ahead in Sports Information: The Success Stories from FAME Members.” None referenced female networks, FAME, the support of women or collective activism specifically. Rather, they reflected narratives of individual hard work and dedication. Wrote one: “I just continued to work hard, continued to want to learn about the job and new technology.” Another noted the social cost of not doing so: “I work hard each day to make sure that I don’t give someone a reason to say ‘that’s why women shouldn’t be in that position...that’s why a woman shouldn’t handle football.’” In this way, the newsletter reminded readers that personal motivation in the way of professional development is the best path to success. Furthermore, a variety of articles offered information on improving communication skills, ideas for technology training and advice for gaining additional experience, all topics that would easily fit in the regular CoSIDA newsletter. Ultimately, the message reflected broader American cultural narratives about hard work leading to success.

Profiles on various SIDs in the newsletter extended discourses of individuality by focusing on the individual accomplishments of various women and the individual awards they had received. Being the “first” to do something was especially valued and numerous references to various “firsts” permeate the newsletter. For instance, at the end of a story about one SID’s experience directing the media relations efforts at the FedEx Orange Bowl, readers saw the following: “Editor’s Note: Archer and her all-female media relations staff aren’t the only story at the Orange Bowl. In February, the Bowl elected its first female president in 67 years.” Recognizing the trailblazing efforts of women was a common theme

in the interviews, as well, and the notion of being the “only” woman in an office, or the “first” female to achieve a certain accomplishment were held in high regard.

“Safe” Activism

Despite the investment in personal ingenuity, comments from the interviewees suggested FAME should help all women in one regard: balancing work and family. Of all the topics addressed in the interviews, none was more likely to arise organically than the issue of the perceived incompatibility with life as a working SID and motherhood. This issue was made strikingly visible in the FAME newsletter and through its conference program, where numerous articles referenced the challenges of working mothers and previews for upcoming conference sessions advertised “tips” for balancing motherhood and work.

Looking for time. Throughout the interviews, many noted the challenges in balancing a social life with a career in sports information and many saw sports information as a difficult career within which to date, because of the long hours, heavy travel and numerous evening and weekend responsibilities. For example, in describing her career trajectory during the opening “ice breaker” questions, Heather expressed her desire to leave sports information because she “wants a life.” She expanded: “I’m 31 and single, you know? I’m not meeting anybody anywhere. So it’s like I eventually want to get married and have kids. So something’s not working.” This challenge translated into a pessimistic outlook for balancing a career in sports information with motherhood, and many noted that they would probably leave the profession once they had children.

Perceived lack of fit. Ultimately, narratives about the “work-family balance” reflected the sentiment that mothers cannot and should not stay in this business. Krista explained the common perception: “It is something I want, but it’s not—it hasn’t happened for me. I think

that—that’s part of it. It’s daunting. To imagine working 70, 80 hours a week and having kids to go home to.”

The challenges facing working mothers is an issue that FAME made public through its newsletter and conference programming. For example, articles in the newsletter offered tips on how to manage a marriage (“We have set up an office at home, complete with a computer and fax machine, which helps us spend more quality time with one another at home and not in the office,” said one article) to insights on how to raise children as a working mother and SID. One profile on a single, working mother provided directions on how to manage both jobs, such as bringing children to work, and relying on neighbors and coworkers for babysitting help. As the self-written profile said about the life as a working parent: “I’m a single mother of an overly active child and a woman SID. That’s more lives than some cats get. Fun for me is shopping for groceries before 11 p.m. But on the serious side, it can be done.”

Interrogating the visibility of work-family narratives. In visibly addressing the work-family balance, the newsletter achieved two related effects. First, it presented female SIDs not as threatening (and possibly lesbian!) activists, but as hard-working, if not slightly harried mothers. Secondly, in doing so, the newsletter served as a space for normalizing the standards of femininity. For instance, aside from thumbnail headshots, the most common pictures included smiling women with husbands and/or kids, framing FAME as a collection of women meeting those standards.

The visibility of motherhood and marriage was not always so overt. For example, a story titled “A FAME survey of female directors of sports information” profiled 106 women and included short bios about each woman’s career accomplishments. All followed the same

formula in that they conveyed parallel information: years of service, career path, major responsibilities and accomplishments and awards received, such as directing various events championships, winning publications awards or obtaining advanced degrees.

Some women, though, received an extra line: “She’s married to Russell Jenkins and they have a son, Alex, born in May, 2003”; “Her husband Tracy is an assistant athletic director and SID at Stevens Institute of Technology. They have a son, Robert.”; “She is married to Alex Nsiah-Kumi Jr.”; “Warren resides in Dayton, Ohio with her husband, Jeremy.” There were no similar lines for single women and certainly no mention of same-sex partners.

Adding women’s marital and mother-status not only privileged heterosexuality, but buttressed its transparent visibility, thus presenting the FAME member as “normal women.” Including *everyone’s* marital status – “Jane is single,” for instance -- would have changed the message and highlighted the overwhelming number of unmarried women, thus presenting a different and more transgressive image. Another article profiled three women who earned CoSIDA’s “25-Year Award,” given to members with a quarter century of service. Again each mini-profile focused on career accomplishments, but two included a seemingly innocuous personal line at the end: “She has a daughter, Kathleen”; “She has two daughters, Stacey and Lori, and one grandchild.”

The ease at which the interviewees spoke about the challenges of family and life as an SID is facilitated by a heterosexist culture in which such discussions are acceptable and thus allowed a certain amount of visibility. Further, they are safe issues that allow women to be vocal on something important to them in a way that does not challenge gender norms. It is

also an example of the very public nature of sexuality, a topic that is situated under the illusion of privacy, and an issue I consider next.

Depoliticizing Sexuality

Public displays of femininity to cue others about sexual identity, the common practice of posting images of traditional family in public places, and perceptions of an ulterior motive by women working in sports are three of myriad examples that show the public, salient and important ways in which sexuality figures into everyday life. Through discourses on sexuality we learn about the normal and deviant subject, and I have tried to show how those discourses provide an important framework for meaning-making about women in this industry. Sexuality is public and pervasive, yet comments from the interviews show that the women I interviewed are invested in the idea that sexuality and sexual identity are private. In this final section I address the illusion of privacy and show how such ideology supports its depoliticization.

“Sexuality is Personal”

Comments from the interviews suggested that the women bought into the idea that sexuality is a personal issue. Many saw sexuality through the lens of homosexuality and because of the whispers and perceived lack of overt discussion about lesbians in sports, thus saw sexuality in general as unspoken and private, a notion articulated by Chrissy:

I worked at a school—one of the schools I worked at had separate men’s and women’s departments, and I worked in the women’s department and I was one of the few that wasn’t [gay]. And I mean, they made me feel comfortable because they were accepting of everybody, but there was—you could always tell.

E: How could you tell?

C: It was always unspoken. You could always tell. I mean—well, if some people lived together, or you know, all that kinda thing. But no, there was like the unspoken thing. You knew it, but you just didn't talk about it!

The “unspoken thing” was translated into sexuality as personal and private and thus not acceptable for public conversation. Like many of the SIDs, Dora supported this idea and explained it as such when describing why sexuality did not need to be addressed at the national CoSIDA convention:

I think part of it is—I think some people--for some people, it's just not something that is part of their lives. It's not something that's part of the public life, which I guess would be the best way to say it. I honestly believe, and I'm probably a diminishing minority in this, but I really believe that there are certain things in people's lives that is their personal private business.

The Irrelevancy of Identity Politics at Work

The positioning of sexuality as “personal business” made sexuality thus irrelevant in the workplace, and many of the women I interviewed voiced the common sentiment that hard work was all that mattered. Indeed, there was a pervasive narrative about a dedication to work that could trump all identity politics. Therese explained how she dealt with open homophobic comments in the workplace as a gay woman:

It burned in my gut sometimes, some of the comments that I would hear that had been talked about or had been said about me or put down. Not just me, but other people, too. But you know what? We just did our job. And people knew—people respected you for doing your job.

Anna, the woman frustrated because she felt compelled to cut her hair in order to avoid being labeled lesbian, was an interesting case in this regard. She was the only openly homophobic women among this study's participants, using her evangelical roots to justify her beliefs. Anna worked for an openly gay male coach and said she preferred not to "put myself in a situation where I'm around a lot of homosexuals." A belief that sexuality did not matter at work, however, allowed her to sidestep the personal problem she held of working for a gay male coach:

Because that was one thing when I interviewed for this job was my boss had known me for awhile before I interviewed with him and he knew my background, he knew my very conservative belief system and he's like 'you gonna have a problem with that?' And I'm like, 'nah.' [laughs] I'll deal with it as it comes and everything will be fine. And to me it should never—that part of a person's life should never affect their work. It shouldn't matter, you know, skin color, sexual orientation, the belief system. You have a job to do.

Therese echoed the sentiments of irrelevancy, struggling to not only give an answer, but come to terms with the answer she gave:

E: Are these issues that would ever be discussed at CoSIDA? ON a panel, table topic? Homophobia?

T: Well, you know [big sigh]. Oh my god. Um, listen to what I'm saying—I don't, I guess I don't know if it's really relevant. Isn't that awful to say? And I hate to say that because I guarantee you that there are some guys that are in our profession of 3,000 people. I mean, there's gotta be a lot of guys that are gay and working in sports. And as women, men, bisexuals, whatever I just don't – I guess I don't think. Here's

what I think Erin. I don't think that your sexuality has as big an impact in the athletic world as an SID as it were if you were a trainer. If you were an assistant coach. If you were a student athlete. Because you are really--yes you are a member of the staff, but it's a little bit more of an auxiliary position, do you know what I'm saying? I mean I guess you could say 'oh yeah, you know, we don't want that person to travel with our team or we don't want that guy to travel with our football team if he's gay because he's gonna be hitting on the guys. I mean, I don't even think anybody in CoSIDA would even think about that to be honest with you, but what I'm trying to say is I don't know if because we are more in the service and auxiliary position if that would even be a concern. I think what's a concern is how people are treated in the workplace and it doesn't matter what the workplace is. It doesn't matter if it's an insurance agency. It doesn't matter if it's sports, but if it is sports, I will tell you, one of the last – and we've seen it. We've seen it with the coaches, we've seen it with people jumping ship, we've seen it with misbehavior. It still is a lot of the boys will be boys attitude, okay? Kind of a wink wink, you know, move away from it. That's what we're still up against.

A Depoliticizing Effect

This ideological position takes something expressly political (sexuality) and repositions it as something expressly private, making the idea of talking about sexuality in an open forum seem invasive. Not surprisingly, the politics of sexuality are largely missing from public discourse and issues of sexism, sexual harassment and homophobia are notably (but not surprisingly) absent from the newsletter. (One article, a re-print of an award acceptance speech given by a FAME member, slightly alluded to homophobia. The speech advocated for

the promotion of women's sports and referenced several "myths" about female athletes, including the notion that "Women in sport develop large muscles like body builders and look like men.")

But stories stemming from the interviews reveal the problem of situating sexuality as private and personal as it forces women to privatize issues of sexuality when they most need public support. Therese and Dora both suggested their careers had been harmed by their sexuality, and the sheer lengths many of these women went to separate themselves from a lesbian stigma indicate the social cost of being labeled lesbian. Dora reflected on the implications of being essentially "implicitly out" at her major athletics program, conceding: "I'm sure it's had some impact on maybe promotions or raises or opportunities." Therese described feeling outcast at work because of her sexuality, which she kept largely hidden from her coworkers and when I asked whether her gender was a reason for her difficult relationship with her boss she responded by saying, "Oh there's no question at all. I also think my sexuality had a lot to with it, to be very honest with you." Later Therese added:

People have said really hurtful things about me, and they have said really hurtful things about coaches at [my university]. They've said very hurtful things publicly – and this is the people I work with. The good old boys network is alive and well. Let's just put it that way.

Others noted the way they privatized various experiences with political implications. Heather, the woman whose soccer coaches joke with her about her breasts, said she did not see the value in making public her discomfort, choosing instead to just "brush it off." Lisa, who described the humiliating experience in which her school's football team created an uncomfortable experience that she later told a friend made her feel like she was "visibly

raped” said she had no choice about how to react and simply “sucked it up” in order to continue forward with her job. Ultimately, the response to discrimination was interpreted within the broader narrative of individuality, as the following excerpt from the FAME newsletter implies:

I cannot emphasize enough the importance of maintaining a sense of humor and assuming that, until they prove definitive discrimination, everyone you deal with is fair-minded. It is amazing how many difficult or uncomfortable situations can be resolved in a positive way when one is willing to cut others some slack.

The silence and depoliticization of sexuality was so salient in sports information that it even impeded the recruitment of women who identify as lesbian for this project. It became clear early on that finding a sizeable number of gay women to interview would be a difficult challenge largely because sexuality is strictly not discussed among women SIDs – lesbian or not. Simply put, even the “out” lesbians did not feel comfortable contacting other gay women for this study. Although both of the lesbians I interviewed for this project described belonging to the same close-knit group of women, neither described sexuality as something they discuss or felt comfortable acknowledging in their group. At one point I asked Dora about why a select few of her friends acknowledge her partner and ask about her in emails and other correspondence. She hesitated in answering before finally suggesting that her friends *may* also be gay, but she just did not know: “I make assumptions about why they [ask],” she said, “but I could be wrong.” Therese, who to a greater degree felt that her sexuality had impeded her progression at work, resisted the idea of making sexuality a public topic at the next FAME meeting:

I don't even know if it's really been a topic that anybody's really talked about. I'll be very honest with you. I feel like there are so many other topics to talk about as a female trying to work in this environment

Anna was the only SID to exhibit overtly homophobic views, but by separating sexuality from work, Anna was also able to "tolerate" her gay volleyball coach. Only Therese and Dora –the two out lesbians-- critiqued homophobia or the norms of a culture that support a climate in which women's sexuality would be under question. Most described a culture in which everyone knew about the lesbian stereotype and other problems of sexual harassment and sexism but avoided discussing it altogether. The silence created a "glass closet" where everyone accepted the existence of lesbian coworkers, but largely ignored the implications of that silence. Rather, sexuality was situated as an immutable and natural identity and difference became the thing to be accepted, a sentiment summed up by Lisa:

You just have to be very tolerant, especially nowadays because I think that, especially in athletics, people aren't afraid to be who they are now. ...Someone's that way, or someone's a lesbian or whatever. That's just who they are, you know, and just embrace the difference.

Conclusion

FAME is the most visible (if not the only) institutional outlet for support, networking and collaboration among women in sports information. The group was formed by female SIDs for female SIDs and thus serves as a space for potential activism among women in this industry. Given the way discursive frameworks within the culture of sports information order bodies in a way that is specifically problematic for women, FAME is one critical tool for

facilitating support among women, and perhaps fostering “material moments” (Hirschmann, 2004) through the sharing of lived experiences among female SIDs.

Yet, as a claimed organization of women’s activism, FAME operates within the boundaries of acceptable femininity, which may be a result of associations between lesbianism and feminism. In sports information, “Truths” about women in sports may lead to the distancing of individual women -- and FAME itself -- from activism that does not fit in within normative narratives of gender, with the result a lack of engagement with more transgressive issues, including sexual harassment and homophobia. In short, the technologies of sport in this industry result in the constitution of a docile political subject. That docility is facilitated through narratives that position sexuality as private, thus rendering any discussion on the topic as irrelevant and even invasive at work.

The Ideological Work of Work-Family Narratives

Work-family issues arose in every interview and were clearly a troubling topic that left the women wondering about their future in sports information. There is no question that workplace norms, which value long days at the office, unbroken career tracks and dedication to the work above other priorities, are problematic values in a culture where women are the primary caregivers (Ridgeway & Correll, 2000; Rutherford, 2001). After all, it is impossible to earn “face time” at work when one must also pick children up from school in the early afternoon. I do not raise this critique, however, to suggest that FAME – and its member SIDs – should not address this issue, work for solutions and pressure superiors to find creative ways to support working parents.

My aim, however, is to consider the issues privileged through FAME and the interviews within the context of sexual politics presented in this project. Importantly,

discussing work-family challenges in a forum such as FAME does not violate gender norms; in visibly and vocally engaging in such discussions, heteronormative standards are normalized. Further, marriage, motherhood and notions of traditional family are cemented as not only ideal goals, but “correct” goals, thus maintaining heterosexism in a way that is transparent. Ultimately, although FAME may be a space for potential activism, its primary image presented does not challenge discursive femininity – rather, FAME *is a product of it*.

Much research has explored the work-life balance among female laborers, and it is a persistent issue in public relations and sports journalism literature, specifically (see, for instance, Aldoory, Jiang, Toth, & Sha, 2008; Hardin & Whiteside, 2009a). Aldoory et al., for instance, have argued that when public relations practitioners discuss work-family issues, those issues are discursively positioned as a “woman’s issue.” They suggest that such narratives reflect existing assumptions about women’s ideal gender roles in society. This chapter offers an additional explanation as to why work-family challenges are a “woman’s issue” in that those narratives also do “ideological work” in the way of showcasing the ascribed femininity of female SIDs.

Certainly cultural norms about women’s natural place at home contribute to the naturalization of work-family issues as a “woman’s issue.” However, making visible the difficulties working mothers face privileges the epitome of femininity – motherhood – in a time period in which it is common for women to work outside the home. Family, motherhood and femininity are thus still presented as ideal standards for women. In sports information, where sexuality plays a critical part in the construction of femininity, this process may explain why such issues are so privileged. Simply, the presentation of women as concerned mothers fits in within the broader matrix of sexuality and gender in which discursive

frameworks reward women who meet traditional notions of femininity. Yet, as women strive to achieve that ultimate embodiment of femininity, they learn that such an achievement is fundamentally incompatible with life as a productive sports information professional, leaving female SIDs in a maze with no escape. Failing to meet such standards of femininity intensifies the panoptic gaze on their sexuality; doing so, however -- in the form of motherhood -- invites women to leave the profession. Thus, as discourses of sexuality invite women to embody heteronormative standards of family and marriage, they also invite women to leave the profession. Ultimately, even when they meet the epitome of femininity, they still see themselves as outsiders, unable to meet the demands of both.

The Docile Political Subject

It is interesting to note that none of the women explicitly mentioned their association with FAME as problematic in terms of their own sense of self. Most valued the usefulness of FAME in connecting women to each other and providing a space for potential support if such a need would ever arise. But comments did suggest an association between lesbianism and activism, a common stereotype (Aronson, 2003). The lack of feminist activism – and even the word “feminism” – within the FAME newsletter and re-prints of speeches often included in that publication suggest a distancing from that (deviant) association. Thus, it is no wonder FAME, and its members focus on issues that affirm heteronormative standards.

The association between feminists and lesbianism continues to be a pervasive stereotype, and, in an industry such as sports information where that stereotype is magnified, is an important factor in explaining the lack of engagement on topics that do not showcase heteronormativity. In this way, the subject created through discursive frameworks is a *docile political subject*, where the docility undermines potential challenges to narratives and Truths

that naturalize men's institutional power in this industry. If activism is associated with lesbianism, then what hope can there be for collective action on any topic beyond those akin to balancing life as a working mother?

Constructing Difference

In privileging and vocally discussing work-family issues, FAME and its associated members could meet normative heteronormativity and operate in a kind of "safe zone" of feminist politics. Thus it is no surprise that none of the interviewees saw issues of sexuality as something that should be discussed openly despite describing myriad instances in which their lives and workday experiences were mediated by sexuality, some in very salient ways.

Yet, only one – Anna – expressed homophobic views. Rather, difference was not constituted as problematic, but something that should be embraced. This discourse on the celebration of different types of friends --"I have tons of friends who are lesbian!" -- obscures the ways in which difference is constituted and the problematic assumptions associated with the construction of that difference, and the ultimate effect is the "toleration" of lesbians.

In some ways this is a step forward from outright and overt homophobia. But thinking about difference in terms of "toleration" has the potential to stall the deconstruction of hierarchical difference (Brown, 2004). In sports information, the privatization of discourse on sexuality does more than just position everyone in a glass closet where lesbians must remain secretive about their identity and heterosexuals are protected from addressing their prejudices (Griffin, 1998). In addition to the fragile relationship among everyone in the closet, difference is cast as natural, and, more importantly, protected from contestation.

Valuing Privacy

The value of privacy was a common sentiment throughout the discussions and to varying degrees the women I interviewed saw sexuality as inherently private. Those discourses of privacy, however, obscured the ways in which discourses on sexuality invite docility, thus undermining the potential for producing counter-discourses that could change the culture in a productive and ethical way. Thus, it is not simply the potential politicization of sexuality at stake, but the related change in social status for women that the illusion of privacy preserves.

Chapter 8: Conclusion

Sexuality as Discourse

Problems and (Potential) Solutions

Sexuality has not been researched from any perspective in the context of sports media producers and micro-level studies of public relations and sports journalism workroom cultures, and what I have offered here, using sports information as a specific example, provides one glimpse at the importance of considering sexuality when theorizing about women's lack of representation in management and overall collective lack of institutional power in various organizations.

Differing theoretical perspectives will result in various analyses and prescriptions for change and I have entered this project from a poststructuralist position, drawing heavily from Foucauldian analyses. In doing so, I consider sexuality not as an essential identity or “thing” inherent in each of us (“I am straight”; “She is a lesbian”) but as a set of discourses through which power is relationally expressed (Foucault, 1990). Theorizing from this perspective allows for the opportunity to expose the ideological work embedded in discourses that are particularly problematic for women in sports and, in the context of this project, sports information (Bartky, 1988).

Foucault writes that power is everywhere, yet it is nowhere, thus creating a difficult task for feminists: if we cannot locate the source of power, how might we proceed in dismantling it? In some ways this is troubling and Foucault has been critiqued with undercutting the feminist movement (Diamond and Quinby, 1993). But if we are all a part of a network of power, we also have the opportunity to engage with it, through what Foucault (2003) calls technologies of the self. Through various strategies, we can possibly create

counter-discourses that may shift or challenge accepted truth claims that may lead to better communities and societies.

A main focus of this project has been illuminating the ways in which power is expressed through sexuality discourse. As a set of discourses, sexuality organizes and normalizes bodies in sports information and as a discursive framework, is a web of power through which we are all implicated. Considering and acknowledging sexuality in research exploring women's underrepresentation in management and overall outsider status is thus a critical component of such studies. Yet, because we associate homosexuality with secrecy and repressed discourse, there is an illusion that sexuality in general is personal and private with no political implications for individuals in the public sphere, which may be one reason sexuality has been so overlooked in such research.

In this final chapter, I weave together the story of sexuality as a visible organizing principle in sports information and advocate for the inclusion of sexuality in future studies theorizing about women's marginal status in all media professions. When sexuality is taken from a poststructuralist perspective, the "attack point" is at that level of discourse, an important point given the activist goal of feminist research. I thus finish with a conversation on the roles and responsibilities of sports feminists, and how, when assessing ideas for change and liberation, we might turn renewed focus to the research process itself for answers.

Sexuality as Discourse

We often talk in ways that position sexuality as an immutable identity which naturalizes sexuality as a "thing" inherent in all of us. Foucault's (1990) work provocatively challenged that idea and suggested a renewed focus to the way discourses about sexuality

define sexual identity and thus invite subjects to meet the standards of that constructed category. Taking sexuality as a discursive framework was the objective of this project, and in doing so, I have tried to show how such discourses relate to the naturalization of women's overall outsider status in the sports media workplace.

Knowledges and truths about women in sports create a problematic web for women in this industry that traps them in a constant state of angst about their own sense of self that is particularly tied to sexuality. The end result is the same conclusion at every turn: outsider status. The deviant subject is most intensely scrutinized in a panoptic culture, and, in sports, that subject position is "woman." The idea of women's collective outsider status is certainly not a new idea in sports, nor analyses of sports media organizations. But what this project has tried to do, however, is show 1) the importance of considering sexuality when assessing women's outsider status; 2) the varying ways women experience the panoptic gaze and 3) the varying ways that experience happens within the context of a media organization, an important concept as scholars continue to advocate for women's general inclusion in management and gatekeeper positions.

Discourse and Difference

Research seeking to explain women's underrepresentation in management in general, as well as in media organizations specifically, has largely focused on difference between men and women. Women have too often been presented as a monolithic group collectively interested in breaking through the glass ceiling. Further, research has largely taken "Women" as an essentialized given, offering prescriptions for change that assume all women react to and engage with systems of power in the same way.

Differences among women must be taken into account, and this project has shown that women's experiences of the gaze depends on myriad factors. For instance, single status can be interpreted as indicative of a lesbian identity, or an unethical female SID working in sports for possible romantic relationships. Interpretations and meaning-making depends on context and there is thus no "one size fits all" assessment of women's status in this industry.

This research on women in sports information – a subset of the broader field of public relations – also shows the complexities of the notion of "Women" and most importantly illustrates how various cultural processes essentialize the categories of women and femininity – an important step in understanding their collective subordination. Providing prescriptions for change based on those essentialized identities only naturalizes the very categories that are problematic in the first place.

Aldoory (2006) has called for public relations scholars to move beyond analyses that take "women" as a monolithic group, a call this project answers. Sexuality is a visible, salient and public part of the lives of women in sports information, and as we continue to develop theories about women's underrepresentation in various media workplaces, we must continue to think about factors that constitute difference, rather than taking such difference for granted.

Further, this work raises some relevant questions for those studying women's lack of power within public relations. Women's "difference" is dependent on the cultural meanings of the specific workplace. In sports information, that workplace is organized around the celebration of masculinity. Scholars looking at the broader field of public relations may want to consider the specific cultural conditions and related knowledges, practices and discourses that, when expressed, constitute the female subject as problematic for management.

Public relations is described as “feminized” because of the large numbers of women within its ranks, a concept that some scholars have embraced as a path to better and more ethical public relations practices. Relying on “excellence theory” these scholars have noted that skills marked as feminine, such as listening, collaboration and empathy, are especially conducive to effective public relations (Grunig, Toth and Hon, 2001). My intent here is not to expand on what makes a “better” PR practitioner, but to engage with the conditions that naturalize an individual’s ability to meet normative standards within a given workplace culture. Because of the already large numbers of women within the PR profession, as well as the type of work required of PR practitioners, women’s inclusion is not questioned and they are accepted as “normal” members of that culture.

Sports information is also a public relations profession and one that requires workers to excel in the same tasks often articulated by public relations scholars. Yet women hardly feel accepted as a “natural fit,” as many of the SIDs’ comments about feeling the need to “prove” themselves indicate. In contrast to women in the wider field of PR, female SIDs are constituted as outsiders in a variety of ways and thus treading on “male terrain.” The notion of sports information as first and foremost about sports – not the feminine skills of “listening” and others -- creates a problem for women. As many of the SIDs noted, there must be *some* reason they desire a career in sports information. That question is at its core a problematic one that women in the wider (non-sports) field of public relations simply do not face and one that scholars studying excellence theory should consider when developing its future trajectory, which may be overly simplistic in its application to all public relations-related professions.

Divisions Among Women

In sports information sexuality is like a thread that at the same time connects women to each other and divides them, as well. In one sense, the discourses of sexuality normalize bodies in the specific gendered way alluded to by Bartky (1988). Fear of being implicated as lesbian invites displays of overt femininity, an effect that is unique to women, and magnified in this particular industry. That fear also has the potential to divide women as they may seek to distance themselves from an unwanted stereotype that is magnified through association with other stigmatized individuals in sports information.

This stigmatization should continue to be one “attack point” for feminists. Wright and Clarke (1999) and Griffin (1998) among others have strongly critiqued the assumption that lesbians are the problem in sports, and have advocated for recasting the problem as homophobia and heterosexism. This is an important and worthwhile endeavor and helpful in illuminating discrimination toward gays and lesbians in sports. But simply advocating for the acceptance of lesbians does not trouble the idea that sexual identities are in fact an effect of discursive power relations. Within those relations are binary dualisms that reflect “good” and “bad” and “right” and “wrong” ends of a continuum. Thus, I question the usefulness of advocating only for the “acceptance” of lesbian and heterosexuals in sports without considering the relations of power that factor into the constitution of those categories in the first place.

For instance, I have shown how through discursive frameworks of sexuality in sports information, heterosexuality is privileged as “normal,” by extension privileging women who identify as heterosexual in the social hierarchy. If we do not consider the production of

difference in this way, then how can we expect lesbians to be accepted on the same terms as heterosexual women?

It is, however, worth noting that all but one of the women in this project lived in small college towns which are often reflective of more conservative social values than are large, metropolitan cities. This may have contributed to the internalization of heterosexuality-as-normal ideology and future research should expand this project to SIDs working in large city environments where gay and lesbian culture enjoys a more visible presence.

Sexuality as Public

The illusion of privacy in regard to sexuality was a strong and pervasive sentiment among the women I interviewed, and reflective of wider cultural narratives that reinforce that perception, such as the United States' "Don't Ask Don't Tell" policies and the belief among sports journalists that asking an athlete about his sexuality is invasive. In sports information, the women's internalization of privacy discourse resulted in the idea that sexual identity is a personal and private issue and thus irrelevant for public discussion and debate.

Yet, what the preceding chapters show is its very public nature and the intricate role sexuality plays in shaping the experiences and sense of self among women in this industry. The whispers about "lesbians" and assertions that sexual identity is private contribute to the illusion of privacy. The public nature of sexuality is obscured by a heterosexist culture that normalizes displays of heterosexuality, making them seem transparent. Thus, water cooler talk about children and the display of pictures of boyfriends in the office goes unnoticed as evidence of the public nature of sexuality. If Therese, for instance, had posted pictures of her same-sex partner at work, however, such a display would surely have warranted attention.

This is not to suggest that FAME's publication of family pictures, or the showcasing of femininity through various markers such as jewelry and makeup are inherently "wrong" or "bad." Rather, I aim to interrogate such taken-for-granted types of discourse as a critical component in exposing the way power is expressed through them. In the case here, "normal" and "deviant" categories are reified through such discourse with the potential to create hierarchies and divisions among women.

Further, the illusion of silence depoliticizes sexuality, and this effect should be considered within the context of Foucault's notion of the struggle against subjectification. Thus, one "attack point" for sports feminists should be exposing the public nature of sexuality, which may lead to the deconstruction of oppressive Truths about gays and lesbians in sports.

The Ethical Responsibility of Sports Feminists

When I traveled to the regional and national CoSIDA conferences to conduct my planned interviews, I initially saw the events as simply a space where I could conduct conversations in person, and thus capture the special nuance and non-verbal cues that add important depth to a qualitative project such as this. However, during the interview process, it became clear that FAME members had come to see me as a visible authority figure and qualified to speak on issues relevant to women in this field. My former title as an SID at a major athletic institution helped in that regard as well, as it kind of "legitimized" me as someone who understood from the inside.

I attended both the regional and national FAME meetings to observe the gatherings and of course, make a pitch for potential interviews. At the regional conference, however, the

group leader asked me to present on some of my recent research, something that surprised me, given my original intent to kind of blend in, observe, and meet women to interview. I had only a few moments to gather my thoughts and then present a coherent discussion about issues relevant to women in this business. As I jotted down some notes, I felt the pressure on my shoulders. In previous years, I had been one of these women, a female SID attending a meeting where I could connect with other female SIDs. But now I was separate somehow, and because of that separation, was given the opportunity to provide information that might have the potential to spark change in an industry that I see as problematic for women. Ironically, in leaving sports information, I gained a new kind of power and authority status and, given my personal politics about women in sports that have stemmed from critical reflection in an academic setting as well as my own lived experience in various sports media professions, I was thus presented with an opportunity to spark similar critical reflection, which is no small thing.

Self Reflection

I have implicated myself in this project from the beginning, and entered it with what I called an activist research agenda. Saying so implies the intent to enact change, a potentially audacious statement that should not be flippantly tossed around without thought to the ethical implications of actually enacting change. Yet Foucault wrote that individuals could ethically exercise power over others “as a means of opposing domination” while practicing care of the self, a key part of this equation in which through transforming the self, individual subjects can transform society (McWhorter, 1999, p. 211). Thus, I have tried to use my own experiences as points of critical self reflection in the exercise of caring for my self and consideration of the possibilities of subjectivity.

Critical reflection is one component to Foucault's technologies of the self, or the strategies "which permit individual to effect by their own means, or with the help of others, a certain number of operations on their own bodies and souls" (2003, p. 146). They are the tools we have to engage with technologies of power and deploying them can possibly lead to new ways of knowing.

In my own career as an academic, these strategies have led to new experiences and ways of knowing, yet I want to be quick to acknowledge that such a process is ongoing and reflective – as it should be. At this moment at the FAME meeting, however, I had the opportunity to challenge ways of knowing through discussions of political issues related to women in this business and thus I was in a position of power. As researchers, we must acknowledge this subject position, and only an ongoing care of the self will allow us to ethically take responsibility for provoking change that is at the heart of any feminist project (Markula, 2003).

It is through discourse, knowledges and truths that power is expressed, often in ways that are transparent to us. Thus, from a Foucauldian perspective, the "attack point" for creating change is at the level of discourse where, through the relational expression of power, bodies are normalized (McWhorter, 1999). What does this mean for feminist researchers and especially sports feminists in the midst of a project such as this that has been labeled "activist?" Markula (2003) writes:

[Sports feminists] need to be in the fore front of provoking the critical inquiring reaction to women's sport through active dialogue with the sports world. As players in the sporting truth game, we need to reflect on the limits of our own identities to problematize the boundaries of discursive femininity. *Only then can we use our*

knowledge and our power positions ethically to take responsibility for encouraging athletes, coaches and others involved in sport to engage in critical self-reflection [emphasis added] (p. 105).

As an “activist researcher,” I must have a plan for how I might ethically and respectfully enact that activist research agenda. Thus, it is worthwhile to consider how, within the context of this project, I may have ethically encouraged the SIDs I interviewed to engage in critical self reflection. In reviewing my experience here, I offer an applied answer to Markula’s articulation of the responsibilities of sports feminists, and suggest qualitative research with individuals in sports media as one way in which that task may be realized.

Seeking out Possible “Material Moments”

In reviewing the interview transcripts, I was struck by comments I heard such as “maybe this is just me” or “I don’t know how other people feel, but for me...” Few of the SIDs reported seeking out other female SIDs to reflect on various lived experiences that made their gender or sexuality more salient. Lisa, the woman who recounted the humiliating story with her university’s football team, lamented the lack of support she had in negotiating through a horrifying experience. She explained:

It was hard because I didn’t have another coworker to go to that I could commiserate with and tell them that and tell them what happened and have them say this is how I would have handled it. [So] I kind of sucked it up, and I don’t know, it was a little, you know, a bit uncomfortable.

“Sucking it up” and pushing through could mean acceptance and resignation to women’s low and outsider status in sports – in short, the acceptance of a Truth about women. Further, several, in recounting their experiences or opinions, asked me outright if their

sentiments had been echoed by other women. An exchange with Chrissy regarding the knowledges about the “deviant” (lesbian) status of women, shows a possible moment of questioning the related truths about women:

C: Have other people talked about the whole...

E: Yeah, it seems to be a common thread. So, I’m—

C: --The unspoken—the unspoken thing. [laughs]

As most did, Chrissy preferred not to use the word “lesbian” or “gay” which may hint at a level of discomfort with the topic. As I have also argued, comments from the interviewees suggest that discourse on sexuality is repressed in general; that repression does not eliminate the deviant subject, but defines it. The obscure notion of “lesbian” that individuals work to distance themselves from exists within the repressed discourse. A Truth about the privacy of sexuality is taken for granted, as is the Truth about women in sports information. And, as the interviews showed, these Truths invite docility in the form of a specific feminine embodiment.

What Chrissy’s question also hints at, though, is a moment of critical reflection. She did not reject outright the Truths obscured by discourse on sexuality, but her question may reflect a desire to know more about them, and to begin a process of critical interrogation, akin to Hirschmann’s (2004) notion of the “material moment” in which individuals, based on personal experiences, “see that existing dominant discourse is not ‘true’” (p. 325). Further, Chrissy’s question is one small query, but it represented an expression of power on her part; Chrissy’s comment changed the course of the interview from uni-directional and put her in charge of its trajectory, even if for just a moment (Wahab, 2003).

Others asked questions and provided other comments, engaging in what I would argue are technologies of the self, therefore showing the potential for change within a climate that at times can seem overwhelming for women. For example, when a separate article on women in sports information was published during the course of writing this dissertation, I received an email from Lisa. She had read a press release about the article and wrote that she had printed it out and planned to talk about it at that day's staff meeting. Was she questioning the Truths about women's outsider status in sports information? I was not at the meeting and can only speculate about her coworkers' reactions, but I can't help but wonder if her reading that press release to her all-male coworkers was similar to McWhorter's (1999) day at the Virginia State Assembly in her quest to corral technologies of power in ways that would be ethical for her and her fellow citizens. As McWhorter wrote, she did not expect to receive approval; rather, in her explanation of this moment, she sought a realization that "these men don't have complete power over everything" (p. 222). McWhorter used a "deliberate deployment of technologies of power" to force a group of "anti-queer men" to acknowledge her and her fellow gay rights advocates. In a similar way, Lisa's act of bringing the press release to the meeting may have forced a similar acknowledgment. Did our specific conversation and interview spur critical reflection? I can never say for sure, but as Markula (2003) argues, and to which I agree, it is our ethical responsibility as sports feminists to help trouble problematic discourses.

It is here that I think lay the value of qualitative inquiry in media studies. In the context of sports information, I have worked on projects advocating for the inclusion of women in high-status sport assignments, where they may develop and acquire the skills needed for consideration in management and leadership positions (Whiteside & Hardin,

2010). I have also written work articulating the need for media producers to make better and more informed decisions when writing about Title IX, arguing that rhetoric regarding the law in op-ed newspaper pieces positions it as 1) representative of important liberal values like fairness and equality, but 2) ultimately illogical given accepted Truths about women's lack of interest, aptitude and fit within sporting spaces (Whiteside & Hardin, 2008). Further, I have contributed to work critiquing neoliberal discourse in the sports media workplace, and its function of obscuring the systematic ways in which women are normalized as outsiders (Hardin & Whiteside, 2009a). These pieces are knit together by the norms, practices and discourses of sports – the technologies of sports, to borrow Cole's (1993) term – that result in the Foucauldian power effect of collective sexism. Common to these studies and others, is the fundamental argument that the sports media workplace is hostile and problematic for women.

The final example provided above came from long interviews with women, a method often called a “feminist method” because it starts the production of knowledge from the position of women (Mason, 2002). By taking on such a task, ways of knowing have changed for the betterment of all society: I used an example earlier about how the sharing of experiences among housewives helped shift discourse – and ultimately knowledges -- on household labor from a labor of love to actual hard labor. In thinking about the responsibilities of sports feminists and the possibilities for change, we should continue to use the long interview as a way to provoke critical inquiry and a Hirschmann-esque (2004) “material moment” among the individuals in the very professions we are trying to critique.

Interviews as Libratory

The plan of attack in a Foucauldian framework is to deconstruct normalizing discourse. I do not mean to suggest abandoning other legislative pursuits, such as Title IX or other diversity initiatives. This may seem like a contradiction given the way such a law does not interrogate the production of difference that seems to be at the heart of the problem for women in sports. But Title IX and other laws like it may facilitate the challenge to discourse that we seek. If Title IX, for instance, allows for more women to play sports, more women may consider careers in sports where they may occupy positions of leadership. Seeing a woman as a coach or athletic director, for instance, may challenge our commonsense knowledges of gender and sports.

However, I also would argue that sports feminists must double our focus to troubling discourses that leave the effect of sexism, racism, classism, homophobia, ableism and other forms of discrimination that this all-too-simplified list omits. If the point of attack is indeed at the level of discourse, then self reflection through long and/or group interviews is one avenue through which to achieve that goal. Through those interviews we should stay open to the ways in which the interviewees may participate in their direction in an effort to facilitate a “material moment” by either ourselves as researchers, or among the research collaborators (interviewees).

This is not to suggest that such a “material moment” arising from long interviews may result in the rejection of truths in discourse in the way that we, as sports feminists, each might imagine or hope for. Laying out a path to liberation is impossible and would only create new standards and categories with related boundaries to freedoms and alternative ways of knowing. Writes McWhorter (1999, p. 181): “To know where we are going would be, at

the outset, to have already failed.” Indeed. But contesting ways of knowing through the practice of care of the self opens up unlimited possibilities – some perhaps even libratory in a way that may benefit entire communities, including organizations such as sports information.



OFFICE USE ONLY
IRB NO. _____

EXEMPTION DETERMINATION FORM

Form Instructions:

- To complete the form, press TAB or SHIFT TAB between boxes and enter an 'X' or text. For assistance, contact the Office for Research Protections.
- Submit recruitment materials, informed consent forms, and all other materials as attachments to the application. **Do NOT** include within the application.
- Handwritten applications will NOT be accepted.

Project Title: Under the glass ceiling: Relationships among women in sports information

Exemption Screening Questions:

PLEASE ANSWER ALL OF THE SCREENING QUESTIONS. If you answer 'Yes' to any of the following questions A through D below, then **STOP** and use one of the *Applications for the Use of Human Participants – Expedited & Full Reviews* for initial IRB review.

If you answer 'No' to all of the questions A through D below, continue to complete this *Exemption Determination Form*.

A. For research involving special populations, interventions or manipulations

- 1. Does your research involve prisoners? Yes No
- 2. Does your research involve using survey or interview procedures with children? Yes No
- 3. Does your research involve the observation of children in settings where the investigator(s) will participate in the activities being observed? Yes No
- 4. Does your research involve the use of deception? Yes No

B. For research using survey procedures, interview procedures, observational procedures, and questionnaires

- 1. If data are to be audio or video recorded, is there potential harm⁵ to participants if the information is revealed or disclosed? Yes No

⁵ Harm to participants means that any disclosure of the human participants' responses outside the research could reasonably place the participants at risk of criminal or civil liability or can be damaging to the participants' financial standing, employability, or reputation.

2. If participants will be identified either by name or through demographic data, is there potential for harm to participants if the information is revealed or disclosed? Yes No
3. Is the research regulated by the FDA and is NOT a food or taste study as outlined in category 6? Yes No

C. For research using existing⁶ or archived data, documents, records or specimens only

1. Will any data, documents, records or specimens be collected from participants after the submission of this form? Yes No
2. If the data, documents, records or specimens are originally labeled in such a manner that the participants can be identified, directly or indirectly through identifying links, is the investigator recording the data for the purposes of this research in such a manner that participants can be identified, directly or indirectly through identifying links (e.g., demographic information that might reasonably lead to the identification of individual participants – name, phone number, or any code number that can be used to link the investigator's data to the source record – medical record number or hospital admission number)? Yes No
3. If genetic tests are conducted on specimens, are the specimens and/or results linkable to participants or contain identifiable information (coded)? Yes No
4. Would the data, documents, records or specimens being used in this study be classified as a "restricted usage" dataset? Yes No

D. For research using protected health information

1. Will the research involve the use or disclosure of individually identifiable health information including: names, dates (other than years), telephone numbers, fax numbers, electronic email addresses, social security numbers, medical record numbers, health plan beneficiary numbers, account numbers, certificate/license numbers, device identifiers and serial numbers, web URLs, internet addresses, biometric identifiers, full face or comparable images, or any unique identifying number, characteristic or code? Yes No

Principal Investigator: Erin Whiteside	PSU User ID (e.g., abc123): eew10
University Status (Faculty, Staff, Student, etc.): grad student	Telephone Number: 814-xxx-xxxx
Email Address: eew10@psu.edu	Dept: --
College: Communications	Campus: University Park
Mailing Address: 115 Carnegie	

Faculty Advisor, if PI is a student: Marie Hardin	PSU User ID (e.g., abc123): mch208
Email Address: mch208@psu.edu	Telephone Number: 814-865-1395

⁶ Existing means the items exist before the research was proposed or was collected prior to the research for a purpose other than the proposed research.

Dept: Journalism	College: Communications
Mailing Address: 222 Carnegie	Campus: University Park

Is there anyone you wish to include on correspondence related to this study (e.g., a study coordinator, etc.)? NO	
Name:	PSU User ID (e.g., abc123):
University Status (Faculty, Staff, Student, etc.):	Telephone Number:
Email Address:	Dept:
College:	Campus:
Mailing Address:	Role in this study: Choose one of the following

1. Funding Source: Indicate the name and mailing address of internal and external sources of funding. If the study is not funded, indicate such. If applicable, a copy of your grant proposal must be included with this application.

This study is not currently funded.

2. Class Project: Is this a class project?

Yes → Provide the following information:

- Instructor's Name:

Course Title and Number:

Semester course is being offered:

x No

3. Conflict of Interest: Do you or any individual who is associated with/responsible for the design, the conduct, or the reporting of this research have an economic interest in or act as an officer or a director for any outside entity whose financial interests would reasonably appear to be affected by this research project?

Yes → Refer to Penn State Policy [RA20](#) AND [HR91](#) for additional information

x No

4. Exempt Research Categories: Read the following categories and choose one or more that apply to your research. Your research must fit in at least one category in order to be considered for an exemption determination.

Category 1: Research conducted in established or commonly accepted educational settings, involving normal educational practices, such as (i) research on regular and special education instructional strategies, or (ii) research on the effectiveness of or the comparison among instructional techniques, curricula, or classroom management methods. (This category may include children. This category may NOT include prisoners or be FDA-regulated.)

x **Category 2:** Research involving the use of educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures, or observations of public behavior unless: (i) information obtained is recorded in such a manner that human participants can be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to the participants; and (ii) any disclosure of the human participants' responses outside the research could reasonably place

the participants at risk of criminal or civil liability or be damaging to the participants' financial standing, employability, or reputation. (This category **may NOT** include prisoners or be FDA-regulated.)

◆ Research involving the use of educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement) for which participants cannot be identified, or release of the information would not be harmful to the participant. (This category **may** include children.)

◆ Research involving the use of survey procedures or interview procedures or **observation of public behavior** for which participants cannot be identified, or release of the information would not be harmful to the participant. (This category **may NOT** include children except for research involving the observation of public behavior of children, when the investigator does not participate in the activities being observed.)

◆ **PLEASE NOTE:** This category **CANNOT** include the use of diaries, journals, or asking participants to perform a task(s) [e.g., conducting searches on the Internet & then completing a questionnaire]. The entire study must fit into a category not just portions of it.

Category 3: Research involving the use of educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures, or observations of public behavior that is not exempt under #2 of this section, if: (i) the human participants are elected or appointed public officials or candidates for public office; or (ii) Federal statute(s) require(s) without exception that the confidentiality of the personally identifiable information will be maintained throughout the research and thereafter. (This category **may NOT** include prisoners or be FDA-regulated.)

Category 4: Research involving the collection or study of existing data, documents, records, pathological specimens, or diagnostic specimens, if these sources are publicly available or if the information is recorded by the investigator in such a manner that participants cannot be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to the participants. (This category **may** include children. Existing data means the items exist [are 'on the shelf'] before the research was proposed or were collected prior to the research for any purpose. This category **may NOT** include prisoners or be FDA-regulated.)

Category 5: Research and demonstration projects that are conducted by or subject to the approval of department or agency heads, and which are designed to study, evaluate, or otherwise examine: (i) public benefit or service programs; (ii) procedures for obtaining benefits or services under those programs; (iii) possible changes in or alternatives to those programs or procedures; (iv) possible changes in methods or levels of payment for benefits or services under those programs. (This category **may** include children. This category **may NOT** include prisoners or be FDA-regulated.)

Category 6: Taste and food quality evaluation and consumer acceptance studies, (i) if wholesome foods without additives are consumed or (ii) if a food is consumed that contains a food ingredient at or below the level for a use found to be safe, or agricultural chemical or environmental contaminant at or below the level found to be safe, by the Food and Drug Administration or approved by the Environmental Protection Agency or the Food Safety and Inspection Service of the U.S. Department of Agriculture. (This category **may** include children. This category **may NOT** include prisoners.)

NOTE:

- The Principal Investigator is responsible for ensuring that **all** individuals conducting procedures described in this application are trained adequately prior to involving human participants.
- All personnel listed on this application who (1) are responsible for the design/conduct of the study, (2) will have access to the human participants (i.e., will consent participants, conduct the study), or (3) will have access to identifying AND confidential information must successfully complete the **IRB's Training on the Protection of Human Participants** or provide verification of training from their home institution. PSU's training may be located at <http://www.research.psu.edu/orp/education/modules/irb/index.asp>. Approval will NOT be

granted until all individuals have successfully completed the training. **Verification of training does NOT need to be sent in if the individual completed the Penn State's training.**

• **As personnel change, you must submit a *Modification Request Form – Exemption* to add or remove personnel.**

5. Research Personnel: Provide the name of the other individual(s) assisting with this study who (1) will be responsible for the design/conduct of the study, (2) have access to the human participants (i.e., will consent participants, conduct the study), or (3) have access to identifying AND confidential information. If the individual does not have a PSU Access User ID, please provide some other form of contact information. If additional space is needed, attach a separate sheet containing the same information.

Name	Email Address	PSU User ID (e.g., abc 123)	Mailing Address	Role in this Study
------	---------------	-----------------------------------	-----------------	--------------------

None

Choose one of the following
Choose one of the following
Choose one of the following
Choose one of the following
Choose one of the following
Choose one of the following
Choose one of the following

6. Participants: Estimated numbers of participants/samples/charts to be involved (Enter one number – not a range): 10

7. Participants: Will there be an equal representation of:

Gender Identity Yes No If No, please explain.

Only women will be interviewed as I am only interested in women's experiences in the workplace for this particular study

Racial/ethnic groups Yes No If No, please explain.

Sexual Orientation Yes No If No, please explain.

8. Participants: Age range – Choose all that apply:

Less than 1 year 7 – 12 years 18 – 25 years 40 – 65 years
 1 – 6 years 13 – 17 years 26 – 40 years 65+ years

9. Recruitment: Describe from where and how the participants will be identified or recruited, who will make the initial contact with the participants, and how you plan to distribute or display any recruitment materials for this research (e.g., bulletin board, emails, newspaper advertisement).

Participants will be recruited via an email sent out to the FAME listserv by the director of the listserv, who has granted verbal permission to the PI. (Email script attached).

Participants will also be recruited at the Female Athletic Media Relations Executives' annual meeting; fliers will also be distributed at that meeting (flier and verbal script attached). Permission to speak at the FAME meeting and hand out fliers has been verbally granted by leaders of FAME.

10. Recruitment: Indicate how participants will be recruited to participate in this study & **attach** copies of the materials. Choose all that apply:

- Advertisement In-person Script (Verbal) Flyer Email
 Telephone Script Information Sheet Letter Other → Explain:

11. Consent: Describe the methods you plan to use in order to obtain informed permission to participate in this research. **Attach** a copy of the written description or script for oral presentation. If you cannot obtain informed permission for this study, explain why it cannot be obtained (e.g., the data are de-identified).

Participants will be provided the informed consent form prior to the interviews. The PI will be present to answer any questions.

12. Compensation: If individuals will be offered compensation, indicate the type and amount of compensation that will be offered.

- Money → Amount: \$20
 Gift Certificate → Amount:
 Extra/Class Credit → Amount:
 Drawing → Explain:
 Other → Explain:
 Compensation will **NOT** be offered → Skip to Question 14

13. Compensation: If extra/class credit is being offered, describe the alternative available for earning the extra/class credit. The alternative must be equal in time and effort to participating in the research.

14. Recordings: If recording will be done for this research, indicate the type of recording that will be made.

- Audio Video Photographs Recordings will **NOT** be made → Skip to #16

15. Recordings: Describe (a) where the recordings will be stored; (b) who will have access to the recordings; (c) how the recordings will be transcribed and coded, if applicable; (d) who will transcribe the recordings; (e) how and by what year will the recordings be destroyed. If you wish to retain the recordings indefinitely, provide a sound justification for doing so.

a) Recordings will be stored in the private home office of the PI, Erin Whiteside. They will be in the form of audiotapes and digital files.

b) Only Erin Whiteside will have access to the recordings

c) The recordings will be transcribed by listening to the tapes/digital files and typing the recordings into a word processing document.

d) The recordings will be transcribed by Erin Whiteside

e) The digital recording files will be destroyed by August, 2012 by deleting the files from Erin Whiteside's computer. The audiotapes will be destroyed and discarded by the same date.

16. Abstract: The abstract below will assist the ORP in reviewing your research. The abstract must address the important elements of the exemption category you indicated your research meets in Question 4 above. The information in the abstract must include a specific description of the procedure(s) involving human participants to demonstrate the study meets all the requirements for the chosen category (ies). Depending on the category(ies) chosen in Question 4 above, the abstract should address the following:

Category 1: Specify whether 1.i. or 1.ii. applies and briefly explain.

Category 2: Assure condition 2.i. and/or 2.ii. applies and briefly explain. Attach copies of tests, surveys, interview questions, focus group topics or applicable instruments.

Category 3: Explain why identifiers or links must be collected. Explain if participants hold a public office (3.i.) or assure federal statutes for maintaining confidentiality apply (3.ii.). Attach copies of tests, surveys, interview questions, focus group topics applicable instruments.

Category 4: Provide the following information for the data/specimens that will be used in this study:

- a brief explanation about the original study and the origin of the data/specimens – include web address (URL) if known & applicable
- a list of all data points that will be used in this study (or attach the data collection sheet) and what the data/specimens will be used for
- a statement regarding how the data/specimens to be reviewed exist as of the date of the submission of this application (i.e., the data/specimens are 'on the shelf' and no new data/specimens will be added to this study
- if the data/specimens are NOT publicly available, a description of how access to the data/specimens will be gained.
- Submit written documentation of permission/approval from the person authorized to grant access to the data. The documentation must include the following information: (1) a statement indicating identifiers linked to the data/specimens will not be provided OR (2) if identifiers are linked to the data, a statement indicating access to identifiable data/specimens has been granted, why this is necessary, and that the data/specimens will be recorded in such a manner that participants cannot be identified directly or indirectly through coded identifiers linked to the participants

Category 5: This exemption is extended only to research and demonstration projects conducted by or subject to the approval of Federal Department or Agency Heads and are designed to study, evaluate, or otherwise examine Federal public benefit or service programs. Explain how this study meets these criteria. Identify and describe which of the categories (5.i. – 5.iv.) apply.

Category 6: For taste and food quality evaluations, assure the safety of the foods by addressing how conditions 6.i. or 6.ii. are met.

Use the following sections to complete your abstract:

a. Background/Rationale: Briefly provide the background information and rationale for performing the study and any potential benefits.

This study draws from scholarship on gender and sexual identity and will build on previous literature related to women's experiences in the workplace.

b. Key Objectives: Summarize the study's objectives, aims or goals.

The study seeks to better understand the experiences of women in the workplace.

c. Study Population, Samples and/or Charts: Describe the characteristics of the participant population, such as anticipated number to be involved, age range, gender, ethnic background and health status.

This research will focus specifically on women in sports information and thus will include only women in that profession. I am interested in sexual identity in the workplace, and will be seeking women who identify as both homosexual and heterosexual. The anticipated number of women to be interviewed is 10. The expected age range of the sample is 18 and older. The ethnic and racial background of the participants is expected to be

reflective of the industry overall, which is mostly white (Caucasian) although I will make every effort to find racial minorities to include in the study.

d. Major Eligibility Criteria: Identify the criteria for inclusion and exclusion.

The criteria for inclusion is women who work in sports information and are age 18 and over.

e. Research Procedures involving participants: Summarize the study's procedures by providing a step-by-step process of what participants will be asked to do, emphasizing the procedures that may cause risk. **Include enough details to demonstrate that the research meets the requirement(s) for the exemption category (ies) chosen in Question 4 above.**

Participants will be recruited via an e-mail sent written by the principle investigator, Erin Whiteside and at the annual meeting of a group called Female Athletic Media relations Executives. Participants will be given the informed consent form to sign. If they chose to participate, participants will be asked to answer a series of questions in a one-on-one format (interview questions are attached). The interviews will last approximately 60-90 minutes. The interviews will be recorded using a tape recorder and a digital audio recording device. The recordings will only be accessible by the PI, Erin Whiteside. The interviews will take place in a private room at the CoSIDA conference. Additional interviews may take place over the phone. Participants may be asked to conduct a follow-up interview to clarify statements given in the initial interview. During the initial interview, participants will be asked for contact information that the PI will use to contact participants for a follow-up interview. In the follow-up interview, participants will be asked questions based on their original interview with the goal of clarifying or expanding on original statements. Follow-up interviews will be tape-recorded and the recordings will only be accessible by the PI, Erin Whiteside.

f. Risks and Discomforts: If applicable, describe any reasonably foreseeable risks and discomforts – physical, psychological, social, legal or other.

Participants will be able to stop at any time if they feel uncomfortable, although I do not expect the questions to cause any risk or discomfort. Questions may prompt participants to think and reflect on the issues we discuss after the interviews end.

g. Confidentiality & Privacy: Explain how the confidentiality of the data and the privacy of the participants will be maintained.

The taped audio recordings will be kept in the office of Erin Whiteside, the principle investigator. The digital audio files will be kept on the computer of Erin Whiteside. Only Erin Whiteside will have access to the recordings. Pseudonyms will be used to protect the identity of individuals consenting to be interviewed. Only Erin Whiteside will have access to the list of pseudonyms.

h. Investigator Qualifications & Specific Role in the Research: Describe the role of each individual (including the advisor, if applicable) listed on this form. Clearly state (1) the procedures or techniques he/she will be performing and (2) his/her level of experience in performing the procedures/techniques.

The principle investigator is involved in all aspects of the study. I will meet all participants and will conduct interviews by asking questions and responding to participant comments. I am experienced in interview research and have assisted on several prior projects involving interviews. The faculty advisor, Marie Hardin, is highly experienced in interviewing research and can provide guidance when appropriate.

i. References: If applicable, provide any relevant literature references/citations.

17. Assurances

I agree to report to the Office for Research Protections (ORP), in a timely manner, information regarding (a) any injury to a human participant, (b) any unanticipated problems involving risks to participants or others, or (c) any new information involving risks to participants. All individuals listed on this form have completed the training requirements. I have adequately explained in this form the role of each individual and their experience in performing that role.

I understand that any changes that occur after the initial exempt determination is made, **must be submitted to and reviewed by the ORP before implementation**, except where necessary to eliminate apparent immediate hazards to participants. In the latter instance, the ORP must be notified by the next workday.

I affirm that as the principal investigator on this study, I will adhere to the policies and procedures described in Penn State's Federalwide Assurance with the Office for Human Research Protections as well as Federal regulations for the protection of human participants involved in research (45CFR46; 21CFR parts 50 & 56). Copies of these documents are available in the ORP upon request or on their website – <http://www.research.psu.edu/orp/>.

Signature of Principal Investigator, REQUIRED Date

I hereby confirm that I have read this application and my signature denotes the completeness and accuracy of the information provided.	
_____ PRINT Name of Faculty Advisor, REQUIRED IF PI IS A STUDENT	
_____ SIGNATURE of Faculty Advisor, REQUIRED IF PI IS A STUDENT	Date

I hereby confirm that I have read this application and my signature denotes departmental/unit approval of this project. To the best of my knowledge, the information in the attached application relating to members of my department is correct.	
The investigator(s) who are members of my department are qualified to perform the roles proposed for them in this application. Any novice researchers from my department will be supervised by qualified investigators.	
_____ PRINT Name of PI's Department/Unit Head, REQUIRED	
_____ SIGNATURE of PI's Department/Unit Head, REQUIRED	Date

Informed Consent Form for Social Science Research

The Pennsylvania State University

Title of Project: Under the glass ceiling:
Relationships among women in sports information

Principal Investigator: *Erin Whiteside, 115 Carnegie, University Park, PA, 16802
814-XXX-XXXX, eew10@psu.edu*

Faculty Advisor: *Marie Hardin, 222 Carnegie, University Park, PA, 16802
814-865-1395, mch208@psu.edu*

1. **Purpose of the Study:** The purpose of this research is to explore the work experiences of women in sports information.
2. **Procedures to be followed:** Participation in this research will include participation in an individual interview. You may be asked at a later date to conduct a second interview. Your comments will be audio-recorded in all interviews.
3. **Duration/Time:** Interviews will last approximately 60-90 minutes.
4. **Statement of Confidentiality:** Your participation in this research is confidential. The audio recordings will be stored and secured at the home office of Erin Whiteside in a locked and password-protected file. Only the principal investigator (Erin Whiteside) will have access to the audio-recordings and they will be destroyed by August, 2012. In the event of a publication or presentation resulting from the research, no personally identifiable information will be shared. Any names connected to comments will be changed to pseudonyms.
5. **Right to Ask Questions:** Please contact Erin Whiteside at 814-XXX-XXXX with questions.
6. **Payment for participation:** FAME will be paid \$20 for your participation.
7. **Voluntary Participation:** Your decision to be in this research is voluntary. You can stop at any time. You do not have to answer any questions you do not want to answer. Refusal to take part in or withdrawing from this study will involve no penalty or loss of benefits you would receive otherwise.

You must be 18 years of age or older to consent to take part in this research study. If you agree to take part in this research study and the information outlined above, please sign your name and indicate the date below. You will be given a copy of this form for your records.

Participant Signature

Date

Person Obtaining Consent

Date

Appendix B: Email Script

My name is Erin Whiteside and I am a graduate student at Penn State and the former WBB SID there. I am currently working on my dissertation, which explores the experiences of women in sports information, and I am very interested in hearing the individual stories of female SIDs for this research project.

In order to write about my topic, I am hoping to conduct one-on-one interviews with women in the profession. The interviews should take about an hour and are confidential. As a token of appreciation for your time and thoughts, I will be offering FAME \$20 for each interview I conduct.

I am looking for a wide range of SIDs experience-wise, and if you are interested in participating, you can email me at ew10@psu.edu to set up a time for an interview. I will be at CoSIDA in San Antonio to conduct those interviews, but if you are not going to be there, we can also set up something for over the phone.

Best of luck in finishing out any remaining spring sport responsibilities and in your preparations for the conference.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Erin Whiteside
Doctoral student, Penn State University
College of Communications
814-XXX-XXXX
ew10@psu.edu

Appendix C: Recruitment Flier

Recruitment Flier

This flier will be distributed at the Female Athletic Media relations Executives' annual meeting.

Research Opportunity

Hello!

My name is Erin Whiteside and I am a graduate student at Penn State. I am currently working on my dissertation, which explores the experiences of women in sports information, and am very interested in hearing the stories of female SIDs. As a former member of the profession, I hope this research will help us better understand women's experiences in this profession.

I am here at the CoSIDA conference and will be conducting one-on-one interviews. As a token of appreciation for your time and thoughts, I will be offering FAME \$20 for each interview I conduct. If you are interested in participating, please call my cell phone at 814-XXX-XXXX to schedule an interview.

Enjoy the conference!

Erin Whiteside
Doctoral student, Penn State University
College of Communications
814-XXX-XXXX
ew10@psu.edu

References

- Acker, J. (1990). Hierarchies, jobs, bodies: A theory of gendered organizations. *Gender & Society*, 4(2), 139-158.
- Aldoory, L. (2007). Reconceiving gender for an “excellent” future in public relations scholarship. In E. L. Toth (Ed.), *The future of excellence in public relations and communications management: Challenges for next generation* (pp. 399-409). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Aldoory, L. (2006). A (Re)conceived feminist paradigm for public relations: A case for substantial improvement. *The Journal of Communication*, 55, 668-684.
- Aldoory, L., Jiang, H., Toth, E., & Sha, B. (2008). Is it still just a women’s issue? A study of work-life balance among women in public relations. *Public Relations Journal*, 2(4). Retrieved July 5, 2009 from <http://www.prsa.org/prjournal/fall08.html>.
- Aldoory, L. & Toth, E. (2002). Gender discrepancies in a gendered profession: A developing theory for public relations. *Journal of Public Relations Research*, 14(2), 103-126.
- Anderson, E. (2002). Openly gay athletes: Contesting hegemonic masculinity in a homophobic environment. *Gender and Society*, 6(6), 860-877.
- Aronson, P. (2003). Feminists or “postfeminists”? Young women’s attitudes toward feminism and gender relations. *Gender & Society*, 17(6), 903-922.
- Baptiste, I. (2001). Qualitative data analysis: Common phases, strategic differences. *Qualitative Social Research*, 2(3). Retrieved 4 July, 2007 from <http://qualitative-research.net/fqs/fqs-eng.htm>

- Bartky, S. L. (1988). Foucault, femininity, and the modernization of patriarchal power. In I. Diamond and L. Quinby (Eds.), *Feminism and Foucault: Reflections on resistance* (pp. 61-86). Boston: Northeastern University Press.
- Becker, G. (1993). Introduction and division of labor in households and families. In G. Becker, *A treatise on the family*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Bianchi, M. (2009, Sept. 4). Good to see ESPN's Erin Andrews make her return to the sidelines. *The Orlando Sentinel*. Retrieved March 22, 2010 from America's Newsbank database.
- Birrell, S. (2000). Feminist theories for sport. In J. Coakley (Ed.), *Handbook of sports studies* (pp. 61-76). Thousand Oaks: Sage.
- Blau, F. D., & Kahn, L. M. (2006). The gender pay gap: Going, going...but not gone. In F. D. Blau, M. C. Brinton, & D. B. Grusky (Eds.), *The declining significance of gender?* (pp. 37-66). New York: Sage.
- Blinde, E. M., & Taub, D. E. (1992). Women athletes as falsely accused deviants: Managing the lesbian stigma. *The Sociological Quarterly*, 33, 521-533.
- Bordo, S. (1993). Feminism, Foucault and the politics of the body. In C. Ramazanoglu (Ed.) *Up against Foucault: Explorations of some tensions between Foucault and feminism* (pp. 179-202). London: Routledge.
- Braun, V. & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3, 77-101.
- Bredemeier, B., Carlton, E., Hills, L., & Oglesby, C. (1999). Changers and the changed: Moral aspects of coming out in physical education. *Quest: The Journal of the National Association for Physical Education in Higher Education*, 51, 418-431.

- Brines, J. (1994). Economic dependency, gender, and the division of labor at home. *The American Journal of Sociology*, 100(3), 652-688.
- Brown, W. (2006). *Regulating aversion: Tolerance in the age of identity and empire*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press.
- Butterworth, M. L. (2008), "Katie was not only a girl, she was terrible": Katie Hnida, body rhetoric, and football at the University of Colorado. *Communication Studies*, 59(3), 259-273.
- Cahn, S. (1994). *Coming on strong: Gender and sexuality in 20th Century women's sport*. New York: The Free Press.
- Carpenter, L. J. & Acosta, R.V. (2010). *Women in intercollegiate sport: a longitudinal study — thirty three-year update*. New York: Smith College Project on Women and Social Change and Brooklyn College of the City University of New York. Accessed March 1, 2010 from <http://webpages.charter.net/womeninsport/>
- Caudwell, J. (2007). Queering the field? The complexities of sexuality within a lesbian-identified football team in England. *Gender, Place and Culture*, 14(2), 183-196.
- Caven, V. (2006). Choice, diversity and 'false consciousness' in women's careers. *International Journal of Training and Development*, 10(1), 41-54.
- Charmaz, K. (2006). *Constructing grounded theory: A practical guide through qualitative analysis*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Claringbould, I., Knoppers, A., & Elling, A. (2004). Exclusionary practices in sport journalism. *Sex Roles*, 52(11/12), 709-718.

- Clarke, G. (2002). Outlaws in sport and education? Exploring the sporting and education experiences of lesbian physical education teachers. In S. Scraton and A. Flintoff (Eds.), *Gender and sport: A reader* (pp. 209-221). London: Routledge.
- Clarke, G. (1998). Queering the pitch and coming out to play: Lesbians in physical education and sport. *Sport, Education and Society*, 3(2), 145-160.
- Code, L. (1993). "Taking subjectivity into account," in L. Alcoff and E. Potter (Eds.), *Feminist epistemologies* (pp. 15-48). London: Routledge.
- Cole (1993). Resisting the canon: Feminist cultural studies, sport, and technologies of the body. *Journal of Sport & Social Issues*, 17, 77-97.
- Collins, P. H. (2004). Learning from the outsider within: The sociological significance of black feminist thought. In S. Harding (Ed.), *The feminist standpoint theory reader* (pp. 103-126). London: Routledge.
- Connors, K. (2007). Sports information functions at the University of Massachusetts. In B. J. Mullin, S. Hardy & W. A. Sutton (Eds.), *Sport marketing* (3rd ed.). Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics.
- Correll, S. J. (2001). Gender and the career choice process: The role of biased self-assessments. *The American Journal of Sociology*, 106, 1691-1730.
- Correll, S. J., Benard, S., & Paik, I. (2007). Getting a job: Is there a motherhood penalty? *The American Journal of Sociology*, 5, 1297-1338.
- Cramer, J. A. (1994). Conversations with women sports journalists. In P. Creedon (Ed.), *Women, media and sport* (pp. 159-180). Thousand Oaks: Sage.
- Creedon, P. (1994). Women, media and sport: Creating and reflecting gender values. In P. Creedon (Ed.), *Women, media and sport* (pp. 3-27). Thousand Oaks: Sage.

- Creedon, P. J. (1991). Public relations and “women’s work”: Toward a feminist analysis of public relations roles. *Public Relations Research Annual*, 3, 67-84.
- Creedon, P. J., & Smith, R. S. (2007). Women journalists in toyland and in the locker room. In P. J. Creedon & J. Cramer (Eds.), *Women in mass communication* (pp. 147-158). Thousand Oaks: Sage.
- Curtin, P. A., & Gaither, T. K. (2005). Privileging identity, difference, and power: The circuit of culture as a basis for public relations theory. *Journal of Public Relations Research*, 17(2), 91-115.
- Denham, B., & Duke, A. (2010). Hegemonic masculinity and the rogue warrior: Lance Armstrong as symbolic American. In H. Hundley, & A. Billings (Eds.), *Examining identity in sports media* (pp. 109-132). Thousand Oaks: Sage.
- Diamond, I., & Quinby, L. (1988). *Introduction*. In I. Diamond and L. Quinby (Eds.), *Feminism and Foucault: Reflections on resistance* (pp. ix-xx). Northeastern University Press: Boston.
- Dickson-Swift, V., James, E. L., Kippen, S., & Liamputtong, P. (2007). Doing sensitive research: What challenges do qualitative researchers face? *Qualitative Research*, 7, 327-353.
- Dozier, D. Sha, B. L., Okura, M. (2007). How much does my baby cost? An analysis of gender, differences in income, career interruption and child bearing. *Public Relations Journal*, 1(1), 1-16.
- Duncan, M. C. (2006). Gender warriors in sport: Women and the media. In A. A. Raney & J. Bryant (Eds.), *Handbook of sports and media* (pp. 231-252). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

- Duncan, M.C. (1994). The politics of women's body images and practices: Foucault, the panopticon, and *Shape* magazine. *Journal of Sport & Social Issues*, 18, 48-65.
- Duncan, M.C. (1990). Sports photographs and sexual difference: Images of women and men in the 1984 and 1988 Olympic Games. *Sociology of Sport Journal*, 7, 22-43.
- Dworkin, S. L. & Messner, M. (2002). Just do...what? Sport, bodies, gender. In S. Scraton and A. Flintoff (Eds.), *Gender and sport: A reader* (pp. 17-29). London: Routledge.
- Eaton-Robb, P. (2009, July 22). ESPN reporter secretly videotaped nude in hotel. *Charleston (W.V.) Gazette*, p. 4B.
- England, P. (2006). "Toward gender equality: Progress and bottlenecks," in F. D. Blau, M. C. Brinton, & D. B. Grusky (Eds.), *The declining significance of gender?* (pp. 245-264). New York: Sage.
- Etling, L. (2002). An uphill climb. *APSE Newsletter*, June, 5-7. Retrieved September 21, 2005 from <http://apse.dallasnews.com/pdf/jun2002.pdf>.
- Everbach, T. (2008). Still in the minor leagues: A comparison of women's sports coverage in female- and male-edited newspaper sports sections. *Southwest Mass Communications Journal*, 23(2), 55-68.
- Fallon, M. A., & Jome, L. M. (2007). An exploration of gender-role expectation and conflict among women rugby players. *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, 31, 311-327.
- Fink, J. S., & Kensicki, L. J. (2002). An imperceptible difference: Visual and textual constructions of femininity in *Sports Illustrated* and *Sports Illustrated for Women*. *Mass Communication & Society*, 5, 317-339.

- Foucault, M. (2003). *The essential Foucault: Selections from essential works of Foucault, 1954-1984* (revised edn.). P. Rabinow and N. Rose (Eds.). New York: The New Press.
- Foucault, M. (1995). *Discipline & punish* (A. Sheridan, Trans.). (2nd Vintage Books edn.). New York: Random House. (1975).
- Foucault, M. (1990). *The history of sexuality: An introduction* (R. Hurley, Trans.). New York: Vintage Books. (1976)
- Frohlich, R. (2004). Feminine and feminist values in communication professions: Exceptional skills and expertise or “friendliness trap”? In M. de Bruin & K. Ross (Eds.), *Gender and newsroom cultures: Identities at work* (pp. 67-80). Cresskill, N.J.: Hampton Press.
- Frome, P. M., Alfeld, C. J., Eccles, J. S., & Barber, B. L. (2006). Why don't they want a male-dominated job? An investigation of young women who changed their occupational aspirations. *Educational Research and Evaluation*, 12(4), 359-372.
- Gerber, E. (1975). The controlled development of collegiate sport for women, 1923-1936. *Journal of Sport History*, 2(1), 1-28.
- Gherardi, S. (1994). The gender we think and the gender we do in our everyday organizational lives. *Human Relations*, 47(6), 591-609.
- Gill, D. L., Morrow, R. G., Collins, K. E., Lucey, A., & Schultz, A. (2006). Attitudes and sexual prejudice in sport and physical activity. *Journal of Sport Management*, 20(4), 554-564.
- Goffman, E. (1963). *Stigma: Notes on the management of spoiled identity*. New York: Simon & Schuster.

- Goldin, C. (2006). "The rising (and then declining) significance of gender," in F. D. Blau, M. C. Brinton, & and D. B. Grusky (Eds.), *The declining significance of gender?* (pp. 67-101). New York: Sage.
- Gower, K. K. (2006). Public relations research at the crossroads. *Journal of Public Relations Research*, 18(2), 177-190.
- Griffin, P. (1998). *Strong women, deep closets: Lesbians and homophobia in sport*. Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics.
- Griffin, P. (1992). Changing the game: Homophobia, sexism, and lesbians in sport. *Quest*, 44, 251-265.
- Grunig, J. (1992). *Excellence in public relations and communication management*. Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates
- Grunig, L., Toth, E. L. & Hon, L. C. (2001). *Women in public relations: How gender influences practice*. New York: The Guilford Press.
- Guttmann, A. (1991). *Woman's sports: A history*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Hakim, C. (2002). Lifestyle preferences as determinants of women's differentiated labor market careers. *Work and Occupations*, 29(4), 428-459.
- Halbert, C. (1997). Tough enough and woman enough: Stereotypes, discrimination, and impression management among women professional boxers. *Journal of Sport and Social Issues*, 21(1), 7-36.
- Hall, M. A. (2002). The discourse of gender and sport: From femininity to feminism. In S. Scraton and A. Flintoff (Eds.), *Gender and sport: A reader* (pp. 6-16). London: Routledge.

- Hardin, M. (2005). Stopped at the gate: Women's sports, "reader interest," and decision making by editors. *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly*, 82(1), 62-77.
- Hardin, M., Lynn, S., Walsdorf, K., & Hardin, B. (2002). The framing of sexual difference in *SI for Kids* editorial photos. *Mass Communication & Society*, 5(3), 341-359.
- Hardin, M., & Shain, S. (2006). Feeling much smaller than you know you are: The fragmented professional identity of female sports journalists. *Critical Studies in Media Communication*, 23, 322-338.
- Hardin, M. & Shain, S. (2005). Strength in numbers? The experiences and attitudes of women in sports media careers. *Journalism and Mass Communication Quarterly* 82, 804-819.
- Hardin, M., Shain, S. & Poniatowski, K. (2008). There's no sex attached to your occupation: The revolving door for young women in sports journalism. *Women in Sports & Physical Activity Journal*, 17, 68-79.
- Hardin, M., & Whiteside, E. (2010). The Rene Portland case: New homophobia and heterosexism in women's sports coverage. In H. Hundley, & A. Billings (Eds.), *Examining identity in sports media* (pp. 17-36). Thousand Oaks: Sage.
- Hardin, M., & Whiteside, E. (2009a). Token responses to gendered newsrooms: Factors in the career-related decisions of female newspaper sports journalists. *Journalism*. 10(5), 627-646
- Hardin, M., & Whiteside, E. (2009b). Consequences of being the "team mom": Women in sports information and the friendliness trap. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the International Communication Association, Chicago.

- Hardin, M. & Whiteside, E (2006). Fewer women, minorities work in sports departments. *Newspaper Research Journal*, 27(2), 38-51.
- Hardin, R., & McClung, S. (2002). Collegiate sports information: A profile of the profession. *Public Relations Quarterly*, 47(2), 35-39.
- Harding, S. (2004). *The feminist standpoint theory reader*. London: Routledge.
- Harding, S. (1987). "Conclusion: Epistemological questions," in S. Harding (Ed.), *Feminism and methodology* (pp. 181-190). Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press.
- Harding, S., & Norberg, K. (2005). New feminist approaches and social science methodologies: An introduction. *Signs*, 30(4), 2009-2015.
- Hargreaves, J. (1994). *Sporting females: Critical issues in the history and sociology of women's sports*. New York: Routledge.
- Hartsock, N. (1987). The feminist standpoint: Developing the ground for a specifically feminist historical materialism. In S. Harding (Ed.), *Feminism and methodology* (pp. 157-180). Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press.
- Hirschmann, N. (2004). Feminist standpoint as postmodern strategy. In S. Harding (Ed.), *The feminist standpoint theory reader* (pp. 317-332). London: Routledge.
- Hon, L. C. (1995). Toward a feminist theory of public relations. *Journal of Public Relations Research*, 7(1), 27-88.
- Howell, R. (1982). Recreational activities of women in the Colonial period. In R. Howell (Ed.), *Her story in sport: A historical anthology of women in sports* (pp. 35-43). West Point, N.Y.: Leisure Press.
- Jaggar, A. (2004). Feminist politics and epistemology: The standpoint of women. In S. Harding (Ed.), *The feminist standpoint theory reader* (pp. 55-66). London: Routledge.

- Johns, D. P., & Johns, J. S. (2000). Surveillance, subjectivism and technologies of power: An analysis of the discursive practices of high-performing sport. *International Review for the Sociology of Sport*, 35(2), 219-234.
- Kanter, R. (1993) *Men and women of the corporation*. (Revised ed.). New York: Basic Books.
- Kauer, K. J., & Krane, V. (2006). "Scary dykes" and "feminine queens": Stereotypes and female collegiate athletes. *Women in Sport & Physical Activity Journal*, 15(1), 42-55.
- Kelly, L., Burton, S., & Regan, L. (1994). Researching women's lives or studying women's oppression? Reflections on what constitutes feminist research," in M. Maynard and J. Purvis (Eds.), *Researching women's lives from a feminist perspective* (pp. 10-28). London: Taylor & Francis.
- Kian, E., & Hardin, M. (2009). Framing of sport coverage based on the sex of sports writers: Female journalists counter the traditional gendering of media coverage. *International Journal of Sport Communication*, 2, 185-204.
- Kian, E. T. M., Vincent, J., & Mondello, M. (2008). Masculine hegemonic hoops: An analysis of media coverage of March Madness. *Sociology of Sport Journal*, 25, 223-242.
- Kolnes, L. (1995). Heterosexuality as an organizing principle in women's sport. *International Review for the Sociology of Sport*, 30 (1), 61-77.
- Krane, V. (2001). We can be athletic and feminine, but do we want to? Challenging hegemonic femininity in women's sport. *Quest*, 53, 115-133.
- Krane, V. (1997). Homonegativism experienced by lesbian college athletes. *Women in Sport and Physical Activity Journal*, 6(2), 141-163.

- Krane, V. (1996) Lesbians in sport: Toward acknowledgement, understanding, and theory. *Journal of sport and exercise psychology*, 18(3), 237-246.
- Krane, V. & Barber, H. (2003). Lesbian experiences in sport: A social identity perspective. *Quest*, 55, 328-346.
- Lapchick, R., E. Little, R. Mathew and J. Zahn (2008). The 2008 racial and gender report card of the Associated Press Sports Editors. The Institute for Diversity and Ethics in Sport (TIDES), University of Central Florida.
- Lenskyj, H. (2003). *Out on the field: Gender, sport and sexualities*. Toronto: The Women's Press.
- Lenskyj, H. (1986). *Out of bounds: Women, sport and sexuality*. Toronto: The Women's Press.
- Lincoln, Y. S., & Guba, E. G. (1985). But is it rigorous? Trustworthiness and authenticity in naturalistic evaluation. In D. D. Williams (Ed.), *Naturalistic evaluation: New directions for program evaluation* (pp. 73-84). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Lindlof, T. R., & Taylor, B. C. (2002). *Qualitative communication research methods* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks: Sage
- Mason, J. (2002). *Qualitative researching*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.
- Markula, P. (2005). Introduction. In P. Markula (Ed.), *Feminist sports studies: Sharing experiences of joy and pain*. Albany, N.Y.: SUNY Press.
- Markula, P. (2003). The technologies of the self: Sport, feminism, and Foucault. *Sociology of Sport Journal*, 20, 87-107.

- Maynard, M., & Purvis, J. (1994). Doing feminist research. In M. Maynard and J. Purvis (Eds.), *Researching women's lives from a feminist perspective* (pp. 1-9). London: Taylor & Francis.
- McCleneghan, J. S. (1995). The sports information director: No attention, no respect, and a PR practitioner in trouble. *Public Relations Quarterly*, 40(2), 28-32.
- McCracken, G. (1988). *The long interview*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.
- McWhorter, L. (1999). *Bodies and pleasures: Foucault and the politics of sexual normalization*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press.
- Messner, M. A. (2002). *Taking the field: Women, men, and sports*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Miller, P., & Miller, R. (1995). The invisible woman: Female sports journalists in the workplace. *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly*, 72(4), 883-889.
- Miloch, K., Pedersen, P. M., Smucker, M. K., & Whisenant, W. A. (2005). The current state of women print journalists: An analysis of the status and careers of females in newspaper sports departments. *Public Organization Review: A Global Journal*, 5(3), 219-231.
- Motion, J., & Weaver, K. W. (2005). A discourse perspective for critical public relations research: Life sciences network and the battle for truth. *Journal of Public Relations Research*, 17(1), 49-67.
- Mullin, B. J., Hardy, S., Sutton, W. (2007). *Sport marketing* (3rd ed.). Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics.

- Neupauer, N. C. (2001). Sports information directing: A plea for helping an unknown field. In R. L. Heath (Ed.), *Handbook of public relations* (pp. 551-555). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Neupauer, N. C. (1998). Women in the male dominated world of sports information directing: Only the strong survive. *Public Relations Quarterly*, 43(1), 27-30.
- Papper, B. (2005). Running in place. *Communicator*, July/August, 26-32.
- Pitts, M. J., & Miller-Day, M. (2007). Upward turning points and positive rapport-development across time in researcher-participant relationships. *Qualitative Research*, 7(2), 177-201.
- Pompper, D. (2007). The gender-ethnicity construct in public relations organizations: Using feminist standpoint theory to discover Latinas' realities. *The Howard Journal of Communications*, 18, 291-311.
- Pompper, D. (2005). Multiculturalism in the public relations curriculum: Female African American practitioners' perceptions of effects. *The Howard Journal of Communications*, 16, 295-316.
- Pompper, D. (2004). Linking ethnic diversity & two-way symmetry: Modeling female African-American practitioners' roles. *Journal of Public Relations Research*, 16(3), 269-299.
- Pringle, R. (2005). Masculinities, sport, and power: A critical comparison of Gramscian and Foucauldian inspired theoretical tools. *Journal of Sport & Social Issues*, 29(3), 256-278.

- Pronger, B. (2000). Homosexuality and sport: Who's winning? In J. McKay, M. A. Messner and D. Sabo (Eds.), *Masculinities, gender relations and sport: Research on men and masculinities* (pp. 222-244). Thousand Oaks: Sage.
- Ramazanoglu, C. (1993) Introduction. In C. Ramazanoglu (Ed.) *Up against Foucault: Explorations of some tensions between Foucault and feminism* (pp. 1-25). London: Routledge.
- Ramazanoglu, C. with Holland, J. (2002). *Feminist methodology*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.
- Reskin. B. (1993). Sex segregation in the workplace. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 19, 241-270.
- Ricchiardi, S. (2005, January). Offensive Interference. *American Journalism Review*, 58-62.
- Rich, A. (1980). Compulsory heterosexuality and lesbian existence. *Signs*, 5(4), 631-660.
- Ridgeway, C. L., & Correll, S. J. (2000). Limiting gender inequality through interaction: The end(s) of gender. *Contemporary Sociology*, 29(1), 110-120.
- Risman, B. J. (2004). Gender as a social structure: Theory wrestling with activism. *Gender & Society*, 18(4), 429-450.
- Roth, A. & Basow, S. A. (2004). Femininity, sports and feminism: Developing a theory of physical liberation. *Journal of Sport & Social Issues*, 28(3), 245-261.
- Rubin, H. J., & Rubin, I. S. (2005). *Qualitative interviewing: The art of hearing data* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks: Sage.
- Rutherford, S. (2001) 'Are you going home already?' The long hours culture, women managers and patriarchal closure, *Time and Society*, 10 (2/3), 259-76.
- Sartore, M. L., & Cunningham, G. B. (2009). The lesbian stigma in the sport context: Implications for women of every sexual orientation. *Quest*, 61, 289-305.

- Schell, L.A. & Rodriguez, S. (2000) Our sporting sisters: How male hegemony stratifies women in sport. *Women in Sport & Physical Activity Journal*, 9(1), 15.
- Scott, J. (1999). The evidence of experience. In S. Hesse-Biber, C. Gilmartin, & R. Lynenberg (Eds.), *Feminist approaches to theory and methodology: An interdisciplinary reader* (pp. 79-99). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Schultz, J (2004) Discipline and push-up: female bodies, femininity and sexuality in popular representations of sports bras. *Sociology of Sport Journal* 21, 185-205
- Scruton, S., & Flintoff, A. (2002). *Gender and sport: A reader*. London: Routledge.
- Skerski, J. (2005). From sideline to centerfold: The sexual commodification of female sportscasters. In T. Reichert and J. Lambiase (Eds.), *Sex in consumer culture: The erotic content of media and marketing* (pp. 87-106). London: Routledge.
- Skwar, D. (1999, August). Women's sports gain the spotlight. APSE Newsletter. Retrieved May 7, 2010 from <http://apse.dallasnews.com/aug1999/14skwar.html>
- Smith, A. M. (1994). *New right discourse on race and sexuality: Britain, 1968-1990*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Smucker, M. K., Whisenant, W. A., & Pedersen, P. M. (2004). An investigation of job satisfaction and female sports journalists. *Sex Roles*, 49, 1573-2762.
- Stanley, L., & Wise, S. (1993). *Breaking out again: Feminist ontology and epistemology*. London: Routledge.
- Staurowsky, E.J., & J. DiManno, (2002). Young women talking sports and careers: A glimpse at the next generation of women in sport media. *Women in Sport and Physical Activity Journal*, 11, 127-141.

- Stoldt, G. (2000). Current and ideal roles of NCAA Division I-A sports information practitioners. *Cyber-Journal of Sport Marketing* 4(1). Retrieved December 11, 2008, from <http://fulltext.ausport.gov.au/fulltext/2000/cjism/v4n1/stoldt41.htm>.
- Stoldt, G., Dittmore, S. W., & Branvold, S. E. (2006). *Sport public relations: Managing organization communication*. Human Kinetics: Champaign, IL.
- Stoldt, G. C., Miller, L. K., & Comfort, P. G. (2001). Through the eyes of athletic directors: Perceptions of sports information directors and other public relations issues. *Sport Marketing Quarterly*, 10(3), 164-178.
- Suggs, W. (2005). *A Place on the team: The triumph and tragedy of Title IX*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Sykes, H. (1998). Turning the closets inside/out: Towards a queer-feminist theory in women's physical education. *Sociology of Sport Journal*, 15, 154-173.
- Theberge, N. (2000). Gender and sport. In J. J. Coakley and E. Dunning (Eds.). *Handbook of sports studies* (p. 322-333). London: Sage.
- Thorpe, H. (2008). Foucault, technologies of self, and the media: Discourses of femininity in snowboarding culture. *Journal of Sport & Social Issues*, 32(2), 199-229.
- Tong, R. P. (1998). *Feminist thought* (2nd ed.). Boulder CO: Westview Press.
- Toth, E., & Cline, C.G. (1989). *Beyond the velvet ghetto*: San Francisco: IABC Foundation.
- Toth, E. L., & L. A. Grunig (1993). The missing story of women in public relations. *Journal of Public Relations Research*, 5(3), 153-175.
- Truitt, E. (2001, July 6). Athletes in skirts: Why don't women tennis players wear shorts? *Slate*. Retrieved April 26, 2009 from <http://www.slate.com/id/111580/>.

- Trujillo, N. (1991). Hegemonic masculinity on the mound: Media representations of Nolan Ryan and American sports culture. *Critical Studies in Mass Communication*, 9, 290-308.
- Wahab, S. (2003). Creating knowledge collaboratively with female sex workers: Insights from a qualitative, feminist, and participatory study. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 9, 625-642.
- Warren, C. A. B., & Karner, T. X. (2005). *Discovering qualitative methods: Field research, interviews and analysis*. Los Angeles: Roxbury.
- Whisenant, W. A., & Mullane, S. P. (2007). Sports information directors and homologous reproduction. *International Journal of Sport Management and Marketing*, 2(3), 252-263.
- Whiteside, E., & Hardin, M. (2010). Public relations and sports: Work force demographics in the intersection of two gendered industries. *Journal of Sports Media* 5(1), 21-52.
- Whiteside E., & Hardin, M. (2009). "I don't feel like I'm up against a wall of men!": Negotiating difference, identity and the glass ceiling in sports information. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication, Chicago.
- Whiteside, E., & Hardin, M. (2008). The rhetoric and ideology behind Title IX: An analysis of U.S. newspaper editorials, 2002–2005. *Women in Sport and Physical Activity Journal*, 17(1), 54–67.
- Williams, J. (2000). "Deconstructing the ideal-worker norm in market work," in J. Williams, *Unbending gender: Why family and work conflict and what to do about it*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

- Wright, J., & Clarke, G. (1999). Sport, the media and the construction of compulsory heterosexuality. *International Review for the Sociology of Sport*, 34(3), 227-243.
- Wrigley, B.J. (2002). Glass ceiling? What glass ceiling? A qualitative study of how women view the glass ceiling in public relations and communications management. *Journal of Public Relations Research*. 14(1), 27-55.
- Young, I. (1980). Throwing like a girl: A phenomenology of feminine body comporment motility and spatiality. *Human Studies*, 3(1), 137-156.
- Zippel, K. S. (2006). *The politics of sexual harassment: A comparative study of the United States, the European Union, and Germany*. Cambridge University Press.

VITA: Erin Whiteside

Education

Ph.D., Mass Communications, The Pennsylvania State University, 2010

M.A., Media Studies, The Pennsylvania State University, 2006

B.A., Communications, Finance, California State University-Fullerton, 2000

Selected Publications

Whiteside, E., & Hardin, M. (2010). Public relations and sports: Work force demographics in the intersection of two gendered industries. *Journal of Sports Media*, 5(1), 21-52.

Hardin, M. & Whiteside, E. (2010). The Rene Portland case: New homophobia and heterosexism in women's sports coverage. In H. Hundley & A. Billings (Eds.), *Examining identity in sports media* (pp. 17-36). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Hardin, M., & Whiteside, E. (2009). Through the revolving door: Narratives of young women in U.S. sports journalism. *Journalism*, 10(5), 627-646.

Hardin, M., & Whiteside, E. (2009). The power of "small stories:" Narratives and notions of gender equality in conversations about sport. *Sociology of Sport Journal*, 26(2), 255-276.

Whiteside, E., & Hardin, M. (2008). The rhetoric and ideology behind Title IX: An analysis of U.S. newspaper editorials, 2002-2005. *Women in Sport and Physical Activity Journal*, 17(1), 54-67.

Hardin, M., & Whiteside, E. (2008). Maybe it's not a generational thing: Values and beliefs of aspiring sports journalists about race and gender. *Media Report to Women*, 36(2), 8-15.

Selected Conference Presentations

Whiteside, E., & Hardin, M. (2009, August). "I don't feel like I'm up against a wall of men!" Negotiating difference, identity and the glass ceiling in sports information. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication, Boston, MA.

Whiteside, E. (2008, November). *Writing women: The experiences of sports journalists covering women's sports*. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the North American Society for the Sociology of Sport, Denver, CO.

Whiteside, E., & Hardin, M. (2008, August 9). *What do women want? Exploring the sports media consumption habits of women*. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication, Chicago, IL.

Employment

2008 – 2010, Instructor, The Pennsylvania State University

11/2003 – 6/2006, Assistant Director of Athletic Communications, State College, PA

6/2000-11/2003, Assistant Editor, Major League Baseball, New York, N.Y.