DOES WINNING TRUMP GENDER? :

A CONTENT AND VISUAL ANALYSIS ON WATER POLO MATCHES

DURING THE 2012 OLYMPIC SUMMER GAMES

By

Rachel N Rowan

A thesis

submitted in partial fulfillment

of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts in the Department of Sociology

Idaho State University

April 2014

Committee Approval

To the Graduate Faculty:

The members of the committee appointed to examine the thesis of RACHEL ROWAN find it satisfactory and recommend that it be accepted.

_____

Gesine Hearn,

Major Advisor

_____

D J Williams,

Committee Member

_____

Karen Appleby,

Graduate Faculty Representative

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

DOES WINNING TRUMP GENDER? : A CONTENT AND VISUAL ANALYSIS ON

WATER POLO MATCHES DURING THE 2012 OLYMPIC SUMMER GAMES

Thesis Abstract- Idaho State University (2014)

The world of sport media is an ever changing arena where women have struggled to make their presence known. Men dominate sports in every aspect. Research of the past has indicated women participating in sports get minimalized and sexualized (Messner, 2002).  This thesis was conducted using a content and visual analysis approach; analyzing the United States men's and women' water polo matches of the 2012 Summer Olympic Games. This thesis seeks to find if there were any differences in the way the games were displayed through commentators' words and the visual display. Results of the analysis suggest that the men's and women's games were displayed fairly similar, especially in visual display. However some differences remain; different words used while calling the games, how we addressed the athletes, the amount of play-by-play calling, and the way they discussed victories and defeats of each team.

Chapter One

Introduction

A recent article published in *US Today* newspaper discussed tennis star Marion

Bartoli, the most recent female winner in Wimbledon. During one of her matches an

announcer commented about Bartoli's appearance saying "she is not a looker". The

article went on to say that there were previous comments made in *The Independent of*

*London* saying she was not your "typical leading lady". She is neither poster girl pretty

nor athletic in the romantic sense. The article goes on to talk about the constant

comments which have been made about female athletes' appearances. It suggests that

today, female athletes are brushing these types of comments off. The article discusses

more current female athletes and the comments they have endured from some of the

press, but many of their responses are only a quick shrug of the shoulders. Still, female

athletes have to fight a constant struggle between athleticism and femininity. Female

athletes are aware of the struggle yet still choose to participate in sports (Knapp 2013).

My research sought to discover if female athletes are still treated differently in the

media. I chose to conduct a content and visual analysis of men's and women's water polo

matches played during the 2012 Summer Olympic Games in London. I sought to discover

if there were any differences in the way the matches were presented, visually and

verbally. If there were any differences, I wanted to know what these differences were. I

chose to look at water polo because sports media is just now starting to cover it. Also, I

played water polo for many years. I want to know if media representation of water polo

follows the typically gendered trends. I analyzed data using qualitative and quantitative content analyses. I took a critical feminist theoretical approach and used theories on hegemonic masculinity and hypermasculinity to understand my data. I used George Gerbner's Cultivation theory and Stewart Hall's Representation theory to explain media's effect on society.

Sports reinforce American culture. American sports embody our cultural values. They are a social institution in America, where basic values of our culture are taught. Sports also promotes attachment to society. Our sports subculture shows Americans our emphasis on winning, competition, and striving for excellence. Parents want children to participate in sports because they believe sports are going to teach them good values. There are on average, over 2.6 million children participating in high school sports throughout the country (Shepard 2012). However, participation in sports is also divided along gender, race, and class lines.

Gender and gender relations are central topics in the sociology of sports. This is because, in the past, the majority of all sports around the world was played by men and was defined as a male activity. It has been argued, by sports sociologists, that sports is an arena where masculinity is taught. It provides an arena for safe male intimacy and bonding. Sports perpetuate male dominance through four processes: we define sports as a male activity; second, men are in control of sports, even over women's athletics; third, the majority of all media attention, as well as community and school budgets, and facilities, are given to male sports; fourth, female sports are trivialized (Eitzen and Sage 2003).

Feminine qualities are not valued in sports; this in turn, creates resistance for women to participate. However, we did see an increase of female participation in sports in the 1970s. This new wave of participation came from government regulations, global women's rights movements, and health and fitness movements (Coakley 2009). Today, many women participate in sports. They are participating during childhood, in high school, at the collegiate level and on the professional stage.

Advocates of female participation in sports argue that playing sports leads to a more positive body image in women, higher self-esteem, reduction of stress and depression, more energy, and participants learn how to take risks and be aggressive. However, there is a difference between sports participation and the image of the female athlete (Heywood and Dworkin 2003). There are benefits derived for women and girls from participating in sports, but throughout history the sports arena is where masculinity has been taught and repeatedly practiced (Messner 2002). Historically, women have been chastised for participating in male domains. In sports, women are still subjected to masculine ideals.

The mass media plays a prominent role in communicating information and cultural values. In fact, culture cannot exist without an effective system for transmitting and distributing messages. The mass media also provides entertainment to society and fulfills the important functions of social integration and social change (Eitzen and Sage 2003). In the United States, over 10,000 hours of sports per year are broadcast on local and cable network, and the current trend indicates this will continue to rise. Broadcasting has greatly influenced the rising popularity of some sports in our culture and helped minimize others (Eitzen and Sage 2003).

Women have participated in sports for years; however, until the 1990s they were relatively invisible in sports media. In the 1990s female athletes were finally starting to get some recognition for their participation in sports. Even though they were now presented in the media, they were presented in a strong feminine role. In 1992, Nike ran the first ad campaign that addressed female issues crucial to their athletic identities. The ad was titled "Did you ever wish you were a boy?" The immediate response was "Yes, of course, every day, all the time. They're the ones who get the column space in the paper, their games talked about, televised, as if they're the only athletes around" (Heywood and Dworkin 2001:2)

The new emerging ideal is strength, which has always been attributed to being masculine (Heywood and Dworkin 2001). As research shows, female athletes have been enduring a constant struggle to gain the attention they deserve. Women are typically sexualized in sports media, rather than being recognized for their athletic accomplishments.

Research has shown there is a difference between the media coverage of men's and women's sports. Men's sports receive priority among all media. Men's sports make up about ninety percent of all media coverage and the majority of written press stories. Coverage of women's sports has been minimal in all types of media. Since the 1990s women's sports broadcasting has become more prevalent, but it has not reached the status of men's sports (Coakley 2009). Men's televised game stories, as well as written stories, are typically longer than women's. When the media is covering men's games, the media has better equipment than at women's game. When female athletes are discussed or their events are broadcasted, the commentary and written work typically reflect feminine

attributes and discuss the female athlete in terms of her attractiveness and sexuality, rather than her physical prowess and athletic accomplishments (Duncan and Messner 1998).

*A Water Polo Overview*

For this study it is important to understand water polo and where the sport stands in society. I will also provide some information on the teams. Although water polo has been around for a long time, it has just started to make its way into mainstream media coverage. In the United States, men's water polo became a collegiate sport in the early 1970s. However, women's water polo was not implemented until thirty years later. Since then, participation in water polo among high school and college athletes has grown. Men's water polo was the first team sport added to the Summer Olympic Games. It became an event in 1900 and continues today. Women's water polo was the last Olympic team sport to be added, which took place in 2000. In men's water polo, Hungary has become one of the main powerhouses, winning the most Olympic medals in the history of the sport. With the addition of women's water polo to the Olympics, new powerhouse countries emerged, with Canada and the United States typically resting on top of the podium at the Olympic Games and national championships (collegiatewaterpolo.org 2012).

In California, water polo is now the ninth most played sport in the state. There was a 1.4 percent increase in female participation in water polo in 2012 throughout the state of California (blogs.sacbee.com 2012). The Collegiate Water Polo Association is the largest water polo conference in the country, with teams in 75% of the states. The

association includes both intercollegiate varsity competition and club competition, which is the only conference of this type. Intercollegiate varsity competitions are programs which are funded through athletic departments. At the collegiate club level, funding varies from school to school. However, club funding typically comes from student activities (collegiatewaterpolo.org 2012). There are also privately funded clubs with no association to any school or college.

Collegiate men's water polo now has twenty-two Division I teams and seventeen Division II and Division III teams recognized by the NCAA. Women's water polo has grown dramatically since its addition into the 2000 Olympic Games. Currently, there are thirty-two Division I teams and twenty-six Division II and Division III teams recognized by the NCAA (Collegewaterpolocoach.org 2013).

One of the biggest organizations in US water polo is 'USA Water polo'. This organization was founded in 1978 as the National Governing Body for water polo in the United States. USA Water Polo is a member organization with 35,000 to 40,000 active participants. The organization hosts many national championships such as the Junior Olympics, Master Nationals, and the US Open of Water Polo. This organization also governs the United States Men's and Women's water polo teams (usawaterpolo.org 2013).

Both the men's and women's teams walked into the Olympic Games ranked number six. The men ended the games in eighth place. They earned the silver medal at the 1984, 1988, and 2008 Olympic Games. They also earned the bronze medal at the

1924, 1932, and 1972 Olympic Games (usawaterpolo.org 2013). The women's team won the gold medal in the 2012 Olympic Games.

In the past the women's US water polo team has been more successful than the men's team. Since the 2012 Summer Olympic Games, the women are ranked number one team in the world. Since the inclusion of women's water polo in the Olympic Games, the women have never left the Games without medals around their necks. They are the only team in women's water polo, worldwide, to have accomplished this (usawaterpolo.org 2013).

Chapter 2

Literature Review

*Masculinity and Sports*

Sports equate masculinity. The sports arena is where masculinity is taught, practiced and reproduced. It has been argued by researchers that athletics and power are companions (McDonagh and Papano 2008). Athletes must be powerful on the field and participation in sports gives athletes' power in our culture. This is because sports are a large cultural icon which the majority of Americans either watch or participate in. Michael Messner (2002) argues that sports provide a forum for public displays of masculinity.

> Success in athletics, as in politics and business, defines what it is to be 'male' in our society. Organized sports enforce a male power structure that reaches far beyond the field. Organized sports support a form of sex segregation that permeates nearly every aspect and intersection of athletic and popular culture. (McDonagh and Papano 2008:2).

As we look at the history of sports, women were strongly discouraged from playing any sports. Those who did play sports were often seen as unfeminine. It was believed that sports participation harmed women mentally and physically. Michael Messner, one of the leading sports sociologists, found sports to be an arena in which masculinity is socially-constructed. It is a safe area for male bonding and competition. Therefore, women's participation in these masculine charged activities is seen as deviant and unfeminine (Messner 1992). In 1972, the Education Amendment Act passed Title

IX, which required public high schools and colleges to offer women equal access to sports. Currently we see basketball, tennis, golf and volleyball all with professional leagues for women (Shepard 2012).

Even the introduction of Title IX however, did not change the underlying structure of athletics and it did not change the way in which male and female athletes were seen in society (McDouagh and Papano 2008). As more women continued to participate in sports, sports became more segregated along gender lines. This led to what we would consider "male appropriate" and "female appropriate" sports. Scholars have identified patterns distinguishing "male-appropriate" and "female-appropriate" sports. "Male-appropriate" sports concentrate on power and strength. "Female-appropriate" sports are typically individual sports without physical contact (Brookes 2002). Social mores also influence female-appropriate sports. Female sports must include grace and aesthetically pleasing body motions. Research has found that sports such as swimming, gymnastics, and tennis are socially acceptable for women, whereas sports such as football and basketball are not (Davis and Tuggle 2012). For every male sport, there has been an attempt to offer an equivalent for female athletes; much of this has been done to appease Title IX rules. For example, men have football and women have field hockey. Men have baseball and women have softball. Men have wrestling and women are encouraged to participate in gymnastics (McDouagh and Papano 2008).

Dividing sports along gendered lines has caused conflicts, especially when you are a male or female trying to participate in a non-traditional sport for your gender. For example, men participating in volleyball, which has always been seen as a feminine sport, or women who try to participate in football. Even when males and females do play the

same sports they are divided into male and female teams. Also, males and females who play the same sport often encounter male and female versions of norms and rules (McDonagh and Pappano 2008). For example,

> In NCAA college play there are rule differences completely unrelated to play. For example, men's games have three referees, one of whom must be present thirty minutes prior to the game while women have two referees, one of whom must be on the floor fifteen minutes before game time. Such a difference, and there are many, creates distinctions and preserves segregation, as players become accustomed to different rules even when they are irrelevant to the game itself (McDonagh and Pappano 2008:11).

There is also a clear difference between male and female professional athletes. Women participants in professional sports still make less money than their male counterparts in the same sports. For example, in 2010 the winning purse of the PGA tennis tour for men was five million dollars while the winner of the WPGA tour received two million dollars (Shepard 2012).

### *Sports, Media, and Gender*

Mass media is a powerful tool which influences our perceptions, beliefs, attitudes, and values.

> It not only offers us something to see, but also shapes the way in which we see by creating shared perceptual modes. Media messages are used and interpreted by audiences according to their own cultural, social, and individual circumstances (Koivula 1999:589).

Televised sports are a huge corporate market in the United States, generating billions of dollars while enticing billions of viewers. Many avid sports fans do not have the opportunity to witness the games in person so they rely on televised sports to bring them into the game. Due to this, commentators and announcers play a vital role in bringing the game to life. "Viewers must rely on the visual coverage and verbal commentary in order to experience the games, since they cannot experience them firsthand" (Bissell and Smith 2013:1).

However, sports media coverage is also divided along gender lines, as well as based on traditional gender ideologies. Media coverage of female-appropriate sports typically concentrates on the appearance of the athlete rather than her physical prowess. This allows the representation of the female athletes to be based more on femininity and sexuality, than athletic accomplishments (Brookes 2002). The majority of media coverage on women's sports is on these female appropriate sports.

Other than just visual differences in men's and women's games, there are differences in the ways the games are spoken about by commentators and written about by media. For example, when the media broadcasts women playing male-appropriate sports, they typically emphasize gender. Research has shown that when men play basketball, commentators will say "basketball", but when women play basketball, commentators will say "women's basketball" (Brookes 2002). This is called gender marking. This is when commentators identify women's athletic events as 'women's' whereas men's events are simply described as athletics or athletic events (Segrave 2006).

When discussing men's sports, commentators tend to talk about the physical prowess of the athletes, as well as their athletic accomplishments. In contrast, when discussing women's sports, they tend to talk about the athletes' physical attractiveness and attributes, rather than their athletic accomplishments. Commentators will say things such as 'she is tiny but she can play' (Duncan and Messner 1998).

By concentration on looks and sex appeal rather than athletic performance, women are not only symbolically denied athleticism but they are also forced to conform to standard, stereotypical, and ultimately constraining ideals of femininity (Segrave 2006:33).

Patterns of gender differences in sports can be seen when commentators discuss successes and failures. When discussing men's failures, commentators normally do not mention the losing team's shortcomings (Duncan and Messner 1998). The commentators still talk about the male athletes' strength and power. Success in men's sports was attributed to competence and failure was attributed to the opponents' competence. In contrast, when female teams lose, the commentators discuss the loss as an emotional issue or claim that the team did not try hard enough (Duncan and Messner 1998).

Research has found a difference in how commentators address the athletes. The gender pattern of naming athletes imposes meaning (Segrave 2006). When calling a men's game, commentators call the male athletes by their last names, showing respect toward the athlete. Also, when calling men's sports, the commentators commonly used the word 'men' rather than 'boy'. Female athletes were typically called by their first name or both first and last names. Furthermore, commentators regularly call female

athletes 'girls' (Duncan and Messner 1998). Other demeaning terms frequently used are 'sweetie', 'princess,' 'doll,' and 'young ladies' (Segrave 2006). This is also referred to as infantilization, which is the tendency of commentators to use term such as "girls," to show women are less significant.

All of these practices indicate that female athletes are not of equal importance. Sports writers and announcers commonly devalue female athletes by using hesitant language and using contradictory and conflicting messages. Sports are seen as representing masculine traits; therefore, when women participate in this masculine arena, they must constantly be distinguished from the real players; the men. As a culture, we socially construct this clear difference between male and female athletes through the terms, slogans, and symbols we use to represent the athletes (Segrave 2006).

Female sports are shown at a much lower rate than male sports, and stories and segments about female athletes are also very rare. In the United States, for example, ESPN SportsCenter focuses of female athletes less than two percent of the time and even mainstream newspapers, such as the New York Times have less than ten percent of their sports space devoted to women (Billings 2008). Another study on televised sports newscasts in Los Angeles, California found that women's sports only occupied eight percent of all sports covered (Coakley 2006).

> Men's team sports remain the most popular of all media sport in the United States; American football, basketball, and baseball continue to form the foremost triumvirate of male sporting interests, blanking all 12 months of the calendar year and dominating sports coverage, news programs and talk radio. Conversely,

women's sports are largely regarded as a niche market, with the exception of some individual sports, such as tennis, golf, and figure skating. Taken as a whole, the sports media continue to be overwhelmingly male dominated (Billings 2008:107).

Even when female athletes are represented in the media they are typically trivialized, objectified and marginalized. A famous example would be female tennis star Maria Sharapova's Sports Illustrated ads. These ads display her in only a swim suit, frolicking around on the beach. There is also a popular ad in which she is in her uniform on the court; however she is lifting the side of her skirt to put the tennis ball under her shorts.

Messner (2002) argues that women's increased participation and closing of the muscle and performance gaps between men and women are too dramatic to be ignored by the mass media. However, Messner found four dominant patterns in sports' media which impact women's sports. These patterns are silence, humorous sexualization, backlash, and selective incorporation of standout women athletes (Messner 2002).

Messner noted that female athletes were rarely shown on televised sports news. This is how media is keeping women's sports silent. When women's sports were televised, reporters devoted a considerable proportion to humorous feature stories on non-serious women's sports or humorous sexualization of female athletes and female non-athletes. It was found that serious female sports stories were fairly brief and rare. The more in-depth women's sports' stories were often done as gags and more as entertainment. For example two stations did long segments about nude bungee jumping (Messner 2002).

There is also backlash for women participating in sports. "Women do not do sports. And when it turns out that some women *do* do sports, well, they are not real women. In short, either women athletes are too soft and feminine to be worth considering as serious athletes or they are butch lesbians who are worthy only of derision" (Messner 2002:108). In Messner's' final category, selective incorporation of standout women athletes, he finds sports media clutch on the image of a female athlete and will pull her into the center of a cultural discourse, at least temporarily. They seem to do this when it seems to be marketable (Messner 2002). For example, wildly popular and successful female Olympians, such as figure skater Tara Lipinski, skier Lindsey Von, and one of the recent newcomers and media sweetheart gymnast, Gabby Douglas, have all been objects of this attention.

When we look at female representation in the media, we cannot overlook female representation in printed press, such as *Sports Illustrated*. Women have been sexualized on countless covers and articles in sports magazines and ad campaigns. In a 2000 issue of *Sports Illustrated,* Anna Kournikova graced the cover and the magazine ran a story that did not focus on her tennis abilities, but rather on her sexual attractiveness (Messner 2002). At this time, Kournikova had not won a championship in the tennis world, but she was known throughout the world for her beauty and was earning ten million dollars in endorsements at the age of 19. The cover portrayed the 19 year old in an off the shoulder shirt, lying on her stomach, holding tightly onto a pillow (Messner 2002). The shot was close, displaying only her bare shoulders and her come-hither eyes. The Women's Sports Foundation slammed Sports Illustrated, saying

We see a 19-year-old, #15 ranked tennis player primarily illustrated by

photographs of her in short skirts, slit skirts, off the shoulder gypsy blouses or

with eligible men with only two tennis action shots out of 11 photos. This is not

about journalistic integrity. This is about selling magazines. When circulation

declines, put sex on the cover… Female athletes should be portrayed as athletes in

athletic uniforms displaying their sports skills. When have we ever seen major

sports periodicals depicting Michael Jordan or other male athletes' stuffed into

tight-fitting uniforms to display their genitalia as a way of getting more women to

by magazines (Messner 2002:99).

*Olympics Games and Media*

The NBC Olympic telecast has been argued to be one of the most progressive

outlets of all American Sports media in terms of their awareness of the long-standing

history of gender inequalities (Billing 2008). The telecast displays female athletes at a

higher rate than during other sporting events. However, male athletes are still portrayed

more throughout the Olympic coverage than female athletes. Even when women won the

majority of the medals, men still receive a higher amount of coverage. The media is

selective in regards to the events which they air. Men are still portrayed today as

powerful and as dominating sports, whereas women are typically depicted in sports in

which they wear swimsuits or leotards (Billings 2008). For instance, the most popular

and most frequently broadcast women's sports during the summer Olympics are

swimming and gymnastics.

Female participation continued to grow. In the 2012 Olympics women made up 44 percent of the athletes in the games. Every nation that sent delegates to participate sent at least one female athlete and this is the first time in history this had happened. The United States sent 530 athletes, 269 females and 261 males (npr.org/, 2013). In the 2012 games, the United States women won 58 medals, 29 of which were gold (feminist.org/, 2013).

In recent studies, researchers have found that when women's sports are shown, they are typically individual sports; women competing in team sports receive little to no media attention (Davis and Tuggle, 2012). "Women who competed in 2000 in sports involving power or hard physical contact received almost no attention. The same was true in 2004" (Davis and Tuggle, 2012:55).

During the Olympic Games, ninety percent of the commentators were men. It is no surprise that there is a gender gap in analysis of the sporting events by commentators. Research found differences in two categories: attribution of success and failure and depictions of physicality and personality. Andrew Billings (2008) calculated a chi-squared analysis of the last six Olympic Games and found that in on-air dialogue of announcers, athletic success was largely attributed to the superior skill of the male athletes. Men were spoken of as being composed, having experience, and showing commitment. The number one on-air comment on men's success was athletic skill. There were short single word description such as, 'conquering,' and 'battling,' 'fast,' or 'talented.' Women were spoken of as being courageous such as 'fantastic that she even tried it', 'never quitting' and 'heart as big as the skating rink'. When discussing failures,

men's failures were attributed to lack of athletic skill or lack of concentration. Inexperience was the main reason assigned to women's failure (Billings, 2008).

When discussing personality and physical appearance, Billings found that men were described more often than women in terms of their size and the shape of their bodies. Men were also described as being more introverted. When discussing women, there were countless terms of youth used, such as, 'kid', 'immature', 'young lady',' teenager' and 'rookie'. The dominant descriptor for women was attractiveness and depictions ranged from "she is going to take your breath away", to "she is easy on the eyes." Female athletes were also characterized as 'a sweetheart' or 'adorable.' Terms of attractiveness were most prevalent during the 1996 Olympic Games broadcasts (Billings, 2008).

1996 was the year of the woman. The Olympic Games preview of *Sports Illustrated* featured female athletes on the cover. The participation of women was up from the 1992 Olympics, where thirty percent of the athletes were women, to thirty-six percent of the athletes being women in the 1996 Olympics. However, this still leaves a majority of male athletes, at sixty-four percent. "Of the 271 athletic events, 165 were for men only as compared to 95 for women only, only 11 events were mixed." (Heywood and Dworking, 2003:25). During these games the media was under scrutiny. They were watched for how they represented female athletes during the games. During the 1996 Olympic Games, men who were fathers were discussed almost as much as females were discussed for being mothers (Heywood and Dworkin, 2003).

A study which looked at the 2008 Games found that NBC, the number one news network which covers the Olympic Games in the United States, averaged 27.7 million viewers during prime-time and additional 33.8 million visitors on their internet coverage of the Games, over the two week period. On NBC women received approximately 46.3 percent of the total airtime during the 2008 Olympics. Women received more coverage than men in individual diving, beach volleyball, and gymnastics, as well as team gymnastics. Men received more coverage on individual and team competitions. Significant to my study is the finding that, in the 2008 Olympics, women's water polo did not receive any coverage (Davis and Tuggle, 2012).

When we examine visual accounts of the Olympic Games, we are able to see a difference between mele and female sports as well. In an examination of men's and women's Olympic track and field events it was found that men's events were presented as more visually exciting. This was done by using a wider variety of camera shots and angles and more motion special effects. It was concluded that these differences between the two genders and the visual displays could contribute to perceptions that women's sports are less interesting than men's (Bissell and Smith, 2013).

Visual and textual research done on past Olympic Games of beach volleyball matches resulted in mixed findings. Bissell and Duke, (2007) found that when making play-by-play calls and commentary during breaks of the games, commentators did not emphasize or even mention sexuality, appearance, or attire. There were comments on a tattoo one of the athletes had but no comments were made about hairstyle, facial appearance, or body shape (Bissell and Duke, 2007). Bissell and Smith also analyzed the 2008 Olympic Games, and found a similar pattern (Bissell and Smith 2013). Volleyball is

19

a female-appropriate sport, while water polo is considered a male-appropriate sport. It will be interesting to see if this matters and if any differences emerge during my study.

Many of the past studies have shown that female athletes are still fighting against inequality in the sports arena. The sports world is male-dominated, in both participation and presentation. Female athletes have made advancements in the sports arena and they have a high participation rate. More young girls participate in sports. With the Title IX inclusion more women participate in the collegiate arena, and women now have professional leagues.

I was unable to find any content or visual analysis on water polo in the literature. What I found on water polo was the author listing water polo as a sport that received no air time during the Olympics. No study looked at water polo as one of the primary sports. Water polo is a new sport on the scene; a sport which is gaining more participation and media coverage. It is important to see if this relatively new sport is falling into similar gendered patterns of the past.

Chapter Three

Methods

I conducted a content and visual analysis of five water polo matches featuring the United States men's and women's teams that were played during the 2012 Summer Olympic Games. I sought to answer my research question as to how female and male athletes were represented in game commentary and visually during the 2012 Summer Olympics. I specifically strived to answer the following questions:

1) Are there differences that emerge during commentary and visual representation of men's and women's water polo?
2) If there are differences, what are these differences?
3) If differences emerge, do these differences follow traditional findings on gender representation?

I analyzed three women's games and two men's games to find out if there were any differences. Also, I wanted to know how the athletes were visually shown during the game. Originally, I had planned to code two men's games and two women games. I chose to analyze the first two games of the Olympics and the final two games the teams played. However, I was unable to obtain access to all of these games in my study. I decided to include the first two games as well as the semi-final matches for both teams. Rather than not coding the Gold Medal game for the women. I coded this game because I thought it would be important to my study.

The videos were found on the official Olympic Youtube website. This is the official channel of the International Olympic Committee. It is in connection with the official website of the Olympic Games (www.olympic.org). The Olympic Youtube

station shows twenty-four different channels all in one location, with over a quarter of a million views since the origination of the site in 2006 (youtube.com 2014). The commentators for the games I coded were overwhelmingly males, except for one female commentator. For the men's games there was one male commentator for both games. For the women's games the commentators differed. For the first game against Hungary, there was one male commentator and one female commentator. For the game against Australia, there was one male commentator and for the final game against Spain, the gold medal match, there were two male commentators. All of the commentators for the men's and women's games were British.

I took a combined qualitative and quantitative research approach. Berg stated,

Qualitative research properly seeks answers to questions by examining various social settings and the individuals who inhabit these settings. Qualitative researchers, then, are most interested in how humans arrange themselves and their setting and how inhabitants of these setting make sense of their surroundings through symbols, rituals, social structures, social roles, and so forth (Berg 2007:8).

Qualitative methods allow the researcher to capture and discover meanings to symbols, languages, and so on, rather than just providing a number. I chose to conduct a content analysis, analyzing the number of terms used, as well as a qualitative analysis of the types of words used.

A content analysis refers to the analysis of symbols within messages or written words, spoken words, or pictures. It is an analysis of communication. A content analysis

allows us to understand, "words, meanings, pictures, symbols, ideas, themes and any message that can be communicated" (Neuman 2000). It allows the researcher to interpret and make sense of the messages. Content analysis is a useful research technique when researching three different types of problems. First, it is helpful for a problem involving a large amount of text. Second, it helps when a researcher is studying a topic from a distance. Last, it is useful when a researcher is trying to reveal embedded messages in the text (Neuman 2000).

For these reasons, I chose to conduct a content analysis to answer my research question. The study will be from a distance because the events were in the past. They were also in a different country and were transferred through the media. It was also distant because Olympic athletes are a very elite group which a very small percentage of people in the world ever get to experience or understand.

When conducting a content analysis, a researcher must be aware of three components. These components are the sender, the audience, and the message. "The message should be analyzed in terms of explicit themes, relative emphasis on various topics, amount of space or time devoted to certain topics, and numerous other dimensions" (Berg 2007:309). The senders in this study are the commentators and the network showing the videos. The audience is the viewers of the games. The Olympics has a huge international audience in comparison to other sporting events. The message is what I am seeking to find. The researcher has to be aware of these three components because all three influence the way in which the game is displayed and spoken about.

A researcher must be aware that a content analysis has some limitations. A content analysis can only reveal the content within the text; it cannot interpret its significance. Also, a researcher must be aware of the authors' themes, biases or characteristics because they can sway the text. It is important for researchers to be objective. Objectivity is the principle stating that researchers are expected to prevent their personal biases from interfering with their research (Shepard 2012). The researcher must be aware of his/her own biases that could come into play as well. The researchers' personal biases should not influence the interpretation of results. Researchers must interpret their data solely on what the data produces, rather than interpreting the data based on their preferred results (Shepard 2012).

Looking at my current study, I can see a few biases that may emerge. I have a history in the sport of water polo. I played the sport in high school and a small portion of my college career. I also kept the statistics books for a local college in California. I understand the rules of the game, as well as the physical demands on the athletes. One of the main ways to limit biases is to be open with yourself, as a researcher and to be aware, that they exist. Then, throughout the course of your study, constantly be aware of them when analyzing data to make sure you do not skew any of your findings.

I developed a coding sheet to obtain my data. A coding system is, "a set of instructions or rules on how to systematically observe and record content from text" (Neuman 2000). Coding sheets should be conceptualized and operationalized to include theoretical concerns and empirical observations (Babbie 2005). The researcher will tailor the codes to the specific communication, in this case, broadcasters' spoken words. The coding system can include four different characteristics of the content; frequency,

direction, intensity, and space. Frequency means how often something occurs. Direction is the direction the content is moving; positive or negative. Intensity means the strength or power of the direction. Last, space means the size of the text or how much space was dedicated to the content (Neuman 2000).

For my study, I sought to find all four of the categories. I am concerned with the meaning behind the words, the direction of the words, and the intensity of the message. I am also concerned about the number of words that are used. Is there dead space during the game or are the commentators constantly speaking throughout the game?

There are also different levels of measurement in codes. In my study I used quantitative and qualitative codes. The end product of quantitative codes must be numerical (Babbie 2005). Quantitative coding seeks for visible surface content in the text (Neuman 2000). For this portion of my coding, I pulled specific words found in past studies and counted the frequency of these specific words. I generated the average number of times terms were used throughout all five games as well as which terms were used the most.

However, I also left some of my codes open, which provided my study with qualitative findings. For this portion of my coding, I wrote down word-for-word what the commentators said that fell into one of my six categories of codes. The main drawback of qualitative research is reliability. Every researcher can look at content in different ways. It takes a lot of knowledge of language and social meaning to code more effectively. Also, training, practice, and written rules help the reliability of these codes (Neuman

2000). A researcher who uses both forms of research, qualitative and quantitative, can employ very strong rigor for their research (Neuman 2000).

Reliability and validity are central issues while conducting research. Both are concerned with finding concrete measures. All social research wants measures and findings to be reliable and valid. This provides the research findings with truthfulness, credibility or believability (Neuman 2000).

Reliability means dependability or consistency. It means that the same findings will be repeated in identical or similar studies. One difficulty with reliability is getting reliable data over the course of time. Qualitative researchers typically study processes that are not stable over time. Qualitative research believes the relationship between the researcher and the subject matter should always be growing and evolving. This sometimes decreases the ability to achieve reliability (Neuman 2000).

Validity suggests truthfulness. It refers to the way in which a researcher conceptualizes, defines, and measures their variables. "The absence of validity occurs if there is a poor fit between the constructs a researcher uses to describe, theorize, or analyze the social world and what actually occurs in the social world" (Neuman 2000:172).

Reliability is necessary for validity. Reliability is also easier to achieve than validity. A researcher can describe everything they did to obtain their data. This should allow another researcher to be able to replicate the original study. However, every researcher is going to theorize the data in a qualitative study differently (Neuman 2000).

I coded the commentary and divided my codes into six different categories. The categories consisted of general codes, codes discussing personal aspects of the athletes life, typical female traits, typical male traits, sports information, and miscellaneous. My codes were derived from Megan Polney's (2012) thesis entitled "Gendered Representation of College Athletes: A Content Analysis of Newspaper Coverage of March Madness" and Robert Newell's (2001) article "Negotiating Gender in USA Today: A Critical Feminist Analysis of Newspaper Coverage of the 1999 FIFA Women's World Cup."

My coding sheet begins with two questions, how many times do the commentators say men/ women, and do they say the full name of the player or do they call them by their first name or last names? In past research, these two questions have posted interesting findings. According to Brookes (2002), when calling basketball games, sports broadcasters will typically emphasize women's games by saying 'women's' basketball, rather than referring to it by the name of a sport. However, in contrast, there is no emphasis on men's basketball when sportscasters are calling men's games. I'm asking this question to see if these differences emerge (Brookes 2002).

Duncan and Messner (1998) have found that when commentators are calling men's games, they call the athlete by their last name to indicate respect. However, when broadcasting women's games, broadcasters call female athletes by their first name or both first and last names. Calling a person by their first name is more casual and does not

indicate respect. This is why the second question is important to my analysis (Duncan and Messner 1998).

*Personal*

The personal category looks into the non-athletic portion of the athlete's life. It is divided into three subcategories. The first subcategory consists of demographics, which includes the commentator's discussion on the athletes' families, marriage or marital status, children, school lives, or careers. The second discusses the athletes personalities, such as if they are funny, disciplined, kind, sensitive, etc. These codes capture any discussion of the athletes' personalities which are not directly related to athletic performance. The last subcategory includes looks and appearance. This captures comments made about the athletes' looks or appearance that do not relate to their athleticism. Research has shown that commentators discuss female athletes' families and personal lives more than they do those of male athletes. When women are displaying masculine traits, commentators tend to discuss the athletes' families, personal lives, personalities and appearance to feminize the athletes.

*Typical Female Traits*

The next category is based on existing findings in women's sports. This category is divided into three subcategories as well. The first subcategory seeks to find child-like terms. Research has found that female athletes are normally discussed in childlike terms. The most common term used is 'girls' (Duncan and Messner 1998). Other frequently used demeaning terms are 'sweetie', 'princess,' 'doll,' and 'young ladies' (Segrave 2006). This is also referred to as infantilization, which is the tendency of commentators to

use terms such as girls, to show less significance. The next category includes women who participate in more masculine sports and who are typically sexually objectified in some ways. I code for any mention of the athlete which would be considered sexually suggestive (Duncan and Messner 1998). Last, I code for stereotypical feminine traits. Some of these terms would be passive, emotional, self-critical, graceful, elegant, and other similar terms (Polney 2012).

*Typical Male Traits*

This category originally included many different codes; looking at everything from leadership to strength. Due to the fact there is so much information on male athletes, I chose to focus on the codes pulled from Polney's study. Therefore, I combined all of the typical male traits into one code that looked at strength, leadership, assertiveness, confidence, non-emotional, powerful and intelligence. I also allowed the code to remain open so that if any other term emerged that would be considered characteristic of a male trait I wrote it down.

*Sports Information*

Sports information seeks to understand how commentators talk about the team. The first code looks at sports struggles; is the team struggling to achieve popularity in the public eye or are they facing adversity. The second code looks at how the commentator discusses victories and defeats of the teams. This code was left open to allow flexibility for the findings. Research has found when women lose games, commentators or reports attribute the cause to them not having been in the game mentally, or that it was an

emotional loss. Defeats of a men's team are typically explained by the physical prowess of the other team (Duncan and Messner 1998).

Lastly, I used an open code which tracked positive consonance and negative consonance. I wanted to find out if commentators were using different terms when discussing men's and women's matches.

Below are the operational definitions for the codes used to analyze the games.

Operational Definitions

| Codes | Definitions |
| --- | --- |
| **Personal** | |
| Personal | Any mention of non-athletic portions of the athlete's life (family, marriage, children, school life, career). |
| Personality | Any mention of the athlete's personality traits; disciplined, careful, funny, patient, etc. |
| Looks and Appearance | Any mentions of the athlete's physical appearance or attire not associated with the sport. |
| **Typical Female Traits** | |
| Infantilization | Any mention of the female athletes being referred to as 'girls' rather than women. |

| | |
|---|---|
| Sexual objectification | Any mention of a female athlete's body part that would be considered sexually suggestive (i.e. "She has a very nice butt", "She is lucky she is good looking", etc). |
| Stereotypical Feminine Traits | Any mention of the athlete displaying stereotypical feminine traits such as passive, emotional, self-critical, graceful, etc. |

Typical Male Traits

| | |
|---|---|
| Leadership | Any mention of the athlete as a leader for the rest of the team. |
| Team Orientation | Any mention of the athlete being a team player, making the play with the help of teammates, or team spirit. |
| Physical Power | Any mention of the athlete dominating an opponent or making a play through the use of strength or size. |
| Stereotypical Masculine Traits | Any mention of the athlete displaying stereotypical masculine traits such as assertive, confident, non-emotional, strong, powerful, etc |
| Intelligence and Mental Skills | Any mention of the athlete's skill or successes being tied to his/her ability to use his/her head while playing the game. |
| - | |

- When testing the codes, prior to analysis, this category was not rendering all of the information. Therefore, I combined all of these codes into one open code, Stereotypical Masculine Traits.

Sports Information

| | |
|---|---|
| Sports Related | Any mention of the person's athletic ability. |
| Sport Struggle | Any content describing difficulty of achieving popularity in the public eye. |
| Sports Victories/Defeats | Any mention of how the team obtained victories or was defeated. (e.g.. 'They were mentally in the game', 'The other team was stronger than they were today') |

Miscellaneous

| | |
|---|---|
| Positive Consonance | Any positive mention of the athlete's performance due to factors other than those cited by other codes. (ex. 'He/she is on fire'). |
| Negative Consonance | Any negative mention of the athlete's performance due to factors other than those cited by other codes. |

*Visual analysis*

To code for visual analysis, I looked at five different production techniques. They are field of view, camera angle, focus, lens, and special effects. I will also code for how

many times specific body parts are shown (i.e. face, upper body, lower body, female breast and buttocks).

For field of view, I will look at three different views, long, medium, and close. For this study, all of the shots were inside of the pool and outside of the pool. A long shot will be defined at a full body shot. A medium shot will be defined as any shot from the shoulders and above. A close shot will be the player's face. Field of view typically indicates interpersonal distance. When we are far from a person, we are less involved with them and it is impersonal. As we start to get closer, we develop a more personal interaction with the person; a more emotional connection (Morse 2003).

As for camera angles, I will look at three basic angles eye level, below level and above level. For this study, the below camera angle will include underwater shots. Camera angles are important because when we look up on an object or person, they seem to be more important, powerful and more authoritative than when we look at them straight on. When we look down with a camera on an object or person they appear to lose their significance. They become less powerful.

For this study, I will look at two different types of special effects. I will code for slow motion and replays. Slow motion is when characters seem to move at an abnormally slow speed. Slow motion is typically used in sports television. "The technique of slow motion allows the analysis and appreciation of body movements which are normally inaccessible to view" (Morse 2003:381). Slow motion also implies an increase in scale; for a large body needs more time to complete a movement. It allows a viewer to see the movement of the body and the physicality of the athlete. Most important, slow motion

shows the excitement of victory. Some of the most memorable shots were shot in slow

motion. These images have the ability to spill beyond the end of the game into the crowd

and audience (Morse 2003).

Last, I will code for body parts shown during the games. For example, upper

body, lower body, the buttocks, female breast, male chest. This is intended to determine

if the bodies are being visually sexualized by the media. It is difficult because the athletes

are in swimming suits to begin with. Water polo swimsuits for men are speedos and

women wear a very tight one piece swimsuit. The reason these suits are so tight is

because suits often get ripped off players during play. For this reason, it is difficult to

determine if the players' bodies are sexualized. For this reason, I will use Bissell and

Smith (2012) logic in their study of beach volleyball during the 2008 Olympic Games in

Beijing. They stated that the director has many different shots to display during the game.

What they found was that directors would tell their videographer to zoom in on the body

parts of the athletes. Then the director would place these shots on the screen intentionally

(Bissell and Smith 2012). For my study I took their same idea, and if the field of view

was zoomed into the athlete exposing their body or body parts and this could be

intentional then it would be coded as a sexualized body.

*Visual Operational Definitions*

Field of View

| | |
|---|---|
| Long | A full body shot inside or outside of the pool. |
| Medium | Any shot from the shoulders and up. |

| | |
|---|---|
| Close-Up | Any shot just of the face. |

**Camera Angles**

| | |
|---|---|
| Eye Level | When the camera is looking at the athlete at eye level. |
| Below Level | When the camera is angled up on the athletes. |
| Above Level | When the camera is angled down on the athletes |

**Special Effects**

| | |
|---|---|
| Slow Motion | When characters seem to move at an abnormally slow speed. |
| Replays | The viewer sees the play which just happened again. |

**Sexualized Body**

- If the field of view is zoomed into the athlete exposing their body or body parts and this could be intentional then it would be classified as a sexualized body.

*Procedure*

   After reading through literature, I narrowed down my research question and the sport I wanted to study. I noticed that water polo was a sport which had not been researched in the past. I wanted to see if this relatively new male-appropriate sport would render the same findings as past studies.

I started my research in 2013. The videos were readily accessible over the internet in 2013. I did run into an issue as the 2014 winter Olympics grew closer. It was harder for me to find information on the Summer Olympics because the Olympic website had been converted into the winter games. As explained above, I had to adjust my initial goal of analyzing six games.

I developed coding sheets based on past studies. I revised my coding sheet three times. I combined some categories and took out some of Polney's codes that did not apply to my study. I also wrote a coding sheet that contained all of my categories, including definitions that I applied to the categories. This helped me focus during the coding process but also allows a future researcher to understand my thought process. I tested my coding sheet on a game, which was not in my study, to make sure it would generate adequate information.

Once I had my final coding sheet, I prepared for my study. I printed out multiple copies of the coding sheet, including a blank sheet for notes. I also had an extra sheet of paper for memos. I made notes of times during the game that I would want to go back and review. In my memos, I also included coding categories that worked and ones that could and should be revised for future research.

All of the games were available for viewing on YouTube.com. To help with organization, I made a YouTube account. This tracked the videos I had watched and made the games easy to find when I needed to review them again.

For the first set of coding I listened to everything the commentators said. The first set of codes focused on the words spoken during the games. The majority of the coding

was counting the number of times the commentator used certain adjectives and whether they were negative or positive. The other codes were open codes, which meant that when the announcers said something that fell into the coding categories, I would pause the game to write down word-for-word what the commentator had said. During this first set of coding, various adjectives emerged that were not on my coding sheet in designated male or female categories. I wrote these adjectives on a spare piece of paper and tallied how many times the commentators said them.

On another sheet of paper I wrote down anything which emerged that seemed important to the study. For example, long time rivalries between teams, major players who have had success, and so on.

For the second round of coding, I watched the game for visual display. I analyzed the field of view, camera angles, special effects, and sexualized bodies. All of these codes were numerical, which means I made tallies under each category. This was difficult to track because of the number of times the camera angle changed. I had to re-watch many sequences of play to verify my count.

For the final coding, I reviewed each game for the overall message of the game. When focusing on coding, it is hard to capture the overall game message or feeling. This provided a last level of coding and a good overview of the games.

Once I had obtained all of my data, I started the analysis. To organize the adjectives, I made a table. The table included every adjective that emerged during the games and included in which game they were said and how many times the commentators said it. This enabled me to capture averages and determine if the adjectives

were gendered or appeared in both men's and women's games. With different colored highlighters, I color-coded the adjectives. One color marked the adjectives that emerged during both men's and women's games, and another color indicated gender-specific adjectives. I made a similar table to count the number of times names were said.

For the open codes, I typed out every comment that was made which made it easier to read. I highlighted common words and themes. I reread all of the comments for overall feelings and purpose of the comments. This provided an overarching theme for the games. I was then able to find comments and segments that fit into the themes.

Chapter Four

Theory

## *Feminism*

According to feminists, men and women experience the social world differently. Our experiences are based on a hierarchical ordering, where men reside at the top. Feminists call this 'the gender order', which means most societies value men and masculinity more than they value women and femininity. Societies and the relationship between the sexes are shaped by gender inequality (Tyler, Abbott, Vallace 1990). Even though all feminists agree that women should be liberated, not all agree on how to go about this.

A third wave of feminism emerged. This wave is not as clearly defined as in previous waves because gender inequality is not as black and white as it had been in the past. There are a lot of grey areas and patterns and structures are changing. Women seem to be gaining more equality in society, but it comes at a cost. Scholars even question if women are gaining equality or if they are now being discriminated against in different ways (Heywood and Dworkin 2003).

Feminist scholars ignored sports until the late 1970's. Even after the 1970's, many feminists viewed sports as insignificant and not worthy of their attention (Creedon 1994). However, some critical feminist looked into the relationship between gender and sports. They focused on issues of power and the relationship between the genders in sports which place men above women (Coakley 2009). They asked the questions; why do many men around the world continue to resist efforts to promote gender equality in sports?

Why are so many women's high school and college teams called 'Lady this' and 'lady that' (Coakley 2009)?

We know that sports are a gendered activity. Sports' meanings, purpose, and organizations are grounded in the values and experiences of men, which celebrate and enforce masculinity.

> Therefore in the world of sports, a person is defined and 'qualified' as an athlete, a coach, or an administrator if he or she is tough, aggressive, and emotionally focused on competitive success. If a person is kind, caring, supportive, and emotionally responsive to others, he or she is qualified only to be a cheerleader, a volunteer worker for the booster club or an assistant in marketing or public relations (Coakley 2009:46).

Early theorists of masculinity and sports believed that sports socialized boys to be men. Sports was where boys would learn cultural values and behaviors of masculinity, such as competition, toughness and winning at all costs.  However, some of these early theories and studies suffered from assuming that boys come to their first interaction with sports as  blank slates, which is not true (Messner 2007). In fact, boys come into sports with an already gendered identity and it is through sports that they develop a positional identity. This positional identity clarifies the boundaries between self and other. This separation is achieved through the boys' connections with others (Messner 2007).

Perhaps no single institution in American culture exudes hegemonic masculinity as sports does. Hegemonic masculinity, "refers to a particular form of dominance in which a ruling class legitimates its position and secures the acceptance- if not outright

support- from those classes below them" (Anderson 2005:21). Hegemonic masculinity is an ideal model. It is an unattainable form of masculinity. Even though it is unattainable, men and women still strive to encompass this form (Connell 1990).

For hegemonic masculinity to work, the 'other'- i.e. women-must believe they are subordinate and that it is right and natural.  Mass media are the key factor in promoting sports ideals and thus have the power to impose hegemonic masculinity. Media's representation of hegemonic masculinity in sports normalizes these ideals. "Sports tend to be presented in the media as symbolic representations of a particular kind of social order so that in effect they become modern morality plays, serving to justify and uphold dominant values and ideas" (Trujillo 2000:17). Media representation of sports reproduces and reaffirms hegemonic masculinity, and condemns any alternative features of opposing gender ideologies such as femininity and homosexuality (Trujillo 2000).

Hegemonic masculinity is the key to gender inequality in sports. Even when women participate in sports separate from men, they are held to the same masculine standards. Examples of these standards are in relation to strength, speed, and power. "When it comes to gracefulness, rhythm, and beauty, as in gymnastics or ice dancing, women's talents may be recognized, but these attributes are not accorded the preeminent status of those attributes thought of as male" (Bryson 1990).

Critical feminist worked hard to ensure more equality (Hall 1990). They seek to provide girls and women with the same opportunities. They want to remove the barriers and constraints for women's participation in sports. Liberal feminists do not always see an issue with sports being fundamentally male-dominated (Hall 1990). This type of

feminism is fighting for reform and equal opportunity for all. This form of feminism uses legal strategies, such as Title IX, to achieve equality within the system (Creedon 1994).

The more radical feminist approach recognizes and celebrates the difference between men and women but also seriously questions the male- dominance in the sports arena (Hall 2006). This type of feminism seeks to transform the system as we know it.

Critical feminists have stated that female participation in sports is undoubtedly a source of strength for women. Studies have shown that participation encourages self-worth, confidence, and self- development in women. However, critical feminists argue that these benefits only emerge when the social environment respects the female athletes (Heywood and Dworkin 2003).

In today's society, there is an overwhelming pressure for female athletes to adopt the self-destructive and win-at-all-cost models of men's sports. Feminists argue this is adding yet another unattainable measure to women athletes (Heywood and Dworkin 2003).Women are starting to adopt these masculine qualities while participating in sports.

Varda Burstyn (1999) argues that our contemporary sports global culture has been formed by what she calls the hypermasculine sports nexus. She defines the sports nexus as "an entity consisting of sport and its association with the mass media, corporate sponsors, governments, medicine, and biotechnology (Burstyn 1999:17). She states that the sports which claim first place in the sports nexus are football, hockey, baseball, basketball, Olympic athletics, and boxing (Burstyn 1999). She claims that sports divide people: it separates men from women and men from men.

Masculine dominance is constructed and embodied within the sports nexus. Sports generate hypermasculinity, an ideal manhood (Heywood and Dworkin 2003). This ideal manhood it is associated with physical bravery and with working and soldiering heroes. The athletes' bodies are raw materials and they are willing to sacrifice their bodies for war in the field of play. They put their lives on the line just to be seen as heroes (Burstyn 1999).

She continues to argue that contemporary sports are a school for masculinity, which articulates the ongoing relationship between masculinity and capitalism. It intensifies social conflict, which is exemplified in gender relations (Burstyn 1999). Burstyn states there are indications that sports' media are responding to women's participation in sports and female audiences of sports. She says sports media are starting to see this as a profitable market (Burstyn 1999).

Burstyn stresses the importance of women participating in sports for physical reasons, but argues how important it is for women to be better than the hypermasculine sports nexus (Heywood and Dworkin 2003). Success of women's sports, as seen in professional women's leagues being established, is coming at a cost.

U.S. culture, influenced by men's culture, is marked by an intense denigration of the 'feminine' and its associated qualities of softness, receptivity, cooperation, and compassion. Today's erotic athletic flesh is hard, muscled, tense, and mean. The unquestioning emulation of hypermasculinity by women does not constitute 'androgyny' or 'gender neutrality,' but rather the triumph of hypermasculinism,

its inherent sado-masochistic attitudes of the body and its affirmation of

domination (Burstyn 1999:266-267).

Burstyn is arguing that women are now playing masculine roles while

participating in sports.

Female athletes are not emulating their feminine attributes; they are hiding them

because they are displaying hypermasculine tendencies that are expected in the sports

arena. Burstyn believes this is detrimental to female athletes and gender equality because,

rather than accepting feminine attributes in sports, females becoming more like male

athletes widens the gap between genders (Burstyn 1999).

Burstyn maintains that, "Women need to continue to value those qualities in

themselves and in cultural life, rather than abandon them to the hierarchism and violent

instrumentality of the dominant sport culture" (Burstyn 1999:267). She believes women

can contribute new values to the sports nexus. Not one based on violence or coercion, but

on give and take and mutual creation.  She also argues that women should fight against

the 'smallness' that is expected within sports; this idea of thinness and delicacy. Women

injure themselves through extreme body modifications to maintain the 'smallness' ideal.

She argues this constant self-loathing drains women of the healthy energy both they and

society needs (Burstyn 1999). The success of high profile female athletes contributes to

the idealized culture of masculinity and Bustyn argues that women should not seek to be

like these female athletes because they are 'selling out' (Burstyn 1999).

Hegemonic masculinity and hypermasculinity are applied equally to male and female athletes. Female athletes must strive for this type of masculine perfection to be successful in the sports arena.

*Media Theory*

*Stuart Hall: Representation Theory*

Stuart Halls' theory on representation is important to consider in order to understand how we obtain shared meanings through media. Hall suggests that culture is concerned with the production and exchange of meanings. "To say that two people belong to the same culture is to say that they interpret the world in roughly the same ways and can express themselves, their thoughts and feelings about the world, in ways which will be understood by each other' (Hall 1997:2).

Hall argues that these two people share the same language, symbols, themes, and so on. They share similar dimensions of social life. The way social life is represented to us, is in turn the way in which we internalize meaning. Hall would say that representation is the production of meanings through language (Hall 1997). About these meanings and representations, Hall says "They do not exist in nature but are the result of social conventions. They are a crucial part of our culture- our shared 'maps of meaning'- which we learn and unconsciously internalize as we become members of our culture" (Hall 1997:29). Hall argues we have signs that we organize into language; through language we apply meaning to these signs or objects within our culture. Languages can be used for symbols or can stand for objects, people or events in the world but languages can also represent fantasy worlds or abstract ideas.

A way in which we learn our shared meanings is through the media. However, Hall argues that the meanings we see are only those of the dominant group in society. Therefore, we are perpetuating their ideals (Hall 1997). Meaning is produced through language and it is re-produced by representation.

*George Gerbner: Cultivation Theory*

Stuart Hall argues that we learn meanings to symbols in our culture through the media. George Gerbner's cultivation theory further explains how we learn these meanings. Gerbner argues that media cultivates our shared images and meanings throughout our culture.  It is the main source through which we obtain our symbolic environment.

> The message systems of a culture not only inform but form common images. They not only entertain but create publics. They not only satisfy but shape a range of attitudes, tastes, and preferences. They provide the boundary conditions and overall patterns within which the processes of personal and group mediated selection, interpretation and image-formation go on (Gerbner 1977:204).

Gerbner states that mass media, whether print, film, radio, or television, ushers in the modern society as we know it (Gerbner 1977). The major effect of mass communication is found in the fundamental assumptions, definitions, and premises they contain and cultivate. The effect of mass communication is not what they make us do, it is the meaning which they contribute to what has been done or accepted or avoided. "The most critical public consequences of mass communications are in defining,

ordering, and presenting the issues of life and society and not just in influencing who will do what in the short run" (Gerbner 1977:205).

Communication media are the agents of cultivation; they cultivate the dominant images, patterns, and meanings. "They structure the public agenda of existence, priorities, values, relationships. People use this agenda- some more selectively than others- to support their ideas, actions, or both, in ways that, on the whole, tend to match the general composition and structure of message systems" (Gerbner 1977:205).

Mass media- printing, film, radio, television-presents to us the world as we know it (Gerbner 1977). Mass media has changed the way in which we distribute and obtain knowledge.  Media is always changing to maintain its presence in society. It is changing with the time and with the dominant culture, class and ways of viewing the world. Gerbner argues this cultivation is an on-going process. There is a constant sending of images and messages through the media, which then creates this effect of socialization. Media cultivates over time to create specific meanings in our culture (Gerbner 1997).

 The way in which we see the world and understand our culture is through this cultivation. Therefore, sports media convey what sports means in our culture. Media cultivates our ideas about sports and the sports values. The way media presents female sports is the way we see and understand female sports. Sports' media is perpetuating the main cultural ideal of masculinity.  Therefore, as a culture, we expect anyone who participates in sports to present masculine tendencies.

During the Olympics, national athletes are placed into the spotlight of media for two weeks. During the two weeks of the Olympics, viewers are bombarded with images

from the games; victories and defeats of our national teams and the heroes and heroines of the games. Male sports still get more airtime during the Olympics than female sports. The female- appropriate sports, such as swimming, gymnastics, and diving assume the overwhelming majority of airtime being dedicated to female athletes (Davis and Tuggle 2012).

As stated before, athletes are expected to adhere to the ideal of hypermasculinity in the sports arena. This statement is even more accurate when it comes to male-appropriate sports; such as team sports. While participating in these sports, women are expected to portray masculine qualities. During the Olympics, women participating in these male-appropriate sports did not receive any media coverage. "Male-appropriate" sports concentrate on power and strength; "female-appropriate" sports are typically individual sports without physical contact (Brookes 2002). Team gymnastics, team swimming and team diving received minimal coverage, but they would not be considered male-appropriate sports. In the 2008 Summer Olympics, women's basketball, soccer, softball, and water polo did not receive any media coverage (Davis and Tuggle 2012).

The way sports are represented through the media creates cultural meaning. We receive on-going images and messages; these meanings cultivate meanings. The Olympics Games are a perfect arena where meanings of gender are created: the meaning of sports, gender, and hypermasculinity.

Chapter Five

Results

My research questions were:

1) Are there differences in the commentary and visual representations during men's and women's water polo?
2) If there are differences, what are these differences?
3) If differences emerge, do these differences follow traditional findings on gender representation?

The answer to my research questions is yes and no. Yes, there are some differences which emerge in my findings. However, in many ways the presentations are similar.

For the purpose of my research, I analyzed the comments and visual displays of five different United States broadcasted water polo games played during the 2012 summer Olympic Games in London, England. I analyzed two men's games and three women's games. The Olympic Water polo arena was constructed for the game with the capacity of holding 5,000 audience members. It included two pools, the main pool, and a warm up pool away from the audience. The audience was seated on two sides of the arena, with scoreboards to the left and right of the audience members (Ott 2013). At all five matches the audience made their presence known. It was very easy to hear the roar of the crowd, and the camera would occasionally show the crowd. The only comment made about the arena being at capacity was during the Gold Medal match for the United States' women.

The pool is a rectangular shape. Each team sits on the same side of the pool, but in different corners. Between the bench and the pool, there is a raised platform on each long side of the rectangle. This is where the referees stand and walk during the game. The pool is a fast pool, meaning that the pool is flush with the floor and the gutters are at pool level, not raised. There are thirteen players per team; seven players from each team are in the pool during play. There are two defensive players. They are located on the left and right wings of the goal when on defense. There is a center, who is in the center of the two defensive players; right in front of the goal. There are three offensive players, who are the line farthest away from the goal. Then there is the goalie. The format is the same for men's and women's. The rules are the same across gender lines, however, the men have a larger playing field than the women.

The average age of the United States men's Olympic water polo team was thirty-one years old (m=31). The oldest player on the team was thirty-seven and the youngest member was twenty-five. The average age of the United States women's Olympic water polo team was twenty-six (m=26). The oldest player on the team was thirty-four and the youngest was nineteen.  The nineteen-year-old player was the American sensation, Maggie Steffins. She ended the Olympics as the highest scoring female during the games.

The overall theme for the United States teams was conquering demons of the past. Both teams have had success in the past but both of them had been struggling in recent years. They both had been defeated unexpectedly and these games were looming over their heads. The commentators explained these upsets they had endured in the past and focused on what they would need to do to overcome them. Winning was the main focus in the comments. The teams were expected to win for their country.

I analyzed the following games.

Table 1: Names of Games

| United States versus Opponent | Name in Study | Date | Outcome |
|---|---|---|---|
| Men's: United States vs. Australia | M1 | August 10, 2012 | AUS 10- USA 9 |
| Men's: United States vs. Spain | M2 | August 12, 2012 | ESP 8- USA 9 |
| Women's : United States vs. Hungary | W1 | July 30, 2012 | USA 14-HUN 13 |
| Women's: United States vs. Australia | W2 | August 7, 2012 | USA 11-AUS 9 |
| Women's: United States vs. Spain (Gold Medal Game) | W3 | August 9, 2012 | USA 8- ESP 5 |

In both of the men's games, there was only one commentator who was male and British. In the women's game against Hungary (W1), there was a male commentator and a female commentator. Both of the commentators were British, easily recognized by their accent. For the game against Australia (W2), there was one male commentator. During the Gold Medal game (W3), there were two male commentators.

*Similarities*

I found gender differences between the teams. However, they were not as prevalent or obvious as in past research. I did not find any sexually suggestive comments made about the women's or men's team. There were no comments made about appearance. Some of the major findings of the past, that female athletes were heavily sexualized, did not emerge in my findings.

There were comments made about the female athletes' personal lives. However, those comments were not gendered. The commentators did not talk about the athletes being mothers or sexualize their bodies. There were a couple of comments made about water polo being a family sport. These comments were in regard to the Steffins sisters, who both played on the women's team. The commentators discussed the sisters, which club they came from, and indicated that their father had played water polo in college as well. Maggie Steffins was the youngest player on the team and the media highlight of the Games. This could have been one of the reasons comments were made about family. The family comments were triggered by siblings being present on the team. If there had been two brothers on the men's team, this would most likely, have also been a topic of comments during the games.

In all of the games I analyzed, men's and women's, there was only one comment about marriage. A commentator explained that one of the women's players was marrying the brother of one of her teammates after the Olympics. This might be an indication of past findings. However, this was only one brief comment. I would assume that, if the tables had been turned and a male player was going to be marrying the sister of a teammate, the commentators most likely would not have mentioned it.

Last, there were comments about where the athletes came from, such as which clubs they were playing for prior to the games. These comments were made about both the men's and women's teams.

The visual display of the game presented no significant difference between the men's and women's matches. I analyzed the field of view, camera angles, special effects,

and body parts shown. During play, the whole pool was shown while the ball was being moved from one side to the other. The field of view was medium on the goalies as they passed the ball and close on the players with the ball. This means the players were shown from their shoulders up. This field of view brings the viewers' closer to the athletes.

When a player would shoot the ball, if the goal was made the camera would zoom into the face of the goal scorer, showing their reaction. The field of view would be at a medium effect; the shoulders and head. The camera zooming into the face provides the view with the emotional reaction of the athlete as well as showing the viewer who the hero or heroine was. After, the camera would cut to a replay slow motion shot of the goal, displaying a closer layout of the play, showing the audience the strategy and angle the player took to score. The game moves quickly and the camera is normally over one whole half of the pool, which makes it difficult for the viewer to see how the goal was scored. This replay and slow motion effect allow the viewer to see the complete play. If the goal was stopped the camera would do the same, but the view would be of the goalie.

There was no difference in the way men and women were displayed out of the pool. Both teams were, for the most part, seen at eye level while sitting on the bench. An eye level shot represents a real life action or person. When the camera would cut to the bench after a score, the team would be seen from below, making them look large and powerful. There was one camera located by the bench that showed bench shots and shots of the athletes as they walked back to the bench. This shot provided the only full body shot of the players while out of the pool. There was no focus on any specific body part or zooming into the body or face. Therefore, there was no indication of a sexualized body.

There was no difference in the way the male and female players were shown outside or inside of the pool.

Running slow motion shots of saves and of goals and showing the athletes from below while they were on the bench, made the athletes look like heroes. The player who scored the goal was the hero, as the screen cut to a slow motion shot of the power coming from the athlete's shot or the strategy it took to accomplish the goal. The screen would zoom in on the face of the athlete, showing the viewer clearly who their hero was who had scored the goal for their country. Finally, the screen would cut to the bench, where the players now looked larger and more powerful than ever, as they were displayed from the below camera angle.

### *Differences*

### *Adjectives, Verbs and Nouns*

There are four major differences between the men's games and the women's games. First, the adjectives used to describe the games. Second, there was a difference in play-by-play game calling. Third, there was a difference in the number of times names were said during the game. Last, the biggest difference found was when commentators discussed defeats and victories.

There was a big difference between the words used during calling of the games. Not only was there a difference in the adjectives, but there were some very important, gendered verbs and nouns used. While calling the men's games, there was an average of 36.5 adjectives, verbs and nouns used (m=36.5), while when calling women's games,

there was an average of 46 adjectives used (m=46). The adjectives often used in both

men's and women's games were 'great', 'good', 'terrific', and 'easy'.

Table 2: Adjectives used in both Men's and Women's Games

| Word | Men's Games | Women's Games |
|------|-------------|---------------|
| Perfect | 1 | 1 |
| Fantastic | 1 | 4 |
| Easy | 1 | 1 |
| Brilliant | 2 | 10 |
| Superb | 2 | 1 |
| Terrific | 1 | 3 |
| Great | 2 | 20 |
| Total: | 10 | 40 |

Table 3: Top 5 Words Displayed only in Men's or Women's Games

| Men's Games | Woman's Games |
|-------------|---------------|
| Strike – 7 | Lovely - 29 |
| Tremendous – 6 | Delightful - 3 |
| Attack – 4 | Extraordinary - 3 |
| Denied – 2 | Splendid, Exceptional, Wonderful - 2 |
| Important – 2 | |

Words with a masculine connotation, such as, 'strong', 'leader', 'confident',

'powerful', and 'experienced', were displayed in both men's and women's games. There

was some gender difference that emerged, however.  The number one word used during

the men's games was the verb 'strike', and it was used a total of seven times between the

two games coded. The most used adjective was 'tremendous', which was used a total of

six times. Other adjectives, verbs, and nouns used during the men's games were 'attack',

'important', 'denied', 'tactic', 'battle', 'force' and 'execute'. These words were not used

in the women's games. There were also comments made about the men being machines.

For example, there was an American male athlete who was injured during a play. While

he was out of the pool working with a trainer, the commentator said they were "running repairs on that hand" (M2), indicating he is a machine which could be repaired and fully functional again. All of these words used during the men's games are clearly military language or war/battle terminology.

On the other side, the women's games received more theatrical adjectives. The number one adjective used in the women's game was 'lovely,' which was used a total of twenty-nine times over the course of the three games coded. It is important to remember that the games were located in London, and were being called by British commentators. 'Lovely' is a widely used term in British English. Where Americans would use the term lovely to describe physical appearance, a personality or emotion, in British English lovely is a strong version of the word 'like' or 'nice' (forums.xkcd.com 2008).

Lovely was used far more than any other adjective during the women's games, but was not used once during the men's game. The term could have some gender indications. It could also be related to the strong performance of the women's team. The next adjectives were 'delightful' and 'extraordinary', which were each used three times during the three games. Other words used were 'fantastic', delicious', 'perfect', magnificent', 'delighted', and 'terrific'. All of these adjectives are clearly feminine adjectives. The commentators used the word 'joy' to describe the women's games. All the words used during the women's matches were positive. The positive words are most likely connected to the winning. The team won every match they played during the Games.

During both games the commentators were telling stories about the plays of the games but they were telling two different stories. One was clearly telling a story of a war on the battle ground of the water polo pool, whereas, the other was a story of these magnificent creatures gracefully earning the win.

During the men's games, the commentators used more nouns and verbs while describing the games, yet during the women's games there were clearly more adjectives used while describing the games. If we look at the definitions of a noun, verb, and adjective, we can see there is more importance in the noun and verb than in an adjective in sentence structure. A noun is the subject of the sentence. A verb, it could be argued, is the most important part of the sentence. It asserts something about the subject. It expresses action, events or states of being. An adjective is a modifier in the sentence structure. It is there to modify the noun by describing, identifying or qualifying words (MacFayden 2013). This finding was most in line with past research. There is an obvious distinction between the words used which are divided along gender lines.

*Play-By-Play*

Second, there was a big difference between the amounts of play-by-play calling in the games. There was a larger amount of play-by-play calling in the women's games than in the men's games. There was less talking altogether in the men's games. In the women's games, the commentators were always talking about the players or calling the plays, whereas in the men's games there were times when the commentators would not talk at all and just allow the viewer to watch the game.

Here are some examples of play-by-play language.

"Now it's Seidemann leading the charge up the pool… Down by Wenger…There is Rulon… Wenger again… now touched by Maggie Steffins…Seidemann with the shot."

"Smith (Australian player) has been excluded… Villa…Maggie Steffins!!!.. Maggie Steffins has added to her impressive tally of goals for the tournament. Top scorer at 12 going into this match, now make that 13."

The play-by-play calling could be an indication of a couple of things. One, it could indicate the matter of importance. A more important game receives more attention in the media and from commentators. Another reason could be the fact that women's water polo is a newer sport in the Olympics, and thus did not have a huge following yet. Also, the majority of the people watching could potentially not know the players or the rules. Therefore, there is more information and explanation being sent to the audience by the commentators.

_Names_

Another major difference is the number of times commentators said the players' names. Different from past research, I found commentators said the women's names at a higher rate than the men's. The commentators used the first and last name during the men's game an average of 17 times per game (m=17), and just the last names an average of 27.5 times (m=27.5). When calling women's games, commentators used the first and last names of the players an average of 45 times per game (m=44.67), and just the last names an average of 61 times (m= 61).

One of the main differences is that the women received more name calling. Also, the women were called by their first and last names or just their last names. Both of these findings are different than those of past research. Past studies found that women were typically called by their first names or first and last name, while men were typically called by the first and last or just their last name, indicating respect (Duncan and Messner 1998).

These findings are also relevant to the difference in play-by-play calling. Because there was a higher amount of play-by-play calling in the women's game, it is understandable that there was a higher rate of names called during the women's games. Once again, this could be the commentators' way of introducing an unfamiliar women's team to the audience.

*Victories and Defeats*

Last, there was a difference in the way the commentators discussed the teams' victories and defeats. The commentators discussed past defeats of both teams, but as the games continued, there were more comments directed toward hope when calling the women's games than the men's.

The men's team did not make it to the medal rounds. This was a huge disappointment and was emphasized in the discussion of the commentators. There was a lot of talk about the 'accomplishment of the team' and the 'history' of the team. For example, during the game against Spain, commentators said "Historically, the United States is one of the most successful teams with 7 medals but 2012 has not been their year." As the game progressed the commentators started to focus on defeat, stating "For

the United States anything less than a medal here would have to be seen as failure" and finally, "The 2008 silver medalists have been defeated by Spain." Another example of failure is when a commentator said, "One more will pretty much kill off any hope of the Americans coming back."

During the men's games they seemed to be faced with urgency. For example, during the game against Australia the commentators said, "The United States needs a big score as they are starting to slip away" or "They are trying to get back into shape, but currently trailing." While the men were playing the comments were negative. For example, while discussing the men's team there were comments made about their "inability to execute" or "You are fighting against yourself sometimes."

In contrast, the women's 2012 Olympic team won the Gold Medal. 2012 was the year of women's water polo for America. The commentators discussed the history of the team in Olympic Games of the past. In the three times women's water polo was featured in the games, the United States women's team had medaled in every game, but had never won the gold medal. The past was looming over their heads and the commentators did not have any problem discussing this in detail. The semi-final game between the USA and Australia was very dramatic; going into double overtime to determine the winner. The winner of the game would go to the gold medal round. "The United States was dramatically beaten in the finals by the Netherlands four years ago." "This could be a case of history repeating itself, with Australia beating the United States as they did in the 2000 games." But in the end, the US team defeated Australia and continued on to the gold medal match. As the gold medal match began there was a continued discussion

about the past. "With the disappointment in Beijing are they going to put it behind them and emerge with the Gold?"

The difference between the men and women, is there was never any doubt of victory for the women. The commentators made multiple comments such as, "It's not getting any easier for Spain. The Gold Medal is slipping out of their hands." Probably one comment that expresses this the most was made in the first game the women played against Hungary. The female commentator said, "If I was a betting woman, I would put money on the United States for Gold." Even in the most difficult game the women faced, against Australia, in overtime the commentators said, "Time to go girls and let's not forget the effort they have already put in" and "The United States is on the verge, seconds away from claiming their spot in the Gold Medal Match."

As the games progressed, the emphasis was on the United States women and their abilities. "If the United States is going to win the gold medal they are determined to do it in style." "Everyone is playing their part for the United States. This is the biggest roar I have heard in the water polo arena." "The United States is nearly there. They deserve it with their overall domination of this match." As the women captured the gold, there was an overwhelming sense of relief presented by the commentators, "The United States, at last! It is gold for team United States!"

The majority of the comments made about the women's team were positive comments; filled with hope and the women's ability to win it all. The men received more negative comments. As the men's team started to struggle, the comments turned negative, with very little hope of recovery expressed.

*Frequency, Direction, Intensity and Space of Comments*

According to Neuman, frequency, direction, intensity, and space were important factors while conducting a content analysis (Neuman 2000). According to my findings, all four played an important role. Frequency meant how often something occurred. There were many indications of frequency. First, there was a difference between men's and women's games in the number of words used to describe the games. The women, overwhelmingly, received more play-by-play calling, the women's' names were called at a higher rate, and the commentators used more adjectives when calling the women's games.

Direction meant in what direction the content was moving: positive or negative. The women received a higher number of positive comments. There were more positive words used while the games were being called. There were also more positive comments made about the possibility of winning for the women's team. There were some negative comments but most were directed towards the men. However, the men did receive some positive comments about how they were playing. Also, words used during the men's games were more war/battle terminology, indicating the team going into battle with the other team.

Intensity meant the strength or power of the direction. During the men's games, the commentators used nouns and verbs to describe the games. Nouns and verbs have very high importance in sentence structure, meaning they have a stronger intensity. During the women's games there was a high number of adjectives used. Adjectives do not have as much importance in a sentence structure. Adjectives are there to explain the

nouns or pronouns. They have less intensity in the sentence. Battle and strike are more intense words than lovely and delightful. Also, the words used during the men's games were action words; they were aggressive words. During the women's games the commentators used more non-important or complacent words.

Space meant the size of the text or the amount of time spent on the specific team. The women's team received much more commentary than the men's team. There was a higher amount of play-by-play calling during the women's games. Also, the commentators spoke the women's names at a higher rate.

### Summary

According to my findings, the emphasis was not on gender, as in research of the past, but on winning. The fact that the men did not even get to the medal round was a big upset to the team and country, which the commentators discussed with ease. While the women were battling themselves and their past, they were able to overcome their odds and defeat the overarching question, will they ever win gold.

There were some clear distinctions along gender lines in the words used while describing the games. The men received military and aggressive descriptive words, while the women received more endearing, caring terms. Yet there were no visual differences in the way the games were show, and bodies displayed during the games.

Chapter Six

Discussion

For my research I conducted a content and visual analysis on five United States water polo matches that were played during the 2012 Summer Olympic Games. I tried to determine if there was a difference in the way the media displayed men's versus women's matches. I analyzed spoken words of the commentators during the games, as well as, camera techniques to see if there were any differences in the way the games were displayed.

I found that, in many ways the games were displayed and commented on in similar ways. There were no differences in the way the teams were visually displayed. Camera angles and shots were the same across gender lines. However, there were a few major differences: the words used while calling the games, the amount of play-by-play calling during the games, the number of times names were used during the games, and last the difference in the way the teams were discussed when talking about wins and losses. I will discuss these differences in more depth.

The language used during the games was clearly gendered. During the men's game, the commentators used war-like terms. Words such as strike, and attack were used in men's games but not in women's games. In contrast, the women were putting on a show for the crowd. The commentators described their actions with words such as lovely, delightful, and extraordinary. These findings are comparable to research findings done in the past. The commentators were clearly differentiating between the male and female teams by representing them in gendered ways (Segrave 2006). Past research has found

that women who participated in sports were subjected to sexualization of their bodies and constant gendering by commentators; talking about their family lives, marital status, and children (Duncan and Messner 1998). Even though there were no findings to support sexualization and only minimal comments were made about the athletes' personal lives, the commentators did differentiate gender through the way they called the games. As stated in past literature, commentators tend to use hesitant language when calling women's games, which is a way of undermining female athletes as well as maintaining the status quo (Segrave 2006). Men are the dominant gender in the sports world. When females participate, media tend to undermine and belittle female athletes. Even without sexualizing or undermining the female athletes, the commentators still made a clear distinction between the two genders in the way they spoke about the game. This is a way of maintaining the current hierarchy in the sports world, where men reside on top.

We can understand this finding better when we look at George Gerbner's cultivation theory. Gerbner stated that we learn our shared meanings through the media. The media displays the ideals of the dominant group, in this case men (Gerbner 1977). Media has been at the forefront of cultivating the cultural views of women's athletes. The media portray female athletes as being less important than male athletes. The difference in the way the commentators discussed the games in my study, and the terms they used maintained a clear distinction between men's and women's athletics.

There were gendered differences in the way the commentators discussed the games; however, they were less prevalent than in past research. I was unable to find sexualization of female athletes through visual images and through direct sexualized

words or phrases. These are predominant findings in past research. I believe this might be a small indication that gender inequality in sports might be changing.

As a society, we have become more accepting of female participation in sports. Our culture now sees women participate in male dominated sports, such as football, basketball, and boxing. The Title Nine program was established to achieve equality for female college athletes. It provided female athletes more opportunities at the elite level of sports. More women are now participating in sports than ever before. With the growing acceptance of female sports participation, there is also a growing amount of media coverage. However, female athletes are still not receiving the same amount of coverage as men. Male athletes receive the overwhelming majority of media coverage, written stories, and monetary funds.

Unlike research of the past, I found that female athletes' full and just last names were used more often than the men's. Duncan and Messner (1998) found that, while calling men's games, the commentators called the men by just their last name. This was an indication of respect. When calling women's games, the commentators would call the athletes by their first names or call them by first and last names. In my research, contrary to Duncan and Messner, I found that commentators' used the women's last names at a higher rate than the men's. Also, the commentators used the first and last or just the last names of the female athletes, rather than just their first names.

There was a large difference in the amount of play-by-play calling in the men's and women's games. The commentators called more play-by-play during the women's games than the men's games. These findings could indicate the importance of the games

or introducing the national viewers to relatively unfamiliar athletes. However, I believe these findings are related to winning, as well. The better the women played, the more media attention they received. When they entered the Olympic Games, they were already in the number one position, after winning the FINA World Championship in 2012. The team was expected to win the gold medal and had already gained media attention.

The way in which winning and losing were discussed was an important finding in my research. Winning at all cost has always been a vital aspect of American sports. The 'W' is all that matters. The men were expected to get to the medal rounds, which the team did not accomplish. This was a huge disappointment to the team, as well as to the country. Falling in line with research of the past, when discussing the men's defeat, it was attributed to the physical prowess of the opposing team. Placing the blame on the strength and power of the other team is a common theme we find in sports media. It is what we expect to hear when we listen to commentators talk about male teams' defeats. Because the other team is displaying more masculine traits, the seriousness of the horrible defeat is almost lessened.

It is important to understand that the men's tournament ran simultaneously with the women's tournament. However, the men's ran longer, due to the number of countries represented in the Games. There were twelve men's teams featured in the games versus eight women's teams. During the preliminary rounds, the United States men's team had been defeated twice, while the women had won all of their games (olympics.org 2013). The women had achieved Gold prior to the two men's games I analyzed. This could have negatively influenced the words used during the men's games. The women had already won everything, while the men were struggling just to stay in the tournament.

My study indicates that things in the sports media world could be changing. Female athletes are starting to become more respected and allowed in the sport nexus, especially if the women's team is winning. However, we have female athletes participating in a male appropriate sport and they are displaying masculine qualities while they are participating. While the women's water polo team was engaging in these two scenarios, the media did not sexualize them to the degree to which it had in the past. However, at what cost are female athletes being accepted? Is it at the cost of femininity? Female athletes are expected to display masculine traits while participating in masculine sports. Once they show their femininity, they are seen as weak in these male appropriate sports. It is perfectly acceptable in the eyes of sports media for femininity to be demonstrated in female appropriate sports such as figure skating and gymnastics. Feminine qualities may even make men more successful in these sports. Yet this statement does not hold true when discussing male appropriate sports.

Findings of this study support many points of Burstyn's theory: media is becoming more accepting of female athletes because they are becoming more like men. The female athletes were more welcomed and received more media attention in my study. The women were also participating in a male appropriate sport and displaying masculine traits in the pool. In response, media is treating them like men. Female athletes' participation in male appropriate sports is changing their gender socialization at a young age. Femininity as we know it, as we are taught through socialization, is changing for these women. As women start to participate in sports at a younger age, they are, in turn, being introduced to these masculine traits. I would argue just as young boys learn these masculine traits, young girls start to develop these traits before they even enter into the

big leagues of American sports. Young girls are held to these masculine ideals even at a young age. Today, we see coed teams for sports like soccer and baseball, both of which are consider male appropriate sports. The young girls have to compete directly against their male counterparts. Essentially, the beginning the young girls are being socialized to be men while participating in sports. This trend then continues as they continue their participation in sports.

Burstyn (1999) argues that this is a negative development. She says women need to rise up and continue to be the cooperative and compassionate women of the past (Burstyn 1999). However, some could see this as a beneficial change to society because of the progress women are making in a masculine world.

The findings of this study might have been different if the games had not been on an international level. The teams were representing a country and this could have added pressure to win. Performing on an international stage adds focus and pressure for the team to perform. The women were expected to win but had caved under pressure on the Olympic stage before. In 2012, the women were winning and in style. They were giving the country the hope of winning a Gold Medal while the men were disappointing the country. Since the women were performing better than the men, this could have decreased the sexualization of the female water polo athletes and turned them into the heroes.

The focus was on the women's team. Excitement and respect were earned by their victories. The first game against Hungary (W1) was the first time viewers got to see the women's team perform at this international level, and they came in strong. The dynamic

of the media and the words changed. The team became important. The team had earned the respect of the commentators, which is why a higher number of names and more play-by-play calling were used. As the games continued, the men continued to struggle, while the women continued being successful. The media always focus on winning teams. This is another reason I believe the women received this positive coverage.

My study shows there are changes taking place in the sports arena. In a world that was dominated by men we are seeing growing acceptance of women participating in sports. Rather than being trivialized, women are now receiving more attention and respect than in the past. This is especially true for a winning women's team. However, this study shows there are still gender differences. These differences may not be as prevalent as the past, but they are still present. Female athletes still have to make leaps to become equal to men in the sports world. Women are still receiving significantly less air time and media coverage than their male counterparts. The media is still perpetuating ideals of male superiority. Through the lack of media coverage, female sports are still not of major interest to our culture.

A way to expand on my research would be to study different countries and their media coverage of male and female sports. The United States is a country with strong masculine ideals, but not all countries are as strongly influenced by masculine ideals. It would be interesting to compare and contrast the United States with other countries with different ideals. Would the female athletes still be expected to display masculine traits to be successful?

Last, California is the mecca of water polo. In some parts of the state water polo is as important as football and basketball. I believe another good way to expand on my research would be to study sports media in the current home of water polo. It would be interesting to see how women water polo players are portrayed in sports media. Are female water polo players receiving a lesser amount of coverage than their male counterparts? Are men's water polo programs receiving a larger amount of money than the women's programs?

This research is important to sports sociology and society overall because it points to a change which is slowly happening in the sports arena. Female athletes are becoming more accepted in male appropriate sports; however, they are being held to the same masculine standards. Therefore, as Burstyn (1999) argued, female athletes are starting to display masculine traits while participating in these sports. This is an important finding to remember as we start to understand female athletes in this new age of sports. The research also indicates some of the existing inequalities and gender stereotypes that are still present in sports.

The American culture is a culture which exemplifies masculinity. The masculine qualities of strength, assertiveness, power, success, and more are widespread and are what we strive for in our society. The sports arena mirrors United States' culture. For future research, it would be interesting to see if women are expected to display masculine qualities in other arenas that are typically, or in the past have been male dominated. For example, as lawyers or doctors. In the past, these two positions were dominated by men. Now more women than men are going to law school, and women are entering into high

prestige masculine jobs. It would be interesting to see if these women are displaying masculine qualities.

There are many different ways to expand on this research. Women have made great progress in the sports arena. Female athletes have more opportunities than ever to participate in sports at elite levels. Yet, women have not gained equal attention from sports media and society. Female athletes are still second to their male counterparts. However, this study proves that female athletes are taking steps in a positive direction toward equality.

REFERENCES

Anderson, Eric. 2005. In the game:Gay athletes and the Cult of Masculinity. Albany, NY;

    The State University of New York.

Babbie, Earl. 2005. The Research of Social Research. Belmont, CA: Thomas Wadsworth.

Berg, Bruce. 2007. Qualitative Research Methods for the Social Sciences. Boston, MA:

    Pearson.

Billings, Andrew. 2008. Olympic Media: Inside the Biggest Show on Television.

    Routledge, New York: NY.

Bissell, Kimberly and Andrea Duke. 2007. Bump, Set, Spike: An Analysis of

    Commentary and Camera Angles of Women's Beach Volleyball During the 2004

    Summer Olympics. Haworth Press.

Bissell, Kimberly and LR Smith. 2013. "Let's (Not) Talk Sex: An Analysis of the Verbal

    and Visual Coverage of the Women's Beach Volleyball during the 2008 Olympic

    Games." *Journal of Sports Media* 8 (2): 1-30.

Blogs.sacbee.com/preps/archives/2012/08/survey-says-cif.html. 2012. Web retrieved 6

    December 2012.

Brookes, Rod. 2002. Representing Sport. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Bryson, Lois. 1990. "Challenges to Male Hegemony in Sport." in *Sport, Men, and The*

    *Gender Order: Critical Feminist Perspectives*. edited by Michael Messner and

    Donald Sabo. Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics Books.

Burstyn, Varda. 1999. The Rites of Men; Manhood, Politics, and the Culture of Sport. Toronto, Canada: University of Toronto Press.

Coakley, Jay. 2009. Sports in Society: Issues and Controversies. New York, NY: McGraw – Hill.

Collegiatewaterpolo.org. 2012. Web retrieved 6 December 2012.

Collegewaterpolocoach.org. 2012. Web retrieved 6 December 2012.

Connell, Raewyn. 1990. "An Iron Man: The Body and Some Contradictions of Hegemonic Masculinity." in *Sport, Men, and The Gender Order: Critical Feminist Perspectives*. edited by Michael Messner and Donald Sabo. Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics Books.

Creedon, Pamela. 1994. "Women, Media and Sport: Creating and Reflecting Gender Values." in *Women media and Sports: Challening Gender Values.* edited by Pamela Creedon. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Davis, Kelly and C.A. Tuggle. 2012. "A Gender Analysis of NBC's Coverage of the 2008 Summer Olympics." *Electronic News* 6 (2):51-66.

Duncan, Margaret and Michael Messner. 1998. "The Media Image of Sport and Gender" Pp. 170-185 in *Media Sport,* edited by Lawrence Wenner. New York, NY: Routledge.

Eitzen, Stanley and George H Sage. 2003. Sociology of North America Sport. New York, NY: McGraw Hill.

Feminist.org/sports/olympics.asp. 2013. Web retrieved 12 August 2013.

Forums.xkcd.com/viewtopic.php?f=25&t=16772. 2008. Web retrieved 26 February 2014.

Gerbner, George. 1997. "Comparative Cultural Indicatiors."Pp. 199-206 in *Mass Media Policies in Changing Cultures*, edited by George Gerbner. New York, NY: John Wiley & Sons.

Hall, M. Ann. 1990. "How Should We Theorize Gender in the Context of Sport?" in *Sport, Men, and The Gender Order: Critical Feminist Perspectives*. edited by Michael Messner and Donald Sabo. Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics Books.

Hall, Stuart. 1997. "The Work of Representation." Pp. 13-74 in *Representation: Cultural Representation and Signifying Practices,* edited by Stuart Hall. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Heywood, Leslie and Shari Dworkin. 2003. Built to Win: The Female Athlete as Cultural Icon. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.

Knapp, Gwen. 2013. From Superficial Comments come Beautiful Response. In USA Today. 9 July 2013.

Koivula, N. 1999. "Sport Participation: Differences in Motivation and Actual participation Due to Gender Typing." *Journal of Sport Behavior* 22(3):360-380.

MacFadyen, Heather. 2014. http://www.uottawa.ca. Web retrieved 26 February 2014.

Messner, Michael. 2007. Out of Play. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.

Messner, Michael. 2002. Taking the Field; Women, Men, and Sports. Minneapolis, MN:
University of Minnesota.

Messner, Michael. 1992. Power at Play: Sports and the Problem of Masculinity. Boston,
MA: Beacon Press Books.

McDonagh, Eileen and Laura Pappano. 2008. Playing with the Boys: Why Separate is
Not Equal in Sports. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Morse, Margaret. "Sports on Television: Replay and Display" in *Television: Critical*
*Concepts in media and Cultural Studies* edited by Toby Miller 2003, Routledge
New York: NY.

Newell, Robert. 2001. "Negotiating Gender in USA Today: A Critical Feminist Analysis
of Newspaper Coverage of the 1999 FIFA Women's World Cup" Seattle, WA:
The University of Washington.

Neuman, W Lawrence. 2000. Socil Research Methods: Qualitative and Quantitative
Approaches. Needham Heights; MA, A Pearson Education Company.

Npr.org/. 2013. Web retrieved 12 August 2013.

Polney, Megan. 2012. "Gendered Representation of College Athletes: A Content
Analysis of Newspaper Coverage of March Madness"

Segrave, Jeffrey and Katherine McDowell, James King. 2006. "Language, Gender and
Sport: A review of the Research Literature." in *Sport, Rhetoric and Gender*
*Historical Perpectives and Media Representation* Edited by Linda Fuller. New
York,NY: Palgrace Macmillan

Shepard, Jon. 2012. Sociology. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, Cengage Learning.

Tyler, Melissa and Pamela Abbott, Claire Vallace. 1990. An Introduction to Sociology: Feminist Perspectives. New York: NY, Routledge.

Trujillo, Nick. 2000. "Hegemonic Masculinity on the Mound: Media Representations of Nolan Ryan and American Sports Culture." Pp. 14-39 in *Reading Sports Critical Essays on Power and Representation*. Edited by Susan Birrell and Mary McDonald. Ann Arbor, MI: Edwards Brothers.

Ott, Steve. 2012. Sports.yahoo.come/news/. *2012 Olympic Venue Guide: Water Polo Arena*. Web retrieved 6 December 2013.

Usawaterpolo.org. 2013. Web retrieved 6 December 2013.

Youtube.com. 2014. Web retrieved 23 March 2014.

APPENDIX A

URL's to Games

- Women's USA vs. Hungary (http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p5GaLlvvw4c-)

- Women's USA vs. Australia (http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8HHOgcmjuD8)

- Women's USA vs Spain (http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ysSkHgKGJ7U)

- Men's USA vs Australia (http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GfnLSHS7FB)

- Men's USA vs Spain (http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VFtm3gTx5EM)

APPENDIX B

Words Used During the Games

| M- USA vs AUS | M- USA vs. ESP | W-USA vs AUS | W-USA vs ESP | W- USA vs HUNG |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| #of times-6 | 3 | 3 | 6 | 7 |
| F&L- 18 | 16 | 45* | 26 | 63+ |
| Last-33 | 22 | 72 | 54 | 57 |

- * 25 just Maggie Steffins
- +Introduction of each player by first and last name

| M- USA vs AUS | M- USA vs. ESP | W- USA vs AUS | W- USA vs ESP | W- USA vs HUNG |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Strong- U=3/A=1 | Strong- s=1 | Leader- u=3 | Strong-u=1/s=1 | Strong- u=6/H=7 |
| Powerful- U=1 | Leader- u=1 | Size-u=1 | Leader- u=1 | Confident- u=3 |
| Leader- U=2/A=1 | Quick- u=/S=3 | Experience- u=3 | Size- u=1 | Powerful- u=1/h-1 |
| Skillful- U=1 | Experience- s=1 | Quick- u=3 | Intelligent-u=2 | Leader-u=1 |
| Stamina- U=1 | Effort- u=2 | Patient-a=1 | Quick- u=2 | Size- u=2/H-1 |
| Athletic ability- U=1 | Important- s=2 | | Experienced- u=2 | Skillful- u=5/h-2 |
| Aggressive- U=1 | A beast- s=1 | | | Intelligent- u=1 |
| Intelligent- U=1 | | | | Experience-u- 5/h-4 |
| Physical- U=1 | | | | Control u-1 |
| Force- U=1 | | | | Dangerous-u- 1 |
| Management- U=1/A- 2 | | | | Threat u-1 |
| Position- U=1 | | | | Man-up u-1 |
| Contact- u=1 | | | | Fast quick- u- 7 |
| Tactic- u=1 | | | | Tussel- u-1 |
| Control- A=4 | | | | Talent- u-1 |
| Battle- U=4 | | | | Dominate- h-1 |
| Execute- u=2 | | | | |
| Quick- u=1 | | | | |
| Looking for Support- u=1 | | | | |
| Lucky- u=1 | | | | |
| ADJETIVES | | | | |

| Perfect- 1 | Easy-1 | Easy-1 | Fantastic-1 | Phenomenal-1 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Fantastic-1 | Well taken 1 | Delighted -2 | Impressive-1 | Brilliant- 3 |
| Tremendous-6 | Denied-2 | Good- 3 | Terrific-3 | Great- 6 |
| Strike- 7 | Good-5 | Taking advantage-1 | Brilliant-2 | Lovely- 24 |
| Unleash- 1 | Brilliant-2 | What a "finish or save"2 | Lovely- 2 | Fantastic- 1 |
| Gyrations- 1 | Good save- 9 | Excellent- 3 | Delicious- 1 | A joy-1 |
| Incredible- 1 | YES!- 1 | A little better- 1 | Exceptional-1 | Nice move-1 |
| Good- 7 | Superb- 2 | Fabulous-1 | Delightful-1 | Good- 8 |
| Well taken- 1 | Terrific-1 | Fine-1 | Excellent- 2 | Perfect- 1 |
| Important- 2 | Pretty unlucky- 2 | Super-1 | Wonderful-2 | On fire- 1 |
| Attack -4 | Power puff goals-1 | Lovely-3 | Magnificent- 1 | In the grove- 1 |
| Great- 2 | Disappointing- 1 | Great- 11 | Great-3 | Bust her way- 1 |
| Good "save"- 7 | | Fantastic-2 | Better-1 | Fine-1 |
| Taking opportunity- 1 | | Extrodinary-2 | Extrodinary-1 | Suburb- 1 |
| Couldn't control- 1 | | Impressive-1 | Determind-1 | On the mark-1 |
| Disappointed 2 | | Brilliant-5 | Good effort- 1 | Denied- 2 (-) |
| Frustration- 1 | | Splendid-1 | Splendid- 1 | Frustrated- 3 |
| Whipping- 1 | | Exceptional-1 | Glum faces- 1 | Annoyed-1 |
| Wicked- 2 | | Surrenduring- 1 | Misunderstanding- 1 | Disappointed- 2 |
| | | Sloppy-1 | Disbelieving looks- 1 | Crowded out- 1 |
| | | Penalized- 2 | Disjointed-1 | Smothered-1 |
| | | | Inexperience- 1 | |

APPENDIX C

Visual Results

| | M –USA vs AUS | M- USA vs. ESP | W-USA vs. AUS | W-USA vs. ESP | W-USA vs. HUNG |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Field of View | | | | | |
| Long | 75 | 75 | 77 | 74 | 78 |
| Medium | 89 | 87 | 89 | 90 | 93 |
| Close | | | | | |
| Camera Angle | | | | | |
| Eye-Level | 16 | 16 | 18 | 17 | 20 |
| From Above | | | | | |
| From Below | 5 | 6 | 6 | 7 | 5 |
| Special Effects * | | | | | |
| Slow Motion | 29 | 27 | 33 | 30 | 36 |
| Replay | 30 | 31 | 37 | 34 | 40 |
| Body Parts Shown | | | | | |
| Face | | | | | |
| Upper Body | | | | | |
| Lower Body | | | | | |
| Behind | | | | | |
| Female Breast vs. Men's Chest | | | | | |

* Directly affected by shots on goal and goals scored.

Coding Sheet- Spoken Words

Date:

Game:

Lead Commentator and co-commentator

## General

How many times do they say men/women?

Do the commentators say the full name of the players?

First                                    First and Last                                    Last

## Personal

Personal- Non-athletic portion of the athlete's life (Open-Code)

Personality- Athletes personality traits (Open-Code)

Looks and appearance- Mention of athlete's physical appearance not associated with the sport (Open-Code)

## Typical Female Traits

Child Terms- Any mention of the athlete's being discussed in child-like terms (boys, girls, kid, immature, young lady, teenager, rookie) (Open-Code)

Sexual Objectification- Any mention of athletes' which would be considered sexually suggestive

Stereotypical feminine traits (Open-Code)

Passive                 Emotional                Self-Critical            Graceful/Elegant

## Typical Male Traits

Stereotypical male traits (Open-Code)

Assertive               Confident                Non-emotional            Strong

Powerful                Leader                   Big Size                 Skillful

## Sports Information

Sports Struggles- Any content describing difficulty of achieving popularity in the public eye or facing adversity growing up.  (Open-Code)

Sports victories/ Defeats- Any mention of how the team obtained victories or were defeated (Open-Code)

| Positive Consonance | Negative Consonance |
|---|---|
|  |  |

APPENDIX E

Coding Sheet- Visual

## Field of view

Long

Medium

Close

## Camera Angle

Eye-Level

From Above

From Below

## Special Effects

Slow/Fast Motion

Replay

## Body Parts Shown

Face

Upper Body

Lower Body

Behind

Female Breast                                    Men's Chest