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REPRESENTATIONS OF WOMEN IN SOUTH AFRICAN TELEVISION SPORTS BROADCASTING

by

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A dissertation submitted in the Department of Multimedia Design, Faculty of Art, Design and Architecture, University of Johannesburg, in fulfilment of the requirements for the Degree of Magister Artium (Design)

May 2018

Supervisor: Dr Anthony Ambala
Co-supervisor: Dr Ruth Lipschitz

University of Johannesburg
DECLARATION

I declare that this dissertation is, unless otherwise indicated, my own work. It is submitted in fulfilment of the Degree of Magister Artium (Design) in the Department of Multimedia Design, Faculty of Art, Design and Architecture, University of Johannesburg. This dissertation has not been submitted by me to another institution to obtain a research diploma or degree.

________________________
Tania Vorster

1 May 2018 ______________________
Date
DEDICATION

In loving memory of Tannie Leize and Tannie Reinet,
angels who were gone too soon.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am grateful to God for the good health and wellbeing necessary to complete this dissertation.

I would like to thank my dissertation supervisor, Dr Anthony Ambala, and co-supervisor, Dr Ruth Lipschitz. Both provided me with endless support and guidance during the highs and lows of writing this dissertation. Their office doors were always open and they were ever willing to help if I hit a roadblock, needed a push in the right direction or simply asked to have a quick chat about my work.

My gratitude also goes to Patrick Healy, at the Postgraduate Centre, who helped proofread and edit my initial work, and made suggestions about what the dissertation was lacking and which areas needed to be refined or reworked. He also often gave me English lessons during sessions which saw my writing capabilities improve immensely in just six months.

Thank you to Elsa Crous for proofreading and editing the final version of this dissertation.

Lastly, I would like to thank the people I love most in this world: my mother, father, sisters and husband. While Dr Ambala, Dr Lipschitz and Mr Healy guided me through the writing of this dissertation, my family supported me with endless love and patience.
ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to conduct a critical comparative analysis of representations of women in South African television sports broadcasting. The research draws on the ideas of seminal feminist authors such as Laura Mulvey, Judith Butler and bell hooks, to critically examine the complexities of how television broadcasts represent sportswomen and female sports presenters. The analysis focuses on visual strategies such as camerawork and film speed, as well as the ideological inflections of a patriarchal postapartheid society in dialogue.

The first theme interrogates the camera’s gaze in the field of play. Here, the focus is on the manipulation of shot speed, shot framing and shot selection during the selected matches. The second theme of the analysis deals with absences in women’s sports broadcasting, which includes an analysis of the absence of female match commentators, experts and match officials, as well as the limited broadcasting time allocated to women’s sport and what these factors suggest about women in sports broadcasting. The third theme investigates the role of women in in-studio match analyses, in which two shows are critically analysed. The intention here is to interrogate how the camera frames female sports presenters, while comparing the role these women play and the degree of acknowledgement they receive during talk shows. The fourth and final theme focuses on commentating during women’s sports broadcasting, by engaging with commentating during a women’s rugby match.

The selected case studies include the Confederation of African Football (CAF) Women’s Olympic Qualifying Tournament (as broadcast by SABC 1, a South African Broadcasting Corporation channel), the Hong Kong and Shanghai Banking Corporation (HSBC) World Rugby Women’s Sevens series (broadcast on SuperSport 5), and the in-studio rugby talk show, First Fifteen (FirstXV) (broadcast on SuperSport 1).

The research and findings do not seek to focus on why women are represented in a certain manner in South African television sports broadcasting. Rather, the primary aim here is to examine how these women are represented, and how such
representation is reinforced by the camera’s gaze and through (scripted and unscripted) dialogue.

While the theories of Mulvey, Butler and hooks all fall within the sphere of mainstream film, the analyses and findings of this study suggest that those authors’ arguments are, in fact, applicable to twenty-first-century sports broadcasting.

**Key words:** objectification, reiteration, representation, the male gaze, women’s sports broadcasting
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<td>Confederation of African Football</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DStv</td>
<td>digital satellite television</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FIFA</td>
<td>Fédération Internationale de Football Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IAAF</td>
<td>International Association of Athletics Federations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HSBC</td>
<td>Hong Kong and Shanghai Banking Corporation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LGBTI</td>
<td>lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and/or intersex</td>
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<tr>
<td>SABC</td>
<td>South African Broadcasting Corporation</td>
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<td>SARU</td>
<td>South African Rugby Union</td>
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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the study
This dissertation engages with the on-screen representation of South African sportswomen. The argument made here is that their representation cannot be addressed without understanding phallocentric conventions and attempts by that domain to ‘deal’ with women who supposedly ‘invade’ the masculine realm of sport. This is especially the case with sports that are traditionally associated with men, such as soccer and rugby. The primary research delves into the ways in which women – both as athletes on the soccer pitches and rugby fields, and as presenters of in-studio talk shows – are represented on television. The research follows a qualitative approach, to arrive at a critical understanding of how integrated women truly are, in sporting spheres around the world. Along with theories derived from the works of bell hooks (2016; 2009; 2000), Laura Mulvey (1975) and Judith Butler (1993; 1990), this approach will serve as a framework for arguments put forward during an analysis of a number of case studies.

By bringing feminist interventions in the politics of representation into the domain of sports broadcasting, this research focuses on the visual and verbal organisation of a phallocentric world, and considers the ways in which it is both reproduced and interrupted. The undertaking is contextualised through an analysis of several case studies, which focus on two sporting codes – women’s soccer and women’s rugby – and two broadcasters – the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC) (its channel 1, in particular) and SuperSport (channels 1 and 5 respectively).

1.2 Research questions
Four main research questions are addressed in this dissertation. How are female sports personalities (athletes and sports presenters) represented on the South African public service broadcaster, the SABC, compared to the privately owned terrestrial pay television broadcaster, SuperSport? What is the extent of these women’s participation in the broadcasts? To what degree are female sports

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1 John Paul (2015:402) asserts that there is a stereotype that men ‘naturally’ fit into a sporting role, while women do not. Contentiously, Cassandra Oggunniyi (2013:53) argues that heterosexual women do not participate in sport, as it is a space where only homosexual women belong.
presenters present and to what extent do they actively contribute to in-studio sports talk shows featured on the SABC and SuperSport, and how are these women represented? How are female athletes framed and constructed by both the camera and male commentators in sports broadcasting on the SABC and SuperSport respectively?

1.3 Aims and objectives

Here, the aim is to undertake a comparative study of how women are represented by each of the broadcasters, the SABC and SuperSport, rather than interrogating why their representations appear as they do. This study acknowledges that both questions are intricately related and that South Africa’s broadcasting history plays a role in how representations are constructed in contemporary times. The intention is to unearth significant insights into the way women are presently represented, based on a critical textual analysis of televised footage.

The objectives of the research include

- probing the presence or absence of women in in-studio sports talk shows on the SABC and SuperSport, and when they are present, analysing their role in, and their impact on, the broadcasting process.²

- analysing how the camera frames and represents female sports personalities (such as athletes and presenters) to the viewers during televised sports events.

1.4 Rationale and motivation

According to Clotilde Talleu (2011:5), gender equality in sport exists by law, yet is not widely practised. Looking at the topic from a different angle, Roy Randen (2015:sp) states that soccer and rugby are amongst South Africans’ top three most popular sports, generating huge sums of money for the economy, yet upon closer scrutiny it is evident that in this country not much research is being done on women’s participation in those sporting codes.

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² The phrase ‘women in sports’, as employed in this context, includes the presenters.
In an article written for the online news network, IOL, Kamcilla Pillay (2015) concedes that although South African women have been successful in soccer, which is considered to be a male-dominated sport, not enough research has been done in the field of rugby, thus there is insufficient evidence to show whether female rugby players are equally successful.

Talleu (2011:5) justifies the value of filling the research gap by arguing that sport has the ability to unify countries, despite differences in culture, race and gender. In this respect, Talleu (2011:5) mentions the existing misconception that women who take part in male-dominated sports are tomboys. News24 (2013) reports that nearly 20 years after South Africa became a democratic country, there are still gender constraints in male-dominated sports, specifically in sports administration. According to News24 (2013), there are no women on the executive committee of the South African Rugby Union (SARU). Yet Robert Chappell (2005) wonders why, given that South African women’s soccer and rugby teams are very successful, these women still have to fight for their rightful place at all levels in all sporting disciplines.

Given the above argument, this dissertation will add to the existing knowledge by looking at the stereotypes around women’s participation in male-dominated sports from a broadcasting point of view, not only focusing on the athletes but also on commentators and presenters within the codes of soccer and rugby.

1.5 Chapter outline
Chapter one is dedicated to introducing the research questions, aims and objectives, rationale and motivation for this study.

Chapter two encompasses a review of seminal texts which can be used to support the research objectives. This chapter outlines the literature that supports an interrogation of women’s representation in sports broadcasting in South Africa. After discussing women’s participation in rugby and soccer, a review is undertaken of background literature to the study of sportswomen, as represented in the media, to unravel the sociological perspectives of gender in sport and why women stereotypically do not fit into sporting roles. Statistics pertaining to the broadcasting time allocated to women’s sports are presented to support the argument that such
sporting events receive far less coverage than those featuring men. In addition, commentary during a women’s match and the way it might differ from a men’s match will be integrated into the findings. The presence of women in sporting roles will be discussed to determine whether they are as actively present as male sports broadcasters are, how the involvement of women in reporting positions play a role in empowering women in sport, and how the media and broadcasters (inadvertently or not) ensure that women’s sports remain less popular. These arguments will lead into the next section, which deals with how power manifests itself in sport. The chapter ends with a review of the literature that focuses on women in relation to sports and how the question of female representation is addressed in the broadcasting sphere.

In chapter three, a theoretical framework is proposed through which to locate the research analysis of the role and place of women in sports broadcasting. This chapter critically engages with key theorists (hooks 2000; Butler 1990; Mulvey 1975) in the fields of feminist media studies and gender studies, whose ideas provide an analytical lens through which to peruse the selected case studies. This section highlights a feminist analysis of power and possible opportunities for intervention in its patriarchal – or what Butler (1990) calls “heteronormative” – effects, whereas Mulvey’s (1975) analysis of the male gaze relies heavily on psychoanalysis. While Butler’s (1990) writing is also informed by psychoanalysis, her texts emphasise the social pressures of gender and its working on the body. Hooks (2000), in turn, discusses the system of patriarchy. Collectively, these theorists aim to examine those patriarchal structures which engender female oppression, so as to dismantle, disturb and challenge embodied relations of power, race, class and capital.

Chapter four investigates the methods implemented in an attempt to respond to the research question of how South Africa’s female athletes and presenters are represented on the public service broadcaster, SABC 1, compared to content aired on the private terrestrial pay television broadcast channels, SuperSport 1 and SuperSport 5, and the extent of the women’s participation in these broadcasts. This is followed by a discussion of the case studies and a motivation for their applicability, after which an outline is given of the theories applied during the data analysis.
Chapter five includes an in-depth analysis into, and interrogation of, the case studies. This analysis of female athletes and presenters in rugby and soccer focuses on four themes: 1) ‘The camera’s gaze in the field of play’, where the focus is on the manipulation of shot speed, shot framing and shot selection during selected matches; 2) ‘Absences in women’s sports broadcasting’, which interrogates the absence of female match commentators, experts and match officials, as well as the limited screen time allocated to women’s sports and what these factors suggest about the broadcasting of women’s sports; 3) ‘Women in in-studio match analyses’, in which two shows are critically analysed with the intention of studying how the camera frames female sports presenters, and comparing the role the women play and the degree of acknowledgement they receive during talk shows; and 4) ‘Commentating during women’s sports broadcasting’ which engages with scripted or unscripted banter or discourse during a women’s rugby match.

Chapter six concludes with the findings of the analysis and the results gleaned from an interrogation of the case studies.
CHAPTER TWO: BACKGROUND AND REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.1 Introduction
This chapter reviews a number of seminal texts which are closely related to the research topic. The chapter begins by reviewing the literature that frames the arguments for research into the representation of women in sports broadcasting within the South African context. This is done by outlining two articles that question sportswomen’s sexuality, written by Julia Madibogo (2016) and Cassandra Ogunniyi (2013). The former article, for instance, focuses on the South African athlete, Caster Semenya, who, amongst others, has been misrepresented or stereotyped following questions about her gender and masculine appearance. Women in rugby, soccer and cricket are discussed by making reference to Maria Len-Ríos and Earnest Perry (2015), Katerina Tovia (2014), Fiona Gill (2007) and others who theorise on athletes’ everyday struggles in sport because of their gender.

The chapter then reviews background literature to the study of sportswomen as represented by the media, to determine whether the latter influence the way the former are represented to the world (see Vann 2014). David Karen and Robert Washington’s (2015) discussion on the sociological perspectives of gender in sport and why women stereotypically do not fit into sporting roles are also incorporated, to provide context to the study. John Paul’s (2015) arguments are included to contextualise the visibility sportswomen are afforded, and how their (in)visibility is influenced by male hegemony in sport. Dave Zirin (2015) offers statistics pertaining to the broadcasting time allocated to women’s sports, in support of the argument that female athletes receive far less coverage than their male counterparts do. In addition, Margaret Duncan's (2005) text on commentary during a women’s match and the way it might differ from what is naturally expected during a men’s match, are interrogated. The presence of women in sporting roles is discussed to determine whether they are as actively present as men, by making reference to Barbara Coventry’s (2004) text on sexual discrimination in the workplace, followed by the same author’s breakdown of statistics regarding the minimal number of women in influential positions across sporting codes. Two of Bradley Schultz’s (2002) texts on women in sports broadcasting are included to contextualise the importance of women in sport; how female reporters help to empower women in sport, but also
how the media and broadcasters contribute to make women’s sports less popular. These arguments lead into the next section, which casts a spotlight on power and its diverse manifestations in sport.

The chapter ends with a review of the literature that focuses on women in relation to sports, and how their representations manifest within the broadcasting sphere. Mulvey’s (1975) theory of the gaze is briefly discussed, as are Margaret Olin’s (1996) views, derived from engaging with Mulvey’s work. Lucia Saks’ (2010) text on cultural representation in South Africa and Paul’s (2015) exploration of the representation of women in sports foreground the portrayal of women, which leads to questions about power and its multiple manifestations. The chapter draws on Michel Foucault’s (1982) conceptualisation of power as knowledge and its discursive operation, in order to address the work of power in and through representation. As supporting texts, the works of Sara Mills (2003) and Robert Lapsley and Michael Westlake (1988) serve to enhance Foucault’s (1982) theory of power as knowledge.

Even though Mulvey’s (1975), Butler’s (1990) and hooks’ (2000) publications differ in terms of their approach, all are grounded in a feminist analysis of power and opportunities for intervention in patriarchal – or “heteronormative” (Butler 1990) – effects. Mulvey’s analysis of the male gaze (1975) relies heavily on psychoanalysis, while Butler’s (1990) concerns are more informed by the social pressures of gender and its effects on the body, and hooks (2000) deals with various manifestations of patriarchy. Feminism analyses the ways in which, under patriarchy, power is socially, structurally and psychoanalytically the purview of men. It aims to examine how patriarchal structures entrench the oppression of women, with a view to dismantling, disturbing and challenging their embodied relations of power, race, class and capital – a quest which Mulvey (1975), Butler (1990) and hooks (2000), amongst many others, have in common.

2.2 Review of background literature to the study

In her text on social perceptions of sportswomen’s sexuality, Ogunniyi (2013:53) calls attention to the commonplace belief that when women take part in male-dominated sports, their sexuality can and should be questioned. Ogunniyi (2013:53) elaborates that these sportswomen are generally referred to explicitly as lesbians,
even if such labelling is untrue. According to Ogunniyi (2013:53), the idea that women in sport are likely to be homosexual can be traced back to the 1930s, when heterosexual women did not participate in sport – it was deemed the purview of homosexual women. Ogunniyi (2013:53) mentions the term “pseudo-men” – a label often given to women taking part in sport since “they are not fully male due to their biological bodies, but are not fully female due to the physical engagement with a masculine sport”.

This questioning of their sexuality soon shifted to a questioning of female athletes’ gender (Ogunniyi 2013:53). Madibogo (2016:[sp]) recalls a number of incidents where female athletes’ gender was questioned, based on their above-average performance in their chosen sporting code. An example is the world-renowned track athlete, Caster Semenya, whose media identity is still largely shaped by arguments and suppositions about her gender, rather than her talent. This came hot on the heels of a medical examination, after the 2009 International Association of Athletics Federations (IAAF) World Championship, where tests revealed that Semenya’s testosterone levels were higher than those of most women (Madibogo 2016:[sp]). As was the case with Semenya, Indian athlete Dutee Chand was disqualified from the 2012 Olympics after medical examinations found high levels of testosterone in her bloodwork (Madibogo 2016:[sp]). Semenya and Chand were both allowed to take part in the 2016 Olympics in Brazil, yet at the time of their participation speculation was rife amongst the media (and their respective competitors) as to their true gender (Madibogo 2016:[sp]).

Madibogo (2016:[sp]) concedes that Semenya and Chand are not the first athletes to have their gender questioned based on elevated testosterone levels. In 1938, German athlete Dora Ratjen was arrested shortly after winning a gold medal at the European Athletics Championships in Austria – she was charged with fraud, for being a man masquerading as a woman (Madibogo 2016:[sp]). In 2005, the Indian athlete, Santi Soundarajan, was disqualified from the winter Olympics after failing a gender verification test (Madibogo 2016:[sp]). As Madibogo (2016:[sp]) recounts, the list includes a handful of female athletes from around the globe, representing various sporting disciplines, who had the world focusing on their biology rather than their athletic ability.
The points which Madibogo (2016) and Ogunniyi (2013) make, become even more critical in relation to rugby which, as a contact sport, is deemed by many to be a masculine pastime and not suitable for participation by the “fairer sex” (Tovia 2014:1). Many of the daily challenges which women in rugby face, can be firmly related to the aforementioned stereotype (Tovia 2014:1)

Tovia’s (2014:1) writing outlines the social norms that play a role in labelling rugby as a masculine sport which demands physical strength not traditionally associated with females or femininity. With research based on women’s rugby in New Zealand, Tovia (2014) highlights the challenges these players face, including the limited popularity of this branch of the game – this, despite the fact that women have been playing rugby since 1891. The idea of women challenging the status quo, by deviating from what is generally regarded as stereotypical femininity through taking part in rough-and-tumble games, is frowned upon by many societies (Tovia 2014:3). Tovia’s (2014:21) findings show that women are encouraged to rather take up netball as a sport and leave rugby to the “big boys”. Also, women in New Zealand rugby face the same obstacles regarding their representation in the media as women in most Western societies do, by being depicted as either masculine or highly sexualised, with broadcasters struggling to find ways to slot these athletes into predetermined sporting niches (Tovia 2014:13).

Gill (2007:418) centres her research on women in English–Scottish rugby, who challenge the status quo and the manner in which they are stigmatised by society because of it. According to Gill (2007:418), one of the stereotypes regarding violence in rugby seeks to exclude women and femininity from its sphere. It buys into the notion that being a woman comes with being labelled as vulnerable to violence, and specifically sexual violence. Gill (2007:418) suggests that there is a sub-textual implication to commentary which has it that, since most women do not have the physical strength to beat off a sexual predator, those who play rugby are less feminine. Thus, integral to the nature of femininity are weakness and a vulnerability to violence. Watching women play a physical sport thus positions them as non-female or “mannish”, precisely because of their presumed violation of the stereotype of “passive femininity” (Gill 2007:419).
Christopher Baldwin and Roger Vallance (2016:152), who discuss female referees’ experiences in officiating rugby union matches for New South Wales, argue that limited research has been done on this topic; however, what data there are prove that, as with athletes, these women fall victim to sexism and marginalisation. Because of constant sexual discrimination and their sexualisation by the media, as well as the attitudes of the men in the sporting sphere in which they work, female sports officials are constantly under pressure to perform not on par with, but better than, their male counterparts (Baldwin & Vallance 2016:153). Furthermore, Baldwin and Vallance (2016:153) argue that it is even more difficult for a woman to referee a match involving players of the opposite sex, as their own marginalisation causes them to be treated as insignificant – many are not taken seriously by the players or supporters, and the calls they make during a match tend to be questioned.

In South Africa, women’s soccer has been especially popular since the mid-1900s amongst black African, Indian and white citizens (Hong & Mangan 2004:241). Hong and Mangan (2004:241–243) note that cricket and rugby are more strongly associated with white English and Afrikaner women, but that, following the end of the apartheid era in the 1990s, women’s soccer in this country received greater visibility and more financial aid than other sports played by women (such as rugby and cricket). Sine Agergaard and Nina Tiesler’s (2014:3) research confirms this, noting that the percentage of women who participate in soccer has grown significantly over the past two decades. In fact, the number of female soccer players and coaches more than doubled during the 2013 Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA) tournament, which is largely due to financial support (Agergaard & Tiesler 2014:3). This economic boost has allowed female soccer players to receive much-needed media coverage, with their sport being granted more broadcasting time (Agergaard & Tiesler 2014:3).

Despite such progress, as Agergaard and Tiesler (2014:189) assert, bringing women into a sport dominated by men is bound to lead to some form of sexualisation in a society that is sexist or patriarchal. Barrie Gunter (2014:93) notes that even a women’s soccer team from a first-world country like the United States (US) is subjected to sexualisation in the media. As is the case with many other sporting
codes, the media are more focused on the appearance of the players, than their talent (Gunter 2014:93), thus female soccer players tend to fall victim to explicit sexual references. The public also tend to be far more interested in these women’s personal lives than their professional careers (Gunter 2014:93). An example is a scenario which presented itself during the 1999 Women’s Soccer World Cup, when player Brandi Chastain from the US removed her shirt to reveal her sports bra after scoring the winning goal for her team (Len-Ríos & Perry 2015:301). That image of Chastain graced the cover of *Sports Illustrated* and the conversation soon began to revolve around her removing her shirt, rather than the fact that she scored the winning goal (Len-Ríos & Perry 2015:301). Len-Ríos and Perry (2015) state that sexualising female soccer players is just one of the many ways in which the media send out the message that women do not belong in the sporting domain.

Héctor L’Hoeste, Robert Irwin and Juan Poblete (2015:) concede that while FIFA still sexualises female soccer players this is done not solely out of disrespect, but to suppress viewership figures, hinting that the organisation might be misogynists. The authors explain that the notion that ‘sex sells’ is false when it comes to women in sport, as these women are taken more seriously when depicted in their professional sporting roles than when portrayed as objectified models (L’Hoeste, Irwin & Poblete 2015:). On the other hand, Fan Hong and FA Mangan (2004:243) argue that sexualising female soccer players does not affect how viewers interpret their sporting skills: rather, the women’s attractiveness is intensified by their participation and the level of skill shown on the pitch.

Cricket is another male-dominated sport in which female players experience greater problems than not being taken seriously. Unlike the sexism and objectification issues linked to women in rugby, female cricketers in India are faced with a lack of opportunities (Upendran 2013:). Ananya Upendran (2013) structures her work around why India’s female cricketers struggle for recognition in the sport. First and foremost is the issue of finances and the costs involved in broadcasting a women’s cricket match – it forces them to play predominantly local games that are not allocated broadcasting airtime (Upendran 2013). Another challenge is that there are not many opportunities for women to play in a team on the subcontinent, as only a handful of cricket clubs cater for women (Upendran 2013).
Geoff Lemon (2015:) states that women in Australian cricket are often depicted as second-class citizens; their attractiveness is what is commented on and they are mocked for their “adorable” way of playing the game. The players are represented as soft and feminine, instead of coming across as a force to be reckoned with (Lemon 2015).

The idea of sportswomen somehow being more masculine has its roots in the historical (and hysterical) belief that women who took part in sport risked harming their reproductive organs (Women’s Sports Foundation 2016:). The Women’s Sports Foundation (2016) counters this long-standing stereotype by arguing that participating in sport does not diminish female athletes’ womanhood, but rather adds further dimensions to it by improving their physique, and making them feel healthier and more confident. Studies have shown that women who actively exercise for as little as four hours a week reduce their chances of developing breast cancer (Women’s Sports Foundation 2016:). Sport can also reduce a woman’s chances of developing osteoporosis, as low-impact exercise stimulates the development of bone mass (Women’s Sports Foundation 2016:). Furthermore, being active can help improve the brain function and concentration levels (Women’s Sports Foundation 2016:) of both genders.

2.3 Women in sports, the media and broadcasting

Portia Vann (2014:438) remarks that mainstream media have become so advanced that female sports personalities are now not only being objectified by the camera, but also on social networks. Such objectification stems from the ability of sports broadcasting to develop a voice through social networking (Vann 2014:440). As this voice offers sports broadcasters the power to manipulate output around the sport being aired, the discursive framing of female athletes and broadcasters on social media differs from that of their male counterparts (Vann 2014:440). Vann (2014:441) refers here to the power of social media to draw users into discussions about female sports personalities, rather than placing them in a passive position on-screen.

3 Hysterical, derived from the word ‘hysteria’, is related to the idea of the floating womb. “It commemorates the traumatic enjoyment of the abundant presence of the maternal body: one could read the ‘wandering womb of hysteria’ as referring to the subject’s desire being doomed to endlessly seek an impossible satisfaction” (Bronfen 2014:42).
Because of this development, consumers indirectly become the medium, wielding the power to formulate and share their own meanings and opinions about women in sport (Vann 2014:438). Vann (2014:441) asserts that multiple media platforms (such as Facebook and Twitter) create a space where viewers can discuss, critique and comment on, amongst others, female athletes, match officials and presenters, dissecting their performance and appearance while watching a live broadcast. Vann (2014:441) adds that even on interactive social media platforms, the camera still has the power to manipulate what viewers see: this essentially means that even though viewers may have developed a degree of power in discussing women’s participation in sport, their views are still influenced by the camera and by what the broadcasters want them to see.

Karen and Washington (2015:) assert that gender is a prominent form of social division, as people are segregated according to sex from the moment they are born. In this regard, Karen and Washington (2015:) emphasise the social difference between sex and gender, with sex being the state someone is born into, and gender being constructed by sociological norms, where the normative gender roles of ‘feminine’ and ‘masculine’ are expressed. Karen and Washington (2015:) draw on Butler’s (1990) theory on sex/gender, but follow a different route in their argument: they recognise that an individual’s personality traits, psychological orientation and identity develop and manifest in gender roles, which creates room for male hegemony to be established. This, in turn, leads to the existence of male hegemony in sport, and the marginalisation of most women (Karen & Washington 2015).

Paul (2015:402) acknowledges the stereotype that men ‘naturally’ fit into a sporting role, while women do not. In this regard, Butler (1990:5) defines the term ‘normal’ as everything that is socio-politically accepted, thus the labels of ‘normal’ or ‘natural’ make it seem as if everything outside their scope fails to ‘belong’. Because of male hegemony in sport, Paul (2015:403) argues that sports that are practised by men are more likely to be granted visibility in the media than those in which women participate, adding that when women do receive coverage, it is overshadowed by a sexualisation and an objectification of their bodies.
Accompanying a lack of visibility for women in sport are the unequal salaries and the lack of respect these women receive (Zirin 2015:44). In unpacking the statistics, Zirin (2015:44) found that even though the number of female sports personalities has grown, the level of visibility and broadcasting time have decreased when it comes to sporting events in which women participate. Studies show (see Zirin 2015:44) that in 1999 the percentage of broadcasting time allocated to women’s basketball and baseball in the US was at a high of nine per cent, but ten years later the number had dropped to a staggering 1.6 per cent. In a critique of the mainstream media, Zirin (2015:44) contends that a female athlete will only appear in a tabloid when she flaunts her body, thus allowing herself to be objectified in front of the camera. There is a suggestion that some female sports personalities are willing to do this, in order to maximise the coverage they receive and perhaps attract sponsorship, but equally such objectification is a powerful tool in the hands of male hegemony to ensure that the oppression of women continues (Zirin 2015:44).

Duncan (2005:[sp]), acknowledges that gender equality in sport exists by law, yet does not occur in practice, as women’s sport rarely receives as much broadcasting time as contests featuring men. Duncan’s (2005:[sp]) concerns lie in the verbal commentary of male commentators covering women’s sporting events, arguing that much of their reportage is aimed at undermining the female athletes. This can be as subtle as tennis commentators referring to sportswomen as ‘girls’, while their male counterparts are referred to as ‘men’ (Duncan 2005:[sp]). Commentators tend to give little weight to the achievements of women in sport and are more likely to draw attention to the smallest mistakes the women make, whereas their commentary on men’s matches tends to overlook or gloss over mistakes the athletes make (Duncan 2005:[sp]). Duncan (2005:[sp]) found that commentators during a women’s basketball game constantly pointed out that it was a women’s match, as if trying to draw attention to the fact that it was not ‘natural’ to see women in these positions.

Marion Keim (2003) observes that in twenty-first-century democratic South Africa, social divisions continue to exist. Despite promulgated laws on equality, discrimination has not ceased to exist: “A time when South Africans of different background not only work together but also play together seems a long way off” (Keim 2003:11). Here, Keim (2003) is not referring to different genders physically
competing, but rather to people supporting athletes from a different gender, racial or cultural background. This will only be achieved when a nation unites through sport, as was witnessed during the 1995 Rugby World Cup (Keim 2003:11).

Coventry’s 2004 text discusses sexual discrimination in the workplace and its role in broadcasts of American football games. Sexual discrimination in the workplace is nothing new, with male hegemony being a historical issue within Western society (Coventry 2004:322). According to Coventry (2004:325), because employers play a significant role in terms of who is appointed, and given that sports broadcasting is predominately male orientated, the likelihood of women being employed in important roles at the American Football League is far slimmer than for men. Stereotypes created around socialised gender roles ensure that it is not ‘naturally’ expected of a woman to accept a sporting position, nor is an employer expected to appoint a woman (Coventry 2004:325). Coventry (2004:325) further contends that it is not just that very few women are visible in sports broadcasting, but when they are employed, it is done strategically to ensure they do not have much room to grow. In this respect Coventry (2004:335) refers to “marginal positions”, in which women are appointed as reporters instead of commentators, or have less important presenting positions. In American football, female match officials and presenters are commonly found refereeing or commentating on women’s matches, and vice versa (Coventry 2004:337). Research conducted just over a decade ago shows that of the 356 sportscasters working in the field of American football at the time, only 12 per cent were women (Coventry 2004:330).

Schultz (2002:201) asserts that while women are becoming a fixture in sports reporting positions, the majority of roles are still held by men. Sport is still deemed a ‘male’ territory, with all aspects thereof being seen as the purview of men: “Up until the 1970s, women had virtually no role as sports reporters on radio or television” (Schultz 2002:201).

This notion of women not fitting into the sports domain led to female sports reporters not being taken seriously – a situation which changed in 1975, when the worlds’ first ever female sports presenter appeared on a sports talk show called ‘The NFL Today’, in what Schultz (2002:201) regards as a historical shift that opened doors for
many women. Schultz (2002:202) believes that having more women in sports reporting positions will lead to women’s sports gaining credibility.

However, this shift in women’s empowerment did not come easily: Schultz (2002:204) relates how a female sports reporter, Lisa Olsen (reporting for the Boston Herald in 1990), received numerous death threats and was subjected to physical abuse by men for crossing boundaries in the sphere of sports broadcasting. Schultz (2002:205) points out that in the twenty-first century, such abuse of women is no longer legal; because of legislation regulating discrimination, men have had to find other ways of undermining women in various sporting codes. The objectification of women in sport stems from incidents of bullying, and allows men to retain control over female athletes and presenters without needing to physically abuse or threaten them (Schultz 2002:205). The result is that most women receive media coverage and on-screen time based on their beauty, not their sporting talent, thus it is highly unlikely that an unattractive woman will be cast as a sports reporter (Schultz 2005:237). Gill Branston and Roy Stafford (2003:131) state that the tennis player, Anna Kournikova, falls into the above category: she was never a top-ranked tennis player, yet she received significant media coverage due to her appearance.

Schultz (2005:237) argues that the media should take much of the blame for failures in respect of women’s sports, noting that during the early 2000s a number of sporting organisations (including the Women’s United Soccer Association) disbanded due to dismal ratings. The sports these organisations represented received scant attention in the media, and limited broadcasting time. Schultz (2005:327) adds that between 1994 and 2005, the percentage of broadcasts devoted to women’s sports showed little change, possibly due to low female viewership numbers. Attempts on the part of sports channels to attract female viewership included more features and entertainment, yet somehow the broadcasters continued to miss the mark (Schultz 2005:237).

2.4 Representation, objectification, power and feminism

Mulvey (1975:805) centres her research on the theory of the male gaze, stating that the cinema became a private space that allowed the viewer to secretly gaze upon a woman in a sexual manner, without being judged – a notion she refers to as
scopophilia, where the scopophilic instinct is defined as “pleasure in looking at another person as an erotic object” (Mulvey 1975:806). The scopophilic look is evident in sports broadcasting, where action scenes featuring female athletes on-screen (such as slow motion action replays or advertisements) are framed in a manner that sexualises their bodies to such a degree that they become objects presented directly to the gazing male viewer (Paul 2015:412).

Olin (1996:208) structures her arguments along Mulvey’s theory of the male gaze, claiming that the person gazing and the person being gazed at have a type of connection, in instances when the object looks directly into the camera. This action turns the viewer into the object who is being gazed back at (Olin 1996:211). Olin (1996:211) mentions instances where a woman looking into the camera has a knowing look on her face – knowing she is being gazed at and liking it. This could align with Paul’s (2015:412) belief that certain female sports personalities have somewhat willingly taken on sexualised personae, and in a contemporary society they relish their power to control the gaze. This is evident in the way some female athletes flaunt their bodies in front of the camera and even stare directly into the lens before a sporting match, making the viewer aware that they know they are being watched (Paul 2015:413). This could serve as an intimidation tactic, were, at certain matches, there are big screens in the stadium showing the game being played. Some female athletes have admitted to doing this strategically, to attract the male spectator’s attention through their physical appearance, which in turn might garner greater visibility for their sporting prowess (Paul 2015:414). However, once the match begins, the women’s focus switches from being sexually appealing to a determination to win (Paul 2015:414).

Saks (2010:163) deals with cultural representation and, more specifically, South African culture as depicted on television, in print and on social media. Cultural representation sees each country or cultural sphere adopting a unique way of representing women on-screen, thus any related analysis can only be done by taking into account the diverse cultural groups within a particular society (Saks 2010:163). To this end, Saks (2010:163) states that in South Africa, the cultural background of apartheid plays a significant role in the way black women are represented as opposed to white women. Saks (2010:3) mentions that this racial difference might be
worth exploring when analysing women in South African television. Racial discrimination in sport does, however, fall outside the scope of this study, and deserves a discussion on its own (de)merits.

Cultural representation relies on social representation, as it attempts to re-present reality on-screen (Saks 2010:76). Saks (2010:177) critiques this system, as the people behind its existence believe that this cycle leaves room for the truth to be tweaked, thus depicting something of a false version of reality. According to Wendy Tanner (2011:11), such objectification is not uncommon, with female athletes’ athletic ability frequently being overlooked because of the sexualised way in which women are represented on-screen. Tanner (2011:12) states that female athletes’ uniforms or kits are designed to fit more snugly than those of their male counterparts, which serves to further sexualise their performance. Athletes are often forced to adhere to certain dress codes during a match, for instance, the mandate for female tennis players is to wear extremely short skirts or dresses, while men may wear shorts of a decent length (Tanner 2011:12).

While Robert Schinke and Stephanie Hanrahan (2012:98) regard development programmes in sport as empowering, such empowerment does not simply entail allowing a person access to decision making – rather, it “involves deeper issues of relations of power and ensuing oppression”. Thus, empowerment should not only be limited to equality and decision-making roles, but should be expanded to include disputes around power relations in society (Schinke & Hanrahan 2012:98). Many development programmes are problematic, however, as they do not directly deal with the problem at hand, which requires a change in thinking: for the empowerment of women in sport to have any lasting impact, Schinke and Hanrahan (2012:98) argue that the system of how hegemony can be challenge by women, needs to be thoroughly understood.

Paul (2015:404) is interested in those factors which play a role in undermining and under-representing female personalities in sports broadcasting, and how society frames women in such a manner that even those women come to believe the way they are being depicted. First, there is a misconception that women are born weaker than men, and that women never fully embrace the strength of their bodies, as
exemplified by sayings such as “you throw like a girl” (Paul 2015:404). Paul (2015:405) adds that the gaze will always be evident in sport, since a significant part of any sport depends on a viewing of the body in action. In turn, this requires the spectators’ eyes to focus on the body, as seen through the lens of the camera. The above cycle leaves room for objectification, as the majority of female athletes become recognised in the media for their appearance (attractive or unattractive), rather than their performance (Paul 2015:406).

Paul (2015:404) argues that, in sports broadcasting, the system is predominantly governed by power. Foucault’s (1982:780) theory of power extends beyond the oppression of the powerless by the powerful. That dichotomy implies that there are individuals who exercise power and others who are subjected to power in a give-and-take process playing out in relations between groups and individuals (Foucault 1982:780), where power is not merely enforced, but also received.

This power, which Foucault (1982) discusses, could be found embedded in narrative cinema. Filmmaker Claire Johnston (in Lapsley & Westlake 1988:23) states that “despite the enormous emphasis placed upon woman as a spectacle in the cinema, woman as a woman are [sic] largely absent”. Lapsley and Westlake (1988:23) note that shortly after the popular emergence of the feminist movement in the 1960s, women started to stand up against their on-screen oppression, with many female filmmakers making their voices heard by producing films which empowered women. The main purpose of these films was to reveal how women should be represented, rather than how men want them to be represented so that, even though a woman’s body appears on-screen, the non-physicalities which make her a woman have been stripped away (Lapsley & Westlake 1988:23). Lapsley and Westlake (1988:27–28) add that through the misrepresentation of women, mainstream cinema derived certain meanings from films, with mainstream cinema ensuring the continued existence of patriarchy by allowing male protagonists to lead the narrative through their actions. Those films therefore could not solely rely on displaying a false truth about women, but had to delve into other images, to create a new language and means of female representation.
Foucault (1982:780) analyses how power is practised on groups and individuals, and how, in turn, individuals at the receiving end react. Power is not something that can simply be described as oppression – it is reproductive, because of the way in which individuals who bear the brunt of this power cause new behaviours to develop (Foucault 1982:780). In certain instances those over whom power is exercised receive power, they become empowered and change into active subjects rather than mere objects who receive power without resistance, and this is where Foucault’s (1982:780) theoretical intervention lies.

For Foucault (1982:782), power is not something that is owned. Instead, it is active and establishes itself strategically in power relations, which means it forms part of a system that operates in every society (Foucault 1982:782). Individuals are then not only objects of power, but become the place where power manifests itself (Foucault 1982:782). Power is not simply an impulse that needs to be obeyed – it walks hand in hand with resistance, which is why Foucault (1982:782) does not subscribe to the one-way structure of power that is evident in the notion of a master–slave relationship.

Power produces laws and truths within society that lead to discipline being reinforced in subtle ways, leaving room for those individuals receiving power to develop different identities (Foucault 1982:788). As Foucault (1982:782) asserts, power has the ability to categorise subjects, thus power could be defined as something which is premeditated and then acted out (Mills 2003:35). The term ‘subjects’ does not simply refer to those who fall victim to power – the person possessing the power can also be the ‘subject’, as s/he is placed in that position because of the stereotype around power relations, thus also falling victim to the predetermined norms applicable to power roles (Foucault 1982:782). Because of this, power relations involve two types of individuals: those who fall victim to oppression and those exerting oppression (Mills 2003:35). Foucault (1982:788) is not interested in how power establishes itself amongst subjects, but rather how it is exercised through different types of knowledge, which can be used to connect people’s actions to their position within a system of power relations.
Mills (2003:36), having studied the works of Foucault, argues that for the latter, knowledge is reflected in the behaviour of each individual, and how s/he knowingly acts towards subordinates. Foucault, who formulated this definition of knowledge, states that it takes away something from its stability, thus allowing for the possibility to be challenged and turned around at any given time if the power relation is not maintained by the one who possesses the power (Mills 2003:52). In Foucault’s view, someone who possesses knowledge can resist power rather than just submitting to it (Mills 2003:52). This implies that knowledge works as a tool within power, with the ability to either reinforce or dismantle power (Foucault 1982:789). Foucault (1982:789) disagrees that knowledge is power, but rather believes that there is a relationship between knowledge and power, which is dependent on the subject as to which way knowledge will effect or be effected by power. Subjects who fall under the oppression of those who possess power might arguably lack the level of knowledge which empowered individuals have (Mills 2003:69). In addressing this gap, Foucault argues that knowledge thus adds to an imbalance in power relations (Mills 2003:69). As this chapter outlines, the question of women’s participation in sports (and in sports broadcasting in particular) is a contentious one. It intersects with social structures of power in conceptions of women’s sexuality, as well as their supposedly rightful place in the hierarchy of the natural order: women in sport challenge the ways in which passivity is held to be a natural extension of femininity, while foregrounding the ways in which male hegemony continues to set the terms for debates around women’s participation. The theoretical conditions for this debate, and the terms through which those conditions can be challenged, are the subject of the following chapter.
CHAPTER THREE: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

3.1 Introduction

This chapter critically engages with the work of key theorists in the fields of feminist media studies and gender theories, whose ideas constitute analytical lenses through which to approach the case studies which come under the microscope. These theorists include Mulvey (1975), Butler (1990) and hooks (2000).

British-born feminist film theorist, Laura Mulvey, is best known for her groundbreaking essay on visual pleasure (Danino & Moy-Thomas 1982:sp). Her articles draw on Freud and Lacan’s theories of psychoanalysis, which contributed to the shift in narrative cinema towards a psychoanalytical standpoint (Danino & Moy-Thomas 1982). In particular, Mulvey’s work highlights the connection between film theory, psychoanalysis and feminism (Danino & Moy-Thomas 1982).

Judith Butler is an American-born philosopher and gender theorist (Duignan 2017:sp) who published several works drawing on Simone de Beauvoir’s notion that an individual is not born a woman but is made one. In addition, Butler draws on Foucault’s ideas of power (addressed in the preceding chapter) and Derrida’s notion of iteration (Duignan 2017) – more on this later. Throughout her work, Butler asserts that “sex and gender” are socially constructed rather than natural (Duignan 2017).

Bell hooks is a feminist and social activist, born in Kentucky, who focuses on issues of race, capitalism and gender, and writes against patriarchy and class domination (Watkins 2017:sp).

Even though hooks’ (2000), Butler’s (1990) and Mulvey’s (1975) publications differ in respect of their approaches, all are grounded in a feminist analysis of power and opportunities for intervention in its patriarchal, heteronormative effects. As a countermeasure to the power wielded by men, feminism aims to examine the patriarchal structures involved in oppressing women wherever they manifest, and overturning those conventions.
Mulvey (1975) uses Freud’s nineteenth century theory of psychoanalysis as the embodiment of the threat of castration, to develop a theory on how classic Hollywood films frame the representation of women in patriarchal, Western societies. Although Mulvey’s essay on visual pleasure was published in 1975, her arguments on psychoanalysis continue to form part of many feminist media theorists’ work. While the analysis in the present study will not depend on Mulvey (1975) per se, her theories will be used to lay the groundwork for understanding feminist theories in order to thoroughly engage with hooks (2000) and Butler (1990). For Butler (1990), Mulvey’s (1975) focus on women’s objectification is a core aspect that supports her own views on sexualisation. Mulvey (1975:803) centres her argument on pre-existing patterns of fascination, as moulded by society and within oneself. Mulvey’s (1975:811) theory grapples with notions of ‘scopophilia’ and ‘voyeurism’ which play central roles in reading aspects of connotative meaning in the signifier, enabling her ideas to be used as an introduction to contextualise more recent feminist theories. Since her theories were established more than four decades ago, the focus of the present study will be on the more contemporary approaches espoused by hooks (2000) and Butler (1990), rather than solely relying on Mulvey (1975).

3.2 Laura Mulvey
In her analysis of the male organisation of visual pleasure in Hollywood cinema, Mulvey (1975:816) explores three different cinematic perspectives: those of the camera, the audience and the characters. Each perspective offers a different point of view (Mulvey 1975:816): first, the camera has the ability to manipulate what viewers see and how they see it; second, even though the audience can process what they see on-screen, it is still influenced by the “look of the camera”; and finally, the characters create their own way of looking, with which the audience can identify. Even though these three looks represent completely different points of view, they still influence and draw on one another, such that elements of each perspective are evident in all of them. Drawing on Mulvey’s (1975) theory, the present analysis focuses on the way the camera frames the image of sports matches. Here, the focus is on the types of shots selected, and instances where the speed of the camera is slowed down, to determine whether slowed-down footage might influence the way viewers process the image shown on-screen.
Mulvey (1975:807) proposes that classic Hollywood relied on the objectification of women to shape both the narrative and visual organisation of a film. In most films, there is a male character whom viewers can relate to and with whom they identify – what Mulvey (1975:807) calls the “ego libido”. In a sense, this ego libido offers viewers their own gaze, but absolves them of any guilt attached to voyeuristic or fetishistic looking, as they are always gazing through the character’s eyes (Mulvey 1975:807).

Although Mulvey’s theory of ego libido applies to men in classic Hollywood films, it is useful to think about when considering the camera’s organisation of the visual field in relation to female bodies in sport. It is important, in doing so, to disconnect the ego libido of Mulvey’s argument from its narrative ties to the male subject of the film. This means that considering the camera’s look at sportswomen and female sports commentators could draw on the notion of the male gaze, without presuming a male spectator behind it. Mulvey’s point is, after all, that the camera structures the visual field into a desiring object and a desiring subject position, and in the age of lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and/or intersex (LGBTI) understandings of identity, these need not be understood as binary oppositions (men vs. women). This adds value to the findings in an analysis of whether, 40 years later, the ego libido is still evident in televised sports reporting, and whether or not female sports personalities have been placed in the position of the ego libido. This will not necessarily only be evident in the way sportswomen are physically objectified on-screen, but might also surface in conversations between male and female sports presenters, and how the women might (or might not) be objectified through their dialogue. Thus, commentary during women’s sports matches will also be analysed to determine whether any of these aspects of the ego libido are present during the commentators’ banter.

Mulvey (1975:805) believes that visual pleasure increasingly incorporates scopophilia, noting that the ‘male gaze’ turns women who appear on-screen into sex objects for male viewers’ gratification. Scopophilia, asserts Mulvey (1975:805), involves the camera creating a female character to match heterosexual norms of sexual fantasy.
Mulvey (1975:805–806) states that there are two ways of using scopophilia as a tool for analysing women on-screen: active scopophilia/voyeurism and fetishistic scopophilia. The former recognises the castration threat and subsequently destroys the idea by punishing the woman for her lack of a penis through voyeuristic control and objectification. By contrast, the latter takes the idea of the castration threat and turns it into something that can be desired by substitution, by shaping and displaying the woman on-screen as a fetishistic goddess. This aspect of fetishistic scopophilia might entail situations in which a woman is sexualised through her physicality, her hair, her makeup and/or costume, which might add to the value of the analysis. Active scopophilia can thus be recognised as taking the castration threat and punishing women for lacking the phallus, in contrast to fetishistic scopophilia which takes the castration threat and turns it into an object of desire, so that the woman becomes the phallus instead of the embodied lack of a phallus. Fetishistic scopophilia gives substance to an analysis of the way female athletes are turned into fetish goddesses by analysing the type of shots the camera employs. This makes it possible to identify any close-up shots that might not serve to enhance the viewer's experience of the match being broadcast, but rather to enhance the viewer's scopophilic experience of the woman on-screen. Active scopophilia, in the course of this analysis, will help determine whether female athletes (during the match) and female presenters (during the in-studio banter) are represented sexually through fetishistic scopophilia, by purposely focusing on commentators pointing out any actions that are imperfect or errors that the female presenters make. Thus, to summarise, active scopophilia punishes the woman for her lack of a phallus, whereas fetishistic scopophilia aims to reshape the female body as an object of desire.

One aspect that is very relevant when exploring the female figure on-screen is phallocentrism (Mulvey 1975:803), which privileges men by granting them access to the making and possession of meaning, thus allowing them to view themselves as superior to women. Phallocentrism, which makes the phallus the primary signifier, revolves around the psychoanalytic concept of the castration threat, with Mulvey (1975:803) believing a woman’s lack of a penis turns her into a potential threat to the psychosocial order. In a psychoanalytic reading, male domination leads to men
seeing women as somewhat of a danger to them, because of the fact that women do not possess a penis and thus embody the threat of castration (Mulvey 1975:803).

Phallocentrism consequently establishes power roles, in that the phallus, which signifies dominance, allows men to have the upper hand in power relations, while women are expected to submit to the fantasy of masculine control (Mulvey 1975:803). Phallocentrism is first and foremost the reason why women are underrepresented in society. Mulvey (1975:803) states that valuable insights might be gleaned from analysing the visual structure of the power positions women and men assume, to determine how those roles are represented and inhabited differently. Thus, by referring to Mulvey’s (1975) work, it is possible to determine whether men and women are also represented differently in terms of positions of power within sports broadcasting. Aspects here include whether the male presenters in in-studio talks shows are given more powerful roles than their female counterparts, and how the dialogue which the producers allocate to each might (or might not) vary in significance. Theories on phallocentrism could thus play a significant role in a study of the on-screen power relations manifesting between male and female sports personalities, if they are indeed separated by the phenomenon of male desire and its mechanisms of control. Mulvey (1975:805) argues for a new language of desire which will rearticulate the idea of visual pleasure in narrative film, which again is only possible to achieve by critically analysing and disrupting the system of phallocentrism.

Mulvey (1975:807) argues that the matrix image of how a woman’s body is represented on-screen creates an illusion of what the ideal woman should look like. This means that a woman’s body is ‘amended’ in order for it to conform to the standards of how men wish to see women’s bodies (Mulvey 1975:809).

This pattern is more than likely to be evident in most mainstream films, which raises the question whether a similar pattern is evident in sports reportage. As a consequence, the current analysis will determine what type of sportswomen the camera chooses to focus on, to ascertain whether that footage has any relevance to Mulvey’s (1975) argument about the ideal woman, if she is ‘measured’ against phallocentric conventions.
Mulvey (1975:809) points out that in films such as *Vertigo* (1958) and *Blonde Venus* (1932) the woman as an object of visual pleasure is present to fulfil the fantasies of the male character and, by extension of the ego libido, the viewer who identifies with him. Phallocentrism is structured in such a way that men are not objectified, which is why they always take on an active role, controlling every aspect of the film, while the women remain in their shadow, allowing them to be the heroes of the film (Mulvey 1975:810). These arguments could prove very useful when comparing the roles of sports presenters, and looking at whether the men assume active roles while women are relegated to more passive roles during the conversations – and, if this is the case, to what degree it occurs. One of the aims of film production is to create an ideological world that can depict human life without destroying the magic which allows viewers to lose themselves in a film (Mulvey 1975:810). Even though Mulvey’s writing focuses on narrative film, while the spotlight here falls on sports broadcasting, the analysis will be done with her arguments about roles in mind, to determine whether they are applicable to the latter scenario.

To summarise, Mulvey’s (1975) theories delve into Freud’s ideas about phallocentrism, to show how every facet of the cinematic world is inevitably built on, and supports, patriarchal ideals. Butler’s (1990) theories of power and its operation in representation, offer an expansion of Mulvey’s (1975) theories.

**3.3 Judith Butler**

Butler (1990:3) argues that an analysis of representation revolves around the notion of power, therefore any investigation should not only be done on women’s involvement in power roles, but also on the language of power. Thus, in addition to investigating the respective positions of power assumed by male and female sports personalities, an analysis of the system of how power roles function is invaluable for understanding why women stereotypically do not fit into those roles, and how commentators commentating on women’s sports may (or may not) facilitate those norms. Butler (1990:6) notes that when the patriarchal system is (finally) changed, one gender should not receive more credit than the other as a result: rather, the new system should effect equality between men and women, by treating the sexes similarly.
For Butler, a feminist position cannot simply argue that power roles need to be reversed, thus resulting in women being privileged and placed in power roles and men being oppressed. Rather, it is imperative to examine the way in which power is reproduced through language and representation. From this theory, it becomes possible to explore whether there is equality in sports, in terms of the diverse power roles men and women assume. This will reveal whether the system is indeed changing to become more equal, or whether women are still treated differently because of their gender.

Butler (1993:14) states that society, social codes and the knowledge that shape these phenomena “ought to be rethought as a series of normativizing injunctions that secure the borders” of sex/gender. This means that although we have to live in society, we need to start thinking of it as a structure of power. By dismantling and rejecting codes of behaviour, it becomes evident that power does not rule out the possibility of change taking place (Butler 1993:14). Butler (1993:15) believes that by pretending to follow the rules or rephrasing them, it is possible to bend the rules without breaking them. Power thus becomes flexible enough to include individuals, by positioning them inside the performative practice (Butler 1993:15). This strategy can be used to analyse how (sports)men bend the rules to obtain and maintain patriarchal power over (sports)women, without visibly breaking ‘the law’ of equal rights. In this study, the commentators’ language will be analysed, in addition to unpacking shot selections to determine whether female athletes are being subtly undermined by the running commentary of male commentators, or by the way the camera frames certain shots (to exclude or include certain sportswomen on the field during a match). It might also be imperative, where men and women present a show together, to investigate whether the women’s comments are acknowledged and given any credit.

There is an historical belief that because men do not understand women and their desires, women could be labelled ‘objects of trouble’ (Butler 1990:vii). The perception was that since most men had a limited grasp of the female anatomy anyway, and had difficulty making sense of the way women differ physically and emotionally from them, the only obvious conclusion to draw was that women posed a
danger not only to men but also to themselves, and were so unstable that they presented a threat to society (Butler 1990:vii). With this in mind, it is possible to conclude that power relations not only developed the way in which men interact with women verbally, but also more deeply in terms of the structuring of their thoughts about gender and sexual difference. Thus, certain attributes are used to classify each individual as either feminine or masculine, and that, in Butler’s (1990:2) opinion, is where categorisation according to gender stems from. Butler (1990:2) claims that being categorised as either male or female already involves pre-constructed social expectations, with girls being taught to act “soft and weak like a girl” and boys “rough and tough like boys”. These signs might be evident in the way individuals speak, dress and act in everyday life, from the moment they are born, according to what is socially accepted as feminine or masculine behaviour. A meaningful tool to use when analysing female sports personalities and their power roles, as evident onscreen, is Butler’s (1990:viii) question about the power dynamic that structures sexual difference. Another approach could be to apply Butler’s (1990:viii) explorations of how so-called natural gender/sexual identities are constructed, and the ways in which these can undermine what is a male-dominated world (and, in this instance, a male-dominated industry).

According to Butler (1990:6), biological sex and cultural gender cannot be separated, as we are all born into a society where our sex/gender is already determined. Even before we are born, socially created structures and systems are in place, which force us to fit into the relevant sex/gender roles (Butler 1990:6). Therefore, any analysis that includes men or women should be done cognisant of the fact that society has already constructed what makes a woman ‘a woman’ and a man ‘a man’, and the findings of this study will therefore not dwell on those aspects. When analysing an image of the female body, one must keep in mind that sex, gender and desire cannot be separated: Butler (1990:8) states that those three aspects combined define individuals as either male or female, masculine or feminine. The body is not a passive surface onto which desire is projected, but rather an active medium through which cultural understandings of women’s bodies emanate (Butler 1990:8). Thus, a society’s cultural conceptions of what makes a woman are written on a woman’s body, which serves as a canvas. By referring to Butler (1990), what follows is an analysis of case studies to determine whether the camera embraces female athletes’
every position onscreen, or whether the camera chooses to avoid certain shots in which women come across as less feminine, according to phallocentric conventions.

Butler (1990:1) states that it is not only sex/gender and desire which are culturally constructed, but also patriarchal norms and understanding. Butler (1990:1) explains that these three aspects did not exist before culture came into being, thus feminist theory and patriarchal norms/understandings can be deemed to have been culturally constructed in accordance with each society’s beliefs and norms. Within all three of the above, politics and representation are always evident (Butler 1990:1), for instance, politics are found where the governance of a country plays a role in culturally constructing norms according to the law, while representation is situated in exposing and revealing the predetermined ‘truth’ about women. Note that Butler (1990:1) believes that all truth is tampered with, thus meriting the use of quote marks around the term: ‘truth’. For Butler (1990:1), no true self exists outside of representation, given that we are influenced by representation, which is constructed long before we were brought into this world, and will cease to exist without it. Thus, if representation precedes identity, as Butler (1990:1) suggests, the norms of sex and gender and behaviour, that are consolidated and repeated in representations, serve to legitimise phallocentric power that practises authority and control over women.

Butler (1990:1) states that the term ‘woman’ is no longer defined under a cultural category and has no determined definition, which leaves room for this designation to change and develop according to the relevant circumstances and influences. Thus, ‘woman’ can mean one thing in a certain culture, but something completely different in another, under the rule of a different government (Butler 1990:1). What is certain, however, is that there is no such thing as a ‘natural’ woman (Butler 1990:2), i.e., woman does not precede the social construction of ‘woman’, which is in itself a network of intersecting lines of race, sex/gender and class.

Butler (1990:2) explains that society’s repeated way of representing women is what defines women. This repetition in terms of representation starts shaping and moulding a definition of what being a woman involves, and causes society to believe that only that definition is acceptable, thus establishing what makes a woman
‘natural’ (Butler 1990:2). Women are thus shaped or naturalised by constant iterations of the way in which they are represented.

The process of repetition, as theorised by Butler (1990:2), is not one of carbon copying – rather, her sense of repetition is informed by a poststructuralist understanding that a new or altered definition can develop each time it is reproduced. Whenever the system is repeated, it creates the potential for a different meaning of the subject to be repeated. Butler (1990:2) stresses that the definition might change in many different ways, depending on the cultural influences under which it is produced, and their relation to patriarchal (or what she calls ‘heteronormative’) structures of power. This is why women employed by different broadcasting channels might be represented differently, and it is imperative to analyse female sports personalities from at least two different broadcasting channels, in order to critically engage with the argument presented by these theories. The analysis here focuses on repetition in dialogue, to determine whether the way male presenters treat their female counterparts – specifically through their discourse – is repeated or reflected in the way male commentators frame female athletes – specifically during a sports broadcast. Prior to in-studio sports talk shows, presenters are given a script and might thus be somewhat restricted in terms of their conversation. However, sports commentators ad-lib during a match, and it might be of value to assess whether they still sexualise women without a script directing them to do so.

Butler (1990:3) states that power relations emerge when society constructs a norm, but any norm also produces exclusions. It is important to note here that ‘natural’ is immersed in the dominant structure of the norm. Butler (1990:5) argues that the term ‘normal’ makes it seem as if everything outside that scope does not belong, hence it is important not only to determine what the footage of women’s sports matches offers the viewer on-screen, but also what it does not offer. This might be evident in the choice of certain shots, and how they are framed and selected during matches featuring sportswomen.

Butler’s (1993:1) theorisation of how power is enacted in society, around and through questions of sex and gender, draws on Foucault (1982) and stresses that power is
much more subtle than simply being reflected in the actions of those who possess it. Power is evident in more pervasive forms than the domination of one party over another, as well as the behaviours and knowledge reflected in society (Butler 1990:1), where so-called social power formulates who you are through the creation of knowledge about the body. Within this context it becomes possible to produce norms that can change behaviour and identities, i.e., a naturalised norm, which entails being what society expects us to be (Butler 1993:1). An individual’s body therefore does not exist outside of society, and hence has no natural form. The only ways of thinking about the body are controlled by structures of language, knowledge and representation within the society it was born into. This theory will be implemented when analysing whether the camera shots of the women’s matches aired on the broadcasters SABC 1 and SuperSport 5 shape women differently across the channels. Here, aspects such as slow speed effects, close-up shots and other shot selections will be analysed throughout the matches under scrutiny.

Butler (1993:1) states that sex/gender shapes people psychologically and physically, thus legitimating certain behaviours. People act in a certain way because of the influence sex/gender has on them mentally, while physically, sex/gender places people in certain groups based on their physical anatomy (Butler 1993:1). This is not only done by categorising people according to what they are or are not, but also by naming and consequently producing them as individuals – since categories are labelled and have certain criteria according to which people are measured, that serves to determine where they fit in (Butler 1993:1).

Butler’s (1993:1) thinking on repetition refers to ‘performativity’, a term for a rhetorical figure in which the saying of something coincides with the doing of it, as in ‘I promise’. This links the idea that an individual is born into a routine that defines who s/he can become – as Butler (1993:1) explains, this circuit operates through Foucault’s (1982) regulatory ideal”, which expresses the parameters that shape how identity is structured. This reasoning explains why sportswomen from different racial and cultural backgrounds might be represented differently in the media, and it is interesting to explore these differences within sports broadcasting to ascertain whether the camera prefers to focus on a sportswoman from a particular race because of her appearance.
The way in which power is tied to performativity, and regulates the bodies it produces, will be important for analysing the normative ideals for women’s bodies, their behaviour and representation in sports broadcasting.

Butler (1993:1) argues that bodies are produced and naturalised through the normative distribution of social power around sex/gender. This norm is derived from social power and developed on the basis of what constitutes sex/gender, especially in terms of behaviour (Butler 1993:1). Musing on repetition, Butler (1993:2) defines ‘re-iterate’ as repetition with the possibility of difference. The difference between iterations exists because of inconsistencies in the way normative ideals are repeated by society (Butler 1993:2).

Butler (1993:2) states that every time someone is represented it leaves room for that representation to become naturalised, and that is where power is situated. Taking earlier theories into account, the above could be because representation is not based on the ‘truth’, thus the system of reproduction creates weak points where power can be interrupted.

Re-iteration thus marks the possibility for interrupting normative sex/gender codes and rewriting patriarchal relations of power (Butler 1993:2). Butler (1993:15) cautions, however, that we cannot just throw off social norms and become rebels, we cannot simply step outside of power relations, but must find ways of coping with them. Because of the way in which power structures are repeated in society, there is room for disruption, for non-normativity (Butler 1993:15), i.e., ‘loopholes in the system’. Using the idea of reiteration, and theories as to what happens when something is constantly repeated, allows for an exploration of whether sports broadcasting has developed a language which naturalises female athletes and presenters through dialogue. If so, it is possible to analyse the way naturalisation is manifested differently, or is interrupted – in this instance, particularly in respect of a rugby match aired on SuperSport 5 and a soccer match broadcast by SABC 1.

Butler (1993:2) posits the notion of a "domain of cultural intelligibility", stating that each nation sets up who belongs and who does not, thus the system determines
whose lives are valuable to society. This is done by determining who adheres to the norms and beliefs of certain cultural groups, ensuring that those who do not follow set principles are naturally exiled from the rest (Butler 1993:2). People who do not fit into a certain domain are thus assigned to a social zone where their lives have no value, and failure to fulfil regulatory ideas of normative behaviour leads to them being categorised as abject; they thus fall into an “unlivable” zone (Butler 1993:3). By not living according to certain norms, individuals thus risk becoming abject rather than subject. The influence the theory of a “domain of cultural intelligibility” exerts on female sports personalities could therefore be analysed to determine whether their representation adheres to this social pressure. Within this context, the question of whether sportswomen experience pressure to conform to the norms of femininity, and how match commentators enforce that femininity through their discourse, will be explored.

Butler (1990:16) notes that culture, class and race play a role in influencing the outcome of gender, sex and desire. These elements form a complexity which needs to be unravelled, particularly when analysing female South African athletes, as this country is deemed a rainbow nation encompassing a variety of different races from different cultural backgrounds which could each objectify women differently. The current analysis will thus point out whether the camera focuses on, or has close-up shots of, women from specific races, and whether it includes different races in shot selections.

While Butler (1993) thus highlights performativity and the role it plays in patriarchal norms, in opening up a space for critical repetition, hooks (2000) confronts patriarchal actions outright, and writes freely on not only the problematic areas of a patriarchal system, but also the changes that need to take place for equality to establish itself amongst communities.

3.4 bell hooks
Hooks (2000:31) challenges sexist thinking around women’s bodies, noting that some men only consider women’s bodies as being there for their pleasure, even if it simply means looking at them – something which might lead to the development of sexist thinking around women’s bodies (hooks 2000:31). One example is the way
women are expected to act ‘feminine’. According to hooks (2000:31), women in the twenty-first century have more freedom or control over their bodies. They are able to choose their preferred style of clothing, when until recently (especially in the nineteenth century), women had to follow certain dress codes which were formulated by men (hooks 2000:31). Women are no longer required to show up at work in a skirt or dress, and it has become acceptable to see a woman in the workplace wearing pants (hooks 2000:31). Women are also no longer obliged to wear high heels, makeup or have their hair tied up neatly (hooks 2000:32), even though any workplace does still have the right to require women to adhere to certain professional dress codes (hooks 2000:31). Hooks (2000:32) stipulates that these freedoms do not represent a level playing field for all women. The role of female sports presenters and anchors will thus be analysed using the theory of “sexist-defined fashion”, to support the arguments made. As a word of warning, hooks (2000:34) points out that not all young women in the twenty-first century want to be labelled as feminists, and in some instances women do not mind having their bodies sexualised.

Hooks (2016:1) accuses patriarchy of being a “life-threatening social disease” amongst men, but she acknowledges that that statement is not to be taken literally – it is a metaphor used to emphasise how patriarchy is tearing men apart, without them even realising it. In this regard, hooks (2016:1) points out that ‘patriarchy’ is not a familiar term amongst men: some purposefully do not acknowledge the concept, fearing that if they do, they will need to admit to its faults. Still, it is interesting to note that patriarchy is with all of us since birth, it is so embedded into our brains that we act it out without having to think about it. Patriarchy exists under socio-political norms which ensure that male dominance and superiority are practised over women (the so-called weaker sex) and often even freely enforced through violence and psychological harm (hooks 2016:1). Referring to her own experiences, hooks (2016:1) recalls that it was ‘naturally’ expected of her to come across as weak, and to assume the role of serving caretaker. This stands in contradiction to the ‘naturally’ strong role of men, who are there to be served while doing ‘manly’ work. It is, therefore, deemed ‘unnatural’ for a woman to take on a man’s role, for instance by exhibiting a violent nature. These arguments serve as a tool for analysing whether or not ‘violence’ is evident in sport – not physical violence, but rather psychological. Pertinent questions include the following: do the camera, commentators and male
presenters practise psychological violence against sportswomen and female presenters during matches and in-studio talk shows? If so, how is that evident in their dialogue and in camera shot selections?

Hooks (2009:13) explores the strong correlation between power and desire, where every type of desire has some aspect of power evident in its system, and desire means very little if it is devoid of power. According to hooks (2009:13), the camera has the ability to control the power of desire, as is evident in the way the camera frames certain scenes or focuses on particular objects by employing either a slow-motion effect or a close-up, which forces the viewer to visually interact with the subject to the point where s/he desires that subject. The power of desire could well be unhealthy in the domain of television, as it not only leads to the objectification of its ‘victims’ but also their eroticisation (hooks 2009:13). However, the camerawork is subtle in that it does not make it seem as if such objectification is done wrongfully (hooks 2009:13). In this respect, hooks (2009:15) states that women’s bodies are regarded as less important under a system of patriarchal pleasure, which is why sexism is widely evident in television. This is not only achieved by featuring women naked on-screen, but might also be evident through women’s dialogue, their appearance, and the way in which the men on-screen treat them. Female personalities who appear on-screen have their hair and make-up done and touched-up by professionals, which serves as a reminder that femininity is created, rather than being ‘naturally’ found. Professional makeup artists and hairstylists can thus be deemed to reinforce femininity through its repetition. Male television celebrities also have their hair and make-up done, but not with the intention of objectifying them (hooks 2009:13).

Hooks (2000:ix) discusses how men benefit from the patriarchal system, stating that one of the ways of maintaining patriarchy is by ensuring that the oppression of women continues. By oppressing women, men in power ensure that they will never be replaced by women and that gender equality will not be established, thus as hooks (2000:ix) argues, the only way for women to be liberated from a patriarchal system is to break down its norms, as these sustain their oppression and prevent them from breaking free. Mulvey (1975:804) theorises that one way of breaking down the norms which hooks (2000:ix) mentions is related to the castration threat,
whose centre of oppression must be interrogated and dismantled by those subjected to patriarchal influences. Mulvey’s (1975:804) theory thus relies on an understanding of the system, as knowledge about its structure will ensure success in disrupting its norms. This argument is also evident in the work of Butler (1990:2), who emphasises that the idea is not to simply dismantle the system, but to understand it well enough to disrupt it from the inside. By gaining insight into work around patriarchy and oppression, it becomes possible to understand the phallocentric system. This knowledge offers information on the system of patriarchy, and how the castration threat and oppression of women work, so as to explore – in the present context – how women are actively present and involved in sports broadcasting and in-studio talk shows. Such knowledge can be gained from reading seminal works in the field of sports broadcasting, power relations and feminism, before critically engaging with the theory and case studies.

3.5 Conclusion
This chapter has foregrounded the feminist theories of representation of hooks (2000), Butler (1990) and Mulvey (1975), and considered the ways in which representation functions as both the instrument of phallocentric power, and the site of its potential interruption. Mulvey’s (1975) understanding of the male gaze and the camera’s role in its objectifying power is vital to the current analysis of sportswomen and sports commentators. Butler (1990) theorises naturalisation, and the opportunity to intervene in the regulatory ideal through representing the norm subversively or differently, adds to the critical analysis. Hooks’ (2000) theories on patriarchal power also form an important part of this analysis. The theories outlined in this chapter, and how they will be implemented in the analysis of the case studies, is discussed in the next chapter, along with the specific research methodology employed.
CHAPTER FOUR: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

4.1 Introduction
This section outlines the process followed in the present research study, in responding to the research question of how female athletes and sports commentators are represented on the South African public service broadcaster, SABC 1, compared to content aired on the private terrestrial pay television channels, SuperSport 1 and SuperSport 5, and the extent of women’s participation in these broadcasts. To support and validate these arguments set out, two case studies will be unpacked and analysed. The two case studies include a women’s rugby match and a women’s football match. Both case studies consist of an all-women’s sport team. The first case study of the women’s rugby match is a seven-players-a-side match, where the female athletes play a fast contact match for seven minutes a side. The second case study of the women’s football match is set at a slower pace as the full match is 90 minutes long. Further on in this chapter is an in-depth introduction and expanding on the conversation on the case studies.

4.2 Research design/paradigm
This study employs a qualitative research paradigm which focuses on a comparative analysis of two South African television sports broadcasters: SuperSport 1 and 5, and SABC 1 Sports. Here, a critical textual analysis forms part of the primary research design by interrogating any work that is produced with the intention of understanding dynamics and making sense of the product (McKee 2003:1). A textual analysis offers a means of contextualising and interpreting visuals such as film, broadcasts, advertisements and any form of print media (McKee 2003:1). This methodology includes a textual analysis of selected sports broadcasts (as texts), relying on ideas derived from the theoretical framework to support the arguments made. The considerations governing the researcher’s selections were based on previous observations made while watching matches broadcast on the SuperSport and SABC channels, and her noticing differences in the way female sports personalities were represented on-screen, on the different broadcasting platforms. The question of how the SABC differs in its broadcasts from matches aired on SuperSport is what prompted further research. This analysis draws on primary research, interrogating it through feminist discourses around power and ‘the gaze’,
and situating how these manifest in the South African sports broadcasting sphere. John Creswell (2014:14) observes that a phenomenological approach to research reflects on certain themes and combines the experience of meaning with lived experience, adding that this approach is “a design of inquiry found in many fields, especially evaluation, in which the researcher develops an in-depth analysis of a case, often a program, event, activity, process…”.

The research design, which guides the overall strategy followed to complete the qualitative and textual analysis of the selected case studies, is supported by seminal and related texts in the field of study, as outlined in the chapters dealing with the literature review and theoretical framework. The section in the literature review which focuses on women in sport clarifies the stereotypes society has created around women in sports, and the everyday challenges presented by gender stereotypes. The seminal theoretical texts in the theoretical framework chapter frame this issue through a wider lens of understanding visual, social and discursive repetitions of power in its “heteronormative” form (Butler 1993:3). The literature study provides the background against which to review the role of the media in the way women in sports are represented to the public, along with the structuring of power relations in the sports broadcasting sphere. The motivation for this research lies in these seminal texts, which highlight inequalities and potentially problematic areas in the representation of women who participate in sport.

The textual analysis is done by critically engaging with the primary texts (the broadcasts on SuperSport 1 and 5, and SABC 1), using the theories outlined in the theoretical framework section as tools to draw on and support the findings. The focus is not on the sporting codes and how a particular sport is broadcast, but rather on the way in which female sports personalities are framed and represented, and the power relations that manifest in those representations. The outcome of the textual analysis is not aimed at a historical uncovering of why the broadcasters represent women within a predetermined context of power, but rather how.

4.3 Case studies

The case studies selected for this analysis were chosen because broadcasters have different mandates that they are bound to adhere to, within the framework of
postapartheid democratic South Africa. This country’s inclusive constitution prohibits, among other ethical considerations, discrimination based on sex or gender. Women’s rugby and soccer matches are rarely broadcast on television, which limits the selection of available case studies. The matches under discussion were selected based on what was broadcast during the period when the research was being conducted. Nonetheless, those broadcasts-as-texts provide an opportunity for a close reading of the institutional, social and representational structures of power at work in the sexed and gendered visual domain of sports broadcasting.

The SABC, as a public service broadcaster partially funded by the public through television licences and funds from the fiscus, is mandated to equitably represent all South Africans in its televised programming and content. The SABC’s corporate mandate stipulates that its service must serve the public as a whole (SABC 2017a:[sp]). According to the SABC (2017a:[sp]), the broadcasting service is funded by advertisements, subscriptions, third-party sponsorships and licence fees which enable it to “provide television and radio programmes and any other material to be transmitted or distributed by the common carrier for free-to-air reception by the public”.

Furthermore, the SABC (2017a:[sp]) is obligated, by law, to collect and broadcast South African content and to do so truthfully, in order to fairly represent audiences from a variety of races, genders and cultural backgrounds. From a sporting point of view, according to the website, the SABC (2017a:[sp]) strives to create an arena for athletes to encourage younger generations to pursue their sporting dreams.

The tournament that will be analysed is a match from the Confederation of African Football (CAF) Women’s Olympic Qualifying Tournament, as broadcast on SABC 1. The in-studio soccer talk show analysed here is Soccer Build-up, broadcast by SABC 1, whose target market is between 16 and 34 years of age, and caters for Nguni- (Zulu, Xhosa, Swati, Ndebele) and English-speaking audiences (SABC 2017b:[sp]). For this reason, SABC 1 was selected as one of the case studies, as it caters for different ethnic and linguistic groups.
SuperSport is a privately funded and commercially driven broadcaster which could arguably have greater freedom in terms of its choice and policies relating to the representation of women in sports broadcasting. However, SuperSport still has certain mandates it needs to adhere to in terms of the constitution, such as broadcasting honest and accurate programming that will not be sexually or racially offensive to viewers. SuperSport consists of a group of South African sports broadcasting channels that are owned by Multichoice and broadcast on the digital satellite television (DStv) platform (SuperSport 2017:[sp]). SuperSport’s (2017:[sp]) mission and vision are “to be the best and most successful provider of premium pay-television sports coverage across the continent of Africa”.

The tournament that is analysed is a match played during the 2016 Hong Kong and Shanghai Banking Corporation (HSBC) World Rugby Women’s Sevens series in Vancouver. The game was not filmed by SuperSport 5, but the channel did play a role for the fact that it broadcast the game. The in-studio rugby talk show that is analysed here, is First Fifteen (FirstXV), filmed and broadcast weekly on SuperSport 1. Each of the SuperSport channels accommodates specific sporting codes, with SuperSport 5 serving as a platform for broadcasting overflow rugby matches from SuperSport 1 (SuperSport 2017:[sp]). These matches often attract fewer viewers and tend to be moved to a lower-ranking broadcasting channel, so as to be able to accommodate matches with a higher viewership on SuperSport 1 (SuperSport 2017:[sp]).

Taking into account the mandates of SuperSport and the SABC, it is evident that they have shared aims when it comes to including all South Africans, regardless of race, gender and cultural background. The focus is thus on a comparative analysis which will keep the abovementioned mandates in mind, to determine how female athletes on the field, and female presenters in the studio, are represented on SuperSport 1, SuperSport 5 and SABC 1 respectively. The representation of the female athletes is analysed during a women’s rugby and a women’s soccer match respectively, along with the visual and verbal participation of a female sports presenter during an in-studio rugby talk show.
4.4 Approach to data analysis
Hooks (2000), Butler (1990) and Mulvey (1975) all contributed to the existing body of knowledge on the workings of patriarchal power. Within the notion of power, subthemes regarding ‘the gaze’, objectification and representation, along with aspects of reiteration, emerge. These subthemes facilitate an analysis of the ways in which patriarchal and phallocentric power relations (if present) manifest, and interrogate whether they are in any way challenged or interrupted in twenty-first-century sports broadcasting. Underlying this analysis of representation is an understanding of Foucault’s (1982) concept of power as a multidirectional discursive network of textual and social relations, rather than a quality attributed to an individual.

4.4.1 The camera’s gaze
This section investigates whether the camera frames female rugby players and soccer players on the field in a particular way, to examine whether such framing influences what the viewers see and how they see it. This section is divided into three categories dealing with the camera’s gaze in the field of play: the manipulation of shot speed, shot framing and shot selection. This categorisation allows the researcher to investigate whether any of the players are framed according to Butler’s (1990) idea of the patriarchal normative in terms of their appearance, and the manner in which camera effects are implemented to represent them in a certain way. On the field, this is evident in the fashion in which female athletes are framed by the camera (according to theories pertaining to the camera’s gaze). Does this challenge Mulvey’s (1975) theory of the sexualised male gaze in a post-apartheid democratic society?

The absence of women from different facets of sports broadcasting (as commentators, on the field and in-studio) is discussed and analysed across both case studies.

4.4.2 Representation through the reiteration of dialogue
This section centres around an analysis of Butler’s (1990) theory of reiteration and how this works in relation to the matches aired on SABC 1 and SuperSport 5. This reiteration in the replay of shots and the slowing down of certain shot speeds is
comparatively analysed, along with the in-studio talk shows’ dialogue between the male presenters and Elma Smit (the only female sports presenter currently appearing on either channel) and male match commentators. The analysis aims to examine the interactions between the aforementioned parties, to determine whether the way the men respond to the women reinforces aspects of phallocentrism. The reason why the current analysis of this primary research is valuable, is because the sports presenters in the studio receive a script (from the show’s producers) outlining the broadcast content, whereas commentators need to ad-lib in discussions and match-related commentary. It is therefore relevant to an analysis of phallocentric representations to investigate how women are treated verbally, within a male-dominated context, when there is a script, and whether this is reiterated in a situation unregulated by a script.

4.5 Conclusion
The next chapter outlines an analysis of the primary research texts and the outcomes of the findings of this study. That chapter aims to bring together the context of women’s sports broadcasting in South Africa, as outlined in the literature review, and interprets this context through the theoretical insights unpacked in the theoretical framework.

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4 By the time of submission of this study, SuperSport has appointed an additional female presenter called Motshidisi Mohono.
CHAPTER FIVE: FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

5.1 Introduction
To engage with the statement of intent put forward in this research, and in response to the research questions, this analysis of female athletes and presenters in the sporting codes of rugby and soccer will focus on four themes. The first is titled ‘The camera’s gaze in the field of play’, where the focus is on the manipulation of shot speed, shot framing and shot selection during the matches under study. Two games are analysed, namely a women’s sevens rugby match aired on SuperSport 5, and a women’s soccer match aired on SABC 1. The second theme is titled ‘Absences in women’s sports broadcasting’, which includes an analysis of the absence of female match commentators, female experts in the analysed sports, female match officials and the lack of broadcasting time allocated to these women’s sports, and what this suggests about the broadcasting of sports in which women participate. The study will attempt to demonstrate that, unlike men’s sporting events which almost always feature these aspects (rather than being known for lacking them), women’s sporting events are often characterised by lack. The third theme is entitled ‘Women in instudio match analyses’, in which two shows are critically analysed, namely SuperSport’s FirstXV (2017) and SABC 1’s Soccer Build-up (2017). The intention here is to analyse how the camera frames female sports presenters, and to compare the role women play and the level of acknowledgment they receive during talk shows. The fourth and final theme, entitled ‘Commentating during women’s sports broadcasting’, engages with the commentating during a women’s rugby match.

For the reader, it is important to note that sports broadcasting is not a one-man job. During the broadcasting of sports, there are a number of people involved to ensure the footage reaches the television screen. These people include the camera operators, the floor- (or in this instance the field manager), the visual mixer, the person calling the shots, the director, and at times the producer. Because of the many hands involved and people having an influence in making the broadcast happen, the different approaches in covering sports matches and the shot framing does not only depend on the director or crew members. Such an analysis would be too broad and fall outside the scope of this dissertation.
The HSBC World Rugby Women’s Sevens is an exclusive platform dedicated to women’s national rugby sevens teams (World Rugby 2015). On 12 March 2017, the South African Women’s Sevens team took on their Canadian counterparts in the HSBC final hosted in Vancouver, Canada. The match was aired on SuperSport 5.

The CAF Women’s Olympic Qualifying Tournament was hosted by South Africa in 2016. On 12 April of that year, the Banyana Banyana soccer team from South Africa took on their counterparts from Botswana in the qualifying rounds of the tournament. The match, hosted in Tembisa, South Africa, was broadcast on SABC 1.

FirstXV (2017) is an in-studio rugby talk show dedicated to discussing and analysing all the latest rugby matches, offering viewers in-depth insight into future matches and airing former rugby players’ opinions of the game. The episode of FirstXV (2017) to be analysed here, was broadcast on 7 June 2017 on SuperSport 1.

Soccer Build-up (2017) is an in-studio soccer talk show which features a panel of experts who discuss, analyse and offer viewers updates on the match to be broadcast afterwards. The episode analysed here, was broadcast on SABC 1 on 20 August 2017.

5.2 The camera’s gaze in the field of play
As Mulvey (1975:805) argues, the camera’s gaze shapes the visual field of desire in classic Hollywood films, becoming an extension of the phallocentric gaze through the framing of shots. For Mulvey (1975:805), the camera teaches the viewer how to desire the objectified female body through strategies aimed at fetishising certain body parts. In effect, this desiring gaze turns female characters into objects of display, rather than agents of the narrative. Transferring Mulvey’s (1975:805) insights onto the sports field, the camera’s gaze has the ability to influence the audience’s gaze through the way in which it frames subjects, and by altering shot speeds. In light of Mulvey’s (1975:805) argument about the phallocentric function of the objectifying gaze, this section discusses screen grabs of slow-motion scenes, in order to critically analyse those scenes from the women’s rugby match aired on SuperSport 5 and the women’s soccer match broadcast by SABC 1. Scenes from the classic Hollywood series, Baywatch (1989), as well as the more contemporary
film, *Wonder Woman* (2017), are included to compare with slow-motion scenes from the games and lay the groundwork for comparing other instances in which the speed was slowed down. Furthermore, stills of the different types of close-up shot which the cameras employed (featuring athletes’ faces, derrieres and their sporting techniques), will be analysed. Finally, other shot selections will be discussed along with SuperSport 5 and SABC 1’s different approaches in framing these shots.

### 5.2.1 Manipulation of shot speed

In the late 1980s, a classic Hollywood hit series, *Baywatch* (1989), aired on primetime television. It was criticised by numerous writers such as Mary Kearney (2013) and Margaret Rowntree, Nicole Moulding and Lia Bryant (2012) for being filled with highly sexualised shots of female actresses. *Baywatch* (1989) is well known for its slowing down of the camera speed in action scenes, which contributes to the sexual objectification of the actresses’ bodies on-screen (Kearney 2013:[sp]).

The actresses, who played the role of lifesavers, were often captured on camera in a melodramatic, slow-motion run to save lives (Kearney 2013:[sp]). Hooks (2009:13) argues that such shots have the ability to control desire by slowing down the speed, which forces the viewers to visually interact with a subject to the point where they desire it. Mulvey (1975) shows that this desire functions to consolidate the male desire as well as heterosexual norms, to the extent that the female viewer identifies with the woman-as-object shown on-screen. In *Baywatch* (1989), the slow speed effect also emphasised the actress’s breasts, which moved slowly and seductively as they ran (Kearney 2013:[sp]), which aligns with hooks’ (2009:13) theory as well as Mulvey’s (1975:805) analysis of the masculine desiring gaze. Kearney (2013:[sp]) concurs, commenting on the “sexual objectification of young female bodies in prime-time television”, in shows such as *Baywatch* (1989). A number of actresses from the *Baywatch* series often featured in the adult magazine *Playboy* as centrefolds, which indicates that these women were sexualised to the point where they were accepted as *Playboy* girls or ‘playmates’ (Jensen 2017).

The shot in Figure 5.1 shares many of the characteristics of one of the slow-motion scenes evident in the series, *Baywatch*, as depicted in figures 5.2 and 5.3. In all three instances, the shot speed has been slowed down. The gameplay time in the
shots from figures 5.1 and 5.3 has been retarded so that the depicted events appear out of sync with the rest of the match – the unnecessary yet deliberate use of slow-motion aligns with Mulvey’s (1975:807) theory of the desiring gaze, so that viewers either adopt a masculine desiring position or become the desired object of the gaze. Here, the assumption is not necessarily that the viewers are predominantly men. However, drawing from the discussion in the theoretical framework section, in this instance the male gaze is not only directed at the male viewers desiring the woman on-screen, but also at the female viewers wanting to be the desired object. This shot is uncannily similar the kind of objectification prevalent in Baywatch (1989), that may lead to female viewers wanting to become objects of desire, rather than skilled athletes. Female viewers can see the objectified image of another female on-screen, recognise that the athlete is desirable, fit and strong, and ultimately want to be desired in that way, or opt to become fit and strong themselves. This includes the female viewer who desires to be the object of the gaze. Furthermore, the female viewer’s desire extends to incorporate and covet the admiration of female viewers who want to be in her position in respect of the gaze.

**Figure 5.1** Slow speed effect of jogging female rugby player
Eddie McAlone (Technical director), HSBC World Rugby Women's Sevens, 2017 (screenshot by author)(McAlone 2017b)

**Figure 5.2** Slow speed effect of jogging female lifesaver
Michael Berk, Gregory Bonann & Douglas Schwartz (Creators), Baywatch, 1989 (screenshot by author)
(Berk, Bonann & Schwartz 1989)
Rowntree *et al* (2012:130) refer to the actresses in *Baywatch* (1989) as “those sexy babes” who are commonly seen wearing swimsuits, as is evident in the still in Figure 5.2. Even though the actresses do not wear bikinis, which would have exposed their stomachs and backs, the cut of their swimsuits reveals their upper thighs and a significant part of their hips and buttocks (Rowntree *et al* 2012:130). Rowntree *et al* (2012:130) note that the camera has the ability to capture the actresses on-screen in a way that emphasises the exposed areas not covered by their swimsuits, thus ensuring that every aspect of the women’s bodies is sexualised to some degree. The speed of the shot in Figure 5.2 has been slowed down in a way that offers viewers time to visually engage with every attribute of the actress’s physical appearance, including the way her swimsuit moulds her body (Rowntree *et al* 2012:130). Arguably, the shot in Figure 5.2 is sexualising the actress by drawing attention to the exposed parts of her body – a process which Mulvey (1975:806) refers to as fetishistic scopophilia, where a certain body part is sexualised in an attempt to make up for the lack of a phallus.

The cameras capture the athletes shown in figures 5.1 and 5.3 in the same way. The argument put forward here, is that the images have similar outcomes to *Baywatch* (1989), in that parts of the athletes’ bodies are exposed (legs and arms). However, the objectification lies in the slowing down of the camera speed to emphasise their bodies in a sexualised manner. These shots offer the viewers time to visually engage with the players’ bodies, to the extent where the viewers desire the athletes, and also desire to become like the athletes in terms of being physically fit, energetic and the
embodiment of physical prowess. This argument may be expanded to argue that the athletes in these shots are offered to the viewers for the pleasure of looking, because of the fact that these scenes were not part of the gameplay and thus did not need to be slowed down.

Choosing to slow down and sexualise a scene that was not part of the gameplay, sends out socially hegemonic messages through the way in which athletes are represented on-screen. The rugby and soccer matches were broadcast globally and widely viewed, therefore the objectified manner in which the women were represented on such well-known platforms denotes that it is acceptable for women’s bodies to be thus objectified. Keim (2003:11) states that sport has the ability to bring people together, but all indications are that the slowed-down shots (figures 5.1 and 5.3) “bring people together” by catering to the male gaze.

*Wonder Woman* (2017) is an American superhero film starring a female actress in the lead role. According to Andrew Dyce (2017:[sp]), *Wonder Woman* (2017) smashes past sexism and the camera’s objectification of female actresses. The lead actress in the film takes on the role of a warrior, portraying great physical strength and wisdom (Dyce 2017:[sp]). The fighting scenes in *Wonder Woman* (2017) consist of slow-motion footage (Dyce 2017:[sp]), with the slowed-down camera speed being particularly evident in scenes where the heroine fights against men. Unlike the sexualised slow motion of the soccer scenes referred to earlier, as well as those appearing in *Baywatch* (1989), the slowing down of the camera speed in *Wonder Woman* (2017) is done to highlight or draw attention to the heroine’s combat skills (Dyce 2017:[sp]).

*Figure 5.4* Slow speed effect of female warrior fighting
Patty Jenkins (Director), *Wonder Woman*, 2017 (screenshot by author)(Jenkins 2017)

*Figure 5.5* Slow speed effect of female soccer player kicking the ball
Carina Grobler (Sports director), CAF Women’s Olympic Qualifying Tournament, 2016 (screenshot by author)(Grobler 2016)
In addition to scenes on the sports field that conform to the male gaze, both case studies analysed here feature slow-motion effects similar to those used in *Wonder Woman* (2017). Figure 5.4 is a still from a fight scene in *Wonder Woman* (2017), in which the camera speed has been slowed down. The shots in figures 5.5, 5.6 and 5.7 contain a number of visible links to Figure 5.4, in which the female combatant fights off her opponent by kicking him through a window. The intention may have been to intensify the woman’s every movement and stunt during the fight, to make her come across as more powerful. This process serves to highlight the heroine’s strength and skill at employing combat techniques. In slowing down the camera speed, the female fighter is validated as an athlete based on the fact that she is physically strong. Here, the power roles are reversed, as she assumes a dominant role in her fight against a male opponent who must retreat before her superior strength – a fact highlighted and intensified by the slow speed effect drawing attention to the matter.

Two female soccer players are framed by the camera in the shot shown in Figure 5.5, with the scene being a slow-motion replay. Here, a player in the South African soccer team contests for the ball and comes into physical contact with an opponent. The slowed-down camera speed allows the viewers to closely follow the action taking place, and presents a clear view of the South African player’s agility in outwitting her opponent. The link to *Wonder Woman* (2017) lies in the way the slow
speed effect is used to promote or highlight the player's skill. By using slow motion (in Figure 5.5), the athletes have an opportunity to demonstrate their technique. That enables the women to gain recognition not merely as objects to be viewed, but as professional, skilled, competitive and competent athletes.

The shot in Figure 5.6 is a fighting scene where the camera is slowed down. Despite its unique context, Figure 5.6 can still be compared to the shot in Figure 5.4. The women in Figure 5.6 are fighting for the ball, and by slowing down the camera speed, the focus is drawn to each player's attempt to win the ball. The slower camera speed allows viewers to take in the women's strength and power, while emphasising the seriousness with which they are playing the game. There are certain correlations with Dyce's (2017:) discussion of *Wonder Woman* (2017): in Figure 5.6 the players are captured on camera smashing notions of sexism and Western phallocentric conventions around how women should act, which again is emphasised by slowing down the film speed.

Figure 5.7 is a shot where the camera frames and slows down the speed as a Canadian player physically shoves away her opponent. Unlike the shot in Figure 5.5, the footage has not been slowed down to objectify the women – rather, the aim is to replay the skirmish so as to draw attention to the women's athleticism and physical strength. By slowing down the speed of the camera and replaying the shot, the women's strength is acknowledged, as is the case with the female fighter in *Wonder Woman* (2017). The screen grab shows women actively engaged in a physical contact sport, and the framing of the shot affords viewers an opportunity to recognise this.

Although there is an altering of speed in these shots, it arguably does not necessarily objectify the athletes in figures 5.5, 5.6 and 5.7. Although the athletes' thighs are visible, the slow motion footage is used to replay action scenes from the matches: in no way can these shots be equated to figure 5.2, in which the *Baywatch* (1989) actress is objectified. This argument is supported by Dyce's (2017:) observation that, even though the lead actress in *Wonder Woman* (2017) wears revealing outfits, she does not come across as an object of the male gaze, due to the physical strength of the character she portrays.
The slow speed effects in both case studies do, in some instances, support hooks’ (2009:13) theory that the camera speed can be slowed down to objectify women on-screen. However, in other instances both of the matches under review offered slow-motion replays to grant viewers a better look at the matchplay, rather than primarily sexualising or objectifying the women. The way in which the camera frames the slow-motion replay shots from the match primarily put the athletes’ skills on display to the viewer.

### 5.2.2 Shot framing and shot selection

Shot framings are often used to draw attention to something specific that is happening or going to happen on-screen. During rugby and soccer matches, shots are often framed in such a way as to draw the viewers’ attention to events on the pitch. The intention is mainly to focus on a replay of crucial action that took place. Such a repetition of the gameplay complicates a reading of the bodies on display, and opens up visual spaces for intervention into the scopophilic and fetishistic aspects of the gaze. This does not mean that such repetition always disturbs the desiring look, as the example referred to below will demonstrate, but it offers a means of disarming the objectifying impulse.

![Figure 5.8 Close-up shot of female soccer player’s legs](image)

*Figure 5.8 Close-up shot of female soccer player’s legs*

Carina Grobler (Sports director), CAF Women’s Olympic Qualifying Tournament, 2016 (screenshot by author) (Grobler 2016)

![Figure 5.9 Close-up shot of female soccer player’s feet](image)

*Figure 5.9 Close-up shot of female soccer player’s feet*

Carina Grobler (Sports director), CAF Women’s Olympic Qualifying Tournament, 2016 (screenshot by author) (Grobler 2016)

Figures 5.8 and 5.9 are examples of the camera using close-up framings of shots where the gameplay is being replayed to draw the viewers’ attention to the players’ footwork and advanced skills in handling and manoeuvring the ball. The framing of
these close-up shots stays on-screen for a decent amount of time (a few seconds longer than expected). In so doing, the camera ensures that the viewers are offered a clear angle of sight on the soccer players’ sporting talents. This allows viewers to visually interact with the athletes’ sporting skills, instead of their bodies, as the camera’s framing of the shots leaves no room for objectification. When watching these close-up framed shots, an uninformed viewer would not have known the gender of the players controlling the ball. This safeguards female players against any form of gender-based discrimination. For the entire duration of this shot being displayed on-screen, the viewers are guided to focus on the player's talent, as offered by the camera, rather than foregrounding appearance at the expense of technique.

Although for many years the male gaze was something purely attributed to men, in recent years, women also came to exhibit the male gaze. Therefore, the study does not call for similar footage of male sports to be analysed, as the focus of the study is on female athletes only, including the way they exhibit the male gaze, and does not include the male athletes.

The strategies of replay, in demonstrating skill over gendered expectations, intersect usefully with Butler’s (1993:13) theory of repetition. As stated in the theoretical framework, repetition, for Butler (1993), works ideologically to naturalise a construct so that it becomes a normalised expectation. Such expectations are not neutral, but have power effects that force certain forms of feminine behaviour and appearance into the “domain of cultural intelligibility” (Butler 1993:2). A few years ago, female athletes were denied the opportunity to be successful in professional sports, but the camera’s framing in the shots in figures 5.8 and 5.9 allow the world to see that these athletes do have talent and deserve the title of professional sportswomen. The camerawork reinforces this aspect, in that it operates beyond – and rejects – objectification.

As Butler (1993:15) also argues, however, repetition intervenes in the circuit of naturalisation – as she writes in relation to the notion of iteration, every repetition can be repeated differently. In other words, the gaze can be interrupted and the viewer's possession of the woman on-screen can be refused.
Figure 5.10 Close-up shot of female rugby player
Eddie McAlone (Technical director), HSBC World Rugby Women's Sevens, 2017
(screenshot by author) (McAlone 2017)

Figure 5.11 Long shot of female rugby players
Eddie McAlone (Technical director), HSBC World Rugby Women's Sevens, 2017
(screenshot by author) (McAlone 2017)

Figure 5.10 is one of the few close-up shots (apart from that shown in Figure 5.1) of a female rugby player from South Africa. Throughout the duration of the rugby match long shots are generally used, with close-ups being few and far between. Figure 5.11 is an example of a long shot, while the player depicted in Figure 5.10 (it is probably no coincidence that she is the same woman who featured in Figure 5.1) could be deemed attractive, based on phallocentric Western stereotypes of what constitutes female beauty. Such features include long, dark hair tied up messily, and fair, blemish-free skin, along with a tall and well-built physique.

Butler’s (1993:2) theory of a “domain of cultural intelligibility” is evident in the women’s sevens match. Since there are seven women on each side, and the duration of a match is 14 minutes, this should leave enough time for the camera to focus on at least two or three other players – but, this never happens. An argument can thus be made that the camera probably chose to zoom in on more attractive women (according to phallocentric norms) for the audience to gaze upon. Accordingly, the camera, again, has the ability to manipulate what the viewers see. Butler (1993:2) states that those who do not fulfil the regulatory ideas of normative behaviour (and in this respect, appearance) become categorised as abject and are excluded. The fact that the camera only features close-up shots of white women appears to support Butler’s (1990:16) findings that, amongst others, culture and race play a role in desire. Therefore, if the production crew filming the rugby match believed the white rugby players were more prone to be desired, they would more frequently afford them screen-time, so as to offer their viewers something to gaze upon.
The camerawork for the soccer match focuses on women of different races, as is evident in the stills numbered 5.12, 5.13 and 5.14. These women also evidently look completely different from the woman shown in Figure 5.10, and do not conform to Western phallocentric conventions for which the female actresses in *Baywatch* (1989) could be considered the archetypal visual models.

This refusal to conform also opens up the idea of repetition with difference. This correlates with hooks' (2000:31) notion of challenging sexist thinking around women’s bodies and how the ideal woman should look.
As with the shot in Figure 5.10, figures 5.15 and 5.16 support the finding that the shots from the rugby match chose to avoid footage of women coming across as unattractive, by not focussing on sweaty and rather zooming out, according to Western phallocentric conventions. Mulvey (1975) asserts that within these conventions, there are norms to determine what the ideal woman looks like. The shots in figures 5.15 and 5.16 portray what Mulvey (1975) meant by the phallus controlling women’s appearance and how the world sees them, by determining when a woman appear too sweaty to rather zoom out, and controlling the tightness of the shot. Butler (1993:2) argues that people who do not fit into the domain of cultural intelligibility are excluded from the rest. This is evident in the sudden change in camera angle when a player falls to the ground, with the camera most likely choosing to avoid showing these kinds of shot on screen. Thus, when the players’ actions confound the expectations of Western phallocentrism, the camera ignores the footage and averts the lens.

Hooks (2009:13) contextualises this as the camera having the power to control desire. As mentioned earlier during the analysis of the shot in Figure 5.10, the camera can choose not to show close-up shots of athletes deemed ‘undesirable’ in terms of Western phallocentric conventions and the domain of cultural intelligibility, as outlined by Mulvey (1975) and Butler (1993:2) respectively.

5.3 Absences in women’s sports broadcasting
Radek Humpolík (2014:6) discusses the importance of having commentators during a match, noting that a commentator’s purpose is to keep viewers interested and to ‘read’ the unfolding match for them. Even though commentating during a match is considered vital to good coverage, the women’s soccer match that was broadcast on SABC 1 had no running commentary – the game commenced in silence and continued that way for the full 90 minutes. Commentary, which is mainly part of men’s sports matches, builds atmosphere and provides insights which work to draw viewers in by contextualising a match and sharing professional insights. One possible reason for the absence of commentary in the aforementioned broadcast (of the women’s match) is that there are insufficient funds to employ a match
commentator. This is a significant omission, as good commentating during a match can help boost viewership figures. On the other hand, there were two commentators for the women’s rugby match shown on SuperSport – both of whom were men. Here, the assertion is not necessarily that having male commentators during a women’s match is wrong. If female commentators were involved in men’s matches the gender of the commentators would be less contentious. However, since there are always male commentators during men’s games, there appears to be little or no room for female commentators, specifically in the domain of rugby.

Another aspect that is important during transmissions is the broadcasting time allocated to a match. In some instances, women’s sports are at a disadvantage in this respect, as was the case with the women’s rugby match discussed here. The broadcast switched to the match a mere 20 seconds before the start of the game, only allowing sufficient time for the World Series log standings to be shown on-screen. There were no pre-match discussions and the halftime banter between the commentators had little substance, as it merely offered a superficial analysis of the first half of the game. As soon as the final whistle was blown to indicate the end of the game, the broadcast immediately switched to another sport, namely a men’s golf tournament, and no time was allocated for post-match interviews with the players. This match having been a final in the women’s sevens series, it surely should have merited more airtime. The women’s soccer match received far more airtime: 15 minutes was dedicated to a match build-up discussion prior to the game, with halftime interviews with players, match analysis and a commentated highlights segment afterward.

FirstXV (2017), a rugby talk show, is presented by three men and one woman, Elma Smit. In 2011, Smit became the first-ever female rugby presenter, but her role remains fairly minimal compared to that of the male commentators. Men are still given far more opportunities to express their opinion, with Smit given small, unimportant roles and scripts, such as discussing the fixtures for the upcoming weekend, or providing viewers with information about where and how to purchase tickets for a match. No female experts participate in the talk show, which could subtly connote to the audience that women are not knowledgeable enough to discuss a male-dominated sport such as rugby.
Soccer Build-up (2017) is the only soccer talk show to feature a female ‘presenter’, but Smit’s role in FirstXV, however small, is significant compared to the part women play on that show. Smit, who is introduced to the audience at the beginning of the talk show, is seen on-screen for the full duration of the show, whereas the female ‘presenter’ in Soccer Build-up (2017) is not featured at all. At no point is the female ‘presenter’ introduced to the audience – she only features as a disembodied voice-over during inserts. Although some female experts have been invited to participate in the show, all the credence is given to male experts and sports stars.

5.4 Women in in-studio match analyses
As mentioned in the section dealing with the absence of women from sports broadcasting, the female ‘presenter’ in the soccer talk show Soccer Build-up (2017) never appears in person, thus her absence prevents her from being objectified by the camera’s gaze. In FirstXV (2017), Smit appears on camera, but after a careful analysis of the shots, the researcher could find no evidence of her being objectified by the camera’s gaze or being framed differently from the male presenters. Thus, the analysis here, in both instances, will focus on verbal communication, rather than the visual.

Figure 5.17 Presenters in studio
Eddie McAlone (Technical director), FirstXV, 2017 (screenshot by author)(McAlone 2017)

Figure 5.18 Presenters in studio
Eddie McAlone (Technical director), FirstXV, 2017 (screenshot by author)(McAlone 2017)
Figures 5.17, 5.18, 5.19 and 5.20 are but a few examples of the kinds of shot framings employed in course of the in-studio rugby talk show. These shots show how the camera frames the presenters, without hinting at objectifying imagery.

When listening to and analysing the conversation between the presenters of FirstXV (2017), it soon becomes evident that the only female presenter on the panel is not given much credence by her male counterparts. In fact, they laugh off Smit’s comments and arguments. The conversation does not linger on what she says; the male presenters quickly move on to the next topic.

In one instance, Smit attempts to introduce a humorous topic. Below is a snippet of the dialogue exchanged between Smit and Xola Ntshinga, one of the male presenters:

Smit: Have you heard that he cut his hair and….
Ntshinga: Let’s not talk about that at all.

Ntshinga successfully changes the topic of conversation. Being dismissed by the male presenters reinforces the fact that Smit’s opinion is not important. The nature of the subject she wishes to discuss also positions her as ‘the girl’, either because she has been instructed to assume that guise, or because she has settled into a submissive role in respect of the other presenters.
Smit is often interrupted by one of the male presenters when she attempts to air her views. Below is an excerpt from a conversation between Smit, Victor Matfield (one of the male presenters), and Marlon Kruger, the South African Rugby Union’s (SARU) Marketing and Communications Manager, about their efforts to bring the best live experience of rugby to South African supporters:

Kruger: … so taking some of the wings off that, we will see you on Saturday.
Smit: I hear that….
Matfield: I have a friend at Loftus, with a box with a smoking machine. With lights and everything. Can we expect something like that?

In this excerpt, Matfield completely disregards the fact that Smit was trying to say something, and continues talking about a matter which is not important enough to warrant his interruption.

At another stage, Smit tries to raise a point that the team selection for an upcoming rugby match might not be easy, to which Owen Nkumane, one of the male presenters, point blank disagrees with her:

Smit: One of the most interesting selection issues for me this year is number nine.
Nkumane: That’s easy!

After this, Nkumane continues to explain to Smit why it is an easy selection, almost as if to emphasise that Smit ‘knows nothing’.

During the talk show, Smit attempts to make jokes which are either dismissed or go completely unacknowledged by the men. In the following conversation, Smit jokes with Nkumane about footage seen on-screen of the traditional New Zealand welcome dance performed during the British and Irish Lions tour in 2017:

Smit: Owen, why are you smiling like that? (Laughs)
Nkumane: I think it is brilliant. (Serious tone)

After his comment, Nkumane proceeds to explain exactly how serious this tradition and the series are, making it clear that this is no laughing matter. However, when one of the men tells a joke, everyone laughs and elaborates on what he said. In the
end, the men’s actions may influence the way the viewers see Smit and how she positions herself.

In the literature review chapter, the focus fell on Coventry’s (2004:335) view that female sports presenters play relatively insignificant roles compared to their male counterparts, who are often given the main presenting roles. The men’s treatment of Smit confirms Coventry’s (2004:334) findings that a woman’s role tends to be limited to directing questions to the men, asking them about incidents that happened during a match and inviting them to predict the outcome of future games, rather than giving their own input. Here is an example:

Smit: We’re gonna take a look at what these guys think the Springbok side might look like.

Smit’s opinion is very rarely heard, while the men’s opinions are prioritised. Smit thus receives very little talk time, while the men’s voices are heard throughout.

The male presenters’ scripts include in-depth discussions on rugby matches, the players’ techniques, insights into the coaching of the teams and other valuable information regarding the gameplay. Smit’s script is not as complex, allowing her to make only a superficial contribution to the discussion. Her script is limited to less significant matters, such as discussing the team mascot, the players having jet lag after a long flight, or giving factual details such as kick-off times and the date of matches. Mulvey (1975:803) calls this phallocentrism for allowing men access to making and possessing meaning which, in this context, grants them superiority over women.

During one of the few instances in the talk show when Smit is permitted to engage in a more in-depth conversation, footage of a rugby game plays on-screen while she speaks, which makes her little more than a disembodied voice. This arguably distracts from her few seconds of fame and the validity of her opinion, as she comes across as not being important enough to be seen while offering personal insights. On the one hand, her disembodied voice frees her from the objectification of the gaze, while on the other, it enacts a mode of ‘silencing’ that marks her expertise as
‘inferior’ in relation to that of the men on the panel. Here, it is important to note that Smit’s role is being an anchor, not an expert, but then this begs the question why there are no female experts on the panel.

The script made available to the female voice-over artist who appears on the soccer talk show is far more complex than anything Smit is asked to deliver. Yet, as is the case with Smit, that woman is not acknowledged by the male presenters or even included or referenced in their conversation. It seems as though the producers of the talk show realise that we live in an era where women cannot be excluded because of their gender, yet they retain the power to ensure that women remain ‘invisible’. The woman’s voice-over does not leave room for analysis as her voice has been pre-recorded, thus there is no interaction between her and the male presenters on the show.

After analysing the verbal communications on the talk shows, it seems clear that the female presenters are not being sexually objectified by the male presenters, but neither are they given much credence. These women are given minor roles, with lines (especially in Smit’s case) that are so inconsequential, the show could function without that input. The male presenters’ opinions are what make the talk shows so successful and informative that viewers want to keep watching. The women’s roles might thus speak of tokenism, of a cursory attempt to include a female ‘perspective’ to ensure that the broadcasters are covered in terms of gender equality, allowing them to negate any allegations that they might not be gender inclusive.

5.5 Commentating during women’s sports broadcasts

This section deals with the dialogue of the male commentators during the South African women’s sevens match, focusing on what was said, and what remained unsaid. Commentators have the ability to frame athletes through their words, by manipulating the way viewers perceive both the match and the players (Humpolík 2014:6–7). Here, the focus is on commentating which might influence the way in which the audience regards the athletes. While no comments were made that directly undermined the athletes, a few comments openly complimented the female players. Some throw-away comments have become normalised, and thus warrant careful study, but following a critical analysis of the commentating, and attempts to
determine the subtext of what was said, several comments were deemed gratuitous, as they do not add value to the match or the images shown on screen. This section starts off with the more obviously positive comments made during the match, followed by a critical analysis of the negative comments.

During the rugby match, the commentators often praise the athletes and note that the women have sporting talent and deserve to be taken seriously by the sporting fraternity. More than once the commentators mention what a shame it was that the South African women’s side had not received much-needed funding to compete in the 2016 Rio Olympics. Another positive comment relates to how ‘terrific’ it is to see women from two years ago still on the team. For the commentator, this is emblematic of their loyalty towards their teammates and country, especially as the women’s sevens side remains underfunded. The commentators note that the women’s sevens event is very important and sorely needed to send out a message to the world, saying “look at us, we have talent and we are here to compete”. A few times during the match the commentators commend the players for their “tremendous” growth. One commentator states that women’s sevens is an inspiration to all young girls, before adding, almost as an afterthought, “and young boys”. This comment contains positive and negative aspects. The commentators acknowledge that these women are inspirational to girls, which is a big responsibility and places them in a privileged position. Then the compliment is watered down by the idea that these women might be good enough to encourage young girls, but not young boys. The notion of women receiving some credit, only to have it rescinded again, can be linked to the patriarchal system which hooks (2000:iix) discusses. By oppressing women, powerful men ensure that they will never be replaced by women (hooks 2000:iix). It is a backhanded compliment that almost grudgingly acknowledges that gender is utterly incidental to talent: it should be the women’s talent that inspires all children, rather than focusing on gender.

During the rugby match, the commentators go to great lengths to emphasise the athletes’ sporting talents and ability. However, phrases such as “an amazing tackle” and “she ran a spectacular distance” almost tend to overexaggerate the athletes’ performance in a way that appears fabricated, rather than genuine. When one athlete scores a try, a commentator is heard exclaiming: “Unbelievable! How did she
do it?” Comments such as these can possibly influence the way viewers regard the match. Though this note of incredulity is not solely heard at women’s sporting events, it may possibly feature more in an all-women’s game. This position questions – albeit unintentionally – the player’s talent and skill. Other words which are emphasised and uttered in overly dramatic tones include “strong”, “strength” and “aggressive”. In a Western phallocentric world, these words are not typically used to describe women but rather men who are physically strong and empowered. This stems from the historical belief that men do not understand women and their desires, therefore they label women as soft and emotional, and men, having the phallus, as strong and dominant (Butler 1990:vii). In this regard, Madibogo (2016) and Ogunniyi (2013) point out that rugby is a contact sport; under Western norms women are not expected to take part in activities requiring brute force. Tovia (2014:1) outlines the social norms that play a role in labelling rugby as a masculine sport, which is imbued with physical attributes not traditionally associated with femininity. Such norms include rugby being a hard and rough sport, which should only be played by hard people (women are socially depicted as being soft and tender).

Butler (1990:2) argues that power relations have not only developed the way in which men interact with women verbally, but on a deeper level they have had an impact on the structure of thought and discourse about gender and sexual difference. In the matches under scrutiny here, the commentators not only used masculine terms but also words and phrases typically associated with women and femininity, in keeping with Western phallocentric conventions. Some of the language used appeared to feminise activities on the pitch, including “lovely bit of footwork”, “lovely run” and “beautiful running style”, with a player being referred to as a “young lady”. Although “lovely” may conceivably be uttered about a men’s soccer match, some words certainly will not characterise a men’s game (“beautiful running style” or “young lady” are generally directed at females). Rather than choosing to use decidedly masculine or feminine references, the commentators could consider using more neutral terms. Instead of “lovely”, they might use “skilful”, and instead of referring to a player as a “young lady”, they might refer to her as an “athlete”. Also, it is doubtful that male athletes would appreciate their sporting talents being referred to in feminised terms. This links to the notion that there are certain attributes that classify each individual as either feminine or masculine (Butler 1990:2), and where
being categorised as either male or female already has pre-constructed social expectations of gender, with girls being taught to act submissively, girlishly and cute, while boys are expected to act like terrors.

The analysis of the commentators and camerawork revealed that the camera caters more to the gaze than the commentators do, thus the gaze plays out visually rather than verbally, which prevents the commentators from using words which could be labelled as sexually insulting.
6.1 Overview of the findings

Post-apartheid South Africa has witnessed sporting events growing to become, to a large extent, part of the local culture. Although South Africa has reached a point where sporting codes such as rugby and soccer see players from different racial and cultural backgrounds integrated as they play the game, gender equality is still a pipe dream. Women in sport, as the findings in chapter five indicate, still tend to suffer under Western patriarchal norms. This confirms the theories of hooks (2000), Butler (1990) and Mulvey (1975), as discussed in chapter three, whose approaches to feminism analyse the ways in which, under patriarchy, power is socially, structurally and psychoanalytically the purview of men.

This study concludes that women in sports broadcasting are still, to some degree, subjected to patriarchal attitudes, even if this is done unwittingly on the part of some of the men involved. Nickolaus Bauer (2012:[sp]) states that SuperSport does not position itself as “cater[ing] for ‘men’s’ or ‘women’s’ sports”, yet its broadcasting of women’s sporting events reflects its patriarchal and phallocentric demographic. As a consequence (albeit in some cases unwittingly), it serves to reproduce paternalistic and condescending attitudes. Demeaning comments made by male sports commentators and presenters, as well as select camera shots (as illustrated in chapter five), are proof that sports broadcasters in South Africa still have work to do when it comes to representing sportswomen on-screen as equal – in all respects – to their male counterparts.

The twenty-first century has seen women in South African sports broadcasting beginning to inch forward, with female athletes proving that they deserve to be just as much a part of the sporting fraternity. From the case studies analysed in chapter five, it became clear that the commentators commentating on the South African women’s rugby match under study here, commended the female athletes on their sporting prowess. Multiple camera angles offered viewers a chance to watch a spectacular run of play, and to see it again in the form of replays or with slow speed effects, thus granting those sportswomen much-needed visibility.
This picture is skewed when it comes to the female presenters of in-studio talk shows. Although the case studies used here demonstrate that these women are not represented differently from the male presenters on-screen in respect of the camera shots, they are not given nearly as much credibility as the men are. As referred to in the research findings in chapter one, and the outcome of the analysis in chapter five, female presenters’ knowledge of sports often go unacknowledged, or they are not afforded an opportunity to offer their input during discussions. This echoes the ways in which the male gaze positions women on-screen simply as objects to be looked at.

6.2 Contributions and future research

The contributions of this research study are intended to enlighten South Africans about the position of female sports presenters in the domain of broadcasting, how female athletes are represented on-screen, and what roadblocks women still face in terms of sports broadcasts in general.

A gap was identified in respect of prior research into women’s participation in what is commonly referred to in Western society as ‘male-dominated’ sports (rugby, cricket, and even soccer). For the past two decades, research on sports in South Africa has mainly focused on racial segregation and the implications thereof. This is, of course, due to the apartheid era coming to an end in 1994, and efforts to bring about racial equality across sporting codes (for instance, by using quotas). Now, however, South Africa appears to be on the cusp of a momentous turning point in terms of bringing about gender equality in sport, as greater awareness is being raised about the role of girls and women in sport.

The aim of this study was, in part, to open the door to conversations around women in sports, and what can be done to improve the way in which female athletes and presenters are represented by the camera and by male commentators. This study offers readers a comparative analysis of two sports channels, highlighting issues of inequality as well as instances where women were treated with respect, and lauded for what they brought to the table.
This study could serve as a basis for future studies in the field, as it focuses on current representations of male–female sports relations. Future research would do well to investigate how history has affected sports broadcasting in the twenty-first century, by studying the role of economics, culture and society in respect of the way women are perceived. Such research could delve deeper into patriarchal issues and the role theorists such as Michel Foucault and Sigmund Freud played in past and existing beliefs around the female body, and why men are regarded as stronger than women.

This study has focused on women in front of the camera, but another study might look at what women behind the scenes do to direct the gaze of the camera, whether that serves to strengthen the scopophilic gaze or work against it.

Another avenue of research could include racial segregation in women’s sport, which this study merely hinted at during the analysis (see Figure 5.16), but which falls outside the scope of this research.

The writings of hooks (2000), Butler (1990) and Mulvey (1975) act as useful springboards for anyone wishing to study diverse theories on patriarchal structures and the oppression of women, if the aim is to dismantle, disturb and challenge embodied relations of power, race, class and capital.

Although significant strides have been made in levelling the playing fields, it is imperative to keep the conversation going about how women are framed in sports broadcasting. Raising awareness and entering into discourse are two ways in which we can grant future generations of sportswomen a chance to establish themselves in their chosen sporting sphere, be it as revered athletes or as valued presenters.
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