

SPORTS INFORMATION DIRECTORS AND THE *DON'T ASK, DON'T TELL*
NARRATIVE: APPLYING GATEKEEPING THEORY TO THE CREATION AND
CONTENTS OF DIVISION I WOMEN'S BASKETBALL ONLINE COACHING
BIOGRAPHIES

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Austin Stair Calhoun

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Mary Jo Kane, Ph.D., Advisor

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DEDICATION

To my beloveds — I will always include you in my bio.

&

To SIDs everywhere — Just ask.

“There is no immortality that is not built on friendship and work done with care. All the secrets in the world worth knowing are hiding in plain sight.”

-Robin Sloan, *Mr. Penumbra's 24-Hour Bookstore*

“Gates will be open on your plea, so yell: FREEDOM.”

-Dissertation Writing Retreat Proverb

ABSTRACT

Researchers suggest that gay and lesbian coaches often respond with silence regarding their sexual orientation or family dynamic (Anderson, 2005; Griffin, 1998). Scholars speculate as to why this silence exists from two antipodal approaches: self-policing and institutionalized policing (Krane & Kauer, 2013; Norman, 2011). While we know that coaches respond with silence narratives (i.e., *don't tell*) when it comes to same-sex family narratives (Calhoun, LaVoi, & Johnson, 2011), it is unclear what dialogues (i.e., *don't ask*) occur between sports information directors (SIDs) and coaches with regard to including same-sex family narratives in online coaching biographies. Using Gatekeeping Theory (Shoemaker & Vos, 2009) as a guide, I examine the routines of BCS Division I women's basketball SIDs and investigate how the construction of online coaching biographies contributes to the absence of same-sex family narratives. The results from semi-structured interviews with SIDs (n = 14) provide insight on processes and dialogues between coaches and SIDs. Major findings were trifold: (1) SIDs presented similar communication routines when creating online coaching biographies, (2) each level of Gatekeeping Theory was reflected the content in online coaching biographies, and (3) SIDs explained the absence of same-sex narratives by placing the blame elsewhere and absolving themselves. This research has the potential to affect stakeholders and constituents in the sport and LBGT communities. Future research should address how SIDs can neutralize their routines and offer opportunities for inclusion of same-sex family narratives in online coaching biographies.

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PREFACE

The idea for this project was born out of a simple moment and I had no idea it would take me down this winding road and lead to a dissertation. It seems only apropos to begin with a preface to the work and to state that my interest to this project is because of my involvement in both the sports information profession and the LGBT community. Prior to coming to the University of Minnesota, I spent several years working in sports information, both at the Division I and III levels. In fact, on many occasions, I was responsible for creating, reproducing, and disseminating print and online coaching biographies.

At one institution that I was employed, it was fairly standard for unmarried coaches to have the following line at the end of their biography, “Smith is single and lives in Anytown, USA.” This line also perplexed me based on its relevance and importance to the coaching profession—and its accuracy to describe coaches with serious girlfriends, boyfriends, partners, or fiancés. The idea for this project was born when I decided to investigate this very line. The idea for this project was also born when I negotiated being a lesbian in intercollegiate sport, writing content that may have silenced other gays and lesbians and reproduced dominant ideologies. Finding peace with that fact that I was, at one point, part of the problem has been difficult, but not prohibitive to this research. Being part of the problem may even be why I am so invested now in being part of the solution.

The fact that I have been highly involved in the sports information profession and continue to be highly involved in the LGBT community is important for those who read this dissertation. I come at this project with an insider, ethnographic understanding of the issues for both sports information directors and the LGBT individuals who work and play under the homophobic sport umbrella. I wanted it to be clear that I come to this dissertation as a lesbian, and as someone who wants to see change in intercollegiate sport. It is my opinion that hiding behind hometown and feigned or hidden marital status is no longer good enough. That provocative statement needs to be bolstered by concrete research in order to create change in sport and among sport media professionals. It is the goal of this project and my future line of research to be a catalyst for this change.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In mid-2013, the Pew Research Center, an internationally recognized and self-proclaimed “fact tank,” issued a report titled, “The Global Divide on Homosexuality,” as part of its *Global Attitudes Project* (Pew Research Center, 2013). In the report, 60% of surveyed Americans believe that homosexuality should be accepted, compared to 49% in a 2007 iteration by the same researchers. Additionally, younger Americans aged 18-29 (70%) and 30-39 (64%) are the most likely to accept homosexuality.

These trends and attitudes towards gay acceptance are reflected in the political and social landscape in the United States. A few weeks following the 2013 report, the United States Supreme Court overturned the 1996 Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA), allowing same-sex marriage to be federally recognized in states where it is legal (Liptak, 2013). At the same time that this landmark political drama is unfolding, the professional sport community also experienced a watershed moment.

Scholars often assert: “sports are a reflection of society” (e.g., Coakley, 2009). Thus, it is not entirely unexpected that in the same year that the Pew report showed changing attitudes and legislation provided freedoms to marry for everyone that two professional athletes, Jason Collins of the National Basketball Association and Brittney Griner of the Women’s Basketball Association, come out of the closet, opening up about their stories of being gay athletes. While both they are both basketball centers and both are gay, the similarities with their stories ends there. Collins is lauded and applauded as the first active professional male athlete of a major U.S. sport to come out (Beck &

Branch, 2013). President Obama even called Collins to wish him well. In contrast, Griner's coming out announcement was met, as *The New York Times* said, with "a shrug" and far less fanfare despite the fact that Griner is arguably and comparatively better than Collins (e.g., Griner is a No. 1 draft pick compared to Collins' 18th pick) (Borden, 2013). Nevertheless, there is more to the story than a "shrug" and it is within Griner's story, a story that brings to light a subculture of women's college basketball, that sets the stage for the research that is to follow, research that aims at uncovering the perpetuation of stereotypes, of silence, of stigma, of "single" coaches.

The subtext to Brittney Griner's story is that she was always gay and always out—at least implicitly out. While Griner was comfortable with her own sexuality, her head coach Kim Mulkey was not. Regarding Mulkey and the Baylor program's view towards her sexuality, Griner said in an *espnW* interview,

It was more of an unwritten law [to not discuss your sexuality] ... it was just kind of, like, one of those things, you know, just don't do it. They kind of tried to make it, like, "Why put your business out on the street like that?" (Fagan, 2013).

She goes on to say that the head coach thought that her homosexuality would hurt Baylor's recruiting efforts. Research, news accounts, documentaries, and anecdotes indicate that Mulkey's views and Griner's experience are not the exception—but in fact a rule, albeit unwritten, that colors women's basketball and women's sport with heteronormativity, heterosexism, and homophobia (Griffin, 1996, and Yacker & Mosbacher, 2009). Elling and Janssens (2009) contend "heteronormativity refers to the fact that 'real' men and women are considered heterosexual and that according to the 'natural' gender order men possess physical, mental and social power over women" (p.

72). In practice, a heteronormative society confers power to white, heterosexual men—and this can lead to heterosexism, the prejudicial treatment of and stigmatizing behaviors towards non-heterosexuals. Additional examples of the heteronormative, heterosexist, and homophobic climate of intercollegiate women's basketball coaches arise in narratives related to hiring and firing.

These stories are commonplace every April, as the dust settles at the Division I Final Four and colleges and universities make plans for the following season. When the University of Missouri hired Robin Pingeton to be their new head women's basketball coach in the spring of 2010, the story should have been fairly mundane. After posting a 12-18 losing record in the 2009-10 season, Missouri hired Pingeton to turn around “a struggling program in the talent-rich Big 12” (Zaiger, 2010, p.1). However, a seemingly simple story gained volatility when Pingeton's press conference remarks focused on the importance of “family and religion as defining over personal and coaching credentials. Pingeton, who called herself “a Christian who happens to be a coach,” saying in her press conference:

I'm very blessed to have my staff here. This is something very unique for Division I women's basketball. A staff where the entire staff is married with kids. Family is important to us. And we live it every day. A lot of people talk about that family environment. We're living it every day as a staff. (Pingeton, 2010, p. 2).

These remarks, along with her remarks about religion, sparked a digital debate about the role of religion and family beliefs in the coaching realm. One online commenter pondered how loaded Pingeton's remarks were: “On the surface, she was speaking of her personal values. I have no problem with that. But was she also implying she would

discriminate against student-athletes on the basis of their religion or sexuality?” (Stoffey & Stillman, 2010, p. 5). Another opinion piece commented that when Robin Pingeton identified herself with religion and family, the words were not only surprising, but also provocative in light of what historically has often been a divisive, personal and sensitive issue in the world at large (Conboy, 2010).

Scholars and activists Helen Carroll and Pat Griffin also responded to Pingeton’s statements. Carroll, the sports project director for the National Center for Lesbian Rights, thought the Pingeton narratives sought a way of “subtly proving that everyone in their program was straight” (Epstein, 2010). Griffin made the complementary point on her blog.

So, we now know as much about Pingeton’s religious convictions and status as a heterosexual married mother as we do about her coaching achievements and plans. We can also infer that she believes that one of the most important qualities in assistant coaches is being heterosexual and married since this is what she chose to highlight at the press conference rather than their basketball credentials (Griffin, 2010).

Both Griffin and Carroll’s comments draw attention to the heteronormative culture prevalent in women’s sport.

While the Pingeton case shows how a heteronormative family can confer and confirm privilege a 2013 op-ed by *espnW*’s Mechelle Voepel highlights how the absence of a heteronormative family can be a scourge to hiring while also bringing in an important theme to this work—the role of the media. In her piece, “*Who should ask? Who should tell?*” Voepel writes about closeted gay coaches and suggests the following:

There seemed to be an unspoken code: Sports writers not only shouldn’t “out” athletes or coaches but should essentially avoid questions about their personal lives if we thought they might be gay. This exchange reflected what I’ve long

thought of as the sports-journalism version of “don't ask, don't tell.” (p. 1)

Voepel also asks, “Will coaches continue to be listed as essentially ‘single, with pets’ in media guides?” (p. 2). What Voepel brings attention to is two-fold: the way gay coaches are presented in the media, and the way the media relate with gay coaches.

These consequences to heterosexism and homophobia are at the crux of this dissertation, as this study uses online coaching biographies on administratively-authored websites to explore how content is (or isn't) created and disseminated. This study traces how heteronormative privilege, especially in family narratives, serves to create a culture of silence for homosexual coaches in their online coaching biographies, while also pointing out the importance of investigating this silence from the perspective of those creating the digital content (i.e., sports information directors).

Family Narratives in Women's Sport

The inclusion of a “traditional” family narrative is not novel in women's sport. Using marital status to protect a sportswoman's image and avoid the lesbian stigma is historically documented. Cahn (1994) noted the existence of heteronormativity, heterosexism and homophobia in sport using example press materials from the All-American Girls Baseball League and the women's golf tour from the 1950's.

Martial data [were kept] as if it were athletic statistics ... publicity for the Midwestern AAGBL supplemented the usual statistics on total hits, runs, and stolen bases with figures on the number of married players in the league ... In the same vein the professional women's golf tour announced that one-third of its members were married and the rest were on the lookout for attractive marital prospects.” (Cahn, 1994, p. 183).

The inclusion of marital data reinforces a normative culture of heterosexuality in sport. Allusion to gender stereotypes and roles also reinforces heterosexual lifestyles, as

noted by Nelson's (1994) example of Grete Waitz, a nine-time New York Marathon winner, who was “identified as 'someone who cooks, sews, and washes clothes just like most wives’” (p. 208). Heterosexualizing athletes and coaches continues to be a standard practice in sport media and marketing (Fink, 2012; Kane & Maxwell, 2011).

While heterosexual coaches’ inclusion of personal details is considered a positive professional credential, research demonstrates that the opposite exists for homosexual coaches, meaning a same-sex family narrative would hinder, rather than help, one’s career (see Griffin, 1998). Events in women’s sport buttress this argument. For example, in December of 2010, Lisa Howe, the head women’s soccer coach at Belmont University, conspicuously resigned her position after she told her players that she was gay and would be having a baby with her partner. Allegedly, the Christian-based university threatened Howe, saying if she didn’t resign she would be fired (Robertson, 2010; Fausset, 2010). Howe resigned from Belmont on December 2, 2010, saying that while she and the university made a mutual decision it was clear that if she did not leave on her own accord, she would be fired (Robertson, 2010). Similar storylines happened in Virginia in the cases of James Finley at Virginia Commonwealth University and Katie Brenny at the University of Minnesota. Both Finley (head women’s volleyball coach) and Brenny (head women’s golf coach) claim discriminatory termination from their respective universities, claiming their sexual identity is why they were let go. Finley, an openly gay coach, had finished the 2012 season with a 25-6 record. His contract was not renewed because “they [Virginia Commonwealth] wanted to go a different direction” (Winchester, 2013, p. 11).

A thousand miles away and two years prior, Brenny filed a lawsuit against the University of Minnesota and the Director of Golf, John Harris, alleging she was discriminated against after the director discovered she was homosexual. The lawsuit makes the following accusations:

Rose [another assistant coach] told player(s) on the women's golf team that the reason Plaintiff [Brenny] did not travel with the team was because Harris [defendant] discovered she was homosexual and did not want her on the road with the team. (Brenny vs. University of Minnesota, 2011, p. 9)

The lawsuit also alleges that Harris “did not want to hire a homosexual to coach the women's golf team” (p. 2). The homophobic climate described in these examples reinforces research (i.e., Griffin, 1998) that suggestions that being “outed” is a risk. In 2014, the lawsuit was settled, and Brenny was awarded nearly \$360,000 with the judge noting that she was “intentionally subjected to disparate treatment based on her sexual orientation” (Chanen, 2014, p. 1)

Because of these examples, responding to homophobia with silence is seen as a safe solution. By being silent about one's personal life, a coach can fit into the heteronormative sport culture, circumvent personal and public harassment, and maintain the “status quo” where gay and lesbian coaches are an erased population. The near-complete erasure of homosexual coaches is the crux of the issue for this project, as I examined one of the critical processes that may contribute to the virtual absence of non-heteronormative family narratives in online coaching biographies.

Purpose Statement

It is the aim of this research to identify explanations for the absence of same-sex narratives in online coaching biographies from the point of view of sports information

directors (SIDs). In essence, the purpose of this dissertation is to investigate *don't ask, don't tell* narratives through the routines and perceptions of Division I women's basketball SIDs. As noted, research consistently shows how gay and lesbian coaches respond to homophobia with silence (i.e., don't tell), especially when it comes to including family narratives in public settings. However, it is unknown what dialogues, if any, occur between the SID and head coaches. Thus, the purpose of this dissertation is to explore how and why, from the perspective and experience of the SID, same-sex family narratives get masked and erased in online coaching biographies using semi-structured interviews as the data collection mechanism.

Don't Ask, Don't Tell: Silence Narratives in Women's Sport

The current events cited above align with a strong body of literature regarding the experiences and stresses surrounding homosexual female coaches. It is also no wonder that an implicit "don't ask, don't tell" policy has been applied to sport, and has specific resonance in women's sport. Anderson and McCormack (2010) introduce an analogy with the military in comparing the dominant masculine culture in sport. However, the authors point out how sport is, perhaps surprisingly, a more stringent environment than the military:

Consider, for example, the U.S. military (another masculinized institution), where higher rates of coming out suggest that service members are more willing to come out and contest overt and institutionalized homophobia than athletes in professional sports. The U.S. military expels around 1,000 soldiers a year for violating their Don't Ask, Don't Tell policy. This means that every year approximately 1 in 1,500 soldiers comes out, compared to 0 in 3,500 professional team sport athletes (p. 959-960).

Similar use of the “don’t ask, don’t tell” analogy to describe sport—specifically gay and lesbian athletes and coaches—have been repeatedly made by a number of scholars (e.g., Anderson, 2005; Griffin, 1998, 2012; Krane & Barber, 2005).

Silence is a theme that these scholars, and others, suggest is a concrete consequence of the homophobic and heterosexist sport environment. The majority of coaches respond with silence in line with the “don’t ask, don’t tell” atmosphere in sport, making a report of the sexual orientations of this population near impossible and certainly inaccurate. Speculation as to why silence exists in sport has been discussed by scholars from two angles— self-policing and institutionalized-policing. Many have suggested that gay and lesbian coaches may “self-police” or hide their sexual orientation due to fear of losing their jobs, recruiting implications, and homophobic backlash (Davis-Delano, 2014; Galst, 1998; Griffin, 1998, 2012; Iannotta & Kane, 2002; Kauer, 2009; Krane, 1996, 1997; Krane & Barber, 2005; Norman, 2012; Wellman & Blinde, 1997). It is also possible that “policing” originates at the administrative level, as scholars assert that sport is colored by institutionalized homophobia (Griffin, 1992, 1998; Kauer, 2009; Lenskyj, 1991, 1995; Melton & Cunningham, 2014; Sykes, 1998). Institutionalized homophobia manifests through the heteronormative and heterosexist culture, policies, and traditions ingrained in sport like the promotion of heterosexual narratives and erasure of homosexual narratives as well as through negative recruiting.

Because of the theme of silence, it is impossible to do a report on the number of gay and lesbian coaches in sport. In contrast to annually released studies like Richard Lapchick’s Gender and Racial Report Cards and Acosta & Carpenter’s Women in

Intercollegiate Athletics, using a “counting” methodology of sexual orientation has yet to be completed on a comprehensive scale and on an annual basis. The two pilot studies (Calhoun, LaVoi, & Johnson, 2011; Calhoun, LaVoi, & Kane, 2009) that informed this dissertation are the first of their kind. In these studies, we attempted to “count” the sexual orientation of head coaches through the family narratives of their online coaching biographies. The results of the studies found a near absence of same-sex family narratives, with only two coaches out of 1,855 (one male Division I softball coach, one female Division I field hockey coach) listing a same-sex partner in their online coaching biographies. When looking at Division I women’s basketball coaches’ online biographies as a subset, there was a complete absence of same-sex narratives.

The female women’s basketball coaches in this Division I subset were also significantly less likely to have mentioned their significant others than males coaches. These coaches were also more likely to have no mention of a significant other in comparison to their Division I men’s basketball coach counterparts. Only three of 73 Division I men’s basketball coaches contained an absence of family, compared to 33 of 72 Division I women’s basketball coaches’ biographies that were void of text related to family.

Discrepancies also existed within the sample of Division I women’s basketball coaches. Nearly 60% (30/51) of the Division I female women’s basketball coaches’ online biographies contained no mention of family or significant other, while only three out of 21 (14.3%) male Division I women’s basketball coaches’ online biographies were absent a significant other. Subsequent information on Division I women’s basketball has

suggested that there is only one coach with an explicitly same-sex narrative in her online coaching biography. Portland State University's Sherri Murrell is, according to the sources, "Division I Basketball's only openly gay coach" (Cohen, 2010, p. 1).

A widely accepted demographic estimate suggests that 10% of the United States general population is homosexual (Black, Gates, Sanders, & Taylor, 2000) and anecdotal opinions suggest it is even higher in women's sport (Hargreaves, 2000). Thus, it is virtually impossible to imagine that not one gay coach would exist in a sample of 72 Division I women's basketball coaches and it is even harder to imagine that only one of the 344 Division I women's basketball coaches is gay. It is hard to imagine that the erasure of one's personal life for this particular group is due to a random occurrence. When the online biographies of heterosexually married coaches reflect their personal lives, the absence of text for presumably "single" coaches is fairly egregious. This absence begs the question: Why is there no explicit recognition of diverse sexual orientations in online coaching biographies?

Much speculation on why this phenomenon exists has occurred in literature and the media. The aim of this study was to empirically investigate this phenomenon and determine the role of the SID in the process. Scholars, as noted previously, have hypothesized that gay and lesbian coaches may "self-police" their sexual orientation (e.g., Griffin, 1998, 2012). It is also possible this policing originates at the administrative level as sport is shaped by the effect of institutionalized homophobia (Cunningham, 2012; Griffin, 1992, 1998, 2012; Lenskyj, 1991, 1995; Sykes, 1998). These hypotheses inform this study and create a foundation for this research to extend the knowledge on

homophobia in sport.

The body of research indicating that coaches self-police their behavior consists primarily of interviews with lesbian and gay coaches. Coaches tell stories of how administrators implicitly or explicitly threatened their livelihood if they were to expose their homosexuality (Griffin, 1998). What we know about administrators and sports information directors often comes from the perspective of the coaches (Kauer, 2009) or the athletes (Fink, Burton, Farrell, & Parker, 2012). With some notable exceptions (Hardin, Whiteside, & Ash, 2012; Whiteside & Hardin, 2011) these concept of self- and institutionalized policing have yet to be interrogated from the administrative perspective of the content creator.

This research examines perceptions of self-policing and institutionalized policing of BCS Division I women's basketball sports information directors and their practices of constructing online coaching biographies. Selecting this population allows us to engage in an examination of how SIDs contribute to or respond to the absence of gay and lesbian coaches in online coaching biographies. The importance of these groups to sport are detailed in the following sections and reinforced in Chapter II, while more detailed explanation of the actual population sampled occurs in Chapter III.

Sports Information Directors and Online Coaching Biographies

The role of sports information is an often overlooked and under-researched field situated in both intercollegiate athletics and mass communications. McCleneghan (1995) noted that in four major public relations textbooks only one contains a summary—a 19-

word sentence—related to the profession. Despite being omitted in the literature, sports information is an integral and usually requisite department in an intercollegiate athletic program. Acosta and Carpenter (2014) determined that 99.6% of NCAA member institutions have a sports information director (SID) and 100% of Division I institutions have an SID. The College Sports Information Directors of America (CoSIDA), the main professional organization in the field, reports having over 2,800 members in 2012, an increase from 102 members when the organization was founded in 1957.

Professionals in this field are charged with creating the flow of and controlling information related to a university's athletic department. SIDs also become representatives of the teams they support, as well as of the athletic department and the university. The content and information they create and disseminate is reflective of the implicit and explicit values of those groups. Buysse and Kane (2005) argued that media guides occupied a prestigious and unique place in the realm of sport media. Extending this argument, those who create media guides and other authorized intercollegiate content are a unique and important population as well.

Specific to this project, sports information directors are charged with maintaining and providing content for university-sponsored athletic websites. As part of intercollegiate athletic websites, online coaching biographies provide the public with an accessible and administratively authorized source of information related to coaches' career accomplishments and extracurricular activities. In this digital age, their importance is burgeoning. Through search engines like *Google* or *Yahoo!*, online coaching biographies become the first point of contact for interested parties—such as fans,

boosters, and prospective students—to access information about a coach. Both local and national media outlets also access these biographies. Essentially, online coaching biographies are sanctioned constructions, containing information that would be relevant to a wide range of individuals and groups, and which reflect the branding of a coach, a team and an athletic department. Because the department endorses online coaching biographies, they present a unique way to investigate how coaches are portrayed as representatives of team, an athletic department, and a university. They not only provide easy access to the narratives endorsed by an intercollegiate athletic program, but also point to the cultural ideologies related to gender and sexuality typified overall in sports.

The Importance of Women's Basketball

This dissertation is limited to interviewing SIDs responsible for creating the online coaching biographies for female Division I women's basketball head coaches at one of the six Bowl Championship Series (BCS) or power conferences (ACC, BIGEAST, Big 10, Big 12, Pac-12, and SEC). Women's basketball is the most popular college sport in terms of numbers of athletes participating, as it is offered in 98.8% of NCAA schools (Acosta & Carpenter, 2014). It is also the most popular female sport regardless of division level. Women's basketball is offered in 98.8% of Division I programs, 98.6% of Division II programs, and 98.8% of Division III programs, respectively (Acosta & Carpenter, 2014). Additionally, all of the Division I power conferences have a women's basketball program.

The embeddedness of basketball in popular culture makes it an interesting context in which to consider sociological constructs. Basketball, for both men and women, girls

and boys, was adopted into educational settings in the early 1890s (Staffo, 1998). The gender power discrepancy begins early in the history of basketball, as many know that Dr. James Naismith invented basketball in 1891, but few know about Senda Berenson Abbott, who altered Naismith's rules and made the game easier in order to allow girls at Smith College to participate in 1892 (Staffo, 1998). The men's game was and is seen as the "authentic" game and the women's game as a hybrid or imitation of the real thing. Women's basketball was considered too masculine for women to play and it has been noted as one of the most aggressive games played by elite women (Baroffio-Bora & Banet-Weiser, 2006). The masculine-sport-typing of women's basketball makes it a unique focus for the study of narratives related to sexual orientation (Metheny, 1965). While masculine sport-typing links women's basketball to where the power and privilege reside in sport culture, it also creates a lesbian stigma for players and coaches (Sartore & Cunningham, 2009b). Women's basketball players (and coaches) have been known or are encouraged to combat this image by appropriating overly sexualized or feminine portrayals (Carr, 1992; Krane, 2001; Lenskyj, 2013).

Each year at the NCAA "March Madness" men's and women's college basketball becomes a staple of many consumers and the fact that both men's and women's tournaments occur simultaneously has provided scholars an accessible arena to directly compare and contrast gender differences between the coverage and popularity of the tournaments, and the sport (Billings, Halone, & Denham, 2002; Kian, Mondello, & Vincent, 2008, 2009). Division I women's basketball is also popular without comparison. Attendance records for the NCAA Final Four are being broken in each successive year.

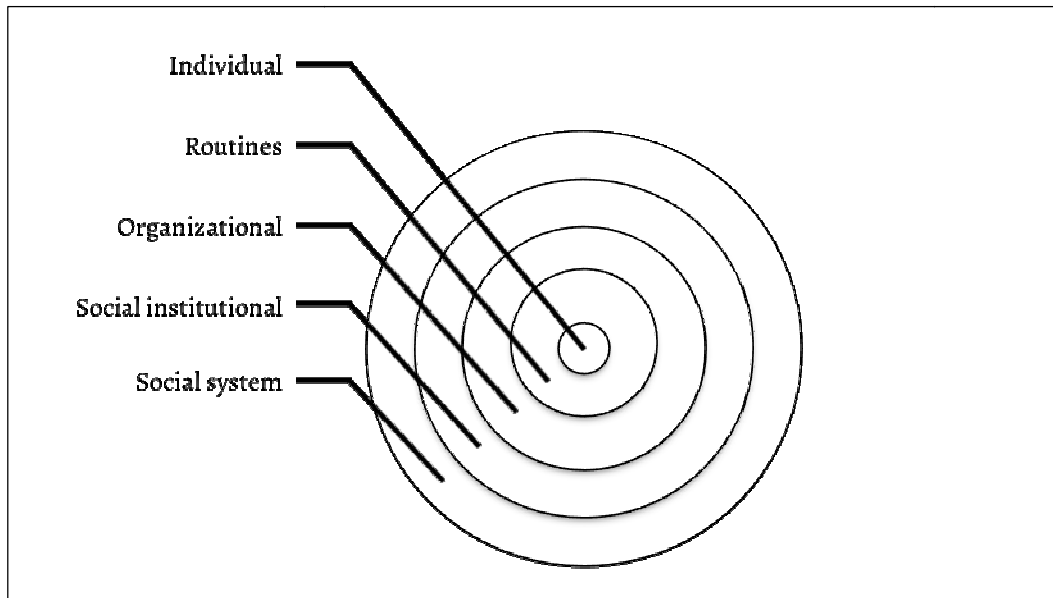
In 2013, attendance at the first two rounds of NCAA tournament saw an increase of 31,372 fans as it increased to 155,212 and the per session average was 4,850, a 20% increase from previous years (NCAA, 2013). The 2004 championship game between Connecticut and Tennessee drew the highest ratings of any basketball contest, regardless of level or gender, with over 3.85 million people tuning in (Reynolds, 2011). In 2011, the NCAA Division Championship game between Notre Dame and Texas A&M drew 2.87 million viewers and nearly a quarter of a million fans attended at least one NCAA Tournament game (Sandomir, 2011).

Theoretical Framework

Since the 1940s when the notion of gatekeeping was first conceptualized, it has become one of the continuously studied theories and concepts in communication research. Gatekeeping research has developed into a robust body of literature, featuring research that describes how items (i.e., news events, facts, data) enter into a channel (i.e., newspaper, television) (Berkowitz, 1987), the characteristics of newsworthy items (Shoemaker & Cohen, 1996), the “forces” that shape the selection of news (Donohue, Tichner, and Olien, 1972), and the organizational and social context of individual gatekeepers (Tuchman, 1978).

Figure 1

Hierarchy of media influences from Shoemaker and Reese (1996, 2014)



Related to this dissertation, past sport media research hints at connections to these five levels. For example, on the social system level, the hegemonic culture of sport (e.g., Messner, 1988) may create a control gate and contribute to the absence of same-sex partners in online coaching biographies. Other examples of theorizing these levels to sport are the homologous composition of sports information directors (i.e., the organizational level) or the documented routine, technical nature of the profession (see, Battenfield, 2004 and McClenghan, 1995). However, the homologous composition of the perceived technical aspects of the profession may be a result of a hegemonic masculine culture. These theorizations hypothesize the application of Gatekeeping Theory in a sport context. Chapter II traces the levels of Gatekeeping Theory and develops an argument for the application and usefulness of the theory to this topic.

It is the aim of this research to use those theorizations to work through the relationship between Gatekeeping Theory and the absence of same-sex family narratives in online coaching biographies. Gatekeeping Theory provides a framework to probe sports information directors about issues of self and institutionalized policing of gay and lesbian coaches family narratives of self and institutionalized policing of gay and lesbian coaches family narratives. Apply Gatekeeping Theory, a valued and tested communication theory, to a digital source is one of the reasons I selected this theory as the framework for my study. As opposed to framing, which was used in Calhoun et al. (2011), gatekeeping theory puts the focus of the research on the process and the act of selection, rather than the characteristics or salience of the selection. As Calhoun et al., (2011) showed that online coaching biographies are overwhelmingly framed with family narratives, thus it is key to as well as SIDs serve a unique position in university athletic departments. Hardin, Whiteside, and Ash note

Another salient reason for selecting gatekeeping as the theory for my research resides in its connection to homophobia, and thus to gay and lesbian coaches and the context of sport. Kim (2007) presented a compelling argument between gatekeeping and homophobia as a bounded phenomenon. Kim argued that “gatekeeping phenomenon exposes the process through which borders and boundaries of social conduct are maintained” and that “these gated areas are ideal sites for the study of the organization of social conduct” (p. 304). Further, this author suggested that gatekeeping is intrinsic to conduct, culture and social regulation, particularly in context to the presence of

homophobia in society and because of homophobia, homosexuality is one of these gated areas where silence and boundaries are pervasive.

Research Questions

The first question is aimed at determining how online coaching biographies are constructed. The second question builds on the first and is based on the remaining levels of analysis in Gatekeeping Theory. These initial questions lead up to third and most specific research question.

1. What communication routines exist when sports information directors create online coaching biographies of Division I women's basketball coaches?
2. Besides communication routines, what gatekeeping factors (individual, organizational, institutional, or social system) influence the creation of online coaching biographies of Division I women's basketball coaches?
3. What explanations do sports information directors offer for the absence of non-traditional family narratives in online coaching biographies of Division I women's basketball coaches?

Points of Departure

This study is unique on several levels, related to both content and application. First, this research relates to processes and routines that exist when online content in intercollegiate sport media is created. Additionally, this research accesses and interviews a population (sports information directors) that has been overlooked in both sport media and public relations research. Furthermore, my research specifically investigates the

gatekeeping decisions contributing to the inclusion or exclusion same-sex partners in online coaching biographies—which is a distinctive undertaking.

Definition of Key Terms

The following definitions and standardizations of key terms and concepts are imperative to this proposal.

Gatekeeping - “The basic premise of gatekeeping scholarship is that messages are created from information about events that has passed through a series of gates and has been changed in the process. Some information end up on a newspaper’s front pages, some in the middle of a newscast or web page, and some never makes it into the news at all” (Shoemaker & Vos, 2009, p. 22).

Gatekeeping Theory - “Gatekeeping Theory describes the process through which events are covered by the mass media, explains this process by considering concepts on five levels of analysis, and shows how difficult it is to predict anything involving people” (Shoemaker & Vos, 2009, p. 3).

Heteronormativity - Heteronormativity represents an ideology that denies sexual orientations and practices that are not heterosexual and therefore normative. Elling and Janssens (2009) contend “heteronormativity refers to the fact that ‘real’ men and women are considered heterosexual and that according to the ‘natural’ gender order men possess physical, mental and social power over women” (p. 72). In practice, a heteronormative society confers power to white, heterosexual men.

Heterosexism - Heterosexism deals with the stigmatizing and harmful behaviors that arise towards individuals because of [perceived] non-heterosexual practices (Smith & Ingram, 2004).

Homophobia - Homophobia is defined as “the irrational fear and hatred of those who love and sexually desire those of the same sex” (Pharr, 1997, p. 1).

LGBT - LGBT stands for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender. In this dissertation it is used to describe the concept of diverse or non-traditional sexual orientations.

Online coaching biography - Defined by being a part of a university-authorized website and authored by athletic department employees, an online coaching biography often contains text related, but not limited to: current and past coaching credentials and accomplishments, collegiate and interscholastic athletic experiences, hobbies, community service, family, and residence.

Sports information directors - Sports information directors (SIDs) is the term used throughout this project to define individuals who work in intercollegiate athletic media relations, communications, or publication relations. This research is open to all SIDs - directors, assistants, and interns if they fall into the inclusion criteria of being the main contact for a BCS Division I women’s basketball team that has a female head coach and the abbreviation SID does not necessary imply a leadership role.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

This literature review contains an overview of the intersecting topics that inform this proposal, while keeping Gatekeeping Theory at the forefront. Gatekeeping, after all, is in many ways about power and control, themes that are rampant in discussions of sport sociology. Gatekeeping Theory organizes those controls in levels, ranging from macro (societal) to the micro (individual). Thus, this literature review follows the various levels of Gatekeeping Theory through the applicable literature related to sport sociology and sport media research. Pederson, Laucella, Miloch, and Fielding (2007) write:

In sport coverage, certain games are shown, certain events are televised, and certain athletes are highlighted. These are just some of the subjective decisions that are part of the sport communication process. (p. 199)

Sections on hegemonic masculinity, homophobia, college sports, and SIDs ensue in this chapter as I make *a posteriori* arguments about the application and associations between the paradigms of sport sociology and sport media research and the five levels of Gatekeeping Theory (individual, routines, organizational, institutional, and social system).

Gatekeeping Theory

Gatekeeping Theory (or gatekeeping) is useful to assess and analyze how and why certain pieces of information pass through “gates” and other pieces of information are rejected. Lewin’s original work from 1947 dealt with how food travels through “channels” (i.e., gates), is affected by certain forces, and ultimately arrives at the dinner table. By identifying the channels and forces (both positive and negative) that determine

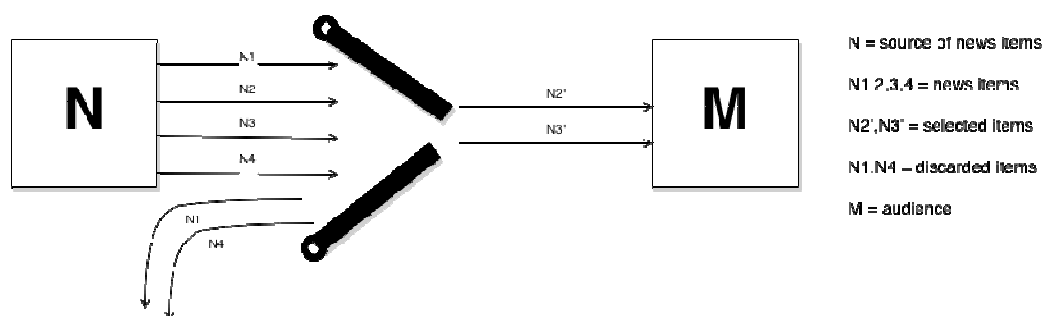
whether or not an item makes it to the table, Lewin sought to understand how to create social change (see, Shoemaker & Vos, 2009). He also foreshadowed and suggested the application of gatekeeping to other fields.

This situation holds not only for food but also for the traveling of a news item through certain communications channels in a group, for movement of goods, and the social locomotion of individuals in many organizations. (Lewin, 1951, p. 1870)

Drawing on this suggested application, David Manning White, one of Lewin's assistants, was the first scholar to apply gatekeeping to communications research. In his White's (1950) case study of one small-town wire editor ("Mr. Gates"), he found that selection decisions were "highly subjective" and based on what "he liked and what he thought his reader wanted" (Shoemaker & Vos, 2009, p.16). White's model (see Figure 2) contains one gate—the editor who exhibited a pattern in avoiding printing complex reports and to withhold content due to space constraints. Snider (1967) replicated White's research with the original editor and found that the same patterns still applied, despite the 17-year time difference.

Figure 2

White's (1950) model of gatekeeping.



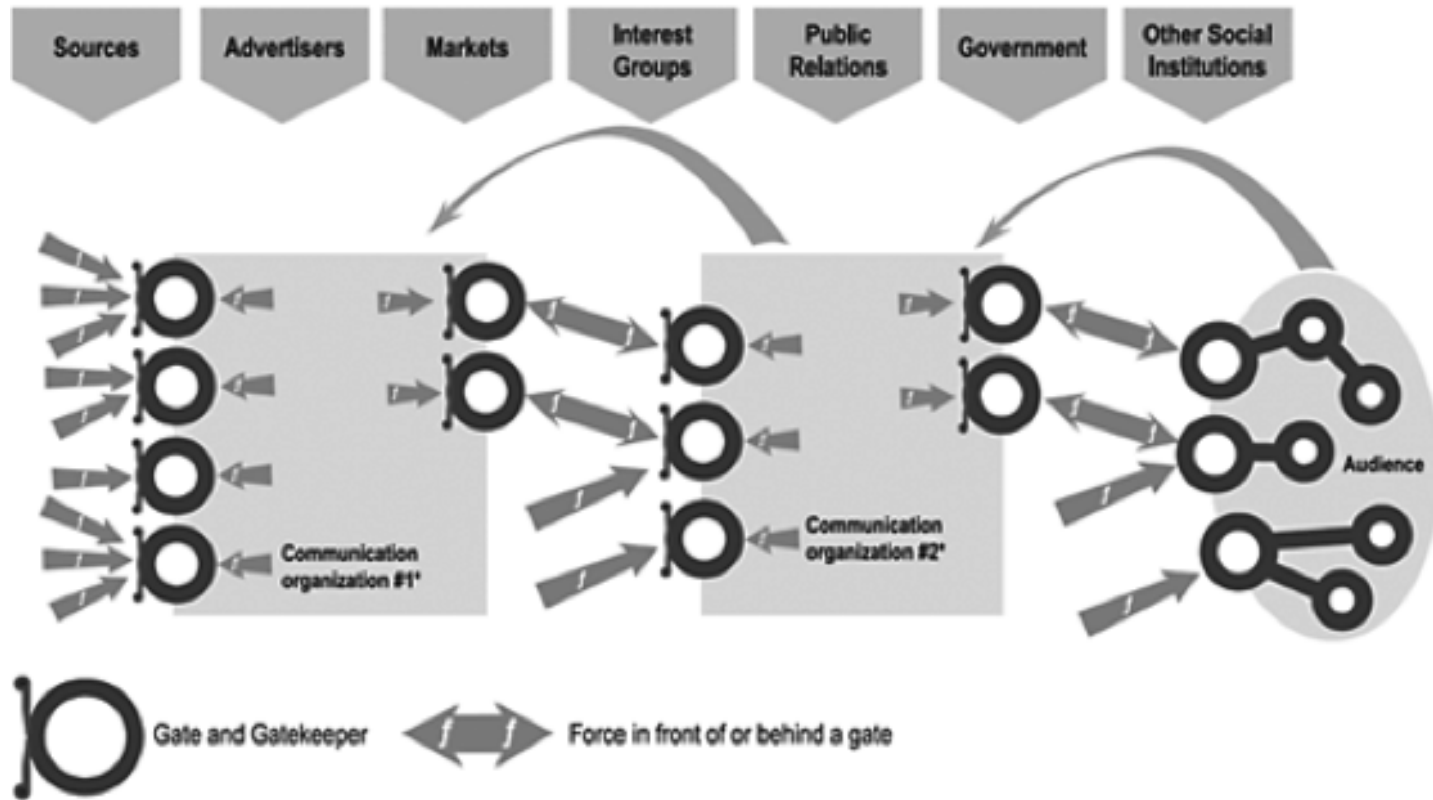
Since the 1950's when these scholars published their pioneering research, gatekeeping has become one of the continuously studied theories in communication research. Shoemaker and Vos (2009) call gatekeeping, "the easiest theory." While averring its simplicity, they also honor its complexity with the development of their Gatekeeping Theory (see Figure 3). In abstracting Gatekeeping Theory, Shoemaker & Vos (2009) created five levels of study, ranging from micro to macro. Also known as the "hierarchy of influences," the levels are: (a) the **individual** communication workers (i.e., individuals' attitudes or gender); (b) the **routines** or practices of communication work (i.e., deadlines or editing routines); (c) the **organization** level (i.e., the athletic department); (d) the social **institutional** level of analysis (i.e., influence from the university, boosters, or community); (e) the **social system** level (i.e., variables like ideology and culture). Figure 3 displays the relationship between the levels and the flow of information.

Shoemaker and Vos (2009) suggest these levels are not strict or confined. However, the separation of levels may allow researchers to delve into the complexity of the gatekeeping process. Shoemaker and Reese (2013) offer that "the sequence of these levels can be approached in different directions, and we don't mean to single out any one level as more powerful than another" (p. 8). While Reese (2007) argued the levels originate at the individual and radiate out, he also offers researcher flexibility. He noted:

It is possible to prioritize their importance and sequence in different ways. We can certainly make a case for stepping through them in both directions: from micro to macro, or vice versa. Does everything begin with the individual, who is progressively hemmed in by more and more layers of constraint? (That is my tendency.) Or is the macro, socio-cultural context logically prior to any actions of its member individuals? These are matters of analytical emphasis and preference. (Reese, 2007, p. 37)

Figure 3

Shoemaker and Vos' (2009) conceptual model for Gatekeeping Theory.



In this case, the literature dictates the structure and, not necessarily a hierarchy, but at least an order. Sport sociology and sport media research is rooted in discussions of ideologies, cultures, and theories. As such, this chapter follows the levels from the social system to the individual, setting the foundation for the discussion of how SIDs construct online coaching biographies and how same-sex narratives are absent and erased.

Social system level

Shoemaker & Vos (2009) call the social system level of Gatekeeping Theory “societal-level influences on news media content” (p. 105). They give examples of these influences as ideologies, cultures, and social structures—and how these can be different based on the context. In traditional media coverage of sport, the social-system has bestowed favor on certain masculine markers—power and performance—while also marginalizing females in sport that take on those traits (Griffin, 1992; Lenskyj, 2013; Sartore & Cunningham, 2009b).

Hegemonic masculinity. It is seemingly impossible to discuss gatekeeping without discussing power and control; and it is seemingly impossible to discuss power and control in sport without discussing hegemony and hegemonic masculinity. These concepts are often used in sport to explain the existing power structures and inequalities in sport (see, Messner, 1988). Antonio Gramsci (1891-1937) is credited by the majority of scholars as the creator of hegemony theory (Dorsher, 2002). Gramsci’s prison writings, though intentionally vague to get by prison censors, lead scholars to identify the three main components of hegemony: power, culture and ideology (Dorsher, 2002). From those tenets, Kian et al. (2008) interpreted the term “to describe the ways in which

a dominant social class uses ideology to create consent for its dominance over others” (p. 224). What is also implied in hegemony is consent without the use of force (Gramsci, 1971).

Hegemony has been applied to sport in many contexts. While Gramsci (1971) did not discuss gender specifically in relationship to hegemonic theory, scholars have agreed that gendered hegemony does exist and frequently use male-dominance in society as a theoretical framework (Connell, 1990, 2005; Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005; Fink, 2012). In fact, Connell and Messerschmidt (2005) noted over 200 papers that use the term “hegemonic masculinity” in either their titles or abstracts and said there is potential for variations on the phrasing to far exceed that number. In their meta-analysis and historical review of hegemonic masculinity, Connell and Messerschmidt (2005) also provided a working context for understanding and applying the concept:

Hegemonic masculinity was understood as the pattern of practice (i.e., things done, not just a set of role expectations or an identity) that allowed men’s dominance over women to continue. Hegemonic masculinity was distinguished from other masculinities, especially subordinated masculinities. Hegemonic masculinity was not assumed to be normal in the statistical sense; only a minority of men might enact it. But it was certainly normative. It embodied the currently most honored way of being a man, it required all other men to position themselves in relation to it, and it ideologically legitimated the global subordination of women to men. (p. 832)

Within hegemony masculinity, the traits of heterosexuality and aggressive behaviors (i.e., competitiveness, assertiveness) underline this dominant form of masculine, are desired and considered the apex of the masculine hierarchy (Connell, 1990, 2005; Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). As sport is a highly regarded and important aspect of society, it can be a mirror for replicating and enforcing ideal

masculine traits, like heterosexuality, physicality and aggressiveness (Messner, 1988; Birrell, 2000)

Since male dominance and a patriarchal ideology are well documented in sport (e.g., Kane, 1996, 2013; Fink, 1998), the framework of masculine hegemony is an applicable theory for understanding how female participants in sport operate in contrast and conflict to their male counterparts. Henderson, Bialeschki, Shaw, & Freysinger (1996) considered women to be oppressed by men—in society and in sport, specifically.

The reality today is that women almost always function in a world that is governed and controlled by men. Males are responsible for most major political and economic decisions. Women are generally socialized to accept social roles that are subordinate to men, even though acceptance may result in their own oppression... Women's unequal access to and participation in leisure are closely linked to more frequently analyzed areas of women's oppression such as domestic labor, reproductive roles, marriage, and waged work. (p. 8)

While that general perspective of oppression and sub-ordination remains an overwhelming theme in research, other scholars have taken more specified, linear approach to discussing gender and power in sport. In a seminal article on gender and sport published in 1988, Birrell identified four themes that contribute to replicating and developing gender difference. The themes, still commonplace and cited thorough sport literature, are as follows:

(a) The production of masculine ideologies and power through sport; (b) media practices that assist in legitimating commonsense understandings of female athleticisms; (c) ideologies related to physicality, sexuality, and the body as important sites of hegemonic struggle; and (d) the ongoing resistance of women to dominant notions of sport, sexuality, and the body. (Birrell, 1988 as cited in McDonald, 2006, p. 507)

As described in the components of hegemony, it cannot exist without challenges, confrontations and conflict (Hardin, Lynn & Walsdorf, 2005). The same applies to the

relationship between masculine hegemony and sport. Like Birrell's fourth point, Messner (1988) identified the challenge, and thus, helped validate the application of masculine hegemony to sport

Increasing female athleticism represents a genuine quest by women for equality, control of their own bodies, and self-definition, and as such represents a challenge to the ideological basis of male domination. (p. 197)

While Messner (1988) noted the existence of resistance, he also pointed out several ways (like, structure and policies; biological difference; social constructions) that interrupt female athletes gains and inhibit change.

Of the mechanisms he mentioned, Messner gave particular attention to the role of mass media as a counteragent to female athlete's challenge in sport. Kane and Greendorfer (1994) piggybacked on this concept in the 1990s during a so-called boom in interest and coverage of women's sports. They called the change "superficial" (p. 40) and went on to comment that

The mass media have been used as one means of resisting ideological change, as media practices, production, content and messages continue to perpetuate notions of sexual difference, gender difference, and gender hierarchy. The media has transformed the meanings of women's physicality—women becoming active agents with and of their own bodies and women using their bodies in skilled, physical activity— to commodification, sexuality and femininity. (p. 40)

The intertwined triad of sport and hegemonic masculinity has contributed to a wide range of research on women's sport, including serving as an antecedent to studying heteronormativity, heterosexism, and homophobia in sport settings.

The three H's: Heterosexism, heteronormativity, and homophobia. The "three H's" are another social system level gate affecting sport media construction.

While Symons (2007) attests that sport has become “a strong and lasting symbol of hegemonic masculinity” (p. 141), she also suggests that:

Women and men who question traditional gender expectations in society generally and in sport in particular, are often thought as dangerous and out of control. This is where homophobia and heterosexism can enter the picture. (p. 141)

Past research in sports has connected heteronormativity and heterosexism to the creation of privilege for the dominant group (Eng, 2008; Krane & Kaus, 2014; Sartore & Cunningham, 2009), homophobia among coaches, players, parents, and athletic administrators (Griffin, 1998, 2012; Krane, 1997; Krane & Barber, 2005; Norman, 2012) and the marginalization and trivialization of female athletes in the media (Kane, & Buysse, 2005; Kane & Lenskyj, 1998).

Griffin (1998) argues women and girls in sport must consistently affirm their heterosexuality, saying “most people assume male athletes are heterosexual until they provide evidence they are not” (p. 26). The lesbian stigma attributed to women in sport has been well-documented (see Griffin, 1998) and remains a powerful process to marginalize women's sport. Cahn (1994) argues that the “open secret” of lesbianism in sport further confirms heteronormativity in society (p. 205). Both of these stereotypes—the assumption and societal conditioning that all women in sport are lesbian and all men in sport are heterosexual—puts sport in a unrealistic and intolerant bubble. Moshak and Schriver (2013) describe the effect of homophobia in sport as staggering.

Today, sexual orientation is the target of overt and silent discrimination at every level of sports—professional, Olympic, college, high school, and youth. And fear should have nothing to do with sports, because—just as with an athlete’s race, gender, ethnicity, or religion—sexual orientation or identity has no bearing on athletic ability, leadership skills, or capacity for [sportspersonship] and

heart...Homophobia is so menacing and powerful that it stops people from coming out, from being who they are, from reaching their full potential, and it discourages them from playing sports or participating fully in society. (p. 65-66)

Griffin's (1998) seminal and comprehensive book *Strong Women, Deep Closets* on lesbian in sport similarly documented the many ways the homophobic environment may affect women, gay and straight, in sport. She points out three themes or “apologetic” responses to the “lesbian boogeyman image” are extremely resonant to this research – silence, promotion of a heterosexy image, and search for a heterosexual-only space (p. 68). Silence has particular importance to why or why not coaches would identify a lesbian partner in a biography.

Lesbian athletes and coaches are treated and expected to act like single women whose family members include only mothers, fathers, sisters, and brothers ... Ironically, the complete absence of any mention of a woman athlete's or coach's personal life leads most people to assume she is a lesbian anyways (p. 70-71).

Griffin's work is often considered the “touchstone” for research, both anecdotal and empirical, on lesbian coaches, but some scholars have found fault in her frameworks.

Iannotta & Kane (2002) challenged Griffin with their research on sexual stories of female college coaches – and found their sample of 13 lesbian-identified coaches did not fit on Griffin's continuum of being out. Moreover, the authors contend that silence is often necessary for gay coaches.

There are instances where an individual's silence may reflect, and even create space for, climates of tolerance. In other words, silence as it pertains to a lack of specific speech acts about one's sexual orientation, does not necessarily mean invisibility, nor does it absolutely mean that a coach expects others to perpetuate or imitate her lack of speech. (Iannotta & Kane, 2002, p. 8).

Correlated with silence, the promotion of heterosexuality is seen as a “credential” for a female coach. Griffin (1998) writes, “at some schools, parents and administrators scrutinize a woman coach’s heterosexual credentials as carefully as they review her athletic accomplishments” (p. 6). Wellman & Blinde (1997) extend the scrutiny of women coaches’ credentials to actual policing. They report coaches have been followed home in order to determine the status of their living arrangements. Besides being “found out,” female coaches are also fearful of the being fired and of negative recruiting (e.g., Griffin, 1998). Female coaches also indicate that the normative climate of sport affected their self-esteem, confidence, and performance (Griffin, 1998; Krane, 1997; Krane & Barber, 2003).

Since counting gay and lesbian coaches proves impossible, we have to assume that there is reason for the silence. In fact, silence is a reiterated theme that scholars, and others, suggest is a true consequence of the homophobic and heterosexist sport environment (e.g., Anderson, 2005; Griffin, 1998; Krane & Barber, 2005). Scholars speculate that it exists because of self and institutionalized policing. Many studies have suggested that gay and lesbian coaches police their personal lives because of fear – fear of losing their jobs, losing recruits, and of receiving homophobia backlash from the department and the community (Griffin, 1998; Krane, 1996, 1997; Krane & Barber, 2005). Another possibility is that the policing of gay and lesbian coaches comes down from an administrative level as sport is colored by institutionalized homophobia and a heterosexist sport culture (Anderson, 2002; Griffin, 1998; Lenskj, 1991, 1995). While silence and policing deal with omission, another theme from literature is the implicit or

explicitly promotion of heterosexuality, and thus heteronormativity, by an athletic department. Heterosexuality is seen as a “credential” for a female coach in the heteronormative world of sport. Griffin (1998) wrote, “at some schools, parents and administrators scrutinize a woman coach’s heterosexual credentials as carefully as they review her athletic accomplishments” (p. 6). Examples of this promotion appear in every coaching biography that lists a coach as a wife, husband, or parent in a traditional family narrative. Newhall and Buzivus (2008) documented the promotion of heterosexuality in their review of the Rene Portland case from a legal perspective.

Portland also conveyed commitment to social roles as wife and mother. Her biography on the Penn State athletic department Web site boasted the basketball program's “family atmosphere (p. 350).

Instances like these suggest that the only narratives that can be included in online coaching biographies are traditional ones. The systematic pressures to conform to a heterosexual prototype confirm the existence of not only institutionalized heteronormativity but institutionalized homophobia as well (Hardin & LaVoi, 2013).

As homophobia marginalizes gay and lesbian coaches, the media parallels its own marginalization of gay and lesbian coaches (Lenskyj, 2013). As such, less scholarly attention has been given to coaches’ representations in the media, regardless of gender and despite that the head coach is the most visible position of power on sport teams. One recent exception is the case study research of Hardin and Whiteside (2009) who examined the media coverage and framing surrounding the lawsuit against Penn State head women's basketball coach Rene Portland. Frames are powerful communication

schemas in which meaning assigned to events, identity, and other culturally significant topics is constructed.

Portland became synonymous with homophobia after press reports exposed her “no-alcohol, no-drugs, no-lesbians” team policy. Hardin & Whiteside argued “denying homophobia as an issue in news coverage was virtually impossible; homophobia was at the heart of the events and subsequent lawsuit in 2005 and 2006” (p. 22). These authors found heterosexist and homophobic frames within the news coverage and argued that “not a single stereotype was challenged in the coverage; all were left intact” (p.32). The Rene Portland example is, to date, the only piece of research that focused on the homophobia, media coverage, and coaches. The research, while seminal, is limited in that it concerns itself with one female coach, and may not be able to be extended to the experiences and portrayals of other female or male coaches.

Plymire and Forman (2000) also came close to combining the trifecta of coaches, homophobia, and media coverage in their research on lesbian fans and Internet message boards, bringing up the same themes of silence and stigma. The authors suggest

An open discussion of lesbians in sport is rarely, if ever, undertaken in the traditional mainstream media. Media discussions of lesbianism usually bemoan the unfair lesbian stigma that confronts heterosexual women in sport. Alternately, the media make a spectacle of lesbianism when an athlete comes out or is outed. In either case, lesbians are marginalized and the code of silence is reinforced. (p. 150)

While the mainstream media isn't undertaking an open and normalizing discussion of lesbians in sport, Plymire and Forman (2000) suggest that the Internet may allow for these kinds of dialogues and narratives. While not specially focusing on coaches, an important theme is brought to light in the potential of new media to be transgressive—

opening gates that were previously closed and transmitting information that previously was unavailable. In the upcoming sections, I elaborate on new media and online content, as well as the suggested promise of changing the media landscape.

Institutional and organizational levels

The social institutional and organizational levels refer to external (institutional) and internal (organizational) influences in the gatekeeping process.

The social institution level of analysis includes units of analysis such as governments, interest groups, or religious organizations. These are also organizations, but, unlike the organizational level of analysis, looking at non-media social institutions allows us to assess their separate influence on the gatekeeping process. (Shoemaker, Vos, & Reese, p. 82).

In a sport and in the context of this project, the clearest way to tease out the social institutional level from the organizational level is to consider the institutional as any influence from outside the sports information office or women's basketball program, and thus to consider the social institutional (which will be from here on out referred to as simply **institutional**) as the NCAA, Division I sports, university affiliations, and other non-media influences. In the context of this project, sports information departments, as a self-sustaining unit, and athletic departments, as a whole, fit into Shoemaker & Vos' (2009) gatekeeping levels at the organizational and institutional. Because interview questions are designed to understand the professionals' situatedness in the organization, results have the potential to elaborate on findings by Whiteside and Hardin (2011) and Neupauer (1998), which are descriptive of the gendered conditions of sports information departments, and Sartore and Cunningham (2009a) and Staurowsky (1995), which describe the consequences of gendered structures in athletic departments.

NCAA Division I sports. NCAA Division I sports represents the highest level of college sport competition in the United States. Along with that elite status, Division I college sports are notorious for bigger budgets and bigger media coverage. According to the *USA Today*'s "College athletics finance database" in 2014, a dozen schools have operating expenses over \$100 million. The same database reports the University of Minnesota of having total operating expenses of 96.4 million (USA Today, 2014). The Knight Commission on Intercollegiate Athletics (2010) suggested that the top Division I programs are projected to have athletics budgets in excess of \$250 million by 2020. These budgets are typically dependent on funding from media contracts (i.e., CBS, ESPN) and other corporations (The Knight Commission, 2009). With the media representing both the funding and the coverage of college sports, the power of the entity is staggering and complements Kane's (1988) sentiment that on the power of the mass media. The mass media, or traditional media (broadcast, print), have a major claim in not just the coverage of Division I sports, but the audience and advertising potential of these media events as well.

As budgets and expenses rise, coaches' salaries also follow suit. Upton, Berkowitz, and Gillum (2010) reveal that major-college football head coaches experienced salary increases of 46% from 2006 to 2009, with an average of \$1.36 million for this population. Similar trends exist for Division I men's basketball as Upton's (2011) review of a *USA Today* analysis showed that the coaches in the NCAA Division I men's basketball tournament will make \$1.4 million on average in 2010-11. FBS head women's

basketball coaches have also seen a 20% rise in salaries from 2004-06, increasing from \$201,500 in 2004 to \$241,500 in 2006.

Organizational level

Shoemaker and Vos (2009) describe the organizational level as the impact of size, structure, and orientation of the media level on the content. While it might follow that the organizational level would be the sports information office or unit, I argue a better parallel for this level is the women's basketball program. Shoemaker (1991) suggested that not only do organizations hire gatekeepers, but also that they hire gatekeepers who can effortlessly represent the organization interests. In this context, SIDs are hired to represent a university—but also are hired to promote and represent women's basketball.

Division I women's basketball is a unique landscape. It is the most women's popular sport – and generates the most revenue, despite rarely breaking even (Eichelberger, 2011). The NCAA suggests that “women's basketball has the best shot at becoming the first female sport to help financially support others, including some played only by men, because it's the biggest revenue producer with the largest crowds and broadest media exposure” (Eichelberger, 2011, p. 2). Thus, the sports information contacts for power conference Division I women's basketball programs were chosen as the population for this research because of its prominence in the overall college sport landscape. It is also known that gender and sexuality play out differently in men's versus women's college sports, and that created the selection of female head coaches instead of a mixed sample (Plymire & Forman, 2000). A more in-depth discussion of the selection criteria and motivation follows in Chapter III.

Situatedness at Division I schools. While Division I schools in the six power conferences and women's basketball programs at these schools are aligned in their high-level of competition and prestige, the university context these programs exist in differs from private to public, from rural to urban, and from highly selective to less selective. Division I BCS schools can also have religious affiliations. Table 1 shows the Division I BCS schools and their conference affiliation in June 2012.

Table 1
Division I “Power Conference” Schools in June 2012

School	Conference	School	Conference
Clemson University	ACC	Marquette University	BIGEAST
Duke University	ACC	Providence College	BIGEAST
Florida State University	ACC	Rutgers University	BIGEAST
Georgia Institute of Technology	ACC	Seton Hall University	BIGEAST
North Carolina State University	ACC	University of Cincinnati	BIGEAST
University of Maryland, College Park	ACC	University of Notre Dame	BIGEAST
University of Miami	ACC	University of Pittsburgh	BIGEAST
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill	ACC	DePaul University	BIGEAST
University of Virginia	ACC	Georgetown University	BIGEAST
Wake Forest University	ACC	St. John's University	BIGEAST
Boston College	ACC	Syracuse University	BIGEAST
Virginia Tech	ACC	University of Connecticut	BIGEAST
Michigan State University	BIG10	University of Louisville	BIGEAST
Pennsylvania State University	BIG10	University of South Florida	BIGEAST
Purdue University	BIG10	Villanova University	BIGEAST
University of Iowa	BIG10	West Virginia University	BIGEAST
University of Michigan	BIG10	Arizona State University	PAC10
University of Minnesota, Twin Cities	BIG10	Stanford University	PAC10
University of Nebraska–Lincoln	BIG10	University of Arizona	PAC10
University of Wisconsin–Madison	BIG10	University of California, Berkeley	PAC10
Indiana University	BIG10	University of California, Los Angeles	PAC10
Northwestern University	BIG10	University of Colorado at Boulder	PAC10
Ohio State University	BIG10	Washington State University	PAC10
University of Illinois	BIG10	Oregon State University	PAC10
University of Missouri	BIG12	University of Oregon	PAC10
University of Texas	BIG12	University of Southern California	PAC10
Iowa State University	BIG12	University of Utah	PAC10
Baylor University	BIG12	University of Washington	PAC10
Kansas State University	BIG12	Auburn University	SEC
Texas Tech University	BIG12	Louisiana State University	SEC
University of Kansas	BIG12	University of Florida	SEC
University of Oklahoma	BIG12	University of South Carolina	SEC
Oklahoma State University	BIG12	University of Tennessee	SEC
Texas A&M University	BIG12	Vanderbilt University	SEC
		Mississippi State University	SEC
		University of Alabama	SEC
		University of Arkansas	SEC
		University of Georgia	SEC
		University of Kentucky	SEC
		University of Mississippi	SEC

Routine level

The second-to-last level of Gatekeeping Theory focuses on routines. Shoemaker and Reese (2014) define this level as “patterned, repeated practices and forms media workers use to do their jobs” (p. 100). Story selection and structure follow certain conventions and rituals. Typologies of online sport content demonstrate these routines, while research on intercollegiate athletic websites provides a specific site to quantify these norms.

Online content in sport. As women’s sport rises in participation and prominence, a concurrent evolution has occurred in the media. With advances in technology, the scope of the media is constantly expanding and the phrase “new media” has become engrained in popular culture’s lexicon. Despite being peppered into daily conversation, the definition of “new media” is difficult to pin down, precisely because it is constantly changing (e.g., Lister, Dovey, Giddings, Grant & Kelly, 2003). Further, Lister et al. (2003) provide the following to describe the term:

It is an enormously general and vague term; yet its utterance suggests certainty as if “the new media” are already exist here and now as fully achieved material and social practices. Of course, this is not true. We use the term to mean different things. We also frequently use it to conjure a future based upon the economic and education promise of “new media” or the promise of new technologies for media forms to come. It is also very seductive in its historical simplicity; there was “old media” and now there is “new.” (p. 9)

Blogs, social media tools, digital forms of newspapers, and university-sponsored athletic websites are categorized within this vague but comprehensive framework.

The prevalence and popularity of new media has lead sport media scholars to study gender, race, and other sociological constructs within its parameters (Sagas,

Cunningham, Wigley, & Ashley, 2000; Hutchins & Rowe, 2012; Kachgal, 2001; Jones, 2004, 2006; Maxwell, 2008; Kian et al., 2008). Kachgal's (2001) pilot study focused on the tennis, golf and soccer coverage found on three major sports websites (CBSSportsline, CNNSI, and ESPN). This analysis was comparable to Sagas et al. (2000) inasmuch as that she discovered that female athletes received less coverage than male athletes, thus enforcing and replicating the theme of underrepresentation and marginalization. However, the same results did not demonstrate that type of coverage devoted to female athletes contributed to typical gendered stereotypes (i.e., weakness or sport-appropriateness). A caveat of these results is that golf and tennis – more than say basketball or rugby – are often considered sports appropriate for women (Sagas et al., 2000). Further, research has indicated that women tend to receive more fair coverage in individual sports than in team competition.

Kachgal (2001) demonstrated how traditional media practices are being transferred into online sources of information, especially in terms of under-representing the female athlete. However, in the years since their research was conducted, Jones (2004, 2006, 2010) completed longitudinal research of an Australian media outlet, *News Online*, during the 2000, 2004, and 2008 Olympics. They found that women were represented more frequently than men during the 2004 Olympics and that their representation increased from the 2000 Olympics; however, that faltered and did not increase in 2008 coverage. The theme of trivializing women's achievements was documented by Jones (2006, 2010), who noted that while women were more likely to be

pictured, they were also more likely to be depicted in a losing effort or as passive participants.

Maxwell (2008), Kian et al., (2008), and Lisec and McDonald (2012) are more contemporary examples of research looking at female sport portrayals in the new media context. Because NCAA Division I women's basketball is one of the most popular and followed women's sports, the aforementioned studies were all focused on comparing men's and women's basketball on various websites. Maxwell's (2008) findings are in contrast to prior work in new media and traditional media (i.e., Kane & Buysse, 2005). Maxwell did not confirm or deny the existence of hegemonic masculinity on ESPN.com, because the results were inconclusive. For example, women's basketball received an equal number of photographic images as did men's basketball, but men's basketball imagery was more likely to be new. Also, women's basketball was more likely to be portrayed in uniform, while men's basketball contained more game recaps. The inconclusiveness of these findings encourages the need for more scholarly research into new media representations.

Kian et al., (2008) analyzed online content from *CBSsports.com* and *ESPN.com* during the 2006 NCAA men's and women's basketball tournament. Overall, the authors' findings did not parallel past sport media research in terms of how athletes were described and covered. However, the authors did find that the majority of the articles did focus on the men's tournament—which is consistent with research that indicates that women's sport receives a minute amount of all sport coverage, despite the medium (see Messner & Cooky, 2010).

Lisec and McDonald (2012) compared WNBA coverage of two popular sport blogs, *Deadspin* and *Women Talk Sports*. Instead of comparing men's coverage to women's coverage, the authors compared the two sources of online women's sports content to each other, and to the known canon of how women are portrayed in the media—as sexualized, marginalized, and trivialized. While *Deadspin* replicated the traditional themes, Lisec and McDonald suggested that *Women Talk Sports* provided a new space for representations of women and sport. This finding complements a previous assertion related to new media's potential to offer new channels and new perspectives and to challenge the status quo.

Intercollegiate athletics websites. While the previous studies pulled content from mainstream news sources, such as ESPN and CBS Sports, only a handful of scholars have used intercollegiate athletic websites as the site to collect data (Cunningham, 2003; Cunningham & Sagas, 2002; Sagas et al., 2000). Sagas et al. (2000) compared and contrasted NCAA Division I softball and baseball websites that were maintained by the university's sports information departments. Their results confirmed that softball “received untimely and inequitable coverage in the preseason as well as during the season” (p. 203). Not only was the content less, it was updated past the completion of the game or event. In comparison, Cunningham's (2003) investigation found that university websites provided more coverage of women's tennis than of men's tennis teams at the same schools.

A follow up to Sagas et al. (2001) by Cunningham and Sagas (2002) attempted to link brand equity to coverage of sports on university-sponsored websites. While the

authors found baseball had higher brand equity and thus received greater coverage than softball, a sport like basketball that had equivalent brand equity across genders received the same amount of coverage. This research suggests that online content may be more comparable when sports have similar brand equity. Cooper and Weight (2011) built on this line of research in their attempt to determine the relationship between coverage and advertising to participation rates and gross revenue. In the context of this project, their research uncovered a relevant finding—women’s basketball, along with men’s basketball and football, received the most favorable promotional and multimedia coverage. The authors suggest that “the results seem to indicate that some progress is being made in the area of gender equity on intercollegiate athletic websites—and the growth in women's basketball support is demonstrative of the impact this promotion can have” (p. 406). Following new 2010 NCAA regulations, intercollegiate athletic websites are replacing traditional media guides, thus making their content all the more important and relevant (Buysse & Wolter, 2013).

While these studies focused on coverage given to teams and players as a unit, the only research that has followed the online content related to head coaches is the pilot data for this dissertation. In the pilot, online biographies of NCAA Intercollegiate Head Coaches of 12 conferences ($N = 1855$) from both Division I and Division III were examined for textual representations of heteronormativity and heterosexism. Biographies were coded based on the presence or absence of personal text and the presence or absence of family narratives. The data demonstrates a near absence of LGBT coaches, suggesting digital content of intercollegiate athletic department websites reproduce

dominant gender ideologies and are plagued by homophobia in overt and subtle ways.

The results of the pilot study are the catalyst for investigating how this content is created from the perspective of the sports information director, the individual level gatekeeper.

Individual level

Charged in many cases with maintaining the intercollegiate athletic websites, sports information directors (SIDs) represent the micro level of Gatekeeping Theory, as the individual. While much research in Gatekeeping Theory deals with the individual as a traditional journalist, Weaver and colleagues (2007) make the argument that gatekeepers are “those who have editorial responsibility for the preparation or transmission of news stories or other information” (p. 3). The ensuing section demonstrates how SIDs fit this criterion. The individual level explores “how the characteristics, knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors of individual people affect the gatekeeping process” (Shoemaker & Vos, 2009, p. 33). Even as far back as White (1950) and in later studies individual variables such as personality (Johnstone, Slawski, & Bowman, 1972; Livingston & Bennett, 2003; Weaver & Wilhoit, 1986), gender (Hardin, 2005; Kim, 2010), and role conception (Weaver & Wilhoit, 1991) were shown to shape information transmission. The remainder of this chapter presents research on SIDs’ characteristics, attitudes, and roles.

Sports information directors. While playing a vital role, sports information is an often overlooked and under-researched field situated in both intercollegiate athletics and mass communication as noted by McCleneghan. Despite being omitted in the literature, sports information is an integral and often requisite department in an intercollegiate athletic program. Acosta & Carpenter (2014) report that 99.3% of all

NCAA-sponsored athletic departments have at least one sports information director (SID).

Of the existing research on this career, two areas have received the most critical attention: (a) the functions and responsibilities of SIDs and (b) their attitudes towards their job and industry (Battenfield, 2004; Hardin & McClung, 2002; Hardin, Whiteside, & Ash, 2014; Gerszewski, 2010; McCleneghan, 1995; Neupauer 1998, 1999; Ruyhley & Fall, 2009; Stoldt, 2000; Whiteside, 2010; Whiteside et al., 2011) McCleneghan's (1995) benchmark survey of the profession did both. He created a typology of an SID: a middle-aged male with a BA in journalism who has been employed at his current institution for 10 years. Similar trends in terms of gender, tenure, degree and age continue to be prevalent in research on this population (Hardin & McClung, 2002; Stoldt, 2000). Moore's (2011) dissertation confirms those findings from nearly two decades ago. His research revealed "the modern college sports public relations director is male, 30-49 years old, has a bachelor's degree in journalism or communications, and most likely makes \$35-\$45,000" (p. iii).

McCleneghan (1995) also revealed the most frequent duties for SIDs (administrative, managing media aspects for one specific sport, writing press releases, working with the media and special projects). In the same vein, Stoldt (2000) classified sports information directors in terms of Broom and Smith's (1979) model of public relations activity patterns. In a sample of 187 SIDS, nearly 83 percent fit the classification of communication technician, a role that is defined as possessing specific abilities, like writing or graphic design and is not involved with decision-making or

management. Hardin and McClung (2002) substantiated those findings as their research determined that writing skills were the most emphasized skillset in their sample of 86 sports information directors.

In relationship to new media, research suggests that sports information directors are frequent users and creators of new and social media content (Stoldt, 2012; Stoldt & Vermillion, 2013). Stoldt (2012) revealed that 88% of SIDs surveyed believed that social media has affected external communication and two-thirds of respondents indicate more than a tenth of their work is in the new and social media realm.

While technical skills may be an important component of the SID, other scholars have suggested that this population is responsible for making content-related decisions and that they desire more managerial duties (see Stoldt, 2008). Rühley and Fall (2009) suggest that the sheer value and budgets of Division I athletic programs makes careful communication imperative and that a shift is occurring in the sports information director's duties.

They no longer are viewed as those who merely produce pamphlets, update Web sites, and create posters. As problem-solving facilitators, they are responsible for much higher order management duties, including recommending responses to issues, advising, managing and evaluating issues, and contributing to policy decisions (p. 408-09).

Moore (2011) also shows change in the profession. Moore (2011) found SIDs to have a moderate-level of influence on athletic director—and that that influence was on the rise. An orientation toward change and upward mobility aligns with Stoldt's (2008) interview with John Humenik, then-executive director of CoSIDA. In this interview, published in

the *International Journal of Sport Communication*, Humenik argues for a shift from “information directors” to “strategic communication.”

In today’s collegiate world, and for that matter throughout all areas of PR in our country, the title “information director” seems to primarily refer to a person who is involved mostly in keeping stats, preparing basic news releases, working on publications, setting up interviews, and managing the press box. The title “communications director,” however, seems to clearly project a person who has broader, more global duties and who is viewed more in a strategic and visionary capacity (Stoldt, 2008, p. 460).

Humenik suggests that not only do SIDs need new roles; but that they want new roles as well. As the field grows and new technologies emerge, more research is needed to determine if SIDs are taking on more managerial or strategic duties and how that affects athletic departments.

Gender and SIDs. Of the research mentioned regarding sports information director, much of it comes from a sport management perspective or communications perspective and fails to apply critical or feminist lenses to the research. A few studies have looked at relationships between gender and sports information directors (Neupauer, 1998; LaVoi et al., 2007; Whiteside, 2010; Whisenant & Mullane, 2007). Neupauer (1998) was one of the first to formally comment on the inconsistency between female representation in sports information and female representation in public relations. Acosta and Carpenter (2014) report only 12.1 % of SIDs as female, while in 2008, the membership in the Public Relations Society of America (PRSA) was 70% female. To interrogate this discrepancy, Neupauer (1998) interviewed a sample of female SIDs at the Division I and III level to determine their opinions on the absence of women in the field. From the interviews, numerous reasons surfaced, including the previously noted time

commitment and tenure. The SIDs in this research also mentioned familial responsibilities, the glass ceiling and the male construction of sport as being blameworthy for the scarcity of women in sports information. Other participants in Neupauer's (1998) research indicated that women are denied opportunities in the field because administrators are male and sport is a predominantly male industry. Whisenant and Mullane (2007) explicitly took on that concept and analyzed whether the gender of the athletic director correlated with the gender of the SID. Guided by hegemonic masculinity and homologous reproduction, their findings corroborate the narratives Neupauer (1998) identified.

In a more contemporary iteration of researching issues of gender among SIDs, Whiteside and Hardin (2014) surveyed 187 female SIDs, asking them questions about the glass ceiling in their profession, along with other related issues. Coming from the perspective of female SIDs, this research revealed similar themes of Neupauer (1998), including perception of a glass ceiling (but hesitance to admit to experiencing) and problems with work-life balance. Unique to this work, Whiteside and Hardin (2014) suggest that female SIDs use coping mechanisms (e.g., acting like "one of the boys", using male language, and trivializing women's sports) in reaction to their internalization of the male-dominated industry and the hegemonic masculinity found within college sports.

Gatekeeping and SIDs. LaVoi et al. (2007) investigated the relationship between occupational position of decision maker, sex of decision maker and sport media representations, with findings suggesting different patterns of decision-making based on

gender. This work integrates both the decision-making with gender to answer what factors (sport type, conference affiliation, sex of decision maker, occupational position of decision maker) influence the cover photography seen in Division I media guides. While unintended, LaVoi and colleague's factors could also be seen as "gates." This research revealed the following personal and global "gates" could contribute to what photos are selected for media guide covers. On the micro level, this research found patterns with the personnel selecting the imagery.

With respect to specific patterns of decision makers, overall one key trend emerged—decisions regarding which images to portray were not made alone. A majority of the time, the SID and HC [head coach] made joint decisions on media guide covers for both men's and women's sports. (p. 38)

Further, this research speculates that global issues such as hegemony and homophobia may also affect why female athletes were significantly less likely to be portrayed in action, even when a female head coach was responsible for making the decisions. The authors suggest that coaches may de-emphasize athletic competence to reassert femininity and thus avoid the lesbian stigma that is prevalent in women's sports. This research was echoed in the findings of Hardin's (2013) eponymously titled piece, "Want Changes in Content? Change the Decision Maker." In this context, Hardin is focusing on sport journalists, opposed to SIDs. Still, Hardin brings up themes of hegemonic masculinity and gender ideology that affect the sport newsroom – themes that affect college sports in general and SIDs (Hardin, Whiteside, & Ash, 2013; Whiteside, 2010) specifically.

Sexuality and SIDs. Whiteside's (2010) dissertation follows up on the themes of feminism and homophobia, while subtly alluding to gatekeeping, as she interviewed 14

SIDs — 12 heterosexual women, and two lesbians. Whiteside’s used these interviews to see how not only gender, but also show sexual orientation affects women’s experiences in sports information. Her transcripts extend arguments on the pervasiveness of homophobia and heteronormativity in intercollegiate sport. Her participants in her study often avoided using the word “lesbian,” addressed how they emphasized their femininity to avoid being called a lesbian, and one said “let’s face it, there’s a [lesbian] stigma whether you like it or not” (p. 116). The lesbian participants in her study acknowledge that they are “private” people, and thus use silence as a way of navigating their sexuality in the workplace.

Two narratives from Whiteside’s work are particularly resonant to this proposal. The first deals with comments from a sports information director of a Division I women’s basketball team — the population suggested by my research. About this participant, Whiteside noted,

Rachel currently works for a major Division I institution for a successful women’s basketball program and was aware of the lesbian stereotype and how working with a women’s team magnified that stereotype. Deflecting the stigma was especially important for her as she saw the lesbian stereotype as not only a threat to her own identity, but a threat to her success; for Rachel, heterosexuality was an advantage that she consciously worked to use in her favor. (p. 142)

Understanding the importance of female sexuality to this population informs this proposal and allows for added sensitivity and appreciation of these complex issues.

The second applicable narrative from Whiteside’s dissertation showcases the power of “asking” when one of Whiteside’s lesbian participants commented to a lesbian coach about her family narratives. Whiteside retells this moment:

Before I even had a chance to ask her a question, she started the interview by proudly relaying a story in which an SID at the conference acknowledged her partner. She also noted how several years ago she asked a coach with a same sex partner and a son why only her little boy was mentioned in the “personal information” section of the media guide, happily noting that the next year, the coach used a picture with the full family. (p. 131)

This anecdote reminds the reader of the importance of asking, and provides even further impetus for discovering the processes, routines, and explanations between including and excluding certain information in online coaching biographies. However, the rarity of same-sex or non-traditional family narratives in online content suggest this “asking” is not normative.

Whiteside, along with Hardin and Ash (2012), also produced research that corroborates these findings on a larger scale. In Hardin et al. (2012), the authors surveyed a random sample of 272 Division I SIDs with questions related to gender and sexuality. First, over a third of respondents (35.7%) believed that coaches should be able to include their gay or lesbian partners in media, 39.7% of participants were neutral on the topic, and 19.5% strongly disagreed with including same-sex partners in media guides. While this data suggests that SIDs are more open to issues of sexuality than their journalistic counterparts (Whiteside & Hardin, 2009), it also raises some confounding issues. The authors noted:

These attitudes may be compounded by the belief that sexuality is private; more than half of the respondents reported working with a gay coach, but such experience did not translate into stronger attitudes toward making sexuality more public by the way of supporting the inclusion of gay and lesbian partners in media guide biographies, for instance. Of course, coaches are often featured with their heterosexual spouses in media guides, illustrating the fallacy of assuming that sexuality is in fact actually a private matter. (p. 17).

This suggests there are varying attitudes towards the inclusion of this content in media. While much research has treated SIDs as an aggregate and has attempted to create a typology of the profession, this data provides a reminder that SIDs are individuals, working at different institutions, in different climates and regions, and may experience different pressures and have different media strategies. The authors recognized this limitation to their work, stating:

One limitation to this study is its failure to measure why SIDs hold varying attitudes toward issues of sexuality, as well as toward women's sports and Title IX. Future research should employ a qualitative approach to better understand how SIDs develop, maintain, or challenge assumptions and beliefs toward issues of gender equity in sports. (p. 18)

These limitations provide a charge for this dissertation, validating in some way the need for more qualitative research on SID experiences, perceptions, and realities, especially when that triad intersects with decision-making, gatekeeping, and online content.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

The previous two chapters set up the foundation, theory, and importance of this dissertation to both sport media and sport sociology research. In Chapter III, the focus is on the planning and execution of the project. The methodology and the approach used in conducting the research are not only described, but are also rationalized. Within that realm, the research design and role of the researcher are identified, as are the population, the data collection timeline and the data collection instrument. I provide a detailed rationale for the decision to make this project qualitative in scope, explain how critical discourse analysis (CDA) informed the methodology, and critique my own situatedness in this research project. I also provide a detailed, yet anonymous, snapshot of the participants and explain the strategy and the implementation of the data analysis.

Researcher Situatedness

The “*azza* sentence,” as described by Simpson (2002), serves to situated the researcher in a cultural, social, and historical paradigm. While there is no direct translation of *azza*, it can be best understood as the “as a” statement or qualifier (i.e., “as a white middle-aged man”) and has permeated social science theory and research since the late 18th century. Simpson, while introducing the *azza* sentence, also debates its relevance in social science research, stating,

It is the antinomic potential of the gesture of self-affiliation (the *azza* sentence) that renders it antithetical to the objectivist component of the social science project; no one fully wishes to be what they say they are, because what is enable at one moment might become a liability at another. Or, one might say, the objective nature of this gesture itself consists in its structured ambivalence (Simpson, 2002, p. 107)

Simpson is suggesting an inherent dissonance with situating oneself in a paradigm that is socially, cultural, and historically constructed and thus is subject to change.

Despite this dichotomy, the role of situatedness in this research is, I feel, implicit and thus important note. Similarly, Woodward (2008) suggests, “feminist approaches that acknowledge the position of the researcher have the advantage of being explicit and direct in re-instating ‘situatedness’” (p. 552). As such, the *azza* sentence for this research endeavor might be “as a lesbian feminist former sports information director.” By stating these aspects of my self and individuality, I call to attention the place from where I am situated in society and the place from where I reflect on the research at hand. However, by no means does this situatedness imply a lack of objectivity. Sugden (1996) reminds researchers to walk a fine line between empathy and emotional involvement—avoiding general relating in our quest for saturating themes about the experience in question.

Social science qualitative research experts, such as Creswell (2012) and Marshall and Rossman (2010), also raise the importance of acknowledging the researcher’s role (which could be construed as another form of situatedness) in order to reduce researcher bias. This acknowledgement serves to point out any prior knowledge or experiences that could affect the interpretation or influence the approach of the research. My admission of being “a lesbian former sports information director” provides assumptions about my operating framework and reflexivity. Breaking down the *azza* sentence, some of potential biases are made transparent, and thus hopefully, reduced.

First, the research has a sensitive focus (e.g., LGBT, homophobia) that could make a participant wary. While my lesbian identity makes this subject personal, it also makes me more adept at tiptoeing around these issues. Krieger (1982) suggests lesbian researchers have an “important sensitivity to offer,” but are also more susceptible to pressures to conform from the straight world and pressures to adequately represent a community from within (p. 108). These pressures provide a sort of social science checks and balances; reminding the researcher of the heteronormative constructs of North America, while also taking into account the known, lived experience of lesbians (particularly in sport).

Second, my position as a former SID allows me to empathize with my participants. As I understand the profession, I am able to communicate about general practices inherent to the job. It is possible that this pre-attained knowledge could obstruct nuances that unacquainted researcher might observe. However, it is also possible as Bridges (2001) indicates, “while individuals from a community have access to a particular understanding of their experience, this does not automatically attach special authority (though it might attach special interest) to their own representations of that experience” (p. 374). Through awareness and acknowledgement, the goal is to reduce the biases that my personal affiliations might cause. Marshall and Rossman (2010) also suggest using a “critical friend” to alleviate researcher bias and situatedness and to peer debrief. The role of the “critical friend” will be expanded upon in a later section.

Approach and Rationale

This research employed a qualitative approach. Creswell (2012) provides myriad, but not exhaustive, rationales for applying qualitative inquiry to research. Among those indicators for qualitative research, five purposes helped determine that a qualitative approach was well suited for this project (e.g., exploring a specific issue; developing a complex understanding of a specific issue; understanding the context and settings wherein the sample approaches an issue; following up previous quantitative research; and the unavailability of appropriate quantitative measures).

These rationales emerged from Creswell (2012) as reasons for taking on a qualitative approach and complement the research questions. For example, the quantitative pilot study surveyed nearly 1,900 online coaching biographies and found only two same-sex family narratives. No quantitative measure exists to further examine this phenomenon, and yet, the notability of the findings foster the need for further inquiry on the specific issue. Quantitative inquiry helped illuminate the “what”; qualitative inquiry may help identify the “how” and “why.”

Little research is a general qualitative inquiry, and this dissertation is no exception as it is fueled by a descriptive and exploratory approach. Marshall and Rossman (2010) indicate that a descriptive approach is appropriate when attempting to document and describe a specific phenomenon, while an exploratory approach is applicable when the purpose is to scrutinize “little-understood phenomena ... to generate hypotheses for future research” (p. 69). Other purposes (i.e., explanatory, predictive, or emancipatory) purposes less applicable to the purpose and research questions previously

stated. As noted, little is known about how online coaching biographies are created and how gatekeeping levels may alter their creation.

Critical discourse analysis. Creswell (2012) also identifies multiple approaches to qualitative inquiry—one of which is narrative research and analysis. Narrative research is noted as being the best fit for research that aims at “capturing the detailed stories or life experiences of a single individual or the lives of a small number of individuals” (p. 73-74). While the scope of this research (detailed accounts from a small population about a specific experience) does fit the narrative research tradition, a more specific approach was needed.

Sometimes described in the umbrella of narrative research, critical discourse analysis (CDA) is a specialized strategy for conducting interdisciplinary qualitative research. It became clear CDA was the best fit for this project as the approach allows this research to investigate and interpret the meaning of creating online coaching biographies through the discourse and narratives of those that create them. For the purpose of this study, attention will be focused on the discourse and narratives of the each actor (e.g., SID) in relation to how they produce online coaching biographies. The powerful approach is useful in a setting where the intent is to find meaning, insights, and relationships between language and ideology (Eskes, Duncan, Miller, 1998; Fairclough, Mulderrig, & Wodak, 2011; van Dijk, 1993).

A key method for media studies, van Dijk (1993) describes critical discourse analysis (CDA) as “a study of the relations between discourse, power, dominance, social inequality and the position of the discourse analyst in such social relationship (p. 249).

Further, van Dijk's seminal explanatory piece suggests that CDA should take a social or political stance and be targeted at change. Critical discourse analysis also has specific application to gatekeeping studies because of incorporation of dominance and power in understanding texts. As van Dijk (1993) suggests

Critical discourse analysis can only make a significant and specific contribution to critical social or political analyses if it is able to provide an account of the role of language, language use, discourse or communicative events in the (re)production of dominance and inequality ... Dominant speakers may effectively limit the communicative rights of others, e.g. by restricting (free access to) communicative events, speech acts, discourse genres, participants, topics or style ... Dominant speakers control the access to public discourse and hence are able to indirectly manage the public mind (279-280).

Critical discourse analysis, thus, provides a theoretical and methodical framework for interpreting the interviews from sports information directors. Previous data (i.e. the content analysis of online coaching biographies in Calhoun et al., 2009 & Calhoun et al., 2011) were used to inform, corroborate, or reject any findings that are derived from the qualitative interviews.

Population and Sample

The population for this research is found within the National Collegiate Athletic Association SIDs assigned to Division I women's basketball teams. According to NCAA.org in 2012, there were 332 Division I women's basketball teams, with 74 schools ($74/332 = 22\%$) representing the six most powerful and prestigious "BCS" conferences (Atlantic Coast Conference [ACC] = 12; BIG EAST Conference = 16; BIG10 Conference = 12; BIG12 Conference = 10; Pacific-12 Conference [Pac-12] = 12; Southeastern Conference [SEC] = 12) (see, LaVoi et al., 2007). These conferences and population are referred to as "power conferences" throughout.

For this project, not only must the SIDs be from a power conference, but they must also represent a head coach that is female. This distinction was made due to the arguably difference experience of gay vs. lesbian coaches in intercollegiate athletics—and because the quantitative pilot data suggested that female coaches were far less likely to have personal text or family narratives. In June 2012, 45 of the 74 power conference schools had a female women's basketball coach as determined by the intercollegiate athletic websites. Thus, the population for this project was the sports information director supporting those 45 programs (N = 45). The population was also equally representative in terms of sex (females = 22; males = 23) and conference affiliation (ACC = 10; BIG10 = 8; BIG12 = 7; BIGEAST = 7; Pac-12 = 7; SEC = 6).

Sampling strategy

The sample for this research was be derived from the N = 45, using criterion sampling. Creswell (2012) notes that criterion sample, i.e., the sampling of all cases that meet a certain a priori criteria, is useful for quality assurance as no one from the population that meets the criteria are left out. Also, Creswell (2012) indicates that “criterion sampling works well when all individuals studied represent people who have experienced the phenomenon” (p. 155). This strategy aligns with the background to this study as all sports information directors in power conferences write online coaching biographies (as verified by the quantitative pilot study of online coaching biographies). Thus, the entire population (N = 45) was used to derive the sample.

In June 2012, an email invitation was sent to each sports information director in the population (see APPENDIX D). This email asked the SID to participate in a phone

interview related to how they create online coaching biographies. Once a participant responds to the invitation a one-hour time slot was determined for the interview to take place. Follow up email and messages via Twitter were sent to attract more participants. The sample size and sample characteristics will be detailed in the following sections.

Sample size

The number of participants desired for this research was based on the similar research of Iannotta & Kane (2002), Krane & Barber (2005), Hoffman (2010), and Whiteside (2010). Both Iannotta and Kane and Krane and Barber conducted in-depth interviews with 13 lesbian coaches, while Hoffman (2010) interviewed six senior woman administrators (SWAs). Whiteside's dissertation used the method of long interviews to discuss a wide-range of issues with 14 female sports information directors. The sample, which will be detailed in a later segment, of this research resulted in being $n = 14$, fitting the *a priori* criteria and reaching data saturation.

Sample characteristics

Scholars note that keeping data confidential and identities private can be a major challenge in conducting qualitative research (Creswell, 2012; Jones, Brown, & Holloway, 2012; Marshall & Rossman, 2011). Protection strategies like removing names, using pseudonyms, removing direct or indirect identifiers, and developing composite profiles are often suggestion to mask participant identities. It is an ethical obligation to protect from the disclosure and identification. As such, it is difficult with a small initial population ($N = 45$) and an even smaller sample size ($n = 14$) to balance the

confidentiality and privacy of the sample with a detailed overview of the sample characteristics. Linked data will not be provided (i.e., a female from the south) and rather, demographic data will be separated by item.

The sample was fairly balanced in terms of gender (females = 6; males = 8). Conference affiliation was slightly less balanced (ACC = 5; BIG10 = 2; BIG12 = 2, BIGEAST = 1; Pac-12 = 3; SEC = 1). Location may be a better indicator of sample balance (East = 2; Midwest = 4; South = 5; West = 3). Additionally, the participants represented both private ($n = 4$) and public ($n = 10$) institutions. The age of the participants was between 27 and 44 years, as of June 2012, and the range of experience as an SID was between three and 20 years.

Data Collection

Based on my knowledge and research related to sports information directors, a shorter form interview is more likely to appeal to a busy professional. I was flexible to the needs of the participants and set up phone interviews on weekdays or weekends. Phone interviews allowed this research to capture a larger sample and not be restricted by travel, time, and budget.

The phone interviews were used to collect information related to the creation of online coaching biographies and the explanations for the absence of same-sex narratives. Yin (2009) notes that in certain settings interviews should be considered “guided conversations rather than structured queries” (p. 106). Of the possible interviewing techniques (i.e., in-depth, semi-structured, structured), focused interviews were employed for this project. This method was selected for data collection because this type of

interview tends to be shorter, conversational, while still maintaining structure and acquiring detail (Yin, 2009). Because of the brevity and focused nature of the interview, an interview guide (See Appendix A) was created to aid in this process and to create a consistent protocol (Rubin & Rubin, 2012).

Each interview began with a reminder to the participant that the interview would be recorded, as well as an additional assurance of confidentiality. Participants were then asked to verbally verify their informed consent prior to the interview beginning. With the participants' permission, interviews were recorded via an Apple iOS application, *Recorder*.

The interview guide had three sets of questions: introductory, communications routines, and family narratives. These sets of questions are parallel and aligned with the research questions. Interviews each started with general questions (i.e., the introductory section), including an ice-breaking question “walk me through your background and career in sports information.” The introductory questions allowed me to build rapport with each participant, and also allowed me to share some of my own experiences in sports information with them. Rubin and Rubin (2012) indicate that it can be difficult to build rapport during telephone, but suggest that by bringing up shared organizations, relationships, or social connections – “anything that makes you seem more friendly and reliable” (p.178) – can help build trust and lead to successful interview.

The second section of interview questions related to how they create online content. These questions followed an inverted pyramid approach—beginning with a general prompt, “Talk to me about how you build online content” and making way to

“who makes the decisions on what information is included in an online coaching biography?” These questions often provided an easy segue to the final section of questions on family narratives, which could be perceived as the most sensitive. Often times, SIDs provided a natural opening to set up and ask the following question, which was often the most revealing question. “As you know, this research is specifically looks into the family narratives included in online coaching biographies. What explanations can you offer for the inclusion or exclusion of family narratives in online coaching biographies?” After this question, I followed the participant’s lead and had several other questions that garnered more details about SIDs experiences with family narratives in online coaching biographies.

Probing questions were also be used to acquire more qualification, explanation or to keep the conversation on topic. Rubin & Rubin (2012) suggest creating a warehouse of possible probes and then selecting a specific one based on need. APPENDIX c contains the potentials probes that could be used during the interview. Due to time constraints and efficiency the data was transcribed via an online service (Quicktate). This digital transcription service was approved by the IRB and maintains all confidentiality agreements of the study.

Data Analysis

After all 14 interviews were transcribed; the resulting 163 pages of single-spaced documents formed the source of the data analysis. The data analysis plan was guided by both Daymon and Holloway (2011) and Marshall and Rossman (2012) and involved the following four phases: immersion, organization, coding, and assessing validity.

Organization and immersion

Following transcription, interviews were read multiple times to achieve familiarity with the content and to correct any errors in transcription. The data was also de-identified (i.e., names of colleagues, references to facilities, conferences) and pseudonyms were applied to each interviewee. Despite the use of a transcription tool, I worked through every transcript, checking for errors, vernacular, and accuracy. Immersion in the data began from the initial stages of the data analysis – from conducting the interviews, to re-reading the transcripts multiple times, to coding the data.

Coding

Inductive coding was used to discover themes and patterns, while deductive coding was used to compare the raw data to the levels of analysis proscribed by Gatekeeping Theory. Daymon and Holloway (2011) suggest that a dual-coding approach might be useful if your coding is led by a theory or previous literature. The authors also recommend being both “intuitive and creative” in approaching data analysis (p. 306).

With the aid of a secondary coder, the data was coded using said dual strategies. While many suggest that a secondary coder could be used to code 10-20% of the data, I elected to have the secondary coder involved in the entirety of the coding process (Creswell, 2012). The secondary coder was given a brief overview of the research design and a list of the research questions. We agreed to code the first transcript and then peer debrief and assess our intercoder agreement. Following coding the first transcript, our intercoder agreement was near perfect—finding consensus where there was discrepancies. Through this first debriefing, we also developed initial codes and themes

that I will discuss in the next two sections. Subsequently, we coded the remainder of the transcripts, observing the same debriefing strategy and obtained high levels of intercoder agreement.

Deductive coding

The initial coding strategy was led by a deductive approach because the five levels of Gatekeeping Theory and the three research questions were readily available. Narratives were coded, and color-coded, for each research question (i.e., RQ1, RQ2, RQ3), and were also coded for the levels of Gatekeeping Theory (i.e., individual, routines, organizational, institutional, and social system).

Inductive coding

The inductive coding strategy drew on the pre-existing categories above, but allowed for the generation of unique themes. For example, a section of text was coded RQ1-Routines (“I might update it, once I do the bio I might go back once I write.”-Ned). The section was also coded as editing (theme) and updating (sub-theme). The data truly led to creation of new themes that originated separately from proscribed concepts.

Trustworthiness

Establishing trustworthiness in qualitative research is a daunting task (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Similarly, Padgett (1998) provides a myriad of strategies for enhancing the rigor of the work, including prolonged engagement, triangulation, member checking, peer debriefing, negative case analysis, and auditing. As such, two steps were taken to ensure the trustworthiness of the data and the data analysis: enlisting a critical friend and member checking the data. Additionally, the data from Calhoun et al. (2011) provided a

priori triangulation—knowing what narratives were included and omitted allowed us to critically assess SIDs discourse around those narratives.

The critical friend. Marshall and Rossman (2010) indicate the role of the critical friend can be used to alleviate research bias, to peer check analysis, and to debrief during thematic generation and coding. In this project, the role of the critical friend was hand-selected based on a number of factors. First, the critical friend is a highly trained and practiced in qualitative research, specifically with interviewing and the ensuing analysis. Second, the critical friend was not affiliated with either the communities or interest group under investigation in this research—she is not LGBT identified nor does she have experience in sports information. However, she is an ally to the LGBT community and was a collegiate athlete, which made her able to speak the language of college sports and be sensitive to LGBT issues without being too close to either population. These unique combinations of skills and identities made this critical friend an ideal secondary coder and peer de-briefer.

Member checking. Daymon and Holloway (2011) describe member checking as a process that promotes the “understanding of the data with the people you study, by summarizing, repeating or paraphrasing their words and asking about their veracity and interpretation” (p. 89). For the member checks in this study, each participant was emailed his or her finalized transcript (See APPENDIX). The transcripts were de-identified and contained participants’ pseudonyms. Participants were directed to respond to my email with any changes or concerns within two weeks. Of the 14 participants, five responded with clarifications and questions about the data—mostly wanting potential identifiers

removed. For example, one participant felt that a story she told about her coach would (a) showcase the coach in negative light and (b) make it possible for her to be identified. In the scenario, and across the other comments, the areas of concern did not alter the results and often were not relevant. In sum, the participants that responded to the member check were more concerned with anonymity than the actual content of the transcripts.

Ethical or Political Issues

The appropriate forms were presented to the Institutional Review Board at the University of Minnesota - Twin Cities and IRB approval was received in December 2011 (see Appendix E). Even with IRB approval, it is possible participants would find ethical and political issues in this research, due to its sensitive subject matter, (i.e., the inclusion or exclusion of sexual orientation narratives and content related to professional duties). Participants were told that they could withdraw from the study at any time and that their responses were being kept confidential.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

Chapter IV details the results of the 14 semi-structured interviews, using the research questions as sections. Recall that the research questions are:

1. What procedures and communication routines exist when sports information directors create online coaching biographies of Division I women's basketball coaches?
2. Besides communication routines, what gatekeeping factors (individual, organizational, institutional, or societal) influence the creation of online coaching biographies of Division I women's basketball coaches?
3. What explanations do sports information directors offer for the absence of non-traditional family narratives in online coaching biographies of Division I women's basketball coaches?

Deductive and inductive themes within and among each question are introduced and elaborated on in this chapter, consistent with the critical discourse analysis (CDA) tradition. As noted in Chapter III,

the aim [of CDA] is not only to identify themes that derive from the theoretical frame but also to be open for new themes that can be found during the interviews or during the reading of them (Jorgensen & Phillips, 2002, p. 124).

Direct quotations and paraphrasing are used to illustrate and exemplify a theme. In certain cases, the conversation between the SID and myself are included to create context.

According to CDA, the onus is on the analyst to choose selections from transcripts that are relevant to the research questions (Jorgensen & Phillips, 2002). Selections are chosen as exemplars of a theme but are never the only occurrence of a theme. Tables are included following each research question to provide a quantitative perspective or characteristic representations of themes. These tables are to buttress the textual, discourse analysis. The data therein should be considered in concert with the written results as the zeitgeist for this project is founded in the qualitative, CDA tradition.

Research Question #1: Procedures and Communications Routines

This section refers to the first research question, “what procedures and communication routines exist when SIDs create online coaching biographies of Division I women’s basketball coaches?” Identifying the process and procedures involved with creating online coaching biographies may provide evidence as to how certain family narratives get included in this medium and how other narratives get omitted or erased.

This research question also represents the second level of Gatekeeping Theory (communication routines). As previously noted, communication routines were separated from the second research question as this gatekeeping mechanism provides context to the processes that may determine the other four levels of gatekeeping and influence the technical creation of an online coaching biography. The level was also separated to reduce redundancy in data reporting and analysis.

While each of the 14 SIDs had a slightly different way of describing how they create online coaching biographies, the following seven themes emerged from the data during their description of the process.

1. Using a content management system
2. Repurposing content
3. Conducting original research
4. Using an information sheet or resume
5. Collaborating with others
6. Editing
7. Incorporating personal style

For several of the themes, subthemes emerged and will be discussed accordingly.

Inconsistencies within the themes will also be identified. For the most part, the themes build on each other and represent a coherent process. At the end of this chapter, narrative epitomes of the process will show how each theme works together.

Using a content management system

All SIDs reported using a content management system (such as CBSports or Netidor). Content management systems (CMS) as a component of the content creation process were usually noted first by the participants, before discussing other processes and routines. The CMS used at one school was described by Jack, a male SID, as being standardized at most “decent schools.” Jack noted that a CMS “makes it real easy for you to post stuff. I think it's easy. It might be hard for other people or whatever. It takes away a lot of the HTML code.” Another male SID, Kevin, corroborated the fact that CMS

alleviates the need of the SID to know how to code and eases the content creation process when he said:

So we're like one of the New Lion schools. So they have a CMS that they provide so we can do our stuff and the nice thing about this, the New Lion Platform is it allows me a little bit of creativity and so you look at our website a lot of the structure they built but I mean I can take and do what am I trying to say, I can do, I can change navigation; I can edit it, I can do things that I need to do.

Repurposing content

All of the SIDs mentioned the process of repurposing content. However, some SIDs mentioned it affirmatively (i.e., they do repurpose content) and some SIDs mentioned it reflexively (i.e., they know that some SIDS repurpose, but they do not). SIDs that reported repurposing content noted that two distinct ways that they repurposed content: repurposing their own and repurposing others.

Repurposing one's own content. The most common way that sports information director noted that they repurpose content when creating an online coaching biography is by using the press release that they have previously written; particularly when it is a new hire. Fred said, "A bio from scratch, I mean quite honestly, is generally [from] a press release." This routine was also confirmed by Carter, who indicated,

Well, what I usually do to start out is to get something up there in the website. I usually put their press release as their bio to start out and then once I have time to really do their bio then I'll change, to do the bio for like the media guide...But you know, I'll use some stuff on the press release, that fits in there as their bio and then just change up to different things.

A veteran coach also can have a bio that is repurposed, which Leah brought up when she said, "Well, I'd say from year to year I re-purpose pretty much the whole thing and just add kind of what happened this last year."

Repurposing others' content. Repurposing other people's content is where the affirmative or reflexive dichotomy occurred for the participants. Dean said that in order to write his coaches' biographies he "used bits and pieces of what [a previous school] did, brought it in and expanded it basically into appeal more to the [current school] fan base." Adam, who said, "Basically, I just pulled up her bio from her last school and just kind of changed the wording to make it sound good here", paralleled this kind of repurposing. Ned also noted, "the information [in the existing bio] that they had was organized great for them and posting it was really easy because it was well-written at the time but I inherited it."

When describing repurposing others' content, the SIDs brought up two reasons as to why they did it: 1) because it was a common practice in the field and 2) because few coaches needed a biography from scratch at this level. For instance, Dean said, "Everybody does Google searches to kind of cross reference everything." Ned also noted, "We're hiring, you know, like we're hiring the second or third stop in most cases and so all of her information was well updated by ... [previous school]."

While many SIDs referenced repurposing content as one of their routines, some mentioned it as a routine in the field, but not one that they practiced. Ellie was an example of an SID who mentioned repurposing, but didn't say that it was a routine that she followed. For instance, she said

Yeah kind of and like sometimes one school may have done their bio like way more in-depth than we've done other coaches and like sometimes its just kind of all out of whack. So I don't usually like just copy other schools bios.

In the following exchange, Helen also brought up repurposing content and explained why she was hesitant to incorporate it as a process:

Helen: You need information from another school, so if there was a mistake there and not a malicious mistake or an intentional mistake, down the line. You don't want to perpetuate that. I want to make sure I am not perpetuating that.

Me: Right. Right and I think that's kind of an interesting point you bring up, that when we do repurpose online content, like it could be something as small as just a date, so if you just keep copying and pasting that, so it becomes the truth.

Helen: Yeah. It becomes, becomes, my problem.

While both Helen and Ellie indicate that they are wary of repurposing other school's content, they note it as a common practice among SIDs creating online coaching biographies.

Conducting original research

Another theme, conducting original research, emerged as the natural opposite to the latter theme of repurposing content. In this theme, sports information profession reported looking through past record books and media guides to find relevant information that could be used in a coaches' online biography. Jack presented a good example of this theme, noting

We'll kind of look through old media guides that we have here to kind of see - to make sure I have all the important stuff - like 'Coach of the Year' awards for the conference - that's a big deal. And tournament appearances and stuff like that ... I've noticed a lot of the assistants that I've done bios for and some head coaches might want this - but they are interested in - like - a cool stat or something that's come about since they started. So, for example, like 'led the ACC in defensive scoring average - you know - like 60 points per game, which is tops in the ACC for the past two years' - something like that - they kind of look for and want. So, I'll try to look up a statistic like that to put in there, too.

Fred corroborated this approach by indicating that he normally does background research on a coach to make sure nothing was left out from a past biography or resume. Leah also suggested that original research could be conducted using the Internet, stating, “So, you know, it's kind of like utilizing those different Internet resources to be able to have an idea of what they've done in their past.”

Using an information sheet or resume

Another communication routine for SIDs when creating an online coaching biography is using the coach's resume or a departmental information sheet. The following exchange shows how this theme can manifest:

Me: Do you ever get a handle on their resume, a hold of their resume or do you actually have a form as well?

Kevin: Both ... we'll get a copy of their resume. The form is more ... targeted but it might include some things on the resume, it might not. Like personal information.

Another sports information director gave specific detail about where the resume originates from, indicating it came from human resources. For example, Dean said, "First thing I would so is I usually take their resume—the resume that's been presented to our human resources office here at the athletic department." However, Ellie indicated that she would retrieve the resume from the coach herself:

Well, typically whenever I have to do that I ask them for their resume ... I usually ask them for that first and from there and a lot of time like resume really do go into detail about what they did so it's really helpful to have it in writing and to be able to work off that.

While most SIDs reported having access to a resume or information sheet, Helen indicated the opposite. For instance, she said, "I mean, you know a lot of times you don't have a coach's resume to base your bio on". This perspective was more rare, and the majority of SIDs indicated using resumes and/or information sheets in some capacity (See Table 1).

Collaboration with others

Collaboration emerged as a communication routine that SIDs employ when creating online coaching biographies. This theme emerged with three sub-themes: collaboration with the coach, collaboration with the coaching staff, and collaboration with superiors. Collaboration also manifested in two ways—through a face-to-face interaction or a computer-mediated interaction (i.e., via email). Also, at times SIDs did not specify the medium of collaboration or SIDs could be collaborating through both types of interactions.

Collaboration with the coach. Both Jack and Ike described a typical collaboration with a head coach. Jack said, “ I would typically draft something up and give it to them and then ask if there's anything you want me to change.” Ike elaborated on what might happen in the collaborative process, indicating:

Yeah, coaches will often want to make changes. I ran it by her and which would be standard practice. Always run it by the coach before you make it public and so I ran it by her and she took a look at it and she asked me, there were some, there were some things she would ask me to subtract, to take out because she felt either they weren't relevant anymore or she felt that they didn't need to be in there anymore.

Helen also described why she felt it was important to communicate and check the bio's content with a coach—two enhance the biography and to protect against mistakes.

For instance, she noted:

Helen: And it's not just to verify her information, but also to get at what she thinks are important, because a lot about bio's are written for recruits, or things like that, so you want to try and work in, her philosophy of coaching and her philosophies of recruiting. You know, just different things that they, how they approach their job. To give people a little bit more insight into them as coach. Anybody could run down a resume, or put together bullet points ... the written bio is more your chance to tell the story of where she is.

Me: OK. Great, and then when you're having these talks with coaches, and I guess, well in terms of a process, saying maybe you write the bio, and then do you show it to the head coach?

Helen: Yes, there were number of years there was a lot of scandals around, you know, bios being wrong, things like that. It's my policy to write it and send it to the coach and then I'll hold on to the email, that say's "I've read this and it's good to go"

Collaboration with coaching staff. Collaboration with coaching staff was typified by Carter, and seemed to occur on a case-by-case basis.

With my head coach here, what I would do is what I've done in the past is I'll send the bio to like the [Director of basketball operations] and get another staff member that's more involved in that kind of stuff. Like hey check this out and see what you think. Are we missing anything? And that staff, the staff I have now for the first few years Coach [NAME] was here, they kind of wrote the bio a little bit. Changed some stuff that they wanted more involved for recruiting purposes and all that. That I never had that happened really before. They wanted to be involved in her bio so I was like fine with me, no problem.

Collaboration with superiors. Another rare, but mentioned type of collaboration was with superiors. Dean described this as follows:

Once that portion of it is written I'll square away quotes with the head coach, if it's a real high profile hire as far as maybe an associate head coach a might get a quote from our, either our SWA or our Athletic Director.

Editing

Many SIDs described a process for creating an online biography in a step-by-step fashion via editing the biography. Three sub-themes were identified as being kinds of editing: updating, reordering, and condensing (noted in order of frequency). Updating was defined by content that was newly added or researched, while reordering was coded when interviews referred to moving content around in the biography. Finally, condensing was a form of editing that involved cutting, paring down, or removing content.

Updating. Updating the online coaching biography was mentioned by nearly all participants. For example, Ellie noted:

Pretty much I just go through it a couple times a year and I just try and keep it as updated as possible, every time we get a new award or win a big game, I try to find a way that it works in her bio. So, I really just keep an eye on it and maintain it a good amount during the year.

Similarly, Mary said, “I try to keep it fresh so it doesn't sound like the exact same bio year in and year out.”

It was common for SIDs to indicate that they only update the online coaching biography a few times a year—due to time and also because an updated copy appears in their game notes. However, Dean presented a deviant case for why he likes to update the biography more frequently.

Dean: It's going to be a useful tool. It's a living breathing bio instead of, well, this thing is out of date. Where can I find the current record? Do I have to do addition? Do I have to do subtraction on my own? We want people to be able to use that website as a resource.

In general, having up-to-date content was a concern of other participants, mostly because of potential media coverage, despite the fact that many indicated updating their content only a few times a year. Mary reported, “They [media] want to know what she's done in the last couple of years and that's really all they care about,” while Beth said she would update an online biography “because of where you know, media are going [there] ...if you don't necessarily have a media guide.”

Condensing and reordering. Condensing and reordering were less frequently mentioned sub-themes of editing, but were still specified by a few participants. Jack described a time when he had to reduce his coach's online biography because of her long

tenure. Jack said, “What I do is I took it and I tried to like pare it down - it was too long - about 4,000-5,000 words or something like that, so I tried to pare that down to like 1,000-1,200.” As for another example of reordering, Ned said about a bio that he inherited, “it became a reordering of content and deciding what was important for our time as a team.”

Incorporating style

The final higher order theme that emerged from the first research question was the incorporation of the participants’ own personal style. Incorporating style ended up having two sub-themes: personal or journalistic.

Personal style. Personal style could refer to a particular approach they use when creating an online biography. The theme that arose most commonly in relationship to personal style was the idea of a taking a “hand’s on approach,” as noted by Jack. Jack was not the only participant who used a variation of that phrase in describing how they create an online coaching biography or online content in general. The following are some examples of the “hands on approach” according to four SIDs:

Fred: I would say that I have at least a hand or a voice in 100% of what goes up on women's basketball.

Carter: I try to really take control of my sports’ pages.

Ellie: I am 100% responsible for whatever we've got there.

Leah: Well, for our website, I feel 100% responsible.

However, SIDS indicated too much personal style was also referred to as potential shortcoming. Mary highlighted this, saying:

Honestly, it's one of the areas that I feel like I need some improvement in because I'm not always as original. I need to be... I try to tell a story but I also I think kind of have that media mentality where I don't want to be overly biased or overly flowery or hear too much of my opinion. Because, honestly, I think, especially when I'm working with the coach, as experienced as [our] coach, that the facts speak for themselves.

Mary's opinion was two-fold not only that she lacked personal style, but also that personal style can at times detract from the content. Mary also said, "I try to make it that heavy from a fact perspective, to support, you know, any kind of opinion that I maybe inserting. But I try to make it interesting." The "media mentality" mentioned in Mary's first quote provides a natural transition to the subsequent subtheme of journalistic style.

Journalistic style. Incorporating style also referred to using a common journalistic style, like the inverted pyramid or *Associated Press (AP)* style. For example, Mary said, "You set it [online coaching bio] up in a pyramid of the new story what's the most important information first and then the stuff that maybe isn't so pertinent towards the bottom." Dean complemented Mary's response by saying he puts important information at the top to make it a "quick hit." Another kind of journalistic style was the use of *Associated Press (AP)* guidelines. For example, Kevin described using AP style in an online coaching biography:

Make sure you're using AP and we and that even goes even aside from the website because we'll do that in our normal when you're writing a press release to send out to the media we do have some guidelines that are already in place for that. We use AP style abbreviations; just that kind of thing.

Kevin's response indicates that journalistic style applies more to formatting or order of the content, while responses from participants related to personal style show a potential link to selection and writer's discretion.

Archetypes of process

As previously noted, this section ends with selected narrative archetypes of the process of creating an online coaching biography as well as a graphic representation (Figure 1), drawing from Shoemaker and Vos (2009). The following narratives show how many of the emergent themes intersect and interact with each other, while also demonstrating there is not one standard agreed-upon process to writing an online coach bio. A theme's numeric distinction (1 through 7) is in bold and brackets when mentioned (see list below). Bold has also been added to link the narrative to the relevant themes.

- 1.** Using a content management system
- 2.** Repurposing content
 - a.** Repurposing ones' own content
 - b.** Repurposing others' content
- 3.** Conducting original research
- 4.** Using an information sheet or resume
- 5.** Collaborating with others
 - a.** Collaborating with coach
 - b.** Collaborating with coaching staff
 - c.** Collaborating with superiors
- 6.** Editing
 - a.** Updating
 - b.** Reordering
 - c.** Condensing

7. Incorporating style

- a. Personal
- b. Journalistic

Archetype #1. Beth: I usually start by **getting the resume** of the coach or player, if that player is becoming a coach, etc. [3] I usually start by getting the resume from that person. Or if that person has also been in the industry for a while, you can do a **Google search** [3] and find, not necessarily a pre-existing bio, but enough **information** to develop one [2] and then go from there with just **speaking with the coach** [5a] and wondering if, especially for head coaches, like what's important to them that they have in their bio. Is it their development, is it their experience on like an international level, the awards they've gotten as a coach, is it their players' awards, is it wins, is it teams that they've beaten. You know, I think it's a lot of, you just have to have an **open communication with your coach** and have a dialogue about what's most important to them [5a].

Archetype #2. Carter: Well I tend to **grab the resume** [3] and depending on where they're coming from, if I could **incorporate the bio from the previous institution** [2b] a little bit seeing what they had in there trying to go to their resume and see all the different places they've been to and I guess starting off with just really a **first few paragraphs** really trying to pump them up [7b] as much as possible.

Archetype #3. Helen: I think for me it's starts with the writing [that] ... their being announced, and **gathering information from her previous school** [2b], and maybe having her **resume on hand** [4a]... and that's sort of the framework for it, and

from there, then I **usually sit down with my coach and do an interview [5a]**, just to get some more insight into her work, get her thoughts on different jobs that she's has, sort of what she has gained from different experiences or the things she thinks are most important in coaching. Things like that, and then I try and interview her in ways that makes sense to her, sort of highlight her career in written form so you know, **chronologically [7b]**.

Table 2

Presence of Research Question 1 Main Themes by Participant

Theme	Participant														Totals (out of 14)
	Adam	Beth	Carter	Dean	Ellie	Fred	Gina	Helen	Ike	Jack	Kevin	Leah	Mary	Ned	
Using a content management system	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	13
Repurposing content	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	14
Conducting original research	X		X	X		X		X	X	X		X	X		9
Using an information sheet or resume		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X			11
Collaborating with others	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	13
Editing	X	X		X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	12
Incorporating style	X		X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X		X	X	11

Table 3

Amount of Women's Basketball Website SID Feels Responsible For

SID	Response
Adam	"Let's say, you know, say at least 90%."
Beth	"in terms of written and multimedia for the most part, yeah"
Carter	"I am responsible for all of that. I try to really take control of my sports' pages."
Dean	"I would probably say I'm responsible for about 80% of it."
Ellie	"I am 100% responsible for whatever we've got there. I mean, no one else really posts on that site."
Fred	"100%."
Gina	"Pretty much all of it."
Helen	"I would say on my sports on our websites I would probably do 85 to 90% of it."
Ike	"I would say at least 99% even I could probably even say 100%. When it comes to woman's basketball content and the content for any sport here ... the SID in charge of those sports are expected to be at least have a hand in the production or the creation of all of it."
Jack	[takes a hands-on approach]
Kevin	"90 to 100 [percent]"
Leah	"Well, for our website, I feel 100 percent responsible."
Mary	"For my sports, I would say 90 percent of it."
Ned	"I'm the number two person in our office under our Director and I handle women's basketball as a primary."

Research Question #2: Influential Gatekeeping Levels

This section refers to the second research question, “besides communication routines, routines, what gatekeeping factors (individual, organizational, institutional, or societal) influence the creation of online coaching biographies of Division I women’s basketball coaches?” Results for this question range from micro-level gatekeeping factors (individual) to macro-level gatekeeping factors (societal). For each level of gatekeeping, themes and sub-themes were identified.

Table 4 displays a matrix of all the themes, as well as their prevalence.

Individual level

Three main themes emerged related to individual gatekeeping factors: the SID as an individual, the coach as an individual, and the individual relationship between the coach and the SID.

SID as an individual. During each semi-structured interview, each SID was asked, “Who makes the decisions on what information is included in an online coaching biography?” (See APPENDIX B). SIDs responded that they felt like a decision-maker in what was included in an online coaching biography. For instance, when asked who makes decisions related to online coaching biography content, Jack replied “I think that ultimately I [do].” However, Jack continued with the following caveat:

I mean there's never been anything that's been really big or glaring that they [coaches] wanted to change or anything like that. But if they did want to, I guess they would have the final say if they really did want to change something. Unless it was just something I was totally against - like - I can't think of anything like that. I guess they would have the final say if they wanted to change something. I mean, there would be a conversation if I really thought it was wrong. Something like that, I guess.

Jack's sentiments were echoed by other participants. Ellie also indicated that she felt like a gatekeeper, saying:

“Yeah I mean for the most part I definitely decide ... if a coach tells me something pretty important then I'll keep that in mind but like if they really want something I wouldn't fight them on it ... I mean I definitely yeah I think when you work in PR you're a gate person ... but I mean yeah I'm the one putting the information out there so I'm the one going to say what goes out there.”

SIDs were asked what percentage of content they were responsible for related to women's basketball.

Table 3 shows that all of them felt high levels of responsible for online content, including online coaching biographies. Despite indicating high levels of responsibility with regard to content selection, their role of gatekeeping was reported as part of their role in the organization. Mary demonstrated that sentiment when she said, “ I think we view ourselves in much more of a support role or behind the scenes role that we really don't maybe necessarily understand the power we wield.”

Coach as an individual. Participants also depicted coaches as an individual-level gatekeeper, indicating that a coach also determines how and what information goes online. Coaches’ personalities and priorities can come through in a biography, as can their circumstances. For example, she said:

It depends on the coaching staff I think. The particular coaching staff that I am working with is pretty hands on and you know love to make sure that they like the pictures and they want to be make sure that the information looks good to them. You know I worked with volleyball last year and I don't know if that coach can even find the website.

Similarly, Beth compared and contrasted individual coaches and how they contribute to creating online coaching biographies, saying:

Beth: Like [ANOTHER COACH I WORK WITH] is big on family, and he wants to have, he wants the family dynamic of his team to really shine through. And that’s kind of evident in his bio with how he's hired his coaching staff along the way and how he's developed his team, where [THE WOMEN’S BASKETBALL COACH] has her principles of beliefs, commit, mature, respect, and faithfulness. And that's including like what they do in the community and how their player develops, and not from when they come in to when they leave. You know, I think it’s all just contingent on what each individual coach wants is how I like to approach it. And along the same lines, we had a football coach in the first weeks of football who handwrote out four pages of stuff that he wanted in his file and guys that he's worked with over 11 years here. So you have - so his bio is forever long and full of stuff. He wanted to put in there. So I think a lot of it, too, depends on the coach.

Fred also reiterated the idea that coaches care on an individual basis about what goes in their biographies, noting, “She is very careful with what is attributed to her. She wants to make sure that what is attributed to her is appropriate and is actually the message that she wants out there for recruits, coaches, fans, alumni”. Additionally, some coaches care to the point that they don’t want information included in their biography because as Ned brought up, some coaches are more private than others. For example, Ned said:

Now what's interesting to me is we have her family information in her bio and it's that she's married and you know, that's in there and if it was up to her I don't think she would put that in there. Like I had to convince her that it was an important part and especially when she had her son, her second or third season here is when she had her son, and her concern with putting her son in there was she didn't want anybody to know what her son looked like.

Not only do coaches care what goes in their biographies, but they also have power to control the message, according to SIDs. With regard to making content decision, Helen explained that in her experience coaches have the last word. She said:

Realistically at this level of University the coaches, have unilateral power behind those kinds of decision. So, I can try and weigh in and then offer the pros and cons of doing something like that, like, the end of the day the coach says it goes in, and then it goes in, the coach says it comes out, it comes out.

Ethan complemented this experience by stating, “I tend to let the coach drive the ship mostly on what they would like included and what they would not like included.”

However, Dean suggested not all coaches appear to care what goes in their biographies, stating:

The only time that we ever discussed it [coach’s biography] was when I first took over in '07-'08 and it was just to make sure that everything, all the awards and honors for players that she's coached were included and highlighted and put forth. She wasn't too concerned about her own personal honors at that time but you

know, as she was talking about it I knew that it had to, it fits in there somewhere.

This approach was rare and was not mentioned by other participants.

Finally, coaches as an individual gatekeeper can be a factor in less active ways, and based on facts (i.e., a coach is single or has kids). Helen highlighted this, saying:

At lot of time it's just the circumstance. Like [our Coach] is single; I don't necessarily write in her Bio that she's single. So, you know for her, with her that's how I ended that personal sentence in there. That's she is single and doesn't have any children.

Individual relationship between the coach and the SID. The final individual level theme that emerged from the data was the individual relationship between the coach and the SID. In essence, the gatekeeping process was affected by the both the relationship itself (i.e., the SID checking with the coach) and the length of the relationship. Ellie reiterated the theme that coaches have individual control over the content of their online coaching bios and that she would check with them before putting something online. Likewise, Mary provided an example of how a long-term relationship can enhance and ease the creation of online coaching biography, while also depicting a collaborative relationship between the two. She said:

When I first got here, I certainly was in the fact finding stage and just kind of, you know, "Okay, here's you bio, what else do I need to know?" I'm fortunate. I've actually known coach [Name Removed] since she was in high school.

Similarly, Fred commented on the benefits of having a previous relationship with a coach. He talked about his current situation and said that he had known the coach for several years, noting:

She was an assistant coach and I think I was an undergraduate basketball manager. So we crossed paths quite a bit. We knew each other a little bit and

when she was hired back, you know, our relationship has been really good because I didn't really have to start from the ground floor. I kind of had a basis, I knew her family, I knew her husband pretty well. So, we have had a pretty good relationship and we have been in a lot of contact because she has been pregnant the last two seasons.

While none of the participants reported have a strained or poor relationship with their respective coaches, Beth brought up that a new SID wouldn't have an established relationship with a coach and that could affect information gathering. She said, "[If] they get a new, fresh, SID to work with and, you know, the trust factor isn't necessarily there."

Organizational level

The organizational level of gatekeeping manifested in the mention of the women's women's basketball program. Within level, two sub-themes emerged: branding and recruiting.

Table 4 demonstrates that all of the participants mentioned the women's basketball program in the context of being a gatekeeping mechanism to creating online coaching biographies.

Program branding. The branding of the women's basketball program was mentioned in terms of emphasizing certain aspects of the program and in turn could affect how information was included, omitted, and styled in an online coaching bio, according to participants. Ned provided an example this theme when he discussed the context of the women's basketball program and how the biography was written in that context. For instance, he said:

She was inheriting a program that was not dead but in shambles. She inherited a program that, by the time she was ready to start coaching, we had five scholarship players and you have to look at that point, at okay, how long is this going to take to build. If you were writing a coaching bio that's replacing a legend and the

legend won when he finished, that bio is quite a bit different than the one you're replacing when you only have five scholarship players so our focus was building, our focus was, I think fun, I think technique was the focus in what we were doing there, like maybe sure that this is what we were going to emphasize our focus is playing hard, like we really emphasized how hard we played and then we needed to focus on kind of getting at [University] back into [the] basketball [program] and so those were kind of the stages that we took in looking like, when [the head coach] and I talked, we talked about how important those things were and so that's where we started with the focus.

Similarly, Ike mentioned that there was emphasis on the program's brand when it came to creating online content and biographies, saying, "She wants our brand like the photos we use. She wants people smiling. She wants a team look." However, Ike also said that because the women's basketball program was successful, they didn't need to do as much branding as other schools, noting, "People know we're good and this is our selling point like we are good."

Communication between the SID and the program also appeared as a mechanism for determining what the brand is from year to year and how it should be included in online content. Mary indicated that she would check in annually with the recruiting coordinator and find out what they were "pushing" this year. Mary said:

And so, between the message that they're sending out and the things that I know that are important core values to [the program]. I think I have a good idea of what her brand is like what she's trying to sell and who she stands for.

Program recruiting. Recruiting segues naturally from branding as an organizational subtheme of the women's basketball program. All of the SIDs brought up the importance of recruiting to online content and many indicated that the program's branding is *for* the recruits. Additionally, NCAA rule changes related to media guides restricted media guide production and potentially put more emphasis on online content,

particularly online biographies (NCAA, 2013). Fred spelled out how recruiting can affect content in an online coaching biography, saying:

Well, I think a big thing with recruiting and definitely I know in our recruiting a big message that we like to bring across is, and I think this is very common, is family. You know, you like to bring a personal aspect to it and if you are not willing in your own bio to say, hey look I've got two kids. I mean it's not like you're saying they go to Forest Acres Elementary School, you know, and they are studying chemistry.

Relatedly, Ned brought up how recruiting could affect the formatting and content of a biography. He also made specific mention that biographies are mainly written for recruits. When discussing how his head coach's biography had evolved over the years, he had the following reflection:

Her first year here there was no reason to worry about the top of the pyramid. We couldn't even get level one so and it was funny because in her first bio and second bio and third bio, it's been built inversely so it's really interesting but you know, from a recruiting standpoint, for a bio. I'm writing that bio for a recruit and what's interesting is if you write it for a recruit it's helpful to the media. More helpful to the media than if you wrote it for the media.

Ned and Fred's perspectives were echoed by Helen, who said, "a lot of bios are written for recruits, or things like that, so you want to try and work in, her philosophy of coaching and her philosophies of recruiting."

Institutional level

Institutional level gatekeeping was the least common level of gatekeeping mentioned by participants.

Table 4 reflects that only four participants alluded to the existence of institutional level gatekeeping. When discussing this type of gatekeeping, each of the four participants indicated that institutional factors, or the situatedness of their university, could be

construed as an institutional gate. Institutional situatedness seemed to apply to private vs. public school, religious affiliation, and location. For example, Kevin noted, “If you were a religious-based institution or if you were a private school there is going to have a lot of different there is probably going to be a lot different thoughts and procedures than a public university.” Dean also brought up how a university’s location might affect how content is created and controlled on the web, noting:

I mean you're not only playing to the 5 million population city but you're also playing to the 100 town populations that have one stop light so you have to know how that message is going to be perceived all the way across the board in something.

Dean’s comments align with Fred, who also brought up religion as a fact, saying that a school in the “bible belt” might create a different content strategy. In sum, institutional gatekeeping was rare, but when mentioned, it was clear that these participants viewed their institution as a piece in the gatekeeping making process.

Societal level

The final component of Gatekeeping Theory is the societal level. All 14 participants mentioned this level of gatekeeping, making it third most-mentioned level of gatekeeping in creating online coaching biographies, after the individual and organizational levels. The societal level presented itself via two themes: Internet impact and gender difference and issues.

Internet impact. The societal impact of the Internet on online coaching bios was two-fold: the Internet as free space and the Internet as require a different style or routine of writing. Ned brings up the former when he said, “the length on the Internet I think is

the greatest thing for the institutional content age and you can just write whatever you want.”

Additionally, some SIDs mentioned that because print media guides had been cut, the Internet was seen as their only medium for this content. Ellie gives a good example of this thought when she said, “And that's kind of like when we cut printing media guides there were kind of things like hey well now we have unlimited space.”

In terms of the Internet as being a different space, Dean said, “There's just no set deadline. You're just always thinking, well I have to have the website updated. It's just constant.” Extending this thought, Adam mentioned that not only does the website need to be updated, but it also needs to be updated in a certain way. For instance, he noted:

And I think Twitter definitely helped shape that. Now, it doesn't necessarily have to be 140 characters but something that you put on the website is quick, short and to the point unless it is like a feature thing and more of an expose. Then you've got longer - you get a better chance to capture their attention but, if it's a big, long recap after a game, somebody would rather see the highlights - you know, video highlights versus read your big, long recap after the game so just kind of quick, short and to the point.

Gina echoed this line of thought, describing:

I don't have a very long attention span myself and I like the bulleted information and I think that's just how people prefer to read kind of now, and I think that as our society evolves and people have less time or want to get things done faster, and you're probably looking at the bio and thinking that is not at all what you have on there.

Gender differences and issues. Gender as a societal level of gatekeeping presented as the difference between content in male and female coaches' online biographies. This theme was often reflected as practices or customs that are different in male coaches versus female coaches biographies (gender differences). Gender also is the

theme used to encompass comments that reflect abstract issues like sexuality (gender issues).

Gender differences. Adam reflects that male coaches may be more “egotistical” and that is why their biographies are longer, saying “maybe ... they want to highlight themselves a little more.” He also said that male coaches might want to highlight their wives. ““Hey, also, look, I've got three kids and here's my wife and this is what she does. I'm also really proud of her, too,” said Adam. In contrast, Carter noted, “male coaches don't care as much about that kind of stuff,” in reference to their online biographies.

SIDs also compared male and female coaches. A good example of this thought comes from Adam when he said:

“They're [female coaches] a little bit more guarded with their family information than male who is a little more proud, more “Hey, look at my...” You know, the female is a little bit more guarded.”

Similarly, Jack hypothesized that “women [coaches] don't want the topic that they're single” included in their biographies.

Gender issues. The theme *gender issues*, describes a societal level form a gatekeeping where a specific gender issue is mentioned (e.g., heterosexism). Mary sets the stage for this theme with the statement, “I think in my experience both as a coach and as a sports information director is that you probably don't post family information unless what we consider the norm.” Similarly, Fred mentioned a coach who wanted to include her boyfriend in her biography, noting:

I remember that she said well I'd really like to include him, but there's really not an appropriate relationship to put there because, you know, if we break up or, you know, something you just never know and you don't want to put anything in there. Of course, I suppose anybody that's married it's also possible that they

could get a divorce too before your next media guide comes out.

Gender issues as it related to explanations for the absence of same-sex family narratives will be also be discussed in-depth in the forthcoming section.

Table 4

Presence of Research Question 2 Themes by Participant

Theme	Participant														Totals (out of 14)
	Adam	Beth	Carter	Dean	Ellie	Fred	Gina	Helen	Ike	Jack	Kevin	Leah	Mary	Ned	
Individual - Self	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	14
Individual - Coach	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	14
Individual - Relationship	X	X		X		X		X	X		X		X	X	9
Organizational – Program	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	14
Institutional – Situatdness		X		X							X	X			4
Societal – Internet	X		X	X	X	X	X	X			X		X	X	10
Societal – Gender	X	X	X			X		X	X	X	X	X			9

Research Question #3: Absence of Non-Traditional Family Narratives

This section refers to the third research question, “what explanations do sports information directors offer for the absence of non-traditional family narratives in online coaching biographies of Division I women’s basketball coaches?” Sports information directors offered many reasons for the absence of non-traditional family narratives, with two themes emerging from the data—**the blame game** and **the absolution devolution**. Sub-themes to each of the themes were also present and will be discussed.

The blame game

SIDs placed the blame on coaches, audience, organization, and society, in some ways echoing the levels of gatekeeping, as they explained the absence of same-sex family narratives in online coaching biographies. Table 5 displays a list of all the sub-themes related to the blame game, as well as their prevalence in the participants’ responses

Blaming coach. When explaining the absence of same-sex narratives, SIDs placed the blame on the head coach in four unique ways, blaming the coach’s circumstances, blaming the coach’s gender, blaming the coach’s sport (i.e., women’s basketball) and blaming the coach’s privacy. Each of these sub-themes will be elaborated on in the ensuing sections.

Blaming coach’s circumstances. How SIDs placed blame and explained the absence often began with descriptions of the coach’s circumstances or demographics. For example, several SIDs explained that a coach might be single, and thus not have an opposite (or same) sex partner to put in their bios. Jack said most of the female BCS

women's basketball coaches he could think are single women, explaining the absence with an absence. Similarly, Kevin said, "I think you would find you're apt to find more single women as head coaches as opposed to married women." Kevin also indicated that coaches he has worked with are more likely to be "basically married to their job." Not only was the coach's relationship status as a circumstance blamed, their age was also mentioned as something to blame. For instance, Carter stated:

It also matters too how old they are. Someone might be kind young where they don't, aren't married yet or they maybe it's just they have their husband [and don't have kids yet].

Thus, for many of the SIDS, it wasn't due to omission that an absence of same-sex narratives occurs. Rather, it was due to a coach's relationship status, age, or work ethic.

Blaming coach's gender. All of the SIDs supported a female head women's basketball coach and would thus bring up her gender as a reason to justify the absence of either personal text or same-sex family narratives. It was not that a coach was gay and should have a same-sex narrative; it was that women coaches are often are single. Ellie said, "I think there's a lot of women coaches that just don't have children or a spouse...they've probably given up that part of their lives." Similarly, Dean said that it's possible that there are barriers for female coaches." More specifically, Dean noted:

It's because the female coaches have to almost work twice as hard as a male coach to climb the ladder ... there isn't enough time in the day for them to have outside relationships and build those types of relationship to where they're getting married.

Ned also brought up that female coaches may feel specific pressure to align with social norms, stating:

I think female coaches don't want to be pigeonholed as being a non-traditional woman. They also don't want to be pigeonholed if they are a non-traditional woman and they don't want to be pigeonholed if they are not a non-traditional woman.

This was repeated by Jack who said “you could theorize that women don't want the topic that they're single” included in online biographies because of certain stigmas (which will be discussed in the next section).

Blaming the coach's sport. Many SIDs brought up women's basketball as an explanation for the absence of same-sex family narratives; that there is an inherent lesbian stigma in women's basketball. Beth tentatively raised this theory by saying, “There's always that stereotype for women's basketball ... that you're gay.” Fred was more definitive noting, “A big thing in women's basketball coaching is that there is a very high percentage of homosexual coaches.” Mary saw women's basketball as having a two-fold issue that could be to blame for the absence of same-sex narratives: religion and family. For instance, she said, “I think in women's basketball, a very sensitive issue is both religious affiliation and familial status,” she said. When asked how this could affect an online biography, she said, “[you'll have] women coaches that don't have a male partner, have female partner and they really want to really play that down because, honestly, even though this is 2012, those kind of things are still used against coaches.”

Blaming the coach's privacy. Another way SIDs explained the absence of same-sex narratives was to blame the coach's privacy. When Beth was asked if she would have a conversation about a coach's personal life, she said, “You don't want to be intrusive because we're all human.” Similarly, Ellie indicated that she exercises caution when talking about a coach's family:

Yeah I mean I don't typically like ask them like straight up do you have kids? Do you have, are you married whatever because I don't really know what the answers going to be but I just kind of leave it out there like do you have anything personal, family that you want included. I just usually say that in general like if you have any type of family or personal info you want included let me know. Sometimes their like my brother was whoever or whatever. I just kind of leave it open at that. I kind of let them put in what they want.

The following exchange between Mary and myself further demonstrates the latter kind of carefulness.

Me: I sort of have this idea that coaches are like don't tell, right? And that maybe sports information directors are don't ask. What would you think about that statement?

Mary: Yeah, I think that would be appropriate. I mean, honestly, I was raised that you don't ask married couples when they're planning to start a family.

Me: Oh, yes, that's a nice one.

Mary: You also don't ask individual if they're gay or straight.

Me: Right.

Mary: It's personal information. You don't ask. If someone wants to divulge it to you then it's fine and you can have a conversation about it. But I don't think Dear Abby would approve of that being brought up out of the blue. Yeah, I mean, I think, honestly, my don't ask attitude if I have one would be more from manners than any kind of taboo.

Another exemplar of this theme came from the following conversation with Dean:

Me: I'm sort of hearing you say is there's some level of responsibility on the coaches.

Dean: Yeah.

Me: To let you know that this is something that they could include, you know, change my name, if it's on their radar then it can be on yours.

Dean: Correct and I think some of it has to do with privacy. You know, how much privacy does this head coach want? Do they want their family members included in things and put out there into the public or do they want to keep that

aspect of it, keep their family out of it and kind of shadow them from kind of the hectic lifestyle or the, because you know, they get enough of it at home that you know, you've got a coach that comes home stressed out about a loss or stressed out about a recruit, you know, that's just a 24 hour, 365 day deal with a coaches wife or a coaches spouse.

Work-life balance. A less common sub-theme of the blaming coach was to actually relieve the blame from the coaches' family or work-life balance. For four SIDs work-life balance was not to blame for the absence of same-sex family narratives.

Carter: Well I mean not really because I think I've seen so many people do it. You know, I guess some have more of the priority of want to have that family as well. It is tough I mean but I have seen and had dealt with a lot of female coaches that are married and have kids and do it. Of course they have very understanding and helpful husbands but you know yeah I think that probably play in the rule as well as they're more concerned on the career at the time than trying to have that family and everything.

Leah: I watch my head coach do it every day. ... She's got two kids. I watch her do it every day. Two kids. A husband. Her mom lives in town Her kids are at practice all the time. They travel with us. I disagree that, you know, but obviously yeah, there are probably some female head coaches that they've decided not to do, you know, not to have a family, or for whatever reason they focus on work.

Beth: Yeah. Like if it's your priority to have a family and have kids, I don't, I don't think you necessarily let your job get in the way.

Mary: ... that [women who] are married and have families, that can be often be used that, you know, these coaches doesn't really have the time to spend because ... which is all ridiculous ... And these women coaches that are married and have kids are paid well enough that they can afford a nanny.

Blaming the organization

Some participants suggested that an organization, either a university or an athletic department, might be to blame for the absence of same-sex narratives. Helen gave a characteristic response for this theme, saying:

You know, I mean, I guess ultimately it depends on the question you asked earlier in terms of who had final control on what they put in the bio. But I would think

that, societally, athletics departments might shy away from adopting patience of that. They certainly wouldn't discourage you know, a coach from their sexuality. But at the same time they may not want it clearly documented to the casual fan.

While Helen's response was general, Adam suggested a specific way the organization might hinder the inclusion of same-sex narratives or from a coach from being explicitly out. For example, he noted:

If the AD especially, if it's a male AD, he may look down on the female coach having the same-sex partner. That coach, then, whether she feels comfortable or not, I mean, she just doesn't want to put that out there as strongly and make it look like she's flaunting - you know, proud of it in front of that male.

Several other SIDs mentioned their university's religion status or regional location as to blame.

Beth: There might be a different preface. I mean, just speaking alone for [my school], a private Catholic institution, I would ask the question to my superior, just say is this alright and are we going to get backlash on of it?

Leah: You know, do you work at a very conservative Catholic university that they would quote unquote frown upon that?

Fred: And so, I think that if you are talking about a coach at a school that is maybe a very big, private Catholic school, is probably less likely to do it than somebody that is maybe at a public, I don't know, maybe in a more progressive state or something like that ... The public's perception of homosexuality is very different places that I have been.

Kevin: If you were a religious-based institution or if you were a private school there is going to have a lot of different ... there is probably going to be a lot different thoughts and procedures than a public university.

Dean: I think even to an extent that if you're in Dallas or you're in Austin, Texas and everything in the University of Texas plays all the way through the state of Texas. You have to be careful because Austin is a very open, you know, very unique city to the rest of the state of Texas. I mean you're not only playing to the 5 million population city but you're also playing to the 100 town populations that have one stop light so you have to know how that message is going to be

perceived all the way across the board in something like that.

The power of a school's religious status was further mentioned by Leah as she told me that, "I know that [another coach] is gay and I think that's part of the reason why he didn't get the job at [a catholic school]."

SIDs also mentioned a hypothetical or potential organizational blame that could affect the presence of diverse narratives in online biographies. For example, Kevin said that he would give his boss a "head's up" in the event a coach wanted to put her partner in her biography, continuing on to say that "it could be controversial obviously. They may think and I think it depends upon the institution." Carter and Gina also suggested their department might have oversight of such a situation, indicating:

Carter: I think I would sit down with our staff and see what our policy would be on that and how they feel about that and you know I guess I need to listen to our coach too and if they feel strongly about it, you know I don't recall that ever happening at [my school] in my 13 years. So yeah I think we just had to sit down with the staff figure out the best plan and a way to go about that and make sure that our administration will be all right on that.

Gina: And, again, I would probably go through administration and make sure that is okay because we are - you know - we have sports, but we are one organization, too - you know. We want to stay consistent there.

Blaming the audience. The third theme that SIDs used to explain the absence of same-sex narratives in online coaching biographies was to blame the audience. The majority of SIDs loosely described the audience as "fans". Kevin also identified the audience as "boosters" and Ned described this group as "parents and donors and ticket holders." Kevin went on to say:

You're having to develop, to please all of your constituents; whether they be recruits or whether they be donors. And a lot of the donors and ticket holders they want access to information. They want access to stories.

With regard to boosters (i.e., donors), Ned also said, “They're giving you a lot of money but if they found out that that's what you were doing then they might not give you any money anymore.”

Blame recruiting. Loss of money was not the only explanation that occurred in this theme. Blaming recruiting emerged as another theme (i.e., “if they list the same sex partner they may feel that it may cost them recruits,” said Ike) and with two unique sub-themes (*blaming negative recruiting* and *blaming recruit's families*). SIDs discussed loss of potential recruits *if* a certain kind of narrative was included.

Participants mentioned that they might discuss the recruiting implications with the coach, in a situation where they wanted to put a same-sex narrative in their biographies. “I would probably warn them that it might affect recruiting a little bit, because if you're going to put it up there, who know what recruits would think,” said Gina. In the same exchange, Gina reiterated, “but if it affects recruiting at all then you definitely don't want that information out there.” Along the same vein, Fred said, “there are some things [being out] that can really hurt them I think in recruiting.”

Blaming negative recruiting. Negative recruiting was mentioned as a specific sub-theme by several participants. Negative recruiting was noted as the idea that another school or program might use a coach's sexuality against them in the recruiting process. Ned described this process as “other coaches use things negatively in recruiting.” Several SIDs mentioned an article from *ESPN The Magazine* (see, Cyphers & Fagan, 2011) about negative recruiting. For instance, Dean noted:

I think that a lot of coaches feel that that would be something that would detract from that and that would hurt their recruiting, they're still a lot of, I remember I read an article, I think it was last year, that *ESPN magazine* did that is used in negative recruiting a lot.

Similarly, Jack said:

I remember there was a good ESPN article maybe a year ago or a year and a half ago where they kind of talked about the whole Lesbian stigma with women's basketball and about coaches negatively recruiting - like 'you don't want to go there - they're all Lesbians there' and things like that. It's not something that talked about out in the open, but I guarantee those coaches are talking about stuff like that in their recruiting meetings and stuff like that.

Likewise, Fred discussed:

I think that *ESPN The Magazine* did about this that there are some parents that will not send their kids to a coach that is either openly homosexual or something like that. So, there is something about that that maybe makes them steer away.

Fred's statement was also an exemplar of the subsequent blaming recruiting sub-theme, where a recruit's family was considered a factor in the way biographies are crafted.

Blaming a recruit's family. Parents or the family of a recruit were also blamed for the absence of same-sex narratives. There was a sentiment that parents might care more about a same-sex narrative than the athletes themselves. Leah said, "Probably their parents have more of a problem with a homosexual head coach." Ike also thought that a coach might not want to offend conservative families with their explicit sexuality. For example, he said, "If they feel they have to hide this information publicly in order to not offend perhaps a conservative recruit's family then they do that." Ned also discussed it is possible that parents would even ask a coach about her family situation during a recruiting visit, stating:

You're sitting in the living room with Mom and Dad or just Mom and Grandma or whoever's living room you're sitting in, it comes up, there's no way it's not

coming up because they want to know and so they're going to ask and it's either important to them or it's not important and so I mean there's no way around it.

In comparison, Fred suggested that a coach might have some agency, but still mentioned the power of parents. He said:

You know, and I don't know how much private or public has anything to do with it but just there are some, you know, some coaches that are willing to say, hey you know what, if you are a parent and don't want to send your kid to play for me because of that, then you know, we don't need you.

Blaming society. The final sub-theme in the “blame game” category was placing the blame on society as a whole. Dean provided an exemplar of this theme saying, “People aren't just more open with it but you know, this is the way things are right now.” Other participants shared the idea that society isn't ready for out gay coaches. Jack reflected this view indicating, “The whole country is not okay with that.” In contrast, Beth said, “Same-sex marriage is becoming more and more acceptable, but [is] still not necessarily overall.” There was also a sense from two SIDs, Leah and Beth, that there is disconnect between coaches and society. For example, Leah discussed:

I think the country as a whole is becoming more accepting, you know, gay marriage and you know, homosexual relationships and things of that nature. But you know, at the same time, if I looked at it from, you know, a coach's standpoint, I don't know that I would, I mean, it's hard to say.

Likewise, Beth said:

Like if you don't list anything then it could be implied that you're either single or you're gay. You know, and they don't want, I think they're still very sensitive about that and not necessarily want it out in the open even though our society is becoming more and more accepting of it.

The Absolution Devolution

While all SIDs participated in the blame game, they also all participated in the absolution devolution. This theme offered more information to the explanations that SIDs had previously stated, where in they not only excuse their practices, but they pass the responsibility. In this theme, SIDs absolved themselves, the tensions they felt, and their job duties as related to the absence of same-sex narratives in online coaching biographies. Table 5 shows both the saturation and characteristics of this theme.

Absolving themselves as a way to explain the absence of same-sex narratives was akin to saying “I’m okay with it *but*.” This theme presented itself generally (e.g., “I personally would have no problem with it,” said Mary) and with one subtheme, identifying tensions—between themselves and their job duties (e.g., “We are PR people, we do have to spin some things, we do have to promote and publicize but we're also human beings,” said Ike).

Table 6 demonstrates the kinds of statements that SIDs made to absolve themselves of the responsibility for including a same-sex narrative. A longer example is included here, from an exchange between Ike and myself. Here he explains to me that including a same-sex narrative would not be up to him, but that he would be “okay” with it:

Me: And so how would you handle it if a coach had or if an assistant came to you and said I'm ready to include Jane in my bio, I don't know says Jill, the coach, how would you handle that?

Ike: I would be totally okay with it. I would agree with the coach ... because it's their personal life. It's their personal life, it's their choice and for me that kind of like, if I were to object to that in any like if I were to say like well, here's what

will happen if you do that then morally I'm kind of I'm being the people that I don't, it morally I would be the people that I disagree with.

Me: Right.

Ike: And to be part of that system ... I leave it all entirely up to a coach. Like I'm not going to encourage a coach to do it or not do it. That's completely personally their choice.

Identifying tensions. The identifying tensions sub-theme appeared in SIDs explanations for the absence of same-sex family narratives in online coaching biographies. In these explanations, many SIDs talked about or alluded to tension between their views and their job duties. For example, Ike questioned whether sexual orientation was something you could or should “spin,” stating:

You don't spin sexual orientation. If someone is confident and says, “yeah I'm gay and this is my partner,” then by all means. In my public relations, my PR strategy, if someone questions that would be, I would just throw it right back in their face and say are you homophobic? Do you have a problem with it? Do you have a problem with this?

Similarly, Ned showed how much he cared about the content in a bio saying, “It's like weighing what you think is the positive and the negative of the simplest thing.” He also said he is constantly making decisions about if what goes into the biography is going to be “tipped it in favor of the good or tipped in favor of the bad.” The idea of content being positive or negative was echoed by Helen when she noted:

For me at the end of the day, my job is to paint the program in, you know the best possible light, and so, you know, if it's a situation where commenting or not commenting isn't going to help us then that's the way I would go.

Confusion and tension also existed for Jack terms of determining if content should be included or not. For instance, he said:

We want to build the program up to be successful and I think they stay on the cutting edge of stuff so they try to keep up with that. But, I don't know if they would want to go to crossing the path that you're talking about - like putting something about their partners there? I have no idea.

Some SIDs showed a lack of tension and conflict surrounding the explanations for the absence of same-sex narratives in online coaching biographies. Fred, for example, was less diplomatic and more certain about his role in the process. For example, our conversation went as follows:

PI: Would you say, “Oh, you seem to have a family? Do you want that in your bio?” Or would you let the coach lead that?

Fred: No, you know what? And I think coaches understand this too. I have a very specific purpose.

PI: Right

Fred: I have to get that information. If you don't want it out there, that's for you to tell me. But I have to ask; it's my job to ask. So I'm definitely going to say, “Hey, look, I understand that this is the case. Is there anything that you would like to put in there about your family?” I'm not going to beat around the bush or do that. I'm not going to assume the type of relationship that one might be in, but I'm also not going to dance around it because at the end of the day, I've got a job to do. And that's you and your personal life. I have no problem with it all. It's about their image. And like I said, any coach that I come across that with is, has definitely thought it about more than I have.

Another way that tensions were identified where when SIDs described how they would counsel a coach who wanted to put something controversial like a same-sex narrative in their biographies. Some saw it as their job to warn coaches about the repercussions of including certain content. For example, Ned said, “You have to basically make sure they know how many bullets they want to put in their own gun.” Ned also said he would ask a coach, “have you thought about what that means positively and negatively for you?” In this same moment, he answered his own question with “my

expected response to the question that I just asked would be, ‘Well, of course I’ve thought about it. She’s my partner.’”

Conclusion

In Chapter IV, I detailed the inductive and deductive themes from interviews with 14 SIDs responsible for creating content for Division I BCS women’s basketball programs with a female head coach. I organized themes and sub-themes, by research question and provided exemplars and characteristics of each one. My major findings were that (1) SIDs presented similar communication routines and practices when creating online coaching biographies, (2) each level of Gatekeeping Theory shaped the content in online coaching biographies, and (3) SIDs explained the absence of same-sex narratives by placing the blame elsewhere and absolving themselves.

Table 5
 Presence of Research Question 3 “Blame Game” Themes by Participant

Theme	Participant														Totals
	Adam	Beth	Carter	Dean	Ellie	Fred	Gina	Helen	Ike	Jack	Kevin	Leah	Mary	Ned	(out of 14)
Blame coach	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	14
Blame organization	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X		X	X		X	11
Blame audience	X			X		X	X		X	X	X	X		X	9
Blame society		X						X		X		X			4

Table 6

Participants' Responses Representing the Absolution Devolution

SID	Response
Adam	"I don't think I'd necessarily have to run it by the sport administrator."
Beth	"I would definitely want to talk to the Sport Administrator about it."
Carter	"I guess I need to listen to our coach too and if they feel strongly about it"
Dean	"You don't want to tell the coach that we have to hide this or you know, you don't want to tell anybody that."
Ellie	"I mean I would be like okay whatever you know."
Fred	"I would have no problem doing that but ..."
Gina	"I don't see a problem with it."
Helen	"I'm fine with that, as long as it doesn't impact, you know, your job and your reputation and those kinds of things."
Ike	"I would be totally okay with it."
Jack	"I mean, I'm fine with gays getting married and things like that I'm absolutely okay with."
Kevin	"I'd be completely supportive of them."
Leah	"I mean that's fine. It's their family narrative."
Mary	"I personally would have no problem with it."
Ned	"If you want them in there, they're going in there."

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

The results of this project both confirm and challenge Gatekeeping Theory. Instead of following the research questions, I systematically trace the levels of Gatekeeping Theory from micro to macro as a guide to answering the research questions and reflecting on the purpose of the project. Given that the research questions presented a sequence of the components of Gatekeeping Theory, I take a theory-driven approach to interpreting the data, as opposed to being bound by the data. The research questions are also a natural progression to the overall purpose of this project—identifying explanations for the absence of same-sex narratives in online coaching biographies via SIDs. It is an important distinction to make that these explanations are coming from the SIDs, and I am interpreting them to reflect and refer to the guiding theory. Thus, Chapter V presents a conversation of the results based on the gatekeeping levels from Shoemaker and Vos (2009). It includes possible limitations of the research as well as applications for theory development, policy, and practice; and it concludes with opportunities for future research and a summary of the research.

Overview of Results

Overall, I believe the results of this project show how Gatekeeping Theory is an applicable framework for considering the creation of online coaching biographies and the absence of same-sex family narratives in the medium. Same-sex narratives are the items “that are rejected or selected, shaped and scheduled [and] are the focus of all gatekeeping studies.” (Shoemaker, Vos, & Reese,

2009, p. 73). The data supporting the first research question shows that the routine practices of SIDs affect the inclusion of same-sex narratives. Further, data related to the second research question indicates that all the levels of gatekeeping are present in this process and the environment of intercollegiate media relations. Finally, SIDs make excuses and divert the responsibility when discussing same-sex narrative inclusion (Question #3). For a same-sex narrative to be included it must pass through not one but all of the levels described by Gatekeeping Theory—and it rarely, if ever, can.

Prior to this project, very little was known about SIDs and whether or not they would “ask” a coach to include a same-sex narrative in a biography. Scholars have consistently averred, however, that coaches self-police their sexual orientation (see, Griffin, 1988; Krane & Kauer, 2013). The results of this research provide data that SIDs are complicit actors in this process—they help self-police, they police themselves, and they reinforce institutionalized and administrative policing. When it comes to family narratives, SIDs participate in a surveillance function that values and promotes conventional arrangement and hides and protects perceived deviance. Shoemaker (1996) suggests that the reason media act as watchdogs and participate in surveillance is due to “an innate desire to detect threats in the environment, keep informed about the world, and devise methods of dealing with these threats, whether real or potential” (p.32). As I expound on the results of this project, it becomes clear that SIDs perceive a same-sex narrative as a threat and make conscious and unconscious decisions to provide protection to coaches, players, programs, and audiences.

This research also furnishes information about that moment, process, and content. The results make it appears not only do SIDs **not** “ask” coaches if they want to include their same-sex family narratives, SIDs also do not think they could or should broach the subject. The reasons SIDs *don't ask* parallel the levels of Gatekeeping Theory. However, interpreting Gatekeeping Theory is not a practice is absolute boundaries (see, Shoemaker & Reese, 2009). Each level is individually complex and also inherently related to the previous and ensuing level. For example, considering the individual practices of SIDs without considering the landscape that SIDs operate would not do justice to the population, the practice, or the theory. In the ensuing sections, I detail how each level of gatekeeping manifests itself, relates to other levels, and how these examples buttress, and at times question, Gatekeeping Theory and related sport media literature.

Individual level

Defining the gatekeeper is an integral part of applying Gatekeeping Theory (Shoemaker & Reese, 2014). SIDs defined themselves *and* the coach as individual gatekeepers. Multiple, individual gatekeepers are consistent with theory; however, having a gatekeeper “outside” the news organization is less consistent (e.g., Shoemaker, Vos, & Reese, 2009). However, a non-media, individual gatekeeper (i.e., the coach) problematizes how information flows, adding another gate and another person to make decisions about what information goes in and what information is held back.

Shoemaker, Vos and Reese (2009) stated, “all gatekeepers make decisions, but they have varying degrees of autonomy” (p. 75). In the case of SIDs and coaches, the autonomy is colored by personal characteristics (i.e., beliefs or demographics) that may block the inclusion of a same-sex narrative into an online coaching biography. The coach’s autonomy and position as a primary source of information is complicated by a coach’s tendency to self-police her personal life if she is a lesbian (Griffin, 1998). Due to a number of factors like fear of backlash, lesbian coaches lack autonomy (or perceived autonomy) to include their partners and families in their biographies (e.g., Krane & Kauer, 2013), which SIDs in this project validated. Mary provides an example of this corroboration, speaking about a lesbian coach:

You have [a] ... situation of women coaches that don't have a male partner, have female partner and they really want to really play that down because, honestly, even though this is 2012, those kind of things are still used against coaches.

SIDs assign blame to the coach’s individual circumstances (i.e., gender, sexuality, age, privacy) consistent with past research that suggest such individual characteristics can influence information selection (Livingston & Bennett, 2003; Weaver & Wilhoit, 1986, Weaver et al., 2007). Notably, participants did not reference their own age, gender, or sexuality. The only personality characteristic they mentioned was their proclivity towards privacy. For example, Mary thought it would not be polite to discuss a coach’s personal life and Beth was of the opinion that “I think you need to leave it [personal text] out is my personal belief.” This tendency to privacy directly affects SIDs ability to ask a coach if they want to include a same-sex family narrative in a biography.

In addition to internal forces, pressure also manifests between the two individual gatekeepers, SID vs. coach. Consider the data reflected in

Table 3 (*Amount of Women's Basketball Website SID Feels Responsible For*) versus Table 6 (*Participants' Responses Representing the Absolution Devolution*). In Table 3, all of the SIDs report being a gatekeeper with high-levels of control over the website content, in general. However, in Table 6, they suggest they might not have as much control over the content as previously indicated. The following two accounts from Fred demonstrate this tension between who, coach or SID, controls the content in an online coaching biography. The first statement demonstrates being in control and the SID as a gatekeeper. Fred said:

Yeah at least, you know, whether it's in the brainstorming part of it or whether it's in the meeting for it, whether it's standing there holding the camera, whether it's writing the articles, or pitching the ideas of the articles that will be on the site, I would say that I have at least a hand or a voice in 100% of what goes up on women's basketball.

The next statement shows being controlled and the coach as a gatekeeper. Fred noted:

She actually will give me her own personal thoughts, whereas some will say hey just come up with a quote and you know, that's what I'll roll with. She is and not so much that it's hands on, but she is very careful with what is attributed to her. She wants to make sure that what is attributed to her is appropriate and is actually the message that she wants out there for recruits, coaches, fans, alumni, etc.

The role of the coach in the content creation and editing process is brought up again in the next section, as collaborating with the coach is a common routine when building an online coaching biography. In sum, the potential power of the individual gatekeeper is mitigated by SIDs characteristics and dissipated by the involvement of the head coach.

Routine level

Shoemaker and Reese (1996) define the routine level as communication worker's "patterned, repeated practices" (p. 100). It became clear that SIDs have fairly well defined routines that they easily articulated, for creating online coaching biographies, and that in turn these routines affect the presence of same-sex narratives in an online coaching biography. Producing, publishing, and maintaining an online coaching biography is both a rote and original process—and SIDs have both agency in the content-creation process and are controlled by structures and the status quo.

Only updating a biography once a year or repurposing content embodied replicating the status quo. When SIDs only update once a year, they often only update the top paragraphs and then remainder of the biography goes unchanged. And yet, there is also some tension in perpetuating the status quo and reinventing content. For example, the themes /routines of repurposing and conducting original research demonstrate the dissonance between the freedom to create and the structures that encourage copying.

Ruihley and Fall (2009) made the argument that SIDs have "higher-order management duties" and are "problem-solving facilitators" (p. 408). While their duties may have expanded to include a decision-making role, they abdicate decision-making to coaches when they collaborate them. The routine collaboration between coaches and SIDs is a "check" that is unbalanced by the SID's lack of agency to change something that a coach would not like. It is also important to note that if the biography in question concerned an assistant coach, SIDs would check with the head coach to make sure it agreed upon. Given a hypothetical situation where a coach wanted to include her partner

or wife, SIDs added another layer of gatekeeping when they mentioned checking in with their supervisor.

An unexpected, but interesting finding on the routine of making an online coaching biography, was the mention of content management systems (CMS). All but one SID mentioned CMS (like CBSports or Netidor) in the first few moments while describing how they create online content. CMS are not word-processing platforms—rather, they help create website consistency and alleviate the need for high-level web development skills like HTML knowledge or Adobe Flash. Kevin said, related to the CMS, “I can change navigation. I can edit it. I can do things that I need to do.” Here Kevin displays some autonomy and control over the website and content, despite the fact that a CMS can often restrict creativity. The idea that Kevin and other SIDs might be able to make decision about information architecture substantiates Ruihley and Fall’s (2009) suggestion about the “new” decision-making role that SIDS may have. It also suggests that new technology and media eases the content creation process and may replicate previous (perhaps traditional) narratives (see, Arant & Anderson, 2001).

Organization level

Teasing out the affect of the organizational level on the inclusion or exclusion of same-sex family narratives was influenced by Gans (1979), who described how organizations and organizational norms affect journalists. In the process of creating of online coaching biographies, this level is not the media organization (i.e., sports information department), as past literature (see, Shoemaker, Vos, & Reese, 2009) would

suggest, but rather the women's basketball program. This creates a dichotomy for SIDs sense of belonging and challenges traditional concepts of Gatekeeping Theory. Usually, this level of gatekeeping would separate the journalists and their organization from the story and its actors. However, in this situation, SIDs are not only members of the media covering the program, they also indicate that they are an important support staff for the program.

SIDs show high-levels on not only involvement, but also deference and adherence to the standards, values, and branding of the program that they support. Organizational gatekeeping also becomes a natural extension of the affect of the individual coach, because the coach sets the tenor of the program. For example, Ike noted:

She [head coach] wants our brand like the photos we use, she wants people smiling, she wants a team look, she wants it to appear I guess the best way to put it is she wants us to always be seen as a team. She wants smiling, she wants upbeat, she wants them to look upbeat in their photos and that's also how we portray them in the videos we did.

High levels of involvement can be seen subtly by Jack, as he uses the word "we" in the following statement, noting, "We want to build the program up to be successful." Helen also says that her job is to "paint the program in, you know the best possible light."

The main reason that SIDs have to "paint the program" in a positive light is due to recruiting. The power of recruits and recruit's families may create the most "closed" gate in the process of including a same-sex narrative in a biography. Every SID mentioned recruiting and many mentioned negative recruiting as a consequence to the

program (i.e., the organization). Negative recruiting has been documented from coaches' perspectives (e.g., Griffin, 1998; Norman, 2011;), but to see it mentioned **and** tolerated by SIDs is significant. SIDs are charged with promoting a program, and yet, they are also promoting a status quo that reproduces the antecedents of negative recruiting. For example, here is Fred, showing complicity in the process of including a "family friendly" narrative, for the sake of the program, noting:

You know, that's the thing, is there is so much selling their idea of being a mother and not only do they have great pride...because they are such an important part of their support system, but also because when getting across that message to recruits that hey, you know, I'm a mother and I'm able to take care of your daughter or I'm able to take care of kids, I get it.

Within that status quo, is concept of "family friendly" branding and programs. Fred even said, "I know in our recruiting a big message that we like to bring across is, and I think this is very common, is family." There is an understood implication that the family in question is heterosexual, thus hinting not so delicately at heteronormativity, heterosexism, and homophobia. If the type of particular "family friendly" program was not a real issue, then Lisa Howe would not have been fired for disclosing that she was going to start a family with her partner (Norman, 2011) and Fresno State's former women's basketball coach Stacy Johnson-Klein would not have been hired " 'as a straight female to clean up the program' and to 'sell' a 'family atmosphere' " (Buzuvis, 2010, p.2). This ubiquitous family atmosphere is a precursor to the "Three H's," which will be discussed in depth in the section on the social system level of Gatekeeping Theory.

Institutional level

University situatedness was a real constraint to the participants, meaning that certain university's religious affiliation and/or regions could play a role in the absence of same-sex family narratives in online coaching biographies. For example, participants implied that a University with a Christian-affiliation or rural location would result in conformity, traditional values, and an absence of same-sex narratives in online coaching biographies. Conversely, you might expect for a non-secular University in an urban location to promote progressiveness and inclusion, along with adding same-sex narratives in online coaching biographies. These two typologies are not foils and the data suggests that latter is not true. Here is another example where Gatekeeping Theory is challenged. While public universities supposedly support norms of openness, educational freedom, and diversity, there remains a disconnect between these values and the near complete absence of same-sex narratives regardless of location, division, and affiliation (Calhoun et al., 2011). The two coaches with same-sex narratives in the pilot study were from schools that do not have the same typology, other than they are Division I and devoid of religious affiliation.

Following discussions with SIDs about online biographies, I would hypothesize that religious affiliation is the most important institutional predictor of the inclusion/exclusion of same-sex family narratives in an online coaching biography. This hypothesis is supported by Nite, Singer, and Cunningham (2010), who explored the organizational practices of an athletic department at a Christian university, noting:

Even though coaches were not particularly pleased with university's strict adherence to religious education, they still yielded to the university's dictums. The participants were all professed followers of the Christian faith and firmly believed in the mission of the university, ultimately resulting in them prioritizing religion over athletics. This was evident even when religious adherence could have been detrimental to athletic achievement (p. 474).

While not all Christian faiths or religious affiliations denounce homosexuality, the SIDs seemed to feel like religious affiliation was an indicator of intolerance, and thus homophobia, and created an institutional gate for the inclusion of same-sex family narratives in online coaching biographies.

Social system level

While there is scholarly dispute about which level of Gatekeeping Theory is most powerful or more powerful than the others, Shoemaker, Vos, and Reese (2009) suggest that the social system "is the base on which all other levels rest" (p. 82). Similarly, the results of this research show how social system factors, like ideologies and cultural practices, play a significant role in influence how content is created online. Masculine hegemony, heteronormativity, heterosexism, and homophobia each surfaced in the reflections and practices of the SIDs. Scholars have said that the previous list is engrained in sport—my results confirm that post-structuralist assertion (e.g., Griffin, 1998; Messner 1998)

To oversimplify the issue at hand, the creation of online coaching biographies and the inclusion of a same-sex narratives in said biographies becomes a catch-22 situation. We know that sport validates masculinity in men and minimizes masculinity in women by trivializing or sexualizing their involvement (e.g., Messner, 1998). We also know that

power and privilege in sport are linked to heterosexuality (e.g., Krane & Kauer, 2013). Thus, a same-sex narrative cannot get included in a biography because the culture of sport is masculine-centric, heterosexist, and homophobic. And, more importantly, if a same-sex narrative did appear in a biography, it likely would undermine the coach's position, power, and privilege.

Statements from SIDs consistently and specifically support this claim. When SIDs blame the coach's gender (i.e., Ned saying, "I think female coaches don't want to be pigeon-holed as being a non-traditional woman.") or blame women's basketball (i.e., Beth noting, "There's always that stereotype for women's basketball ... that you're gay."), they reproduce the masculine hegemony privileges straight, married men—and women, who coach "appropriate" sports. Also, when SIDs blame parents, fans, and donors (i.e., Ned saying, "they're giving you a lot of money but if they found out that that's what you were doing then they might not give you any money anymore."), they reproduce heteronormativity and heterosexism. And when SIDs blame society (i.e., Jack, stating, "The whole country is not okay with that."), they reproduce homophobia. The consequences of the "blame game" link to the "absolution devolution." As SIDs place blame elsewhere and try to absolve themselves from taking responsibility, they provide evidence for double standard and a catch-22 previously mentioned. They seem to have no problem including a heterosexual family narrative (or no narrative at all), but demonstrate hesitancy and a lack of autonomy to include a same-sex narrative (see responses in Table 6).

This paradox is echoed in gatekeeping literature. Shoemaker, Vos, and Reese (2009) reflect on the power of culture to reproduce content, stating

News content is similar in a social system because actors respond rationally to the same constraints and opportunities. To the extent that the institutional environment may produce more than one rational path, we might expect variation even among rational actors (p. 80-81).

These authors also validate data from Calhoun et al. (2011). It is no wonder that there is a near absence of same-sex family narratives in online coaching biographies—the actors (SIDs) are simply responding to the same constraints (the Three H’s, perhaps) and replicating the status quo. Also visible in this argument are glimpses of Hardin’s (2013) claim that changing sport media decision-makers could change the content. However, she ultimately notes:

In fact, scholars—including me—have suggested that in the face of an industry so entrenched in safeguarding traditional definitions of sport and of gender norms, it might be too much to expect that women would challenge the status quo (p. 244).

Instead of an “add women and stir” approach, Hardin (2013) and my results suggest change must come at all levels, including the ideological center of sport.

Limitations

Potential limitations of this research are three-fold: scope, generalizability, and theoretical. First, the research focused on a small subset of sports information directors with specific population delimiters. Because of the population delimiters, the population was already quite small to begin with ($N = 45$) and the sample ($n = 14$) represented nearly one-third of that population. This small, unique sample also could lead to questions about the generalizability of the findings; however, generalizability is an

issue facing any qualitative endeavor and some scholars remove such an onus from the research agenda (Daymon & Holloway, 2011). Finally, this research may have been limited by the application of Gatekeeping Theory. Gatekeeping Theory provided pre-existing themes and guides to addressing interviews. It is unknown if the prescription of the theoretically derived themes stymied the generation of more nuanced inductive themes.

Implications

This research has the potential to affect stakeholders and constituents in the sport and LBGT communities. It gives a voice to SIDs, while also raising their attention to a serious issue. The most practical implication of this research is that SIDs will ask a gay or lesbian coach if they want to include their partner included in their biography. Additional practical implication would be neutralizing any heterosexist language that exists in school forms that coaches fill out.

The policy-making implications of this research run the gamut from departmental to the conference or national level. Through awareness, training, and advocacy, policies could stem from these research that create neutral and inclusive practices for coaches, players, and staff who appear on university-sanctioned websites. Anecdotally, it is Smith College's policy to not have any personal/family text in coaching biographies. A provisional audit of Smith's college-sponsored website confirms that online coaching biographies are void of personal text and only present professional accomplishments. This policy, while interesting, is based in neutrality and implies that if some "can't", than

all “shouldn’t”. A more advocatory and action-based policy would be to promote inclusion among the “cannots” and to increase the diversity included in intercollegiate sport publications. A departmental, conference, or national policy could be instituted that would require SIDs to ask coaches about what personal text (if any) they want to include in their biographies. Education, training, and pro-active action could come from the university itself. Anderson (2005) draws attention to the disconnect between athletics and academics:

The existence of covert homophobia within an athletic department that claims to be gay-friendly highlights an important contradiction; while a publicly funded university must accept all regardless of class, religion, ability status or gender, little has been done to create or enforce an environment free of covert discrimination based on sexuality” (Anderson, 2005, p. 127).

Encouraging colleges and university to take note and action of these sometimes covert and subtle practices is another example of the implications of this work.

National-level policy might include more workplace protection for LGBT individuals, so that if they chose to come out in their online coaching biographies, they don’t have to fear losing jobs – or at least have legal recourse. According to the Human Rights Commission (HRC), there are 29 states do not protect sexual orientation and it is legal to fire, refuse to hire or promote an individual based on their sexuality (Human Rights Commission, 2011). Supporting the HRC’s Employment Non-Discrimination Act (ENDA) is one way to make sure that LGBT coaches can afford to come out in their biographies without risking their livelihood.

Future Research

Data collected through these interviews instigates a bevy of potential projects. More research, particularly mixed methods, could help create a broader understanding of how SIDs create digital content and could buttress our understanding of how and why certain narratives are erased. Another extension of this research would be applying a case study of situation wherein a diverse family narrative does appear in an online coaching biography. Creswell (2007) and Yin (2009) suggest that case studies also allow for the collection of data from multiple sources regarding one social process, in this case the inclusion of a diverse family narrative in an online coaching biographies. Both authors also indicate that case studies are useful when investigating deviant cases. Interviews with pertinent coaches, administrators, and SIDs, as well as supporting data, would help create an understanding of how this inclusion occurred and the ramifications of the inclusion.

Kurt Lewin, the original theorist beyond gatekeeping theory, also coined the termed “action research”, thus it is no coincidence that an investigation into gatekeeping theory would apply this methodology. For Lewin, action research describes work that does not separate the investigation from the action need to solve the program and his model of action research involved a “non-linear pattern of planning, acting, observing, and reflecting on the changes in the social situations” (Noffke & Stevenson, 1995, p. 2). Piggybacking on the cyclical nature of this type of research, Riel and Leopori (2011) suggests that the goals of action research might include not only improving a

professional routine or procedure through continuous learning and problem solving, but also an improving the community wherein that professional routine or procedure is situated.

At some point, I hope to actually create change through research – not just to critique processes, narratives, or phenomenon—by implementing and educating sport media members on the importance of their position and how they can be more inclusive in the gatekeeping processes. Identifying and disseminating the best practices and creating training modules for inclusion and tolerance of diverse sexual orientation in intercollegiate sport media begins with this research. Thus, a long-term goal of my research agenda is creating educational and training resources for SIDs.

Conclusion

Through interviews with 14 Division I SIDs, “don’t ask, don’t tell” narratives were common. Participants were hampered by the five levels of Gatekeeping Theory when creating an online coaching biography and thus exclude same-sex family narratives on a regular basis. SIDs blame others, create scapegoats, and excuse their practices with assurances that they would include, or would “ask,” if they could. These practices encourage sport’s heteronormative, heterosexist, and homophobic status quo and confirm Gatekeeping Theory in this setting.

Nota Bene

In June of 2010, my research was featured in the University of Minnesota's Driven to Discover: The Research Series. I feel that something I pointed out in my interview is important to repeat here and conclude with as it relates to the impact my project could have for gay and lesbian coaches (McCauley, 2010). I want to make it clear that the purpose of my project is to emancipate coaches from feeling like they can't reveal their personal lives in their biographies. It is not the point of this project to out coaches or put coaches who do not want to be out in a position where they have to be. The point is, rather, to create awareness. To enable policy, advocacy, and training so that if coaches want to put their partners in their biographies there are the mechanism in place for them to do so. It may be a small step in creating change in the gendered structure of sport and sport media, but I believe it is an important one.

The potential of the Internet and its users to transmit and co-opt information is unparalleled compared to any other form of media. Addressing this omission of a population in online coaching biographies respects not only the power of the Internet and digital content, but also respects the population under scrutiny.

When I started this project, Sherri Murrell was not out in her bio; Kurt Walker had not been written up in *The New York Times*; and Brittney Griner, she was still in high school. Six years later, I routinely get emails from coaches, SIDs, and athletic administrators, where they forward me an online coaching biography that has a same-sex narrative. Even as recent as this summer, my sister forwarded me the biography of a

colleague whose same-sex fiancé was included in that small, but powerful, personal text section. Immodest or not, I believe in the grassroots affect of this project. Maybe it was inevitable. Maybe Melissa would have put her partner in her biography if my sister hadn't told her about my research.

But.

Maybe not. And I'm glad I didn't chance it.

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APPENDIX A

INFORMATION SHEET FOR RESEARCH

You are invited to be in a research study of gatekeeping in athletics websites. You were selected as a possible participant because you are the women's basketball contact at a BCS school. We ask that you read this form and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to be in the study.

This study is being conducted by: Austin Stair Calhoun, School of Kinesiology, University of Minnesota

Background Information: The purpose of this study is: investigate the role of sports information directors in creating online content, specifically online coaching biographies.

Procedures: If you agree to be in this study, we would ask you to do the following things: Participate in a phone interview that will last no longer than 90 minutes.

Risks and Benefits of being in the Study: There are no anticipated risks to this study. While there are no direct benefits to participate in the study, this study

Compensation: You will not receive payment or compensation for your participation.

Confidentiality: The records of this study will be kept private. In any sort of report we might publish, we will not include any information that will make it possible to identify a subject. Research records will be stored securely and only researchers will have access to the records. Study data will be encrypted according to current University policy for protection of confidentiality. Audio recordings will be stored in the University Office on the University computer of Austin Stair Calhoun in a locked, encrypted and password-protected file folder. Only the principal investigator (Austin Stair Calhoun) will have access to the audio-recordings and they will be destroyed by December 31, 2013.

Voluntary Nature of the Study: Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your current or future relations with the University of Minnesota. If you decide to participate, you are free to not answer any question or withdraw at any time without affecting those relationships.

Contacts and Questions: The researcher conducting this study is Austin Stair Calhoun. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later,

you are encouraged to contact them at Cooke 220, 612-625-1007, stair@umn.edu or to contact the researcher's advisor, Dr. Mary Jo Kane, 612-626-770, maryjo@umn.edu. If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher(s), you are encouraged to contact the Research Subjects' Advocate Line, D528 Mayo, 420 Delaware St. Southeast, Minneapolis, Minnesota 55455; (612) 625-1650.

APPENDIX B

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Welcome text

ME: Hi [INSERT NAME]. I appreciate you agreeing to be interviewed for my dissertation project on how sports information directors construct online coaching biographies. Before we begin, I want to confirm that you have filled out your informed consent form and asked you again if you consent to participate in this research. I also want you to know that your responses will be completely anonymous. Also, I want to make sure it's ok with you that I record this interview.

Introductory Questions

- ☐ Can you tell me a little bit about your background in sports information?
- ☐ How long have you worked at [CURRENT INSTITUTION]?
- ☐ How long have you been the contact for the women's basketball team?
- ☐ In addition to women's basketball, what other sports are you the main contact for?

Process Questions

- ☐ Can you tell me about how you create an online coaching biography for a head coach?
- ☐ Did you create the online coaching biography for your current head women's basketball coach? If not you, then who?
- ☐ Who makes the decisions on what information is included in an online coaching biography?

Narrative Questions

- As you know, this research is specifically looks into the narratives included in online coaching biographies. What explanations can you offer for the inclusion or exclusion of narratives in online coaching biographies?
- Have you ever asked a coach if you should/should not include their narrative?
- Has a coach ever asked you NOT to include their narrative?
- In your experience, are there differences based on the gender of the head coach?

APPENDIX C

INTERVIEW PROBES

Developed from Rubin and Rubin (2012)

Continuation Probes

- ☒ Repeat what was last said with question inflection (i.e., and ?)
- ☒ Then what?
- ☒ What do you mean by “[QUOTE FROM INTERVIEWER]”?
- ☒ Mmmhmm, so. Tell me more?

Elaboration Probes

- ☒ Can you give me an example of [SUBJECT]?
- ☒ Can you say more about [SUBJECT]?
- ☒ Such as?
- ☒ What can you tell be about [SUBJECT]?

Attention Probes

- ☒ Can I quote you on that?
- ☒ That is interesting.
- ☒ I understand now ...

Clarification Probes

- ☒ I'm afraid I didn't follow what you. Can you explain that again?
- ☒ Can you explain what you mean by [TERM]?

Steering Probe

- Sorry I distracted you with that question, you were talking about ...

Sequence Probes

- ☐ Can you tell me how you make [PROCESS/EVENT i.e., online coaching bios] step-by-step?
- ☐ Do you do [EVENT] before you do [OTHER EVENT]?

Evidence Probes

- ☐ What occurred to make you think/feel that way?
- ☐ Could you give me an example?
- ☐ Do you have a specific experience of [EVENT] in mind?

Slant Probes

- ☐ How do you feel about homophobia in college sport?
- ☐ How do you feel about [TOPIC]?
- ☐ Does [TOPIC] make you upset?

APPENDIX D

EMAIL SCRIPTS

Random participants

Hi [INSERT NAME],

My name is Austin Stair Calhoun and I am a Ph.D. student at the University of Minnesota. I am also a former women's basketball SID at both the Division I and III level. My dissertation stems from my experiences in sports information. In particular, I am interested in learning more about how SIDs creates online content, specifically online coaching biographies.

In order to write my dissertation, I am hoping to conduct one-on-one interviews with Division I women's basketball SIDs. The interviews should take about an hour and are confidential. Pseudonyms will be used for any written report.

If you are interested in participating, you can email me at austinstair@gmail.com to set up a time for a phone interview. You can also reach me by phone at 703-606-6099.

I hope your spring sport responsibilities are going smoothly and I thank you in advance for your attention to this research. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Austin Stair Calhoun, M.S.Ed.

Doctoral student, University of Minnesota

School of Kinesiology

703-606-6099

austinstair@gmail.com

Personal contacts participants

Hi [INSERT NAME],

It's been a while since we worked together at INSERT INSTITUTION/ CONFERENCE. After working in sports information for four years, I am now a Ph.D. student at the University of Minnesota. My dissertation stems from my experiences in sports information. In particular, I am interested in learning more about how SIDs create online content, specifically online coaching biographies.

In order to write my dissertation, I am hoping to conduct one-on-one interviews with Division I women's basketball SIDs. The interviews should take about an hour and are confidential. Pseudonyms will be used for any written report.

If you or your women's basketball contact are interested in participating, you can email me at austinstair@gmail.com to set up a time for a phone interview. You can also reach me by phone at 703-606-6099. If you have suggestions about other Division I women's basketball contacts that you think would be amenable to this research, you can either email me their information or forward them this email. I appreciate any help you can do to help my complete this research.

I hope your spring sport responsibilities are going smoothly and I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Austin Stair Calhoun, M.S.Ed.
Doctoral student, University of Minnesota
School of Kinesiology
703-606-6099
austinstair@gmail.com

APPENDIX E
IRB MATERIALS

IRB Application

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

SOCIAL & BEHAVIORAL SCIENCES APPLICATION FORM

Version 5.5

April 2011, check <http://www.irb.umn.edu> for the latest version

IRB Use Only

IRB Study #

1. Project Identifiers

1.1 Project Title (Project title must match grant title. If different, also provide grant title):

Gatekeeping and content creation of athletics websites

1.2 Person preparing this document

Name: Austin Stair Calhoun	Phone number: 612-625-1007
Email: stair@umn.edu	Fax: 612-626-7700

- Please note that if you intend to perform work on this project, then you will also need to be listed as principal investigator, co-investigator, or staff.

1.3 Principal Investigator (PI)

Name (Last name, First name MI): Calhoun, Austin S	Highest Earned Degree: M.S.Ed.
Mailing Address: 1900 University Ave SE Cooke 220 Minneapolis, MN 55455	Phone Number: 612-625-1007
	Pager or Cell Phone Number: 703-606-6099
	Fax: 612-626-7700
U of M Employee/Student ID: 3918849	Email: stair@umn.edu
U of M x.500 ID (ex. smith001): Stair	University Department (if applicable): School of Kinesiology
Occupational Position: <input type="checkbox"/> Faculty <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Staff <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Student <input type="checkbox"/> Fairview Researcher <input type="checkbox"/> Gillette Researcher <input type="checkbox"/> Other:	
Human Subjects Training	
<input type="checkbox"/> CITI, <input type="checkbox"/> Investigator 101 (until 2008), <input type="checkbox"/> NIH training (EXCEPT for 5/8/06 to 2/29/08), <input type="checkbox"/> UM/RCR (between 1994-2003) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other - Indicate training received, when and from which institution: CITI Training at University of Miami in 2006; Refresher in 2011; Also RCR through School of Kinesiology Graduate program	HIPAA Training (Required if Data Contains PHI): <input type="checkbox"/> HIPAA
As Principal Investigator of this study, I assure the IRB that the following statements are true: The information provided in this form is correct. I have evaluated this protocol and determined that I have the resources necessary to protect participants, such as adequate funding, appropriately trained staff, and necessary facilities and equipment. I will seek and obtain prior written approval from the IRB for any substantive modifications in the proposal, including changes in procedures, co-investigators, funding agencies, etc. I will promptly report any unexpected or otherwise significant adverse events or unanticipated problems or incidents that may occur in the course of this study. I will report in writing any significant new findings which develop during the course of this study which may affect the risks and benefits to participation. I will not begin my research until I have received written notification of final IRB approval. I will comply with all IRB requests to report on the status of the study. I will maintain records of this research according to IRB guidelines. The grant that I have submitted to my funding agency which is submitted with this IRB submission accurately and completely reflects what is contained in this application. If these conditions are not met, I understand that approval of this research could be suspended or terminated.	
Stair	11-21-2011
x.500 of PI	Date
	PhD Candidate / Information Technology Specialist
	Title of PI

Training Links:

FIRST (Fostering Integrity in Research, Scholarship and Training):

<http://cfilegacy.research.umn.edu/first/humansubjects.htm>

HIPAA: <http://www.research.umn.edu/first/AdditionalCourses.htm>

- "UM/RCR" includes all human subjects protection training offered in-person or online at the University of Minnesota from 1994-2003.

- The online NIH tutorial offered during the period May 8, 2006-February 29, 2008 is NOT acceptable to meet this requirement.

- If you completed a version of this training not included on the list provided, provide details as indicated

Completion report is attached

1.4 Student Research

If the PI of this research is a student, include Appendix J filled out by the advisor with this application form and include the advisor's x500 below.

Name (Last name, First name MI): Kane, Mary Jo	Highest Earned Degree: PhD
Mailing Address: 1900 University Ave SE Cooke 203 Minneapolis, MN 55455	Phone Number: 612-625-3870
	Pager or Cell Phone Number:
	Fax: 612-626-7700
U of M Employee/Student ID: 2102157	Email: marvjo@umn.edu
U of M x.500 ID (ex. smith001): Maryjo	University Department (if applicable): School of Kinesiology
Occupational Position: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Faculty <input type="checkbox"/> Staff <input type="checkbox"/> Student <input type="checkbox"/> Fairview Researcher <input type="checkbox"/> Gillette Researcher <input type="checkbox"/> Other:	
Human Subjects Training <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> CITI , <input type="checkbox"/> Investigator 101 (until 2008), <input type="checkbox"/> NIH training (EXCEPT for 5/8/06 to 2/29/08), <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UM/RCR (between 1994-2003) <input type="checkbox"/> Other - Indicate training received, when and from which institution:	HIPAA Training (Required if Data Contains PHI): <input type="checkbox"/> HIPAA
Maryjo	11-21-2011 Professor / Director of the Tucker Center

2. Funding

2.1 Is this research funded by an internal or external agency?

Yes.

Type of Funding Source: Federal Funds Foundation Business and Industry

Name of Funding Source:

[Include Appendix A](#)

No. Explain how costs of research will be covered:

Costs will be covered by the researcher.

3. Institutional Oversight

3.1 Is this research proposal being reviewed by any other institution or peer review committee?

- Yes. Attach copy of materials submitted for peer review.
 No.

If yes, Please select which other committee approvals are required for this research and provide documentation of their approval:

- Cancer Protocol Review Committee (CPRC)
 Cancer Protocol Review Committee/Non-Therapeutic Interventional Trials Review (CPRC/NTI)
 Conflict of Interest Review Committee
 Nursing Research Council
 Other IRB, please specify: _____
 Other, please specify: _____

Peer review Web sites:

- [Cancer Protocol Review Committee \(CPRC\)](#)
- [Cancer Protocol Review Committee/Non-Therapeutic Interventional Trials Review \(CPRC/NTI\)](#)
- [University Research Opportunity Program \(UROP\)](#)
- [Grant-In-Aid of Research, Artistry, and Scholarship Program \(GIA\)](#)

3.2 Does this research involve cancer prevention, treatment, survivorship, or supporting care?

No.

Yes.

If this research is cancer-related, including prevention, treatment, survivorship or supportive care, then documentation of approval from the Cancer Protocol Review Committee (CPRC) or CPRC/NTI (Non-Therapeutic Interventional) MUST be provided before final IRB approval can be granted. If this cancer-related research has been peer-reviewed by NIH, CPRC approval is still required.

4. Conflict of Interest

Federal Guidelines emphasize the importance of assuring there are no conflicts of interest in research projects that could affect the welfare of human subjects. Reporting of financial interests is required from all individuals responsible for the design, conduct or reporting of the research. If this study involves or presents a potential conflict of interest, additional information will need to be provided to the IRB. Examples of conflicts of interest may include, but are not limited to:

- A researcher participating in research on a technology, process or product owned by a business in which the researcher or family member holds a significant financial interest or a business interest
- A researcher participating in research on a technology, process or product developed by that researcher or family member
- A researcher or family member assuming an executive position in a business engaged in commercial or research activities related to the researcher's University responsibilities
- A researcher or family member serving on the Board of Directors of a business from which that member receives University-supervised Sponsored Research Support
- A researcher receiving consulting income from a business that funds his or her research
- A researcher receiving consulting income from a business that could benefit from the results of research sponsored by a federal agency (i.e. NIH)

“Family Member” means the covered individual’s spouse or domestic partner, dependent children, and any other family member whom the covered individual reasonably knows may benefit personally from actions taken by the covered individual on behalf of the University.

“Business Interest” means holding any executive position in, or membership on a board of a business entity, whether or not such activities are compensated.

For additional details and definitions, please refer to the appropriate policy:

University of Minnesota Researchers, please refer to:

<http://www.policy.umn.edu/Policies/Operations/Compliance/CONFLICTINTEREST.html>

University of Minnesota Researchers involved in clinical health care in the Academic Health Center, also refer to:

http://www.policy.umn.edu/Policies/Operations/Compliance/CONFLICTINTEREST_APPA.html

Fairview Health System Researchers, please refer to:

<http://www.fairview.org/Research/index.htm>

Gillette Children’s Specialty Healthcare Researchers, please refer to:

<http://www.gillettechildrens.org/>

4.1 Do any of the Investigators or personnel listed on this research project have a business interest or a financial interest of \$10,000 or more (\$5,000 or more if involved in clinical health care with an appointment in the Academic Health Center, AHC) associated with this study when aggregated for themselves and their family members?

- No.
 Yes.

If yes, identify the individual(s) and complete section 4.3:

4.2 Do any of the investigators or personnel (when aggregated for themselves and their family members) listed on this research have:

Ownership interests less than \$10,000 (\$5,000 if in clinical health care with an appointment in the AHC) when the value of interest could be affected by the outcome of the research?

- No. Yes.

Ownership interests exceeding 5% interest in any one single entity?

- No. Yes.

Compensation less than \$10,000 (\$5,000 if in clinical health care in the AHC) when the value of the compensation could be affected by the outcome of the research?

- No. Yes.

If yes, identify the individual(s) and complete section 4.3:

4.3 Has the business or financial interest been reported?

- No.

If you are a University of Minnesota researcher, please report your business or financial interest online via the Report of External Professional Activities (REPA) at:

http://egms.umn.edu/quickhelp/EGMS_Instructions/prepa.html

If you are a Fairview Health System researcher, please complete the Fairview Health Services Conflict of Interest Disclosure forms at:

<http://www.fairview.org/Research/BusinessOperations/ConflictsofInterest/index.htm>

and submit the completed forms to the Fairview Office of Research.

If you are a Gillette Children's Specialty Healthcare researcher, please contact the Director of Research Administration, at 651-229-1745.

Yes.

If yes, have you been informed that a Conflict of Interest Review Committee is reviewing the information you reported on your REPA? No.

Yes.

The IRB will verify that a management plan is in place with the Conflict of Interest (COI) Program. If the COI Program does not have an approved management plan in place for this research, they will contact the individual(s) listed in question 4.1 for additional information.

Final IRB approval cannot be granted until all potential conflict matters are settled. The IRB receives a recommendation from the Conflict of Interest Review Committee regarding disclosure to subjects and management of any identified conflict. The convened IRB determines what disclosure language should be in the consent form.

5. Compensation

5.1 Will you give subjects gifts, payments, compensation, reimbursement, services without charge or extra credit?

Yes.

No.

If yes, please explain:

6. Summary of Activities

Use lay language, do not refer to grant or abstract.

6.1 Describe the objective(s) of the proposed research including purpose, research question, hypothesis and relevant background information etc.

Sport information professionals are charged with maintaining and providing content for university-sponsored athletic websites. As part of intercollegiate athletic websites, online coaching biographies provide the public with an accessible and administratively authorized source of information related to coaches' career accomplishments and extracurricular activities. In this digital age, their importance is burgeoning. Through search engines like *Google* or *Yahoo!*, online coaching biographies become the first point of contact for interested parties – like fans, boosters, and prospective students – to access information about a coach. Both local and national media outlets also access these biographies. Essentially, online coaching biographies are sanctioned constructions, containing information that would be relevant to a wide range of individuals and groups – and that reflect the branding of a coach, a team and an athletic department. Because the department endorses online coaching biographies, they present a unique way to investigate how coaches are portrayed as representatives of team, an athletic department, and a university. They not only provide easy access to the narratives endorsed by an intercollegiate athletic program, but also point to the cultural ideologies related to gender and sexuality typified overall in sports.

Historically, certain narratives have been included and excluded from coaches' biographies. In particular, personal text is often included in biography, with mentions of a coaches' family. However, it is normative for those mentions of family to be heterosexual. Past research shows a complete absence of same-sex family narratives in online coaching biographies. Thus, it is the aim of this research to identify explanations for the absence of same-sex

narratives in online coaching biographies from the point of view of sport information professionals. Research consistently shows how gay and lesbian coaches respond to homophobia with silence (i.e., don't tell), especially when it comes to including family narratives in public settings. However, it is unknown what dialogues, if any, occur between the sport information professional and head coaches. Thus, the purpose of this dissertation is to explore how and why, from the perspective and experience of the SID, same-sex family narratives get masked and erased in online coaching biographies using inductive, qualitative interviews.

Research Questions

The first question is aimed at determining how online coaching biographies are constructed. The second question is based on the levels of analysis in Gatekeeping Theory. These initial questions lead up to third and most specific research question.

1. What procedures and routines exist when sport information professionals create online coaching biographies of Division I women's basketball coaches?
2. What gatekeeping factors (individual, communication routines, organizational, institutional, or societal) influence the creation of online coaching biographies of Division I women's basketball coaches?
3. What explanations do sports information professionals offer for the absence of non-traditional family narratives in online coaching biographies of Division I women's basketball coaches?

6.2 Which methods will this study include? (check all that apply)

- Descriptive
 Ethnographic
 Experimental/Control Design
 Field work (*If checked, please include Appendix L*)
 Formative
 Longitudinal
 Oral history
 Phenomenological
 Qualitative
 Quantitative
 Other, specify : _____

6.3 Describe the research study design.

Focused interviews will be employed for this qualitative project.

6.4 Describe the tasks subjects will be asked to perform. Attach surveys, instruments, interview questions, focus group questions etc. Describe the frequency and duration of procedures, psychological tests, educational tests, and experiments; including screening, intervention, follow-up etc. (If you intend to pilot a process before recruiting for the main study please explain.)

The interview script and probes are attached. Participants will be asked to partake in one phone or in-person interview that will last no longer than 90 minutes.

6.4a List here any procedures that would be performed for these subjects if there were no research involved (i.e. procedures performed for diagnostic or treatment purposes)

None.

6.5 How many months do you anticipate this research study will last from the time final approval is granted?

Seven months

7. Participant Population7.1 Expected number of participants: 168 of Male8 of Female

7.2 Expected Age Range

Check all that apply:

- 0-7 (Include parental consent form)
 8-17 (Include child's assent form and parental consent form)
 18-64
 65 and older

Exact ages to be included: 21 - 64**7.3 Inclusion/Exclusion of Children in this Research**

If this study proposes to *include* children, this inclusion must meet one of the following criterion for risk/benefit assessment according to the federal regulations ([45CFR56, subpart D](#)).

Check the one appropriate box:

- (404) Minimal Risk
 (405) Greater than minimal risk, but holds prospect of direct benefit to subjects
 (406) Greater than minimal risk, no prospect of direct benefit to subjects, but likely to yield generalizable knowledge about the subject's disorder or condition.

Explain how this criterion is met for this study:

If this study would *exclude* children, [NIH guidelines](#) advise that the exclusion be justified, so that potential for benefit is not unduly denied. Indicate whether there is potential for direct benefit to subjects in this study and if so, provide justification for excluding children. Note that if inclusion of children is justified, but children are not seen in the PI's practice, the sponsor must address plans to include children in the future or at other institutions.

- No direct benefit to participation (exclusion of children permissible)
 Potential for direct benefit exists.

Provide justification for exclusion of children:

Children do no work as intercollegiate sport information professionals—which are the targeted population.

7.4 Other Protected Populations to be Targeted or Included in this Research. Check all that apply:

Protected by Federal Regulations

- Pregnant Woman/Fetuses/IVF
 Refer to guidance at <http://www.research.umn.edu/irb/guidance/women.html> and [45CFR46 subpart B](#)
 Prisoners

[Include Appendix C](#) and Refer to and [45 CFR 46 subpart C](#) on the populations protected by Federal Regulations

Protected by Federal GuidelinesInclude Appendix I

- Mentally/Emotionally/Developmentally Disabled/Impaired Decision Making Capacity
 Minority Group(s) and Non-English Speakers
 Gender Imbalance—all or more of one gender

7.5 Inclusion and Exclusion of Subjects in this Research Study

Describe criteria for inclusion and exclusion of subjects in this study

Inclusion Criteria:

The population for this research is National Collegiate Athletic Association sport information professionals assigned to BSC Division I women's basketball teams with female head coaches. There are 73 schools (73/344 = 21%) that represent the six most powerful and prestigious "BCS" conferences. (ACC, BIGEAST, Big10, Big12, Pac10, SEC), and there are 49 schools (49/73 = 65%) that have a female women's basketball coach.

Exclusion Criteria:

Sport information professionals assigned to other teams, who do not work at the Division I BCS level, or who are assigned to a women's basketball team with a male head coach will be excluded based on the parameters of the inquiry.

7.6 Location of subjects during research activity or location of records to be accessed for research:**Check all that apply:**

- University of Minnesota Medical Center, Fairview
 Fairview Southdale
 Fairview Ridges
 Other Fairview Facility, specify: _____
 Gillette Children's Hospital
 Other Hospitals, specify: _____
 Community Clinic, specify: _____
 Elementary/Secondary Schools (*include Appendix M*), specify: _____
 Community Center, specify: _____
 University Campus (non-clinical), specify: Cooke Hall
 University Campus (clinical), specify: _____
 Prisons/Halfway houses (*include Appendix C*), specify: _____
 Nursing Home(s), specify: _____
 Subject's Home, specify: For phone interviews
 International Location: _____ (*include Appendix K*)
 Other special institutions, specify: Participants workplace for phone interviews; National conference for the profession

7.7 Describe the rationale for using each location checked above. Include IRB approvals or letters of cooperation from other agencies or sites, if applicable.

I will be conducting the focused in person or phone interviews at locations convenient to both the participant and the PI.

8. Recruitment**8.1 Describe the recruitment process to be used for each group of subjects:**

Attach a copy of any and all recruitment materials to be used e.g. advertisements, bulletin board notices, e-mails, letters, phone scripts, or URLs.

Recruitment materials are attached.

I will recruit participants through direct emails to the participants. I will also use a snowball recruitment approach to recruit participants (i.e., through recommendations of previous participants). New media sources (Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn) will also be used to make initial contact.

A static (one-page) web site will also be created that will have a link to the informed consent and the PIs contact information. This website will serve as an "advertisement" and will allow participants to email the study information to other potential participants.

8.2 Explain who will approach potential subjects to take part in the research study and what will be done to protect individuals' privacy in this process:

Initial contact of subjects identified through records search must be made by the official holder of the record, i.e. primary physician, therapist, public school official.

The PI will approach all participants via email or in private messages via Facebook, Twitter, and/or LinkedIn. No public or digital trail will be made of the initial contact.

8.3 Are subjects chosen from records?

- Yes. Who gave approval for use of the records: _____
 No.

If yes, are records "private" medical or student records?

- Yes. Provide the protocol, consent forms, letters, etc. for securing consent of the subjects of the records. Written documentation for the cooperation/permission from the holder or custodian of the records should be attached.
 No.

8.4 University of Minnesota policy prohibits researchers from accepting gifts for research activities. Is the study sponsor offering any incentive connected with subject enrollment or completion of the research study (i.e. finders fees, recruitment bonus, etc.) that will be paid directly to the research staff?

- Yes.
 No.

If yes above, please affirm that you have declined acceptance of gifts in the box below.
 Code of Conduct - http://www1.umn.edu/regents/policies/academic/Code_of_Conduct.pdf

9. Risks and Benefits

9.1 Does the research involve any of these possible risks or harms to subjects?

Check all that apply:

- Use of a deceptive technique. (Include Appendix N)

- Use of private records (educational or medical records)
 Manipulation of psychological or social variables such as sensory deprivation, social isolation, psychological stresses
 Any probing for personal or sensitive information in surveys or interviews
 Presentation of materials which subjects might consider sensitive, offensive, threatening or degrading
 Possible invasion of privacy of subject or family
 Social or economic risk
 Other risks, specify: _____

9.2 Describe the nature and degree of the risk or harm checked above. The described risks/harms must be disclosed in the consent form.

There is no apparent risk or harm from participating in this study. This study simply asks participants to discuss how they construct online coaching biographies.

9.3 Explain what steps will be taken to minimize risks or harms and to protect subjects' welfare. If the research will include protected populations (see question 7.4) please identify each group and answer this question for each group.

We will stress that participation in this study is voluntary and that any participant may skip any question without penalty or repercussions. Participants can also withdraw from the study at anytime.

9.4 Describe the anticipated benefits of this research for individual subjects in each subject group. If none, state "None."

(Hint: For instance, if the intervention proves effective, subjects in active arms will benefit but controls will not.)

None

9.5 Describe the anticipated benefits of this research for society, and explain how the benefits outweigh the risks.

In terms of impact, this project has the potential to affect many stakeholders and constituents in the sport and LGBT communities. The project will give sports information professionals a voice, while also raising to their attention a serious issue. Additionally, one of the long-term goals of this research is creating a best practice guide for sport information professionals. The first step to identifying and disseminating the best practices for inclusion and tolerance of diverse sexual orientation in intercollegiate sport media begins with this research.

10. Confidentiality of Data

See [Protecting Private Data Guideline](#) from the Office of Information Technology (OIT) for information about protecting the privacy of research data.

10.1 Will you record any direct identifiers, names, social security numbers, addresses, telephone numbers, etc?

- Yes.
 No.

If yes, explain why it is necessary to record findings using these identifiers. Describe the coding system you will use to protect against disclosure of these identifiers.

Since there are few participants in this study, the researchers will know the names of the participants. However, names will be linked to a letter, which will be used for the analysis. The paper, which links the identifier and the data, will be kept in a locked file cabinet. The researchers will not include any names or identifying information in the final write-up of this research.

10.2 Will you retain a link between study code numbers and direct identifiers after the data collection is complete?

- Yes.
 No.

If yes, explain why this is necessary and state how long you will keep this link.

The researchers will keep a link between **study code numbers and direct identifiers so that the researchers know which interview is which**. Interviews will be transcribed and a code will be used to link the transcript with the participant. The link will be kept for as long as the raw data is kept.

10.3 Will you provide the link or identifier to anyone outside the research team?

- Yes.
 No.

If yes, explain why and to whom:

10.4 Where, how long, and in what format (such as paper, digital or electronic media, video, audio, or photographic) will data be kept? In addition, describe what security provisions will be taken to protect this data (password protection, encryption, etc.).

The data will be kept in a locked cabinet for the entirety of the project. The data will consist of digital files of the focus group and individual interviews. These will also be transcribed, so the data will be in paper form as well.

10.5 Will you place a copy of the consent form or other research study information in the subjects' record such as medical, personal or educational record? (This information should be explained on the consent form.)

- Yes.
 No.

If yes, explain why this is necessary:

10.6 Federal Certificates of Confidentiality

If the data collected contains information about illegal behavior, visit the NIH Certificates of Confidentiality Kiosk (<http://grants1.nih.gov/grants/policy/coc/>) for information about obtaining a Federal Certificate of Confidentiality.

Will you obtain a Federal Certificate of Confidentiality for this research?

- Yes. Submit documentation of application (and a copy of the Certificate of Confidentiality award if granted) with this application form.
 No.

11. Use of Protected Health Information (PHI): HIPAA Requirements**11.1 As part of this study, do you:**

- a. **Collect protected health information (PHI)* from subjects in the course of providing treatment/experimental care; or**

b. Have access to PHI* in the subjects' records?

Please read the definition of PHI below before answering.

*PHI is defined under HIPAA as health information transmitted or maintained in any form or medium that:

1. identifies or could be used to identify an individual;
2. is created or received by a healthcare provider, health plan, employer or healthcare clearinghouse; and
3. relates to the past, present or future physical or mental health or condition of an individual; the provision of health care to an individual; or the past, present or future payment for the provision of healthcare to an individual.

The following records ARE EXEMPTED from the definition of PHI even though they may contain health-related information: student records maintained by an educational institution and employment records maintained by an employer related to employment status. If your study uses these kinds of records, it is not subject to HIPAA. However, existing IRB rules on informed consent and confidentiality still apply.

Health-related information is considered PHI if (any of the following are true):

1. the researcher obtains it directly from a provider, health plan, health clearinghouse or employer (other than records relating solely to employment status);
2. the records were created by any of the entities in "1" and the researcher obtains the records from an intermediate source which is NOT a school record or an employer record related solely to employment status; OR
3. the researcher obtains it directly from the study subject in the course of providing treatment to the subject.

Health-related information is not considered PHI if the researcher obtains it from:

1. student records maintained by a school;
2. employee records maintained by an employer related to employment status; OR
3. the research subject directly, if the research does NOT involve treatment.

Yes. If yes to a or b above, complete Appendix H to show how you will satisfy HIPAA requirements for authorization to use PHI in research.

No. If no, continue to section 12.

12. Expedited Review Eligibility

Federal criteria for risk assessment make some studies eligible for Expedited Review (see 45 CFR 46.110 and 21 CFR 56.110). Expedited review categories can be found at <http://www.irb.umn.edu/expedited.html> Studies eligible for Expedited Review must meet the federal definition of minimal risk, which is as follows: "the probability and magnitude of harm or discomfort anticipated in the research are not greater in and of themselves than those ordinarily encountered in daily life or during the performance of routine physical or psychological examinations or tests". Expedited Review eligibility decisions are made by the IRB following receipt of the application.

12.1 What is the level of risk to subjects in this research study?

Not greater than minimal risk. Justify minimal risk in accord with the federal definition and indicate which expedited review category (1-9) applies to this research:

--

Greater than minimal risk (full committee review)

13. Informed Consent Process

13.1 Recognizing that consent itself is a *process* of communication, build on your responses to questions 8.1 and 8.2 and describe what will be said to the subjects to introduce the research. Do not say "see consent form". Write the explanation in lay language. If you are using telephone surveys, telephone scripts are required.

I will say that I need the participant's consent before I can start the interview. I will remind the participants that they can skip any question and withdraw from the study at any time. I will be clear that there are no penalties or repercussions for not participating in this study.

13.2 In relation to the actual data gathering, when will consent be discussed and documentation obtained? (e.g., mailing out materials, delivery of consent form, meetings) Be specific.

I will ask participants to sign informed consent forms prior to the interview and will email the consent form to the participants or give it them in the case of an in person interview.

13.3 Will there be any waiting period between informing the prospective participant and obtaining the consent? Please explain.

No.

13.4 Will the investigator(s) be securing all of the informed consent?

- Yes.
 No.

If no, please name the specific individuals who will obtain informed consent and include their job title/credentials and a brief description of your plans to train these individuals to obtain informed consent and answer subjects' questions.

13.5 How will you determine who will give consent?

i.e. subject, parent, guardian, Legally Authorized Representative. If someone other than the subject will give consent, provide justification and a plan for obtaining surrogate consent.

Each participant will give consent.

13.6 Describe the steps taken to minimize the possibility of coercion or undue influence.

Participating in this study is voluntary. If a potential participant does not want to participate, we will not pursue that individual any further.

13.7 If subjects are minors, will they still be involved in this study when they reach the age of majority (18)?

- N/A – No Minor Subjects
 No.
 Yes. If yes, outline your plan to re-consent these subjects at the age of majority:

Subject Comprehension

It is the responsibility of the investigator to assess comprehension of the consent process and only enroll subjects who can demonstrate informed understanding of the research study (45 CFR 46.116)

The federal regulations require that consent be in language understandable to the subject. If subjects do not comprehend English, translated consent forms are required or the use of short forms with an oral explanation can be accepted. (see the [Consent Process & Forms](#) section of our Web site)

13.8 What questions will you ask to assess the subjects' understanding of the risks and benefits of participation?
(Questions should be open-ended and go beyond requiring only a yes/no response.)

We will ask the following prompts:

1. "Tell me about any risks you anticipate from participating in this study"
2. "Explain the benefits are from participating in this study:"

Documentation of Consent

13.9 Prepare and attach a consent form for IRB review.

Please see the [sample consent form](#) and follow it carefully. Do not submit sponsor prepared forms without editing the form to include University of Minnesota IRB standard language and all essential elements of informed consent.

Under specific conditions, when justifiable, documentation of informed consent can be waived or altered. These limited conditions are described in [45 CFR 46.116](#) and [45 CFR 46.117](#). If you believe that this research qualifies according to the regulations, include [Appendix W](#).

Resources for preparing informed consent forms:

- [Informed Consent Online Tutorial – http://www.research.umn.edu/consent/](http://www.research.umn.edu/consent/)
- [Informed Consent section of the Human Subjects Guide - http://www.research.umn.edu/irb/guidance/guide4.html](http://www.research.umn.edu/irb/guidance/guide4.html)

You have reached the end of this form. Please make sure that you have responded to every question on this application (even if your response is "not applicable").

IRB Approval

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

Twin Cities Campus

*Human Research Protection Program
Office of the Vice President for Research*

*D528 Mayo Memorial Building
420 Delaware Street S.E.
MMC 820
Minneapolis, MN 55455*

*Office: 612-626-5654
Fax: 612-626-6061
E-mail: irb@umn.edu or irc@umn.edu
Website: <http://research.umn.edu/subjects/>*

01/05/2012

Austin S Calhoun
Kinesiology2061A
Room 100 CookeH
1900 University Ave SE
Minneapolis, MN 55455

RE: "Gatekeeping and content creation of athletics websites"
IRB Code Number: **1111P06932**

Dear Ms. Calhoun:

The Institutional Review Board (IRB) received your response to its stipulations. Since this information satisfies the federal criteria for approval at 45CFR46.111 and the requirements set by the IRB, final approval for the project is noted in our files. Upon receipt of this letter, you may begin your research.

IRB approval of this study includes the consent form and recruitment materials, both received December 16, 2011.

The IRB would like to stress that subjects who go through the consent process are considered enrolled participants and are counted toward the total number of subjects, even if they have no further participation in the study. Please keep this in mind when calculating the number of subjects you request. This study is currently approved for 16 subjects. If you desire an increase in the number of approved subjects, you will need to make a formal request to the IRB.

For your records and for grant certification purposes, the approval date for the referenced project is December 14, 2011 and the Assurance of Compliance number is FWA00000312 (Fairview Health Systems Research FWA00000325, Gillette Children's Specialty Healthcare FWA00004003). Research projects are subject to continuing review and renewal; approval will expire one year from that date. You will receive a report form two months before the expiration date. If you would like us to send certification of approval to a funding agency, please tell us the name and address of your contact person at the agency.

As Principal Investigator of this project, you are required by federal regulations to inform the IRB of any proposed changes in your research that will affect human subjects. Changes should not be initiated until written IRB approval is received. Unanticipated problems or serious unexpected adverse events should be reported to the IRB as they occur.

The IRB wishes you success with this research. If you have questions, please call the IRB office at 612-626-5654.

Sincerely,



Christina Dobrovolny, CIP
Research Compliance Supervisor
CD/ks

CC: Mary Jo Kane

IRB Continuing Review

University of Minnesota

Continuing Review of IRB - Pending
Social & Behavior Science Research

Review Period: 10/14/2012 - 12/06/2013	Rev: 03/01/2005
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 Study Number: **1111P06932**
Principal Investigator: **Austin S Calhoun**

Title(s): Gatekeeping and content creation of athletics websites

Study Status

Data Analysis Only

Funding Source(s)

There are no funding sources for this study.

Personnel

Calhoun, Austin (Student P. I.)

Buysse, Jo Ann (Advisor)

Hardin, Marie (Staff/Lab)

Kane, Mary Jo (Advisor)

LaVoi, Nicole (Advisor)

Ross, Stephen (Advisor)

Thul, Chelsey (Staff/Lab)

Study Enrollment

Number of Subjects Approved for study:

16

Number of subjects enrolled this reporting period:

Male	Female	Unknown	Total
0	0	0	0

Number of subjects enrolled to date:

Male	Female	Unknown	Total
8	6	0	14

Is this a multi-center study?

No

Unanticipated Problem Reporting

Have there been any unanticipated problems, subject withdrawals, or complaints about this research?

No

Has the risk/benefit relationship for subjects changed from the initial expectation?

No

Study Summary

Summarize preliminary information about any results and/or trends:

Preliminary results show patterns in how online coaching bios are created in a formulaic and routine way. These patterns and routines may affect how information gets included on athletic websites. We also see the five levels of gatekeeping appear in the creation of online coaching bios. Finally, SIDs have myriad reasons for not including certain text. Across the board, those reasons have the most to do with heterosexism and homophobia, as perceived by the audience, recruits, and athletic department.

Have there been any changes in protocol approved by the IRB since last continuing review?

No

Since the most recent IRB continuing review approval, have there been any progress reports on the research?

No

Since the most recent IRB continuing review approval, have there been any multi-center trial reports?

No

Since the most recent IRB continuing review approval, have there been any other information relevant to this research discovered, especially information about the risks and benefits associated with the research?

No

Since the most recent IRB continuing review approval, have subjects experienced any benefits?

No

External Findings

Is there anything in the relevant recent literature that the IRB should know about concerning this research?

No