

AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE DISPARITIES OF
MEN'S AND WOMEN'S COLLEGIATE BASKETBALL

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Master of Arts

by

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Accepted by the faculty of the Caudill College of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences,
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Morehead State University, 2017

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This thesis examines the disparities between women's and men's collegiate basketball since the passage of Title IX (1972). Laws have helped women gain access to sports in college since 1972. However, women have been unable to gain equality in acceptance in athletics, viewership, and social ideals. Women have on the other hand gained valuable life and physical skills through athletic opportunities. To gain an understanding of why women face disparities this thesis examines the history of women in basketball, Catherine MacKinnon's dominance theory, and uses qualitative research to support these findings. The study found four major themes: institutionalized masculinity, money drives media and popularity of sports, femininity influences female sports, and life skills learned through athletics. These four themes were consistently found in similar studies as well as in participant interviews. I found that these themes outline the major issues women face in basketball. The question still remains, how can women bridge the gap created by society between men's and women's basketball?

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Chapter One Introduction

Men's and women's basketball have both grown rapidly in the United States since the 1970s. Men's basketball grew due to growth in athletics at public schools and colleges along with media attention; women's basketball grew with passage of Title IX legislation in 1972. Since Title IX legislation, basketball has grown at the collegiate and professional levels. There are currently 344 men's NCAA Division I basketball teams and 342 women's Division I basketball team (Aschburner 2011). Professionally, men's and women's basketball have grown; the National Basketball Association sponsors thirty teams around the United States. The NBA also helps fund the Women's National Basketball Association, which sponsors twelve teams spread across the U.S. (Aschburner 2011). Men's and women's basketball both receive media attention, salaries, and marketing deals, however there are disparities between men's and women's collegiate basketball.

Government intervention and the passing of Title IX legislation have changed the way people participate in athletics in America. Title IX requires gender equality and opportunity in sports at federally funded institutions. Title IX has given women the opportunity to compete in college athletics, which led to a professional basketball league. Large differences still exist between men's and women's basketball, in coaches' salaries, player opportunities, media attention, endorsement deals, and fan following.

I will be exploring the differences between men's and women's collegiate and professional basketball by examining the history of basketball, and interviews with players, fans, and basketball media. Men's and women's basketball began in the United States in the late nineteenth century and the sport has gone through many changes since then, the largest being

Title IX legislation. Title IX was a radical measure that mandated equal participation and resources devoted to both men and women in education, but Title IX did not result in equality between men's and women's basketball. Further evidence for this inequality can be seen in the interviews I conducted for this project.

In my research, I will be using Critical Feminism to assess gender inequality between men's and women's collegiate and professional basketball. I examine the critical feminist discourse of sport, as a means to understand the disparities between men's and women's collegiate basketball. The study will focus on historical changes in basketball since the 1940s with a main focus on Title IX legislation, qualitative surveys about media in basketball completed by students attending a Division I institution, and semi-structured in-depth interviews with Division I female basketball players, coaches, and support staff. I will be using historical analysis, statistics, and qualitative study techniques to research the foundations of collegiate and professional basketball today and the differences between men's and women's basketball.

In my thesis, I examine the history of gender discrimination and the efforts to overcome that discrimination in collegiate and professional sports through Title IX. To discover the disparities between men's and women's college and professional basketball, I completed interviews, analysis of previous studies related to gender inequalities in basketball, and a study of the history of women in athletics.

I have conducted interviews with women's basketball coaches, players, and students to explore perceptions, personal experiences, and feelings toward gender relationships in collegiate basketball. These interviews explore their experience as a women's basketball coach, player, or fan. The attempt of the interviews to reveal collegiate differences between men's and women's

basketball and what goes on outside of the public eye. These are semi-structured, in-depth interviews that use mixed methodologies.

When analyzing the interviews, I searched for similar themes that represented threads of inequalities felt by women involved in different parts of basketball. These themes were then related to feminist critical theory. Once this was completed, I found three themes that could be traced among the majority of the interviewees.

Government intervention and the passing of Title IX legislation has not reached its full potential in creating equality in men's and women's basketball. Participants believed that without large social changes in media and the way women's basketball is compared to men's basketball, there will be no true equality.

A combination of a historical, case, and qualitative study allows many angles to examine the changes and difference in women's and men's collegiate and professional basketball. Historically, men have found more popularity in basketball. However, women's basketball is growing with Title IX legislation. Title IX has been one of the most influential and radical laws passed in the United States. The law forces institutions to offer equal participation, funding, and resources. The enforcement of Title IX and the strict change that occurred at federally funded institutions is significant to the rapid change and growth in women's basketball in the 1980s. However, one law cannot change cultural feelings towards women's basketball. This study attempts to identify why women have not reached equality and possible ways for them to get there.

The following chapter outlines the history of women in basketball. Chapter three provides an in depth look into the literature and study methodology that surrounds critical feminism, gender, and women in basketball. The chapter four describes the methods used to

collect research to conduct interviews. Chapter five analyzes the data collected and creates themes that relate to the overall issue of disparities between men' and women's basketball. Lastly, chapter six concludes the research and findings of this study.

Chapter Two - The History of Women's Collegiate and Professional Sports

1972 was a monumental year for women in sports. The Education Amendment of 1972 included Title IX legislation which requires equal opportunities and funding for men's and women's sports at federally funded institutions. That year, the first collegiate women's basketball national championship took place. Immaculate College, a small private school from Philadelphia played West Chester State College (Farmun 2011). Immaculate's team had no scholarships, they washed their own uniforms, carpooled to games and had barely suitable equipment. However, the Mighty Macs found a way to overcome all of these obstacles and won the first women's national basketball championship. The game was played in front of a crowd of 4,000 fans (Farmun 2011). The men's 1972 national basketball championship painted a different story. The University of California at Los Angeles played Florida State at Los Angeles Sports Arena in front of a crowd of 15,063 fans (Lopresti 2013).

In 1972, there were around 31,000 women playing collegiate sports. Women also received only about two percent of a school's athletic budget, and athletic scholarships for women did not exist. Meanwhile, in 1972 170,384 men played college sports. Female collegiate athletics did not reach 170,000 participants until the 2004-2005 season (Farmun 2011).

Growth of Women's Basketball

Women's collegiate basketball had been gaining popularity since it was invented in 1891. However, it did not gain national attention until the 1940s. The Amateur Athletic Union (AAU) became the top level of play for women's basketball, not college. By the 1940s the AAU National Tournament had grown into an elaborate affair. The tournament had opening

ceremonies, a free-throw contest, community events, and a beauty pageant that crowned a tournament queen. The tournament winner was often considered the nation's top team (Grundy and Shackelford 2007).

Women continued to play outside of college. As men's collegiate teams grew, women's factory teams also grew due to the decrease in male basketball players during World War II. Women traveled, tried out, and were recruited from all over the country to work and play on the best factory teams. However, by the early 1950s, factory teams began to wane as more colleges were offering a women's basketball program and scholarships and women were losing industrial jobs to men who had returned from World War II. Women's collegiate teams still participated in the AAU National Championship. Women still had to face gender ideals of the 1950s: women were supposed to be strong but not too strong, tough but not too tough, and feminine while playing basketball. Players sought to balance their daring on-court moves with a strict observance of womanly convention in other realms of their life, and in this way they gained acceptance for assertive play by showing that it did not challenge the conventional definition of womanhood (Grundy and Shackelford 2010).

Women's basketball saw a sharp decline in the mid-1950s, as audiences dropped and teams and tournaments were eliminated. Women's basketball would not see a revival until the mid-1960s. Post World War II men's basketball prospered and the growth of men's basketball at the collegiate level caused colleges to lose interest in funding and supporting women's teams. With technological advances, suburban growth, and television, male and female gender distinctions were clearly made - leaving women out of sports. The National Basketball Association (NBA) professional league began in 1949 and slowly gained popularity until games

were shown on television and viewership soared. Television and ticket sales pumped money into college and professional athletics that had television time (Grundy and Shackelford 2010).

The first national organization for women's sports was the National Joint Committee for Extramural Sports for College Women, formed in 1957. The organization, which implemented rules and guidelines for extramural activities, also sanctioned intercollegiate competitions. Other organizations followed in an attempt to organize a women's intercollegiate athletic program that would have created, for the first time, mass competition and scholarships equal to the men's National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) (Furman 2011). Unfortunately, the National Joint Committee for Extramural Sports for College Women did not succeed in creating an equivalent female sports organization.

By the late 1950s American women were afforded various opportunities to participate in athletics at their respective colleges. Girls were also offered the opportunity to cheer for the men's sports at their schools. However, successful high school female athletes had little opportunity to engage in competitive collegiate athletics. In the first half of the twentieth century, women gained local support from family members and friends. With the invention of the television and its appearance in almost every family home, women lost supporters. Women now had to face the idea of being the wife of the perfect middle-class family with a male breadwinner. Women's basketball teams resorted to using beauty as their marketing tool to get fans. Women's sports did not gain the attention that individual female athletes did. It became more acceptable for women to play sports. However, women's sports were not viewed as equal to men's sports (Grundy and Shackelford 2010). Instead, women were not allowed to participate competitively at many colleges until the mid-1970s (Blumenthal 2005).

By 1960, women were still playing basketball; just not at the same level as men. Women were relegated to the sidelines as cheerleaders and beauty queens that resembled well-groomed housewives and the American ideal of femininity. Girls did not play basketball after high school. Kay Yow was one of the most well-known collegiate women's basketball coaches. She spent many years at the helm of North Carolina State University's women's basketball team. Becoming a coach was not an easy journey. In 1960, Yow graduated from Gibsonville High School in North Carolina, where she played on the women's basketball team. After high school Yow quit playing basketball and went to college to study English. Many women wanted to continue playing basketball after high school but had little choice. By the late 1960s, women were pushing for social change and women's basketball would be affected (Grundy and Shackelford 2010).

Across the country, sports-minded women were beginning to fight for women's physical education programs and sports. In 1966, the Division of Girls and Women's Sports, a physical educators' national organization, created the national Commission on Intercollegiate Athletics for Women (CIAW), designed to oversee women's intercollegiate athletics and organize national tournaments (Grundy and Shackelford 2010). By 1972, women's basketball had its own national championship. In the 1970s the Association for Intercollegiate Athletics for Women (AIAW) conducted all collegiate women's sports. This later led to a struggle to control women's athletics between the AIAW and the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) (Bell 2008).

With competition growing, many women realized they had been missing out on playing the sport they loved: basketball. Kay Yow was one of these women. When Yow graduated from college she began teaching high school English at Allen Jay High School. Yow not only taught but she also coached the girls' basketball team. Her first team went 22-3 and won the

conference. Yow loved coaching and the game of basketball. As social change of the late 1960s was occurring, the Civil Rights and Equality movements were showing the world inequality in America. The Women's Rights Movement spurred from this. Women were limited to certain jobs, they often could not rent an apartment or open a bank account on their own. They made less money and many college courses were closed to them, like coaching and engineering. Women began raising consciousness to help make equality happen (Grundy and Shackelford 2010).

At the college coaching level, female coaches were doing what they could with what little they had. In 1971, Kay Yow took her first college coaching job at Elon College. At Elon, the team paid for their own gas, food, and uniforms that they had to iron numbers on. Female coaches faced a power structure that did not care for women's sports; this could not be changed on their own. With fewer than 300,000 girls playing high school sports in 1971, women had a long way to go (Grundy and Shackelford 2010).

The Civil Rights Movement and Struggle for Women's Equality in Athletics

The Civil Rights Movement of the 1950s and 1960s had a large impact on women's fight for equality, not only in the work place but also in athletics. Women have traditionally been viewed as the weaker sex (Suggs 2005). In Betty Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique*, she identifies female norms as denying women their rights as a person. They are second-class citizens to men in every aspect of life. Friedan tells women:

“In almost every professional field, in business and in the arts and sciences, women are still treated as second-class citizens. It would be a great service to tell girls who plan to work in society to expect this subtle, uncomfortable discrimination--tell them not to be quiet, and hope it will go away, but fight it. A girl should not expect special privileges because of her sex, but neither should she "adjust" to prejudice and discrimination” (Friedan 1963, 23).

The passing of The Civil Rights Act of 1964, however, recognized equality for all by explicitly prohibiting gender discrimination. Title VI of the 1964 Civil Rights Act states that “no person in the United States shall, on the ground of race, color, or national origin, be excluded from, be denied the benefits of or subject to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance (*Education Amendment of 1972*).” The Act helped increase the status of women and minorities. Presidential agencies were given specific responsibilities to define discrimination, and to negotiate with public and private entities to end it (Suggs 2005). However despite these positive strides, women were still denied the same opportunities as men of any race or ethnicity. As a result, a wave of feminist activism began and they first pushed for an Equal Rights Amendment (ERA), which would have recognized full equality in the workplace, education, and athletics. In 1957, collegiate women seeking greater athletic opportunities moved closer to their goals when the Division for Girls and Women in Sport (DGWS) released an official statement that intercollegiate programs may exist for women (Bell 2008). The ERA was the focus of many women’s organizations such as N.O.W., which demanded that women be seen as equals in society, possessing the same mentality and ability as males (Wushanley 2004). The organization lobbied relentlessly for women’s rights and passage of Title IX to The Education Amendment of 1972 (Joplin 1997). Title IX, brought before Congress by Representative Edith Green (D-OR) and Senator Birch Bayh (D-IN) was a response to women being denied the opportunity to play competitive intercollegiate athletics. The legislation represented the demand for women to be equally the “students and the teachers,” having the same educational and job opportunities as males (Joplin 1997, 53). Title IX was enacted in June 1972, but at this time few people realized the impact the law would have on

women's intercollegiate athletics because it was worded to give all persons equal educational opportunities. The bill did not address athletics as an outlier (Joplin 1997).

The Education Amendment of 1972

United States Representative Edith Green of Oregon was one of the major players in the passing of the Education Amendment of 1972. During the late 1960s Green had worked hard to provide equal opportunities for both girls and boys, which were lacking. For example, state universities in Virginia had turned away 21,000 female students in the early 1960s; during the same period not a single male student was turned down. Green promoted laws that would fund new colleges so that more students could attend. Green also helped create the first federal scholarships and loans so that all students who wished to attend college could go, regardless of their financial situation. Green set out to stop sex discrimination in schools, saying that, at this time "it was perfectly legal to discriminate in any education program against girls or women" (Blumenthal 2005, 33). Green thus proposed an equal education bill, although many legislators, who believed girls simply did not need the same education or opportunities as boys, were against such a "radical" step. However, Edith Green was on her way to making great strides for women in education.

In 1971, when Congress discussed a major education bill focused on proposals for new financial aid for colleges and college students, Green promoted the addition of outlawing sex discrimination. This addition (labeled Title IX), would ban sex discrimination in programs and activities at any school that received federal funding. It did not begin as an athletic bill, rather it grew out of mounting frustrations of female athletes. Many universities opposed the addition of Title IX, believing it would hurt their student body and alumni funding. Nevertheless, the sex

discrimination part of the bill was passed by the House in the early months of 1972 (Blumenthal 2005).

In the Senate, the battle against sex discrimination in schools was led by Democrat Birch Bayh of Indiana. Many senators opposed the idea that men and women should be allowed to play the same sports. Senator Strom Thurmond from South Carolina was Bayh's most important opponent to the sex discrimination bill. Thurmond did not believe that state run military schools should have to allow the enrollment of girls. After the passing of the Education Amendment of 1972, private schools and military schools were exempt from enrolling girls. Although Bayh assured his fellow male senators that women should have their own arena of sports, which included the same opportunities as males (Blumenthal 2005). With Green and Bayh's strong push, the Education Amendment of 1972 was signed into law by President Richard Nixon on June 23, 1972. Curiously, the main focus of the law was on busing; little did people know that the bill's Title IX would soon take the spotlight and a new athletic era for girls and women would begin (Blumenthal 2005).

Many people outside the realm of politics continued to hold strong views against women having equal athletic opportunities. For instance, a 1971 *Seventeen Magazine* article cautioned girls to "stay in their own league," saying that women would never be as talented as men and that there was no point for women to try to compete in athletics, unless they participated in sports such as figure skating. As noted earlier, most women did not try to develop and strengthen their bodies, because they did not want to look like "freaks." In other words, women faced "a social and emotional limitation in sports, not a physical one" (Shoenstein 1971, 28). Social discourse suggested that women were incapable of competition because it was contrary to social norms and that they should not defy society. Katherine McKinnon illustrates how women have been

oppressed by male patriarchy in *Feminism Unmodified*. McKinnon states that, “Gender is an inequality of power, a social status based on who is permitted to do what to whom...being a doormat is definitely different from being a man. A woman’s options are so limiting.” Women were viewed as weak, uneducated and subordinate to men (MacKinnon 1987, 73). The passage of Title IX did not completely change the idea of women as the weaker sex.

Implementation of Title IX

Implementing and patrolling Title IX has been a struggle. First, “consciousness raising” was an important part of the emerging women’s movement, and ultimately, in achieving competitive intercollegiate athletics for women. Getting the word out about Title IX, a law for women’s equality, was an important step in people understanding the changes that were going to have to be made. To this end, *Sports Illustrated* played a significant role in attempting to debunk female stereotypes and raising the issue of equality in sports. In 1973, the magazine ran a three-part series, which helped raise the nation’s consciousness about the unequal treatment of women in all levels of sports in America (Gilbert and Williamson 1973). So did Gwen Gregory, who worked for the Office for Civil Rights of the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare (HEW), and was responsible for establishing government guidelines for the implementation of Title IX. Gregory wanted men and women to have the same opportunities, but on different playing fields, on different teams. Gregory believed women should be allowed to compete, but she did not believe it would be safe or equal if women began playing on men’s sports teams (Gilbert and Williamson 1973).

Title IX officially went into effect in June 1973, a year after it became a law. However, secondary institutions were not required to comply with its ban against sex discrimination until

1978. In June of 1974 Health, Education, and Welfare (HEW) released its preliminary Title IX regulations. These mandated that “no person shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in...any physical education program or athletic program operated by a recipient.” Other regulations included a need for promoting “student interest” in sports, and “affirmative efforts” to inform members of a certain sex about athletic opportunities (Federal Reserve 1974, 14). Title IX entitled females to the same quality of locker rooms, coaching, travel, and equipment as males. These regulations marked the true beginning of women’s equality in collegiate athletics. Title IX was about to change the rules of college athletic programs. This was one of the first major pieces of legislation that require men and women equal opportunity.

Still, schools resisted the new regulations. By the winter of 1973, the two major college sports organizations, the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) and the Association for Intercollegiate Athletics for Women (AIAW), were anxious about losing authority. The NCAA feared female involvement in men’s sports, as did many college’s athletic directors. The early 1970s, college sports were a huge business built around almost exclusively male sports. For example, in the early 1970s, the University of Michigan spent \$2.6 million a year on men’s sports. The budget for women’s sports was \$0-- there was no women’s program (Blumenthal 2005).

In May 1974, the NCAA lobbied Senator John Tower (R-Texas) to propose changing the education bill. Tower insisted that Title IX could not apply to any sports that brought in money from ticket sales. This would mean that football and basketball would be exempt from the regulations of Title IX. Tower, like many Title IX critics, believed that if football and basketball were forced to share their revenues that it would damage their programs. Feminists were horrified by this proposal and argued, if accepted, that there would never be equality and women

would never receive equal funding (Blumenthal 2005). Tower's amendment ultimately did not pass, but the argument that football should be exempt from Title IX persists today (Sabock 1975).

In May 1975 HEW published its final regulations which included single-sex sports, a definition of athletic equality, spending, and period of implementation. The final regulations required college and universities to develop a plan of action to "accommodate effectively the interest and abilities of both sexes" by July 1978 (Suggs 2005, 103). Surprisingly, however, institutions were not required to submit their plans of action to the Office of Civil Rights; they were only encouraged to publicize a plan in hopes to gain assistance of faculty and students to help comply with the new regulations. To be in compliance, a college or university did not have to duplicate men's sports for women, it simply had to determine if the school was offering the same athletic opportunity and availability for men and women. For example, if women on a college campus wanted to participate in basketball and there was enough interest, the school would be required to offer them the opportunity, and only if there was already a men's basketball team. Moreover, institutions were not required to spend the same amount of money on men's and women's sports. They were only suggested to consider the "impact of expenditures for sex-identifiable sports" (Suggs 2005, 109). As for scholarships, colleges and universities were required to reasonably give women and men the same number of scholarships, which would be depend on "the degree of interest and participation of male and female students in athletics" (Suggs 2005, 110). HEW concluded that the overall opportunity to receive scholarship should be proportionate to the number of students of each sex participating in intercollegiate athletics (Suggs 2005).

Intercollegiate associations such as the NCAA were quite displeased with the final implementation of Title IX. As a result the NCAA sued HEW, with the claim that Title IX outstripped the NCAA's authority. But in 1980 the NCAA's lawsuit died in the U.S. Court of Appeals which ruled that, since the NCAA was an independent association, it did not have legal standing to sue HEW. The NCAA was not the only organization that sought legal recourse. By this time HEW's regulations were to take full effect (in 1978), ninety-two complaints had been filed by high schools and colleges, stating that Title IX's regulations were too vague. HEW then established the "three-part test," which offered three options for institutional compliance (Women's Sports Foundation 2011). The first option, the "proportionality test" mandates that there must be the same proportion of female athletes on varsity teams as the proportion to female students (today this can be within a five percent range). If institutions do not satisfy the first standard, they must be able to demonstrate a "history of continuing practice" of expanding programs for women. The third possible standard for compliance is that a college or university must be able to show that the institution is fully and effectively accommodating the interest and abilities of women on campus. This option would be examined through equipment and supplies, games and practice schedules, travel and per diem allotment for meals, academic tutoring, coaching, facilities, medical and training facilities and services, publicity, recruitment, support services, and housing and dining facilities (Litchman 1998). The second part of the three prong test of Title IX is Athletic Financial Assistance; Title IX's only monetary requirements deal with scholarships. Scholarships must be given in proportion to the number of male and female student athletes participating in intercollegiate athletics. Funding for men's and women's programs does not have to be equal, but a large disparity in funds could lead to an institution being non-compliant with Title IX (Lichtman 1998). The third compliance prong of Title IX is

treatment of men's and women's programs as a whole. Title IX does not require each men's and women's team receive the same service and supplies. There are eleven criteria treatment is based on, which can be found in Table 1.1. The bottom line is that benefits to men's and women's programs do not have to be provided with the same amount of money, they just have to be comparable to one another. Female athletic participation grew and so did concerns over Title IX.

Table 1.1 “Criteria for equal treatment under Title IX” (Lichtman 1998)

Compliance Regulations	Criteria to be in Compliance
1	Locker rooms, practice and competitive facilities must be of similar quality.
2	Equipment and supplies must be equal in: quality, amount, suitability, and maintenance and replacement of equipment and supplies. These have to be comparable among men’s and women’s programs.
3	Scheduling of games and practice times must be equal to both men’s and women’s teams. A common issue under scheduling is “prime time” games. For example, if men’s basketball would always play Fridays at 7 p.m. while the women always played at 5:30 p.m., this would be in violation of Title IX.
4	Publicity looks at the availability and quality of sports information personnel. Men and women must receive equal benefits to publicity and other promotional programs.
5	Institutions must examine the equivalence in qualified full-time and part-time coaches.
6	Travel and daily allowances includes modes of transportation, length of stay before and after a competition, housing during travel, and dining arrangements for the team these must be comparable between men’s and women’s programs.
7	Academic tutoring must be comparable between men’s and women’s teams in the realm of qualifications, training and experience of tutors, and employment conditions.
8	Provision of housing and dining facilities and service such as laundry facilities, housing, parking spaces, and house-keeping services must be similar between men’s and women’s sports.
9	Provision of medical training facilities and service, including health, accident and injury insurance coverage, and available medical personal and assistance must be comparable between men’s and women’s athletic programs.
10	Recruitment of student athletes refers to whether athletic personnel and coaches serving male and female athletes are provided with equal recruiting opportunities.
11	Support services meaning administrative, secretarial, and clerical assistance provided to men’s and women’s programs must be comparable.

As schools began to put together women’s teams, aspiring coaches were the first to benefit. Most of these jobs started as part-time positions and went to women who already

worked in physical education departments. These women typically lacked coaching experience. For example, Pat Summit landed the head coaching job at the University of Tennessee at the age of twenty-two in 1974. Summit was able to lead the University of Tennessee to National Championships and sellout crowds (Grundy and Shackelford 2005).

Title IX gave women some opportunity but it did not offer a road map to equality. Women were working to build their programs through male resistance. In 1969, Carol Eckman organized the first national invitational tournament ever held in women's basketball. The teams not only played but they met, shared ideas, and worked together. In 1972, the AIAW took over tournament duties and instituted a series of regional playoffs that led to the national tournament (Grundy and Shackelford 2005).

During the 1970s, the men's game was driven by big money of major universities. In contrast, women's basketball had a small-school feel; scholarships, funding, and facilities were the same at all institutional levels during this time. In 1972, Immaculate College was the first women's basketball team to win a national championship (Grundy and Shackelford 2005).

The first nationally televised game took place on January 27, 1975 between Immaculate College and the University of Maryland. A month later, women's college basketball made its debut at Madison Square Garden. Women's basketball made another break through by gaining long-term corporate sponsors. As athletic budgets grew, institutions began to rely on corporate sponsors over ticket sales and television revenues to fund teams. In 1976 women's basketball gained national attention when the U.S. team competed in the Olympic Games for the first time. Most Americans still paid women's college basketball little attention. But with national pride, women's basketball gained more attention. Women's basketball grew as Title IX was implemented across the country (Grundy and Shackelford 2005).

Many women were able to continue their love for the game of basketball at the collegiate level and later professionally. Nancy Lieberman, one of the most recognized names in women's basketball, began playing the game she loved as a child. Lieberman wrote about how badly her mother hated her love for sports because it was not ladylike: sports were for boys, not girls. Lieberman grew up in Far Rockaway, Long Island and became one of the first major stars of a new era in women's basketball. In 1976, Lieberman missed her high school graduation to try out for the Olympic team, where she won a spot on the team. Lieberman had an abundance of college scholarship offers. She chose to play at Old Dominion University, which placed a higher priority on women's sports than most other colleges at the time. Lieberman played with an aggressive, all-around game that mirrored men's play. Her play earned her the nickname "Lady Magic," after NBA great Ervin "Magic" Johnson (Grundy and Shackelford 2005).

At Old Dominion, the women's basketball team traveled in an old eight-door limousine that represented the idea of the previous era's scrimmage style. Like that style, the teams would often have milk and cookies with their opponents after the game. Lieberman thought this to be a ridiculous idea. This soon ended in Lieberman's second year at Old Dominion. By Lieberman's junior year, 1979, Old Dominion won a National Championship. Lieberman said "we were like celebrities" (Grundy and Shackelford 2005, 79). In 1980, Old Dominion won its second title. During this time, top high school athletes were heavily recruited by schools all over the nation.

By the early 1980s, women's participation in college athletics had increased rapidly. Between 1966 and 1977 the number of women participating in college athletics jumped from 16,000 to 64,375, according to a report by the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights. Budgets, however, did not keep up with the rise in athletes. Women's teams tended to travel in coaches' cars and vans, eating on a very limited budget. A healthy diet is important for any athlete,

especially one at the college level. Women's teams were forced to eat on half the budget of a men's team. This required them to sacrifice health and nutrition. Men's teams, on the other hand, traveled on buses and airplanes. These conditions led women to file complaints against athletic departments and their host universities, or with HEW. The Office of Civil Rights (OCR) was the only agency directed to review institutional compliance. If the investigators found a violation, they negotiated with the institution to resolve it. If the institution failed to comply with Title IX regulations, then steps would be taken to strip the college of its federal funds, which included research grants, student financial aid, and capital allocations. Implementation was slow, and the NCAA protested that Title IX requirements were illegal. Under President Carter, HEW had to further identify Title IX regulations and requirements set for federally funded institutions. The mere threat of this has caused colleges receiving federal funds to comply with Title IX (Suggs 2005).

While HEW and the OCR were enforcing compliance with Title IX, there was much discussion as to which athletic organization was going to be in charge of women's athletics, the NCAA or AIAW. Importantly, both organizations resisted the implementation of Title IX regulation. The AIAW instead wanted to incorporate men's and women's athletics into one organization, and for this to happen, there had to be "sexual equality" in program opportunities, governance, power, and philosophic expression. The NCAA, which responded first to the issue and the governance of women's intercollegiate athletics, finally concluded that equal athletic opportunity for women was a legal and moral obligation. This, of course, was very different from the NCAA's initial approach. The NCAA's transformation, however, began a battle between the NCAA and the AIAW over which organization had governance of women's intercollegiate athletics. At first, the NCAA and the AIAW tried to merge to create one

functioning organization, but this ended up being impossible. Eventually the NCAA drove the AIAW to bankruptcy (Suggs 2005).

After the NCAA took over women's sports from the AIAW, women felt torn. The AIAW had built women's athletics and supported them through Title IX. However, the NCAA could offer women's sports another level of fame and money. In 1982, the first year women's basketball was under NCAA rule, their games were played on CBS and women's basketball became a business. Building a broad audience for women's basketball proved to be a challenge, however, as people still struggled with separating athletic prowess from views of femininity (Grundy and Shackelford 2005).

In 1978, the Women's Professional Basketball League (WBL) was created. By 1981, Lieberman was playing for the Dallas Diamonds of the WBL. The teams did their best to not only promote the team but the feminine aspects of their players. The WBL also tried to conceal that some of its players were homosexual. Lieberman's first season in the WBL would also be the league's last season operating. Overall enthusiasm for the WBL lagged (Grundy and Shackelford 2005). There would not be another professional women's basketball league until the 1990s.

Women's basketball supporters continued to push for support. In the early 1980s women's basketball was the largest female collegiate sport. During the 1981-82 season, there were a total of 9,624 women's basketball players among all three NCAA divisions, compared to 11,578 men's basketball players the same year (Brown 2012). Women had been gaining ground but not at the same growth rate as men. With the NCAA sponsoring women's sports, women hoped they would only find more equality. By the late 1980s, the prospects for women's sports began to brighten at the federal level. In 1988 Congress reauthorized Title IX regulations

placing pressure on college and athletic administration to continue working for equality between men's and women's sports (Grundy and Shackelford 2005).

Chapter Three - Critical Feminist Discourse of Sport

I use a critical feminist approach to analyze the differences between men's and women's collegiate and professional basketball. Critical theory critiques and aims to change society as a whole. Core concepts of critical social theory are that it should be directed at the totality of society in its historical context and that critical theory should improve the understanding of society by integrating geography, sociology, economics, history, political science, psychology, and anthropology (Corradetti 2011).

A major characteristic of critical theory is understanding the ultimate source or foundation of social domination. Historical understanding of circumstances that have created social domination is important to acknowledging what can be done to end it. Modern critical theory concerns itself with authority and injustice. By situating critical theory in historical and cultural contexts, it sees social problems as always changing due to political and social transformations. As a result, critical theory is often focused on micro-scale research, rather than broad generalizations. Postmodern critical research is also characterized by representation of injustice in varying aspects from environmental research to gender discrimination. Postmodern critical research uses qualitative research to clarify findings through personal experiences in subjective settings (Lindlof and Taylor 2002).

Women have been lagging in sports equality for a long time, but why? This is the basic question of contemporary feminist theory, which is rooted in gaining equality for women. Feminist theory aims to understand gender inequality. It examines gendered social roles, interests, experiences, philosophy, literature, education, and economics (Zinn, Hondagneu-Sotelo, Messner, and Denissen 2015). Feminist theory generally critiques social relations and

female subjugation in society. Historically, feminist theory has changed with the needs of women at certain times. For example, the early 1900s women's suffrage movement brought women together to fight for the right to vote. In the 1960s women pushed for an Equal Rights Amendment, and it did not pass. However, Title IX, which requires equal opportunity for women in federally funded institutions and the Equal Pay Act did pass. The Women's Rights Movement has changed politics and life for women. Feminist theory attempts the liberation of women and an articulation of the world in terms of women's experience (Zinn, Hondagneu-Sotelo, Messner, and Denissen 2015).

When melding critical theory and feminist theory, one finds that social inequality is the main overlapping theme. Critical feminist theories examine how cultural structures and practices shape women's and men's lives. These theories also look for how women become empowered and in some cases, how they change dominant patterns and perceptions. Critical feminism seeks to promote equality between women and men. Feminist critical frameworks make gender the main focus of analysis: they aim to restructure practices that have excluded, undermined, and devalued women's concerns. Methodologically, these frameworks attempt to describe the world in ways that correspond with experiences of women and that identify fundamental social changes that are necessary for full equality between the sexes (Rhode 1991).

Critical Feminism aims to explain the facts of the past and present for the misrepresentation of women. It analyzes and critiques gender, power, and inequalities in society. It also aims to use social policies to help women to gain equal access to resources, individual autonomy and economic and political power in society. Many critical feminists do not agree with completing research solely using the quantitative method. Numbers do not represent the true responses of the responders and their feelings and thoughts toward certain subjects. As a

result, critical feminist research adopted qualitative research from other critical sociologists, which uses semi-structured questionnaires and minimally structured in-depth interviewing (Agassi 2000).

Critical Feminist theories focus on power relations and issues such as unequal status and privilege accorded to women compared to that accorded to men. It has been found that white men tend to dominate power positions in society, family, and everyday interactions. According to Critical Feminism, the greater power held by men is the primary reason that women's perspectives, experiences, and knowledge have been devalued and suppressed. Critical Feminist Theories seek to raise awareness of women's perspectives, experiences, and knowledge (Rhode 1991).

Women's basketball has been one of the fastest growing sports in America; it has been growing at an exponential rate since the 1970s. Women have seen many changes in athletics at the collegiate and professional level since the 1970s. In 1972, Congress passed Title IX legislation and put into effect a law that does not allow athletic discrimination at federally funded institutions. Women's basketball has been growing rapidly since but not at the same rate as men's basketball.

Prior to Title IX legislation, women's basketball did not prosper at the collegiate level. Women competed competitively for textile mills, factories, and other businesses. Women would be recruited by a company out of high school to work and play basketball for them. These teams would travel around the country and compete. This was the highest and most prestigious level of basketball women could participate in prior to Title IX legislation (Grundy Shackelford 2007).

There are gender, media, marketing, and cultural differences present at the collegiate and professional level of men's and women's basketball. Women have been attempting to gain the

same popularity as men's basketball since 1972. Women have equal opportunities to play yet they do not have equal encouragement. However, some women have changed the way basketball has been viewed and played. For example, Nancy Lieberman is one of the most influential female basketball players of all time. She played collegiately, professionally, coached a men's team, and is now a philanthropist. Basketball has enabled women to achieve many dreams they may otherwise be unable to accomplish. Still, women have fewer fans, make less money, and have less television coverage than men. The following literature attempts to discover the cultural differences between men's and women's collegiate and professional basketball.

Since Title IX women have been able to gain many new opportunities, educationally and athletically. These opportunities have helped women become more independent, self-sufficient, educated, and successful. Athletics has been a main factor in that. Although women have made major strides in gaining athletic equality, it has not been reached, and this is easily seen in basketball. Women and men each have the opportunity to play collegiate and professional basketball, but at different cost. Women are often forced to give up their dreams of playing in the WNBA due to lack of opportunity and lack of salary. It has been forty-one years since Title IX legislation was passed by Congress. However, women are still struggling to find equality.

The importance of being able to understand gender disparities will give insight into why women face inequality in athletics, in particular, basketball. My research will focus on critical feminism while exploring research on media influence, sports literature, and social theories.

What is Feminism?

According to the *Merriam-Webster Dictionary*, feminism is: “the theory of political, economic, and social equality of the sexes” (Merriam-Webster 2014). The dictionary also notes that feminism was an organized activity on behalf of women’s rights and interests (Merriam-Webster 2014). According to Jennifer Baumgardner and Amy Richards, authors of the popular feminist novel *Manifesta* they add to the definition that “feminism means that women have the right to enough information to make informed choices about their lives”(Baumgardner and Richards 2010).

“Women is a term that encompasses all women: middle-class white, rich black lesbians, and working-class straight Asian women, for example. Feminism is an organic intertwining of movements for economic and racial equality, as well as gay rights. An important component of equality is an allegiance between men and women. Equality is a balance between males and females, with the intention of liberating the individual” (Baumgardner and Richards 2010, 171).

Breaking down the definition of feminism puts it into three components. Feminism is a movement, meaning a group working to accomplish specific goals. These goals are political and social change. This implies that one must be involved with the government and law, along with social beliefs and practices. For these goals to work it is important for sufficient information be easily accessible to women, so they are able to make responsible choices (Baumgardner and Richards 2010).

The goals of feminism are carried out by the everyday woman herself. A feminist can be whoever he or she wants to be, just with a political consciousness. For example, you could be a single mom, a new bride, or a big Hollywood producer; and you could still be a feminist. A feminist may also be someone who wants to be exactly who they are. Feminism includes a wide variety of people, including American Indian, Jews, Latinas, Lesbians, Marxists, working class, and much more. Each of these groups is drawn to political equality. Different groups have

different struggles that need to be emphasized because it affects their struggle for equality (Baumgardner and Richards 2010).

Most women come to feminism through personal experience, which is one reason why the core of feminism is so broad. The term feminism represents a diversity of individual lives. Often a woman who would not normally align herself with feminism will seek it out when she is confronted with an abusive relationship, unequal pay, or if she is trying to open her own business. Women have typically been there to help other women (Baumgardner and Richards 2010).

Critical Feminist Theories

Critical feminism refuses versions of sexual differences which are produced through historical and cultural means. Critical feminism understands there are social differences; however, it does not focus on these as the cause of inequality (Butler and Weed 2011). Catherine MacKinnon's feminist theories focus on sexual discrimination, sex stereotypes, and gender misconceptions. I use MacKinnon's theories to situate my research and findings on inequality in women's and men's basketball and why these disparities exist. MacKinnon approaches gender misconception with a dominance approach. In this approach one will see a shift in gender as difference, where women attempt to classify themselves and men as the same; to dominance, where difference has been used to establish a difference in power (MacKinnon 1987). The dominance approach tries to challenge reality. MacKinnon uses the dominance approach to question politics and the treatment of women under the male hierarchy created in American society. It examines gender and sex inequalities as imposed positions created on the basis of difference between the sexes. If sex inequalities are approached as an imposed position

given to each sex, then one must ask when differences between the sexes ends how can one justify women being treated as less (MacKinnon 1987)? This means, as long as sex equality is limited by gender/sex differences, women will be degraded and viewed as the lesser sex (MacKinnon 1987). The dominance approach allows this research to identify how male dominance has situated women as the lesser athlete.

MacKinnon also examines the role gender differentiation has on women in sports. While there are biological differences between men and women, society has created subjective distinctions between the sexes. For example, women and men have been identified as having specific biological roles, and these roles have been carried over into a gender hierarchy where women are seen as the caregiver and men as seen as the breadwinner. Women's physicality has been tempered by male supremacy and the idea that women have been excluded from physical activities. Historically, women and men have pursued different physical pursuits. Men have been encouraged to push themselves to their best, to beat records, to define what athletics means. Women, on the other hand, have been limited by the concept that femininity means physically weak. Feminism has attempted to transform the meaning of athletics. By using the dominance theory in athletics, one can see that women have been subjected to the idea that men are strong and women are weak. Until the passage of Title IX in 1972, many women spent the majority of their time on the sidelines. Overcoming the stereotype of being on the sidelines, women have also noticed that most athletics have been designed to maximize the attributes of the male sex. Being female and being athletic has been a social contradiction (MacKinnon 1987).

In my research, I will be examining how dominance theory and the law have combined to create a strange contradiction for women in athletics. Women are identified by their relationships with men, however athletics gives women the opportunity to claim their bodies as

their own (MacKinnon 1987). By examining research on the history of women in basketball and identifying how dominance theory has influenced women's athletics from past to present, one will see that disparities still exist between men's and women's basketball.

For understanding the cultural differences between men's and women's basketball, we must understand how gender is perceived in American society. "Doing Gender" a 1987 article by Candace West and Don H. Zimmerman introduces the idea of gender not as a trait, social role or representation, but as a product of daily social practices and behaviors which define masculinity and femininity. The same identification can be found in dominance theory. West and Zimmerman define gender as a set of sociological codes that are at the foundation of everyday activities. "Doing gender" means a person performs complex social activities which are defined as either masculine or feminine. Gender is established through interactions between people. The authors create three concepts that replace traditional sex and gender distinctions. 1) Sex is a determination found through biological criteria that defines a person as male or female. 2) Sex categorization is used when socially required identification is required, this supposes sex but sex is not determined by it. 3) Gender is a reaction and result of a person's actions in certain situation. Gender is typically determined by one's sex categorization (West and Zimmerman 1987).

"Doing Gender" is crucial to advancing the understanding of dominance theory and researching why men and women are expected to behave in particular ways in different situations. Female basketball players typically go against gender expectations. "Doing Gender" does not look at athletes as an example, however female athletes do not easily fit into gender stereotypes in American society. Female basketball players are both masculine and feminine: they are competitive, and have families. Many female athletes balance their role as masculine

sports figures as well as society's views of femininity. West and Zimmerman argue that for social change to occur and men and women to be accepted equally, the change must begin within the institution of sports (West and Zimmerman 1987).

"Doing Gender" lacks current philosophy on gender. However, the article is situated in a time when women's basketball was on the rise and women were fighting between femininity and their competitive masculine nature. Understanding how female basketball players are torn between their gender identities helps explain why women's basketball is unequal to men's basketball due to male dominance in society.

Male dominance can be clearly seen in collegiate and professional basketball. A 2013 study conducted by Nefertiti Walker and Melanie Sartore-Baldwin, "Hegemonic Masculinity and the Institutionalized Bias Toward Women in Men's Collegiate Basketball: What do Men Think?" investigates men's basketball coaches overall attitude and perceptions of women in men's collegiate basketball (Walker and Sartore-Baldwin 2013). The study finds that men's college basketball is a "male-dominated organizational culture of sport" (Walker and Sartore-Baldwin 2013, 12). In Walker and Sartore-Baldwin's study they found themes of masculine culture, lack of access and opportunity for women, institutionalized norms, and a cognitive institution that has existed for generations (Walker and Sartore-Baldwin 2013). These themes are also evident in my study and help support dominance theory in the institution of basketball at the collegiate level.

Exploring the female side of athletics is crucial to understanding the challenges women face. Theories about the changing of sport are important for understanding progress made by women in athletics. Michael Messner, a sociologist at the University of Southern California, studied sport, masculinity, and power. In his book, *Taking the Field: Women, Men, and Sport*,

Messner uses previous gender and sports research to understand how gender is produced, reproduced, and contested in sport. The book finds that gender is a product of sport in America. Messner examines sport and sport media, and how they affect gender relationships in sports. Messner found that sport is changing and challenged by individual sports, female athleticism, the increased visibility of homosexual male athletes, and progressive non-homophobic individuals (Messner 2002). This book is useful because it deals with ways that men and women are affecting gender identities of sports and athletes. The book attempts to locate men's and women's sports as core and periphery relationships and details how they intermingle and work to create and influence gender stereotypes in athletics. Messner creates a feminist theory that examines how personal attributes become political in athletics. This theory is one way women have gained advocates and change for athletic equality.

Title IX is occasionally blamed for causing a disappearance of men's collegiate athletic teams. Victoria Langton's article "Stop the Bleeding: Title IX and the Disappearance of Men's Collegiate Athletic Teams" attempts to show that Title IX has given women equality while significantly reducing the opportunities for male athletes. The article examines the text of Title IX, its regulations, and interpretations. It also analyzes lawsuits male athletes used to challenge Title IX. The article calls for the Supreme Court to grant certiorari¹ to address the issues with Title IX and eliminate the capping of men's teams rosters (Langton 2009).

This article does little to no investigation on the positive impacts Title IX has made on women's collegiate sports. It blames Title IX for preventing men from gaining more opportunity. This article shows bias against women's collegiate athletics and Title IX. Ultimately this article provides court cases against Title IX and their rulings - further evidence of recent backlash against Title IX legislation.

¹ Certiorari: where a higher court reviews a decision of a lower court.

Women have been greatly affected by physical activity and sport in their lives. Jennifer VanSickle's article, "The Impact of Physical Activity and Sport in the Lives of Women" demonstrates how powerful sport is in cultivating powerful, confident, and successful women. The article focuses on how Title IX legislation has changed women's lives forever by allowing them to get involved with athletics at the grassroots level. Vansickle argues that through better education on Title IX and the positive impact sports can have on women, women can change their lives for the better (VanSickle 2012). This article shows what sports can do for women while challenging male dominance. However, it is lacking information on how much further women have to go to becoming equal to men.

Historically, media coverage has exposed dominance theory and the way women and men are viewed as athletes. Pamela Creedon's book, *Women, Media and Sport: Challenging Gender Values*, examines how media creates and reflects gender values in society. The book looks at how women are assumed to be less qualified, powerful, or physical than male athletes. The book examines the history of media in sports starting the 1930s. The book also analyzes the active role of the media in constructing stereotyped images of female athletes. Creedon found that when the media does discuss women in sports, they do so in a way that depicts women as the weaker sex. When the media reports of on female athletes, they often discuss their looks, family, or life outside of the game. Socially constructed gender differences are translated into gender hierarchy in the media. Creedon also uses interviews with females in sports media to reveal traditional sport agenda and how reporters deal with gender cases. *Women, Sport and Media's* main focus is that media creates differences between male and female athletes (Creedon 1994).

Creedon (1994) attempts to create a new model for sport. Creedon believes that by creating a new female archetype, it could change cultural values from women being inferior to

becoming equal and creating a solution to the dominance theory. The female archetype includes a woman who has physical control over her body and the ability to make choices without criticism on how she treats herself. However, the end of the book does not focus on media or help lead into future research. The book ends with no real lead into the future and how sport and media may really change or be changed for more equality. The book does not challenge the ideology of sport as a male dominated field. Overall, this book is most useful to understanding how women's sports have been involved in media since the 1930s.

Continuing with the theme of women in sport media, "Differential Media Coverage of Men's and Women's Basketball: Reflection of Gender Ideology" explores the extent to which mass media coverage of men's and women's sports reflects the broader gender ideology of society. The study uses television coverage of men's and women's intercollegiate basketball as its context and verbal commentary as the text (Blinde, Greendorfer, and Shanker 1991). Blinde et al build on Creedon's research and further identify male superiority and sex identification in sports. The authors attempt to identify qualitative differences in the manner in which men's and women's games were presented by networks and if coverage differences did exist. They tried to identify ideological assumptions which underlie differences, looking at data from 16 televised games from 1988-90 seasons (Blinde, Greendorfer, and Shanker 1991). Another study completed by Adams and Tuggle (2009) backs these findings, showing that less than five percent of sports coverage is given to female athletics.

Blind et al (1991) found that there were general coverage differences. Men's game and performances were used as a standard of comparison and understanding for the women's game and performances. The women's games were noted as "women's basketball" while men's was simply called "basketball" (Blinde, Greendorfer, and Shanker 1991). The language depicts that

men's is better because it is not classified as the "other." Sexist and non-parallel language was used to discuss female athletes and their performances. For example, women were referred to as angry when they were being aggressive. Lastly, commentators showed expectations relative to appearance, physicality, and athleticism for each gender. This study shows that ideology of sport as a male dominated domain is reinforced through differential media coverage and commentary of men's and women's intercollegiate basketball (Blinde, Greendorfer, and Shank 1991).

Differential media coverage is also the subject of "Hoop Games: A Narrative Analysis of Television Coverage of Women's and Men's Professional Basketball," where Leah R. Vande Berg and Sarah Projansky examine how televised sport commentary frames the athletes and actions during women's and men's U.S. professional basketball games in 1996 and 1997 as masculine and feminine. The authors examine the narratives conveyed through commentary during the inaugural seasons of the American Basketball League (ABL) and the Women's Professional Basketball League (WNBA) as well as the 1997 National Basketball Association (NBA). The study found three themes found in both men's and women's basketball commentary: athletic prowess, agency, and adversity narratives. The study also found three themes only found in women's basketball commentary: discipline narratives, diaspora narratives, and domestic role narratives (Berg and Projansky 2003).

Berg and Projansky (2003) describe discipline narratives as a way to undermine female athletes' skills. The study found that women basketball players were depicted by their dependence on being obedient and following the expert advice of others. Discipline narratives framed sportswomen as children who would only learn better practices through discipline. Women were viewed as only successful if they listened to the advice of males (Berg and Projansky 2003).

The second way commentators depicted women was through diaspora narratives. Diaspora narratives place women as exiles in the world of basketball. U.S. women's basketball players have been marginalized as the "other" (Berg and Projansky 2003). Commentators focus more on women's love for the game as children than their skill as an adult. For example, in the WNBA's inaugural season, *Sports Illustrated* writer Bill Colson stated that "at no time did we ever think of doing more than two pages or a scorecard on women's basketball" (Berg and Projansky 2003, 36).

Lastly, domestic narratives were used to frame women's basketball commentary. Domestic narratives focused on sportswomen's performances of nonathletic roles such as mother, wife, caregiver, and sexual role model. For example, female basketball players who were mothers would be framed as successes because they were working mothers. This would then be used to discuss topics like teen pregnancy. Research found that women's involvement in basketball has greatly decreased the way society and the media view women as inferior in athletics (Berg and Projansky 2003). The way television covers or fails to cover women in athletics affects the way female athletes are perceived by society. This idea makes media coverage of women's basketball very important for success. The study found that men and women were given different identities by sports commentators. For example, women playing in the WNBA and ABL were often framed as working parents, sexual role models, caregivers, and heterosexual romantic partners. Male athletes are portrayed based on skill and ability. This article is important for my research to identify how media differentiates when discussing men and women basketball players (Berg and Projansky 2003).

"Hoop Games" could be improved if the study was taken over a longer time frame and included differences between commentary on collegiate basketball players and professional

basketball players. The study does not disclose how this commentary affects women or men basketball players in their lives players or how they feel about the narratives used to describe them. The article does note that equality has not been reached but progress has been made.

Continuing with the theme of gender in televised sports brings me to a research article titled, "Gender in Televised Sports: News and Highlights Shows, 1989-2009." The study looks at two decades of news reports on women's sports on television news and highlights shows; it has tracked the progress and lack of progress. The study found that the language commentators' use towards women has improved and there are fewer sexist and insulting comments used toward women athletes than in 1989. However, the overall coverage of women's sports has declined (Messner and Cooky 2010). The article provides statistical data on the coverage of women's sports and how air time for women's sport has decreased since 1989. The article studies the three big men's sports that led broadcast in and out of season: these sports are men's basketball, football, and baseball. The study also found that men's and women's pro and college basketball had very separate and unequal coverage. The WNBA received a tiny fraction amount of coverage that the NBA received. In college basketball, during the NCAA tournament, women's teams received little to no coverage while the men were lavished with air time.

"Gender in Televised Sports" does try to show why women have received less air time. Women are no longer sexualized as they previously were. The study does not give a hypothesis as to why women have not gained in sports news coverage since 1990. The authors blame tight budgets and revenues on why women's sports have not gained fans which then leads to less media coverage (Messner and Cooky 2010). Messner and Cooky attempt to determine how change can occur, which would be supporting and hiring more women sports reporters and commentators since they may cover sports differently than men and bring different viewers.

This study provides substantial amounts of data about how women's sports are portrayed on television, but is pessimistic about women can gain more equality. Its suggestions are weak and will not be effective without larger cultural change in male dominance.

Not all sources believe women are getting the short end of the stick. Rick Harrow's *CBS Sports* article "March Madness: Business of the Women's Tournament" attempts to show that women's collegiate basketball has reached its full potential and equality. The article gives statistics with no citation or explanation of how the numbers were found. The article makes assumptions about female fans. For example, "female sport fans have been the most avid and loyal of all" (Harrow 2005). The article continues to list accomplishments women's basketball has made through advertisements and spectatorship. However, it does not compare women's basketball to men's basketball and the success men have had.

Another study, "Women's Sport Spectatorship: An Exploration of Men's Influence," examines why women watch certain sports and what influences them to do so. The study found that their participants watch sports to socialize, they typically only watched men's sports, women believed that only men understood sports, a lack of coverage prevent them from watching women's sports, and they wanted to please the people around them (Farrell, Fink, and Field 2011). This research parallels the many themes found in this study of the disparities between men's and women's collegiate basketball. It depicts dominance theory, masculinity in sports, and lack of media attention.

There is an abundance of literature that describes the differences between men's and women's basketball. This literature examines physicality, gender stereotypes, media inequality, and financial differences, however it does not explain how women can overcome male

dominance in athletics. My research will show the disparities that still exist and how women have been attempting to bridge the gap between men's and women's basketball inequality.

Chapter Four- Methods

Semi-structured interviews were conducted among Division I colleges in the Southeastern region of the United States during the spring of 2014 to learn about individual experience and feelings towards men's and women's collegiate basketball. The interview process will be detailed in the sections below. An explanation of procedures used in data analysis, which includes approaches to qualitative data is in the next section. The final section of the chapter examines the strengths and weaknesses of this study and methodology.

Data Collection

Qualitative

Data was collected through semi-structured interviews. This method was chosen to be the main form of collection, surveys were used as supplemental data to support interview findings. Qualitative research is a common sociological practice to complete in depth research on a small focused sample group (Hesse-Biber and Leavy 2010).

I conducted both 'on-site' and phone interviews in the southeast region, with a group of female employees, fans, and players involved with the women's basketball. I conducted seven semi-structured interviews as part of the study. Research with human subjects was approved by Morehead State University's Institutional Review Board. Interviewees chose whether they wanted to participate. Snowball sampling was used to gain access to more subjects. Consent forms and information letters were signed by all participants (See appendix).

Of seven semi-structured interviews, two were current Division I female basketball players at a mid-major university in a border state. I interviewed three basketball fans from the southeast; two male, one female. I also interviewed one Division I women's basketball coach

from a mid-major southeastern university. To bring a media perspective to the study, I interviewed a sports information director at a major southern Division I institution. Most interviews were completed in a one-on-one setting in a public place. Three interviews were conducted over the phone.

Out of the seven participants that took part in the study, five were female, and two were male, one being African American the rest were Caucasian. They ranged in age from 19 to 38 years old. Geographically, interviewees lived in the states of Kentucky, North Carolina, Tennessee, and Texas, suggesting that participants were embedded in southern basketball culture. However, by looking at other studies, I found the information I found seemed consistent across the United States. For example, Berg and Projansky (2003) Walker and Sartore and Baldwin (2013) and Messner and Cooky (2010) all completed studies that researched the disparities women face in basketball. Figure 1.1 shows a table that provides a list of participants and individual demographics.

Figure 1.1 Participant Descriptions

Participant	Pseudonym	Age	Position
#1	Carrie	21	NCAA DI Player
#2	Miranda	20	NCAA DI Player
#3	Samantha	24	NCAA DI Coach
#4	Charlotte	27	NCAA DI Sports Information Director
#5	Natasha	38	Basketball Fan
#6	Steve	29	Basketball Fan
#7	Adrian	19	Basketball Fan

I began by speaking with University basketball coaches who then connected me with players. The tactic of snowballing allowed me to reach the majority of my participants. This procedure is when you gain additional contacts for prospective participants from people already interviewed (Hessee-Biber and Leavy 2010). Once I interviewed two players, they linked me to fans and coaches they had previously known. Interviews were usually set up through email or by telephone.

Interviews ranged from thirty minutes to an hour. Snowballing proved to be effective in gaining interview access especially with current players and coaches, as they felt more comfortable with me because they had an idea of what to expect from the interview. I believe I was able to relate to the interviewees because I am a former college athlete and we had that commonality and shared experience. The current basketball players I interviewed asked prior to the interview if their coach would be given a copy of the interview. I assured them no, and they seemed to relax and proceed honestly in the interview. Once the interviews were conducted the participants were asked to identify anyone they believed would fit the criteria of the research. To avoid bias, I asked participants to refer potential participants for different southeastern universities.

Interviews were tape recorded, and I used an interview guide to loosely structure the conversation. The interview guide used with current or former players can be found in the figure 1.2 . The interview guide evolved during research, and topics covered varied based upon interviewees' role in women's basketball.

Figure 1.2

1. When did you start playing basketball?
2. Why did you start playing?
3. Did you have an icon? If so, who was it and why?
4. When did you realize playing in college was a dream for you?
5. Do you know a lot of people that played in college or tried to make it pro?
6. Do you believe you can play after college?
7. Do you know of many people from your youth that have played collegiate or professional basketball?
8. What does it mean to you to play collegiate basketball?
9. What does it mean to be an athlete?
10. Do you believe playing on a team has helped you or will help in your life?
11. Have you faced any adversities as a basketball player?
12. If so, would you mind giving some examples?
13. Have you ever faced any gender discrimination?
14. Do you consider yourself masculine or feminine? Why?
15. How do you believe society views you?
16. What are three words you would use to describe yourself?
17. Do believe there are any differences between men's and women's basketball?
18. What are they, and why do these differences exist?
19. Are there any types of differences at the professional level? If so, please explain.
20. If there was one thing you could change about the game or culture of basketball what would it be?
21. On and off the court, do you believe you have an advantage in life because you are a basketball player?

The data was analyzed using a phenomenological approach, this is a lens used to explore those who are closely involved in something being studied (Crotty 1998). In this case female athletes, coaches, media, and fans are most intimately involved with the relationship between women's and men's collegiate basketball. This also allows for comparison into other related studies.

Analysis

Once the interviews had been completed, each was transcribed. I then went through each interview and identified major concepts. These concepts included: masculinity, femininity,

media, money, sexual orientation, pace of the game of basketball, and more. Once each interview was fully analyzed, I went through and made a list of themes found in at least four of the seven interviews. The themes found on this list then became the major themes that were analyzed and researched based on prior studies completed in similar topic areas. The four themes found are: institutionalized masculinity, money drives media attention, femininity of female athletes, and life skills.

These themes were found in other studies where research and interviews with other people involved in basketball were taken. These studies helped support the findings in the research completed in this study.

Chapter Five - Results and Analysis

The results of the qualitative study suggest that there is a dominant masculine culture found in men's and women's collegiate and professional basketball. This culture is acknowledged by most participants as being the norm with little to no explanation of how to change the current standard of male dominance in sport. The following sections describe the major themes that emerged from the interviews conducted, the themes are: institutionalized masculinity, money driving media attention, the femininity of female athletes, and life skills learned through athletics. These themes can be found in other studies, and show how women are immediately affected by the disparities between men's and women's collegiate basketball.

Institutionalized Masculinity Leaves Women at a Disadvantage

Most participants expressed feelings of institutional masculinity. Institutional theory examines how one group dominates another. In this study, men dominate the realm of athletics. Institutions create ideologies which will transcend generations (Walker and Satore-Baldwin 2013). In this instance, the participants show themes of institutional theory in their experiences with collegiate basketball.

Adrian, a basketball fans says, "Sports are founded by men, people who usually write stories are men, and... men are in the limelight." Adrian is showing how the historical concept of men as creating the institution of basketball allows them to dominate the sport in acceptance, media, and dictation.

Another interviewee, Samantha, who is a Division I women's basketball coach sees institutionalization on a daily basis.

The culture of basketball is men having more of a “good ole boys system” than women. Athletic directors seem to care more about the men’s basketball outcomes of winning and losing. They (athletic directors) take more into account when they hire for men’s basketball coaches than women’s basketball coaches. The men on campus are treated differently. Assistant men’s coaches have name plates and business cards. Applying for (women’s) basketball jobs also leads to discrimination between black, white, male, female, straight, and gay; whereas, men only compete for jobs among black and white men. There is much more competition in women’s basketball for jobs.

Samantha describes the control men have over the institution of basketball and sport. Similar ideas can be found in Walker and Sartore-Baldwin’s study, which explains that one of the most difficult barriers for women to overcome is just getting hired. The institutional dominance of men in basketball prevents women from reaching the same opportunities as men (Walker and Sartore-Baldwin 2013).

Other participants reflected on similar ideas of institutional dominance. Miranda, a college player, was asked if she thought there would ever be a way to eliminate inequality between men’s and women’s basketball. She responded:

I don’t think in our life time, no. Even long ago, women could not vote, men worked and made money. Women were just a piece of the puzzle. That’s been a long way and we have made adjustments, but not enough. I think it is going to be a while before women are equal. It has been pounded into everyone’s mind that men are always above women. I think it will take a while, I hope it doesn’t but I am afraid it (equality) may not even happen or get worse.

This participant describes the logic behind MacKinnon’s dominance theory. Dominance theory illustrates the shift of paradigms; the equality paradigm becomes a battle between the powerful and the powerless (MacKinnon 1987). In athletics, women are the powerless. The history of women in athletics outlines the discrimination and struggle women have faced to be included in sports. Similar to the response from Miranda, MacKinnon examines what it would mean for female participation in the institution that is sport. MacKinnon states that women do not have to participate in male-defined sports, but could pursue their own form of sport and create a new

standard. However, sport is an institution that has been created through male dominance (MacKinnon 1987).

The creation of institutionalized male dominance was also reflected in participants' responses to what they would like to change about the game of basketball. Miranda simply wants a male-dominated sport society to recognize women.

I wish men's and women's games could be equal. I would like there to come a time where I could see more fans at a women's game than a men's game. Not because the men are having a bad season and we're having a winning season, but just so people understand that we work hard to get to where we are too... I'd like equal support. To me, basketball is basketball, a shot is a shot, it's the same game.

A 2011 study, *Women's Sport Spectatorship: An Exploration of Men's Influence* confirms Miranda's feelings of frustration with fan equality. The study investigates why women are not watching women's sports. And once again, this study finds that dominant society and the male institution of sport influenced female viewership. The data found in the study suggest that women feel that they are expected to use their leisure time in the way their husband, boyfriend, and sons desire (Farrell, Fink, and Fields 2011). The researchers found that most women "suggest being a woman means supporting and facilitating the leisure wishes of men" (Farrell, Fink, and Fields 2011, 42).

All participants of this study refer to the dominance and control men have over sports, in particularly collegiate basketball. This dominance of the institution of basketball is then carried over into other aspects of sport. One can find from the masculine institution of sports that the exclusion of women from sport or the feeling women have of a division between them and men is directly related to the historically created dominance of men over women.

Argument: Money Drives Popularity

Media equality has become a focus in the comparison of men's and women's collegiate basketball. Almost every participant mentioned the inequality in the media. Many participants related this to the entertainment value of the sport of basketball, time associated to promoting women's basketball, and the money generated from television contracts and ticket sales to men's basketball games. Charlotte is a sports information director at a major southern Division One institution, and describes media equality in the following way:

Almost every day I notice the men's basketball team is getting coverage and the women's basketball team is getting half the amount of coverage. Some things that make it look unequal is that there is not the same amount of following for both sports. I do not think that will ever change. You don't waste your resources on that (sports people do not follow). I think it's important to give the same coverage but when there is not enough response, you have to give the public what they want. Sometimes you have to spend more time on that men's sport than women's sport. You have to give the public what they want.

Media inequality is prevalent due to the demand for men's basketball compared to women's basketball. Adams and Tuggle's 2004 study, "ESPN's SportsCenter and Coverage of Women's Athletics: It's a Boys' Club," highlights the inequality of women's sports media after the passage of Title IX (Adams and Tuggle 2004). The study used a 30 day period to examine ESPN sport stories. During these days, 778 stories were run that covered men, while only 16 ran about women. The final 13 covered both men and women. 2.1% of stories involved women only. Adams and Tuggle's study found what many of this study's participants mention that "female athletes are second-rate, female sport is of little importance, and society accepts only certain sports for female competitors (Adams and Tuggle 2004).

Sabock (1975) provides another example of Charlotte's description of how money influences sports. For example, football and men's basketball bring the majority of income into collegiate athletics. These sports increase the divide between women and men's athletics. This is

a theme that has been consistent throughout women's evolution into college sports. In this study, Charlotte argues that universities are attempting to make media equality possible for the men and women athletes.

We try to (produce the same number of stories), in the way of things that come from us. Every game gets its own preview and recap. Then it's based on what comes out of other media outlets. A lot of the stuff we do for men's basketball are accolades and honors that come from outside sources. We try to seek out those things, but we are not UCONN's women's basketball team, so those things just aren't there. There has been equality at putting out the same information from the media department.

Charlotte describes the desire and attempt from the university to produce similar amounts of stories for both the men's and women's basketball teams. She blames outside media for the one-sidedness found in more men's basketball stories.

I then found the reason most participants believe men receive more media attention: money. Money was mentioned in almost every interview as the major driving factor that led to media inequality. Charlotte confirms this when she says:

Sports are just a business. If you're women's basketball you're not going to make a business run. Men's basketball is one of your biggest money makers at a school. The school will comply with Title IX but outside of that, you're not getting much. You have to be creative with the little resources you have if you want your program to be covered.

Many participants identified sports as a business, and historically men have dominated the world of sports. Charlotte describes why she believes men gain more viewership.

ESPN has done better at covering women's basketball. I don't know if you are going to change the perception of the media without a change of the general viewership. It is all about money at the end of the day, and I know that men's basketball pulls in more money.

This theory becomes a reality when looking at the 2015 profits made from the NCAA men's basketball final four. Fans bet nearly \$9 billion on brackets, the NCAA was paid over \$800 million in television contracts (Davis 2015). The top schools stand to make millions of dollars off of their men's basketball programs. This article shows that only a minority of teams actually

make money on their men's basketball teams, and most schools struggle to fund their athletic programs. Of the 68 teams in the men's NCAA basketball playoffs, more than a third just broke even or even lost money (Davis 2015). The idea that men are making more money may be true for a few top ranked schools around the country, but this is not the case for every institution.

The facade of revenue may be true for men's basketball but there is no facade for women's collegiate basketball. In 2012, only four institutions reported revenue over \$4 million and none profited more than \$500,000 (Smith 2012). Some participants highlighted that winning would bring more viewers, which would in turn bring in more money. This idea was not true for the undefeated Connecticut team from 2008-2011 that went on a 90 game winning streak. Despite winning, the Huskies operated at a loss for all three seasons (Smith 2012). Money is not equal. One participant argued that "If women's sports were bringing in as much money as men then you would see them get more coverage and see the athletes celebrated a little more."

How does women's basketball gain media equality? Adrian, a fan, asks "What comes first, public demand or media pushing it? If fans want it (women's basketball) maybe networks would show it. How do you drum up interest without people seeing it on television?" These questions are at the root of the argument over how to gain fan equality. Farrell, Fink, and Fields' study on sport spectators suggests that that lack of coverage and absence of stories about female sports does not allow them to make a connection, which results in disinterest of audiences (Farrel, Fink, and Fields 2011).

Women will continue to lack media equality until male dominance leaves sports at the institutional and media level. As Miranda states, "men control athletics and the media;" most of the female participants believe nothing will change until the media accepts women's college basketball as an equal to men's college basketball.

Femininity as a Defining Factor of Female Athletes

Femininity is defined as: “the quality of being female; womanliness” (Oxford Webster Dictionary 2005). Female bodies have historically been communicated as sexually available. Athletics gives women an opportunity to own their bodies. Many female athletes are considered unfeminine because athletics requires them to take control of their bodies’ physicality (MacKinnon 1987). Historically, basketball has been a male dominated institution and the idea of women playing basketball reverts to the idea of a male-only domain. As women have been breaking the barrier into sports, they have often faced push back from men. Women athletes have been considered unfeminine, which inevitably leads to women being called lesbian or masculine. This is found as demeaning to women in American society. MacKinnon believes and states what other studies have found: when women have control over their bodies, men believe they are sexually inaccessible. This theory tells us that society associates female sexuality with a woman’s availability to being taken by a man (MacKinnon 1987). Sports allow women to create their own identity separate from the association of men.

Many of the participants expressed stories of being discriminated against for their participation in sport. Some were called lesbians, and others tried to act more feminine off the court. One participant, Samantha, a college women’s basketball coach, shares an instance where she is told her players need to be more feminine.

In our conference, they have discussed how women have gone away from looking like women, and how that affects our viewers. People want to see women play basketball, not women that look like men. (They say) Big time donors don’t want to be around saggy pants and backwards hats, they want to see women. My direct boss has said stuff to our girls about looking professional and acting appropriate in public. What about women’s rights to be who you are? It’s like we’re taking steps backwards.

Samantha describes the same relationship MacKinnon does. Society does not see females as being able to have control over their own bodies. There are societal norms that women are expected to meet and dressing like a man is not one of those norms.

Britney Griner also expresses frustrations with society and their expectations of female athletes. Griner is an elite WNBA star who is also openly gay. In her book, *In My Skin*, she discusses the fear of a women's program being seen as gay and how Baylor University tried to cover up homosexual players lives off the court, much like Samantha is being forced to encourage her players to be feminine. Griner states the following:

When it came to my sexuality, and the sexuality of other gay players, it's hard to know how much Kim's (Baylor women's head basketball coach) don't-ask-don't-tell policy was about coaching at Baylor and how much of it was about living inside the paranoid world of women's college basketball, where too many coaches spend an unhealthy amount of time worrying about whether their programs will be seen as "too gay." All I know for sure is that I felt like I was carrying around a giant weight everywhere I went - a growing sense that who I am, at my very core, needed to be hidden away in order for me to survive my time at Baylor (Griner 2014).

Griner's story rings true to the two female basketball players interviewed for this study. Both described fears of being labeled "lesbian."

On the court, I do not feel like I have to show that I am feminine. I think on the court you want to be tough. I don't want to be manly but I want to be a little scary. I want my opponents to fear me, but off the court I don't want people to be like, oh she looks like a man.

She is still looking to society to define her body as feminine and available. Female basketball players have faced stereotypes about how they should act and look. Carrie describes the stereotypes she has faced.

I think I've faced stereotypes as a basketball player and then being a woman athlete. Everyone is stereotypical as far as sexuality and stuff like that, which is a huge thing in women's basketball. So, to not be that way, you know, people just have their stereotypes. It doesn't help that there are colleges that way.

Carrie backs MacKinnon's belief that dominance theory allows men to have control of the institution of sport. This theme of male control over femininity in basketball is repetitive in almost every study used for this research. In all areas women are questioned or regarded as the lower sex.

Berg and Projansky (2003) compare the language used to discuss men's and women's professional basketball players. In 1998, women basketball players were discussed in three different ways to take attention away from female athletes' skill, expertise, strategic knowledge, athleticism, and dedication to playing sports. Women were often associated with female discipline, diaspora, and domestic roles (Berg and Projansky 2003). Women are referred to by their first names, while men called by their last name. Commentators create a narrative about women's roles as a mother, sister, or daughter. Most commentators mainly associate a male player with his basketball skill and statistics (Berg and Projansky 2003). Women are marginalized in the realm of basketball in its current state. The participants in this study are attempting to create their own game while being judged and weighed by societal pressure of continuing femininity.

Why She Plays – "Life Skills"

Why do women continue to play collegiate sports when so many people are trying to stop them? Why are women still attempting to break into a male dominated institution? The female participants in this study were asked why they play, and their answers relate basketball to life skills. According to the participants of this study, men view collegiate basketball as a stepping stone to becoming professionals. When asked if she thought she could go pro, Carrie responds:

No (laughs), I don't have that goal and aspiration for myself. Now if the opportunity presented itself I would take it, but it's not really my goal. I think basketball has been my

love, will continue to be my love, but it's okay. I'm okay after my journey's finished to put my shoes up...But guys are different. I feel like guys come in (to college) and think they're about to be an NBA player. I feel like they come into college, not because they love basketball, but because they want to get to the next level.

Carrie is content with her career being over because it has taught her many life skills.

Basketball is paying for college, but if I didn't play basketball I don't know where I would be. I feel like basketball has really shaped me into the person I am today. I have gained confidence and courage from basketball.

Women use sports to advance them in life rather than for their first professional pay check. Miranda describes how being put in tough situations and playing under a difficult coach will help her handle tough situations in her future job and with management. Women have been ingrained with the idea that the opportunity for them to play sports competitively stops after college. Women must use the opportunity given to excel in sport and take lessons of sports into their life as an employee, wife, and mother (Messner 2002). Miranda continues to describe how basketball has increased her opportunities in college and beyond:

I believe I have an advantage on and off the court. I have learned so much from basketball that I can take into the workplace: time management, preparation, dedication, hard work, and cooperation. All the skills I have learned I think I can take them anywhere. Not everyone can learn all that stuff just by going to college.

Not only are players using basketball to learn skills for the future, coaches are also attempting to prepare their players for life. Samantha describes that her job is more than simply winning basketball games, it's making strong and independent women.

Athletics is very important at the college level because you are dealing with 18-22 year olds. It is kind of like a stepping stone into real life situations. Athletics brings different cultures together. I think it's important for women to be around other women, we've been there before, we know how things were as a female college student and a student athlete. It is important to be able to relate and help young females grow on a daily basis and see seniors go on to become successful in the real world.

Women are not playing or coaching for fame. They are playing for the love of the game, to develop life skills, to be prepared when they become adults, and to better their bodies.

Basketball allows women the opportunity to experience a world that has been limited to men for the majority of history.

Title IX legislation has allowed women an insight into sport and what sports can offer. The women that participated in this study had a feeling that basketball was what they expect it to be. They were not angry. They were proud to be involved in the game and of what it had done for their lives. However, Carrie believes women still have some ways to go before women will be able to bridge the gap between men's and women's basketball.

Carrie says, "I know there are probably women out there fighting for us but I just don't think women have a big enough voice and that's anywhere. Even in the workplace, women get paid less than men in general. I just don't understand why there is such a big difference between men and women."

Gender differences seem to be the main factor for a male dominated society to deny women the same respect and rights as men participating in sport. Women seem to be content with the result they receive from sport, but is there not more that can be done? Samantha states "If only more women knew what forty minutes initially can do for the rest of your life."

Findings

The four main findings in this study support the idea of a dominate masculine culture in men's and women's collegiate basketball, the main areas being: institutionalized masculinity, money driving media attention, the femininity of female athletes, and life skills through athletics. The participants in this study outlined their feelings and experiences within collegiate basketball.

Institutionalized masculinity is a theme that was found in the majority of studies conducted around the topic of women's basketball. Female athletes are seen as second class

athletes to men. MacKinnon and the participants of this study agree that male dominance prohibits female athletes from becoming equal competitors to men. Female athletes gain control over their bodies, this becomes a threat to the culturally created male dominance in our society (MacKinnon 1987). The participants of this study persisted and allowed basketball to be their stepping stone to gain control of their bodies. As women have gained control of their bodies, they have not reached equality.

Women's sports still struggle to gain equal media attention. The idea that money drives media attention was persistent throughout the study. Creating media equality must come through the ability to make money. However, women are at a loss of how to make money without media attention. Adrian, a women's basketball fan asks, "What comes first, media attention or money?" The study found that women's basketball will struggle to gain media attention until it is able to bring in viewership. Then the question arises of "what will gain viewership?"

Studies have found that women will not gain equality in fans simply because they are women. Participants struggle with the idea of being feminine while being athletic. Society expects women to be feminine, while sport requires them to be strong. Women are fighting to be accepted as both feminine and masculine.

Lastly, the women in this study continue to support the idea that there is more to sport than playing the game. Each female participant found life lessons in the game of basketball that they plan to help them in their future. Messner's *Taking the Field* reiterates the concept that sport is more than a game for women, it is a life lesson, it makes women stronger in the work force, more confident, and determined (Messner 2010).

These four themes break the surface of the underlying issues that prevent women from gaining equality in collegiate basketball. Women have a long way to go to achieve equality.

However, the question remains if society will allow female athletes to be seen as equals to male athletes. The participants in this study seemed hopeful and proud that they have been a part of sport and believe that sports change continue to change the lives of women in the future, even if they lack equality.

Chapter Six – Conclusion

Women's collegiate basketball has been in an uphill battle to gain attention since the invention of basketball in 1891. Women's basketball has gained in popularity since the passage of Title IX in 1972, however the rate at which women's basketball has grown has been much slower than men's basketball (Grundy and Shackelford 2007). Title IX requires all federally funded institutions to treat men and women equally, and this includes athletics (Suggs 2005). In this study, we found that women are still looking for that equality in all aspects of the game of basketball.

First of all, the study sought to determine the disparities that exist between men's and women's basketball. Many were found, however four were focused on and situated within Katherine MacKinnon's dominance theory. The first theme, institutionalized masculinity, demonstrates the continued feelings of male dominance in collegiate basketball. This was found through opportunity, attention, and historical thoughts about women's role in athletics. This theme can also be seen in the history of women's basketball and how it has grown over the years compared to men's basketball.

Over time studies, including the research completed here, have found that women have felt unable to overcome the institutionalized masculinity that is found in sports. Samantha and Miranda relay this information as a struggle for respect and equality as an athlete. Walker and Satori-Baldwin (2013) reiterate this claim with their findings of women struggling to be hired and recognized in the male dominated world of basketball. The research shows that most women have had similar experiences and feelings towards male dominance and how it situates them as the lesser in sports and ultimately in life.

The second theme, money drives popularity, explores the argument that money drives the popularity of sports. Most participants believe women's basketball is not as popular because the media does not promote women because people are uninterested. Once again, this theory relates back to dominance theory and displays how women are situated in media in relation to men. The question still remains: how do women gain fans and media attention?

An argument for money disparity is that men's sports have always been more popular and will be the only sports that will bring in large amounts of money. Charlotte, who is a sports information director, believes women will not see a change in viewership and support until they start bringing in profit. MacKinnon would argue that women will be unable to bring in this profit because dominance of male sports will always keep women as the lesser. From the 1970s to today, research shows that women's basketball will be viewed as unequal to men's based on profit margins.

Third, femininity defines female athletes. Female basketball players have been labeled by gender expectations in society, such as that women are meant to be weaker than men (West and Zimmerman 1987). Most participants felt societal norms defined them as athletes. Female athletes display masculinity, which in turn society depicts as wrong or homosexual. The participants struggled to identify how to overcome society's ideas of femininity.

Historically, female athletes were only given the opportunity to play at the same level as men because of Title IX legislation. Messner (2002) found that this idea of government forcing equality has steered the way women are viewed as athletes as weaker. Female athletes have been struggling to overcome the barrier of femininity to be viewed as an equal on the court, field, or track (Messner 2002). Societal norms have defined women as the weaker sex, even though women overcome the stereotype daily. An argument Miranda used to justify this stereotype was

that women's basketball is different. She said, "The women's game is made up of skill and team work, while the men's game is made up of talent." Her justification is not that women are weaker, but that they are differently capable.

The last theme, why she plays, outlines how women view their collegiate playing experiences and how it will assist them in their lives after college basketball is over. The women in this study have a positive attitude on how basketball impacted their lives and how it will benefit them. They situate themselves in a different role than men: while men attempt to go pro, women are going into the "real world."

Messner (2002) also supports this view of women's sports as preparation for a future. Women are taught skills in athletics that they may not find in other avenues of life. As Carrie stated, sports taught her responsibility, time management, and how to deal with a difficult coach or adversity. I believe women use the theme of life after basketball as a way to justify their reason for playing when society views women in athletics as insignificant. In the face of criticisms to Title IX and women's basketball, women are justifying their purpose in athletics as the creation of a better life after college.

This research shows that women have made great strides to advance their role in the game of basketball at the collegiate and professional levels. However, there is still room to grow and changes that can be made. Samantha poses what I believe is the ultimate question to determine how women can overcome male dominance in the institution of basketball: She asks "What will have to change first, media attention or demand from consumers?" Disparities in basketball can be found in many different areas from media, to money to the way women are talked about by broadcasters. I believe the ultimate goal is to encourage ways for women to be recognized as quality athletes that have something to offer to the game of basketball.

Out of my research I have found two other studies that would be beneficial to understanding disparities between men's and women's collegiate basketball. First, one could research how physical differences between men and women attribute to gender inequality in collegiate athletics. In my research I questioned the role physical differences played in inequality given between men's and women's basketball. A few participants in the study noted that men and women's physical differences caused the game of basketball to be played differently. New research on this topic could use the Catherine MacKinnon's dominance theory and studies completed on physical differences to make comparisons between the way men and women are treated at the collegiate level. One complete a case study involving a dominant female basketball player (Britney Griner) and a dominant male basketball player (Lebron James). I believe this research would be beneficial to gain an understanding of how society attributes physical differences to popularity between men's and women's basketball.

Second, a study examining the resentment towards women's collegiate athletics due to the passage of Title IX. In my research I found that many men involved in college athletics resent female athletes because of Title IX legislation. These men feel that women are getting more than their male counterparts. A study that examines men's feelings toward Title IX at the collegiate level would help strengthen understanding of female inequality in athletics. This research could be completed by interviewing male coaches and athletes at colleges and universities across the United States. I believe it would also be beneficial to interview men coaching female sports. This perspective would give the researcher an understanding of how men see female athletics as a whole.

My research did not conclude the answers I had hoped. I found disparities between men's and women's collegiate basketball, but I was unable to discover how to overcome the

disparities. I believe future research, as mentioned above, could make gains in understanding the social concepts that divide the way men and women are viewed in athletics. If society is unable to overcome the idea of male dominance, then I do not believe women will be seen as equals in athletics.

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