

An Ugly Side to the Beautiful Game? An Analysis of Broadcast Commentary of FIFA World Cup and FIFA Women's World Cup Final Matches

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ACADEMIC ABSTRACT

Previous research into athletic competitions and broadcast commentary have been consistent in showing that there are clear differences in prevalence of commentary topics when a commentator is describing a male athlete and a female athlete. Among these differences are sexualized and ambivalent language towards female athletes, gender marking, and language that suggests male athlete superiority to that of female athletes. Although sporting events such as the Summer and Winter Olympics and NCAA Men's and Women's Basketball Championship games have repeatedly been sites for exploration, the world's largest single-event sporting competition, the World Cup, remains relatively untouched. Keeping this in mind, using a systematic content analysis, this thesis analyzed the broadcast commentary provided by play-by-play and color commentators in FIFA World Cup and FIFA Women's World Cup final matches to discern whether or not the sex of the athlete competing resulted in a difference in the prevalence of descriptive evaluations employed by commentators. Findings of this study revealed that there were few differences in the prevalence of descriptive evaluations based on the gender of the athletes competing. Implications of the results and recommendations for future research into broadcast commentary and World Cup final matches are addressed.

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GENERAL AUDIENCE ABSTRACT

Previous research into the role of broadcast commentary in sporting events has shown that not only are there differences in what sports commentators say about male and female athletes, but also in how often specific types of commentary occur. Through the examination of pinnacle athletic competitions, findings have revealed a higher frequency of sexualized and contradictory language towards female athletes, an increase in gender marking, and language that suggests the superiority of male athletes to that of female athletes, among other things. Despite the wide range of athletic competitions that have garnered research attention, one event that has remained relatively ignored is the FIFA World Cup. Because of this, by examining the broadcast commentary provided during FIFA World Cup and FIFA Women's World Cup final matches, this study looked to discover if the sex of the athlete competing impacted how often certain evaluation types occurred during game action. Findings showed that there were few differences in the prevalence of these evaluations based on the sex of the athlete competing. In addition to discussing the findings of this study, recommendations for future research are also addressed.

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Introduction

Since its passing in 1972, Title IX of the Education Amendments Act of 1972, which states that “no person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance” (“Title IX,” 2014) has sparked dramatic increases in female athletic participation. For instance, prior to the law’s passing, only one in 27 females played a sport, whereas per a 2016 report, two in five females in the United States now participate in sport (Olmstead, 2016). This includes an all-time high of 3,415,306 female athletes competing at the high school level and 216,378 female athletes competing in the NCAA at either the Division I, II, or III level (“NCAA Sports Sponsorship,” 2018; News, 2018).

Although growth in female athletic participation has been record-breaking over the years, media coverage of those athletes has experienced delayed growth, with only four percent of media coverage being dedicated to female athletes (University of Minnesota Tucker Center & Twin Cities PBS, 2013; Springer, 2019). While one might assume that broadcasts from conference networks, such as the Big Ten Network, which dedicates almost 50% of its coverage to female sports, as well as those from the SEC Network might help to bridge the gap between male and female athletes in terms of coverage, evidence of this has yet to be presented (“Big Ten Network,” n.d.). Keeping this in mind, when it comes to sport media, some refer to females in sport as “second-class citizens” (MacArthur, Angelini, Smith, & Billings, 2017, p. 412). Perhaps what garners even more concern is that in instances when female athletes do receive broadcast attention, coverage often contains production decisions that result in less interesting viewing environments (Greer, Hardin, & Homan, 2009; Hallmark & Armstrong, 1999) and it prioritizes traditionally feminine sports over those that are deemed more masculine (Coche & Tuggle, 2016;

Tuggle & Owen, 1999). Disparities in coverage have become so apparent that organizations like the Women's Sports Foundation and Women in Sport have dedicated their efforts not only to increasing female athletic participation, but also to earning higher levels of media coverage for female athletes. On an even larger scale, organizations such as the Women's Media Center have dedicated their efforts to raising the visibility and viability of women and girls in all realms of media, not just sport ("About WMC," n.d.).

One important area of research when it comes to television coverage is the role that broadcasters, both male and female, play in mediated sport (Billings, Halone, & Denham, 2002; Duncan & Hasbrook, 1988; Eastman & Billings, 2001). Considering the visual limitations that come with television viewing of athletic events, play-by-play (or PxP) and color commentators have been employed to help bridge the gap between the action occurring live and the viewer at home. Moreover, through their commentary, broadcasters aid in building and maintaining suspense, as well as embellishing drama as it unfolds before the viewer's eyes (Comisky, Bryant, & Zillmann, 1977). However, research has shown that beyond the underrepresentation of female athletes in media, through their commentary, broadcasters also employ gender-based language when describing athletic performance (Billings et al., 2002). Through their use of sexualized language (Kane, 1996), ambivalent language (Duncan & Hasbrook, 1988), gender marking (Messner, Duncan, & Jensen, 1993), and language that suggests female athlete inferiority to that of their male counterparts (Billings et al., 2002), assumptions of athletic gender roles are implicated (Billings et al., 2002). Moreover, through this commentary, presumed gender inequalities between male and female athletes are amplified (Billings, Angelini, & Duke, 2010).

While a number of different athletic events have been explored in previous research, none have received more attention than the Olympics (Messner et al., 1993; Tuggle & Owen, 1999)

and NCAA men's and women's basketball games (Billings et al., 2002; Hallmark & Armstrong, 1999). Although the Olympics and the NCAA basketball finals are certainly pinnacle competitions in the sports world, when it comes to soccer, no event dominates the sport quite like the FIFA World Cup and the FIFA Women's World Cup. For reference, the FIFA World Cup is the men's competition and the FIFA Women's World Cup is the women's competition. Aside from a study of newspaper coverage following the 1999 FIFA Women's World Cup (Christopherson, Jensen, & McConnell, 2002), the sport of soccer and more specifically, the men's and women's FIFA World Cup have received little to no research attention, especially concerning broadcast commentary. Deemed the largest single-event sporting competition in the world, the FIFA World Cup and FIFA Women's World Cup are considered the peak of a professional soccer players career ("FIFA," n.d.). The event, which has been held in different countries all over the world, including South Africa, Canada, Germany and most recently in Russia, occurs every four years for a span of one month. During this month, qualifying countries compete in group and knockout stages in an attempt to be named the world's best soccer team ("FIFA," n.d.). Audiences from all over the world tune in to watch the FIFA World Cup and the FIFA Women's World Cup final matches, including roughly 17 million English language television viewers during the 2018 final game and 25.4 million English language television viewers during the 2015 final game (Deitsch, 2015; Harris, 2018). Keeping this in mind, given the magnitude of the competition, as well as the minute amount of research attention it has received in regards to gender-based language and broadcasting, this becomes a perfect site for exploration. Additionally, given the very large and diverse viewing audiences, both internationally and domestically, findings within this study have potential application beyond just that of gender roles research.

Considering how influential the media can be in their transmission and perpetuation of stereotypes of social groups (Harwood & Anderson, 2002), results of this study may shed light on the implications of how gender is portrayed in media. Furthermore, as Eastman and Billings (2001) explain, when words of sportscasters are consistently repeated in ways that are similar to one another, not only do they provide a framework for the sports experience, they also create mental frames that perpetuate into nonathletic situations as well (p. 183). In doing this, sport commentary has the potential to “reinforce stereotypes of male and female athletes” (Billings et al., 2010, p. 10). Therefore, findings within this study could be applied to studies of media effects and sport in the future. Keeping this in mind, through a content analysis of play-by-play and color commentary of the last two final matches of the FIFA World Cup and the FIFA Women’s World Cup, this thesis aims to discover the differences in prevalence of descriptive evaluations of male and female soccer players. Results from this study look to fill a key gap in the research by expanding the field of sporting events for which gender role research aims to explore.

Literature Review

The literature reviewed in the following section will first address gender roles, how they are exhibited in sport, how they are expressed in media, and how gender roles are displayed in sports media specifically. Following that, the literature will address gender role portrayals in televised sports broadcasts, including through production decisions, as well as broadcast commentary language choices. Finally, information pertaining to the FIFA World Cup and the FIFA Women's World Cup will be shared and media effects literature will be addressed.

Gender Roles

Given how often sex and gender are used in a synonymous fashion in both conversation and in literature, it comes as no surprise that the two often get confused. However, it is important to clarify that sex is a biological concept or label, male or female, while gender is a much more complex social construct (Blackstone, 2003; Parenthood, n.d.). While sex is based on chromosomes and anatomy, gender has more to do with social and cultural expectations (Parenthood, n.d.). Gender roles can therefore be described as a “set of behavioral norms associated with males and females in a given social group or system” (Morgan, 2007, p. 113). These gender assignments are created and absorbed as children and continue to perpetuate into adulthood through what Lorber (1994) describes as “prescribed processes” that involve “teaching, learning, emulation, and enforcement” (para. 7). Moreover, Lorber continues in stating that once a gender has been assigned, “the social order constructs and holds individuals to strongly gendered norms and expectations” (1994, para. 15). Since participants in society “do” gender, their specific actions and interactions “reflect or express gender,” and in doing so are “disposed to perceive the behavior of others in a similar light” (West & Zimmerman, 1987, p.

127). The perpetuation of these gendered expectations can be described as gender role stereotypes.

In an attempt to organize gender roles, Bem (1974) created the Bem's Sex-Role Inventory, or BSRI, which identified characteristics that would be deemed more masculine or more feminine. Such gender roles are described as masculine or feminine based on how desirable the characteristics are for either a male or female (i.e. a more desirable trait for a man than a woman would fall into the masculine gender role). Masculine items on the inventory consist of attributes such as being "independent," "dominant," "athletic," and "self-reliant," to name a few. Feminine items consist of attributes such as being "affectionate," "cheerful," "yielding," and "tender" (p. 156). Those individuals in society whose attributes consist of an equal amount of both masculine and feminine characteristics are classified as being androgynous.

When it comes to Western society specifically, gender roles have been created based on the expectations placed on individuals within given social groups. For instance, masculine gender role stereotypes can typically be characterized as being the "breadwinner" of the family. This includes expected qualities of leadership, being head of the household, as well as shouldering the financial burdens of the family. Conversely, feminine gender role stereotypes are typically characterized as being motherly, being a nurturer, and completing tasks within the home. These gender role expectations can bleed over into the workplace as well, with males being seen as managers and executives, while females would be expected to fill the role of a secretary (Blackstone, 2003). Beyond that of personality traits and occupational expectations, stereotypical feminine gender roles also carry expectations in terms of appearance as well. These include being beautiful, skinny, and emotional (Morgan, 2007). Although these are just some examples of where gender roles are exhibited and where stereotypical gender role expectations

occur, they are not limited to just home and work and there are a vast number of arenas for which gender roles and gender role stereotypes can be displayed. Perhaps most notably of these arenas are in sport and in media.

Gender Roles in Sport

Since sport is a “sub-culture” of the larger society, it is no secret that “nothing typically occurs in sport that does not occur in the larger society” (Vodden-McKay & Schell, 2010, p. 137). Keeping this in mind, gendered expectations displayed in society very much carry over to the athletic playing field as well. Although both males and females endure specific gendered expectations, the latter typically have it worse off and endure more negative stereotyping due to their lower ranking in society (Ólafsson et al., 2006). Much of this can be attributed to the fact that sport has long been seen as a male dominated domain, as well as the fact that, similar to gender roles, sports get categorized based on their characteristics of femininity and masculinity (Koivula, 1995).

In a study of gender effects on sport, Matteo (1986) asked subjects to rate 68 different sports on a nine-point scale based on their perceptions of what was considered masculine, feminine, and neutral. Sports receiving a ranking of 1.0 to 3.5, such as football, basketball, and weightlifting were considered masculine. Those that earned a 3.6 to 6.5, such as roller skating, softball, and golf were considered neutral sports. Finally, the sports that ranked between 6.6 and 9.0 on the scale, which included ballet, gymnastics, and ice-skating were considered feminine. As is evidenced through the ratings, sports with a higher likelihood for contact and requirements of strength are categorized as masculine, whereas sports with less contact and more poise are categorized as feminine. Through this study, Matteo (1986) not only helped to expose societal norms, but the researcher was also able to discover what each individual participant believed to

be the prevalent view in society (Koivula, 1995). Because sports are presented as masculine or feminine, those athletes who compete in sports that counter traditional expectations (i.e. women competing in masculine sports) find it difficult to break traditional gender barriers (Scheidler & Wagstaff, 2018).

Keeping this in mind, considering the overall prevalence of gender dynamics in sport, those individuals who tend to disregard social rules associated with a gender are vulnerable to gender stigmas (Schmalz & Kerstetter, 2006). Consequently, many female athletes oftentimes feel the need to overcompensate for femininity in their selected sport. In their qualitative study of female collegiate athletes and perceptions of gender stereotypes, Rayburn, Chen, and Phillips (2015) found that gender role stereotypes impacted not only female athlete performance on the playing field, but also the way that they carried themselves off of the field. Some athletes expressed a need to wear more traditionally feminine articles of clothing, such as a bow, or put on make-up before competing in order to avoid being seen as lacking femininity. Even more specifically, some athletes felt the need to carry themselves differently based on the sport they play. For instance, the researchers note that female basketball players expressed a fear of being seen as too masculine or too manly, as well as having a fear of displaying tattoos on their arms. Findings also showed that stereotypical receptions differed based on the type of sport the female athlete competed in. For the athletes who participated in individual sports such as tennis or cross country, stereotyping tended to be experienced at a lesser degree, whereas those athletes who competed in team sports noted experiencing severe stereotyping because of their sport type (Rayburn et al., 2015). Although their portrayals may be different given the context, many of the gender role stereotypes that are displayed in sport can also be seen in media.

Media Portrayals of Gender Roles

As Wood (1994) explains, media are one of the most powerful influences when it comes to how society views males and females. Keeping this in mind, since gender roles are viewed as a social construct with normative and pervasive properties, gendered expectations are also prevalent and explored in traditional media. Previous content analyses and meta-analyses have examined gender roles in a number of various media sites, including television advertisements (Eisend, 2009; Grau & Zotos, 2016), video games (Beasley & Collins-Standley, 2002; Downs & Smith, 2009), prime-time television (Glascock, 2001; Lauzen, Dozier, & Horan, 2008; Morgan, 2007), and in film (Behm-Morawitz & Mastro, 2008; Powers, Rothman, & Rothman, 1993), among others. In doing so, research has found that females are often shown in a stereotypical fashion in media and that such representations often emphasize traditional gender roles (Fixmer-Oraiz & Wood, 2018). This includes females being depicted as being married, as well as being a parent. Additionally, in terms of occupational status, in contrast to males, who are depicted in more “boss”-like roles, such as being lawyers, doctors, and police officers, females in media are portrayed as nurses, waitresses, and secretaries (Glascock, 2001). Furthermore, research has also shown that females are circumscribed, or restricted, shown in a negative manner, and are oftentimes sexualized. This includes females being shown in revealing or provocative clothing, partially or totally nude, as well as having unrealistically proportioned bodies (Collins, 2011, p. 294).

Media have also played a role in the perpetuation of gender role expectations through their crafting of specific characters in media. For instance, when it comes to the personality and behavioral traits of males and females in media, males are more likely to be more physically aggressive than that of females, whereas females are oftentimes more likely than their male counterpart to display higher traits of affection (Glascock, 2001). Because of this, not only do

media have the ability to convey what is socially acceptable for a gender, they also help to perpetuate society's understanding of dominant and subordinate groups. In doing so, media have created a society of male hegemony, or dominance (Vodden-McKay & Schell, 2010). Such hegemony is most evident in the overall underrepresentation of females in media (Collins, 2011; Fixmer-Oraiz & Wood, 2018; Glascock, 2001; "The status of," 2019; Wood, 1994).

Although mass media are extremely pervasive and influential in many aspects of consumer's lives, Koivula (1999) explains in her analysis of media sport coverage and gender stereotyping that their importance in sport grows even larger when you consider how many individuals observe athletic events through mass media (p. 590). Therefore, understanding gender roles and gender role stereotypes in mediated sport is necessary.

Gender Roles in Mediated Sport

What makes mediated sport so unique is the diverse avenues for consumer consumption. Although sports can be consumed through sporting events specifically, there is also the possibility of mediated discourse through pre and post-match segments, newspaper and magazine coverage, as well as news segments dedicated to the sport, an event, and a specific athlete or group of athletes. Much of the recent research has focused on the discourse surrounding sexual differences within mediated sports (Duncan, 2006).

One medium that has garnered attention when it comes to gender roles include that of newspapers. In a content analysis of 576 American newspaper articles following the 1999 Women's World Cup Soccer final match, Christopherson, Jensen, and McConnell (2002) found that coverage contained high amounts of gendered commentary, with half of the articles making a reference to the status of women. Furthermore, results confirmed that reporters used gendered lenses to analyze the team in their coverage. Consistent with the findings of Wood (1994) and

Glascoock (2001), there are also disparities when it comes to amount of coverage that male and female athletes receive. Crossmen, Vincent, and Speed (2007) found in their analysis of three separate newspapers following the 2004 Wimbledon Championships that the male tennis players received more newspaper coverage, including more articles and photographs dedicated to them, than that of the female competitors.

Additionally, magazines have also received research attention when it comes to gender roles and sport media. In their analysis of *Sports Illustrated* and *Sports Illustrated for Women* magazines, Fink and Kensicki (2002) found that women in sport are underrepresented, are portrayed in sports that would be considered traditionally feminine, and when photographed, are shown in non-sport related scenery. Beyond that, the athletes were also constructed in a stereotypical fashion and in ways that placed their femininity over their athletic talent. While it is evident that gender role stereotyping does occur in print media, considering the high level of consumption of sport through television, research emphasis can be seen most prevalently in television broadcasts of sporting events.

Gender Roles in Televised Sports Broadcasts

As with other media, including sports media, gender role stereotypes are also frequent in televised sports broadcasts. However, the perpetuation of gender roles has added nuance due to the potential for additional commentary from analysts during athletic competition. Because of this, stereotypical portrayals of gender roles in televised sports broadcasts can be explored through production decisions, as well as broadcast commentary.

Production decisions.

Research has shown that regardless of the gains that female athletes and female athletics have made in recent years, coverage of female athletes in their respective sports has not kept the

same pace. Most notable of these disparities is the trivialized and inferior coverage that female athletes receive. Eastman and Billings (2000) found in their analysis of ESPN *SportsCenter* and CNN *Sports Tonight* that favoritism towards male sports was clearly evident. In the 76 nights that they analyzed both networks, researchers found that only 5% of coverage was dedicated to female athletes and their sports for ESPN *SportsCenter*, whereas CNN *Sports Tonight* dedicated only 7% of their coverage to female athletes and their respective sport (Billings et al., 2002). However, perhaps most concerning about these findings is that results did not show significant coverage changes on occasions when major women's seasons or sport championships occurred (Eastman & Billings, 2000; Cooky, Messner, & Musto, 2015). The findings are consistent with that of Tuggle (1997) who found that coverage of news and highlights by ESPN *SportsCenter* and CNN *Sports Tonight* relegated roughly 5% of their coverage to women's sports.

Hallmark and Armstrong (1999) also found that production decisions in game have produced "less interesting" environments for viewers. In their study of both men's and women's NCAA Division 1 championship basketball games from 1991-1995, the researchers found that camera shots differed based on the sex competing, with men's games receiving more court level and full court camera shots, as well as more on-screen graphics. Furthermore, results showed that women's games received lengthier durations of full-screen graphics, a finding that researchers suggest, "reinforces the argument that producers do not wish to rely on the action to maintain audience interest" (p. 229).

Production decisions also differ based on graphics and logos. For instance, Messner, Duncan, and Jensen (1993) found that when referencing the men's and women's NCAA championship basketball games, men's games were referred to as "universal," with logos saying "The Final Four" and "The NCAA Championship Game" (p. 126). However, this was not the

case on the women's side as viewers were consistently reminded through television logos that they were watching the, "NCAA Women's National Championship" (p. 125). These findings serve as further proof of the male hegemonic trends and overall underrepresentation of women in media that Glascock (2001) and Fixmer-Oraiz and Wood (2018) noted previously. Beyond that of production choices, stereotypical gender roles and expectations are also conveyed in broadcast commentary during mediated sport coverage.

Broadcast commentary.

While commentary categories are not limited to just these, research has been consistent in finding that broadcast sports media have been able to construct gendered commentary through the tendency to sexualize athletes, its implementation of ambivalent, or contradictory, language, the prioritization of feminine sports, use of extraneous commentary during female athletic competition, as well as through the infantilizing of athletes through gender marking (Christopherson et al., 2002; Messner, Duncan, & Jensen, 1993). To begin, gender role stereotypes are portrayed in televised sports broadcasts through the use of language that sexualizes female athletes. In an analysis of media coverage post Title IX, Kane (1996) found that there is "overwhelming" evidence of the differences between male athletic coverage and female athletic coverage. The researcher notes that males are consistently portrayed and described in media in ways that emphasize their competence and their athletic ability, whereas female athletes were more likely to be described in ways that emphasize their frailty, limited athletic ability, and their sexuality. Furthermore, female athletes are more likely to be portrayed in "off the court" settings, out of uniform, and in sexually suggestive poses (p. 102).

Christopherson et al. (2002) suggest that such commentary downplays female athlete athleticism.

Additionally, gender role stereotypes are perpetuated in sports broadcasts through the use of ambivalent language by commentators. Duncan and Hasbrook (1988) explain that ambivalent language in sport commentary would be defined as containing contradictory and conflicting messages. For instance, a female athlete might be portrayed positively, however such portrayal would be accompanied by a negative suggestion about the athlete (p. 8). In their analysis of televised women's sport, the researchers found that in instances where females were even allowed inside TV's "hallowed arena," their images of strength were indeed conjoined by images of weakness which, in turn, subsequently denies power to the female athlete (Duncan & Hasbrook, 1988, p. 19).

Beyond that of sexualized and ambivalent language towards female athletes, sports broadcast commentary also constructs gender role stereotypes through the prioritization of feminine sports. For example, Tuggle and Owen (1999) analyzed the 1996 Summer Olympic Games and found that prime coverage was given to more traditionally feminine sports, such as gymnastics and swimming, whereas sports with more physical contact received little to no air time. Such findings are consistent with Trolan (2013), who explained that female athletes who violate traditional gender roles are less likely to receive media coverage which, in turn, perpetuates a "reward system" for those who conform to societal norms (p. 217). Keeping this in mind, as Billings et al. (2010) explain, not only is it a struggle for female athletes to participate in sport, but also to be treated in a manner that is equal in the media and sporting community (p. 11).

Christopherson et al. (2002) explain that the media can construct gendered commentary through the incorporation of extraneous language as well. Such commentary can be defined as words or phrases that have little significance or relevance to the topic at hand. Examples of this

might include references to a female athlete's role as a mother or conversations discussing who they are dating or are married to. For instance, during separate segments of coverage that included women's basketball stars Lisa Leslie and Candace Parker, Cooky et al. (2015) noted that during each of the pieces produced, the conversation "eventually meanders to the theme of motherhood," which is in stark contrast to the questions and interview topics presented to male athletes (p. 277). Eastman and Billings (2000) corroborate these findings in their study that found that when discussing female athletes, personal lives were brought up more than that of the male athletes.

Additionally, research has pointed out that broadcast commentary has played a part in the infantilizing, or undermining maturity or experience of athletes through the use of gender marking. Gender marking, as defined by Doleschal (2015), is a way of "explicitly signaling that a linguistic expression refers to a male or female being" (p. 1). While gender marking is not always oppressive and in some instances even necessary, when gender marking occurs more for women than it does for men, male athletic competitions are presented as the norm, whereas female athletic competitions are treated as "other" (Messner et al., 1993, p. 127). For instance, in their analysis of the men's and women's 1989 NCAA basketball Final Four, as well as a hand full of matches from the men's and women's 1989 U.S. Open Tennis Tournament, researchers Messner, Duncan, and Jensen (1993) found that in both events, gender marking and gendered hierarchy of naming was prevalent. When describing athletes verbally, research found that commentary tended to gender mark the women but not the men. Moreover, female athletes were referred to as "girls" and "young ladies" and they were consistently called by their first name in the broadcast. This is in contrast to the male athletes who were never referred to as "boys," but instead as "men" and "young men," and whose last names were consistently used when the

athlete was named in the broadcast. Because dominants in society are referred to by their last name and subordinates by their first, the infantilizing of female athletes perpetuates through this gendered hierarchy of naming. Beyond that, viewers were consistently reminded through broadcast commentary that they were watching the “*Women’s* Final Four,” and the “NCAA *Women’s* Basketball Championship Game,” which again, is in stark contrast to that of the male athletes and male athletic competitions (p. 125).

Additional findings suggest that male athletic events also receive more lines of broadcast commentary (Billings et al., 2002; MacArthur et al., 2017), that in contrast to female athletes, male athletes receive more praise commentary to criticism commentary (Billings, 2003), and that male athletes are oftentimes discussed in ways that emphasize their strength and mental abilities (Billings et al., 2002; Kane, 1996).

As it is noted in the literature reviewed, stereotypical expectations and portrayals of gender roles are prevalent in sport and in many areas of mainstream media, including that of sport media. Moreover, gender role portrayals occur in mediated sports broadcasts through production decisions and in the language choices of sports broadcasters. In summary, regardless of the avenue for which gender role portrayals are displayed, it is evident that there are clear distinctions between how males and females are portrayed. With this in mind, attention will now be turned to how the literature is to be applied to this specific study.

FIFA World Cup

Reaching world-wide audiences comparable to that of the Olympics and the Tour de France, the FIFA World Cup and the FIFA Women’s World Cup are the largest single-event sporting competitions in the world (“FIFA,” n.d.; Shazi, 2018). The tournament, which began in the year 1930 on the men’s side and in 1991 on the women’s side, is a contest played by the

senior national soccer team of qualifying nations over a span of one month every four years for the opportunity to be named the world's best soccer team ("FIFA," n.d.). In terms of viewership, results indicate that 26.5 million U.S. viewers tuned in to the 2014 FIFA World Cup final and 17.2 million viewers tuned into the final match in 2018 (Harris, 2018; Jackman, 2018). Conversely, the 2011 FIFA Women's World Cup final garnered views from 13.5 million people and 25.4 million viewers for the 2015 final ("25.4 Million Viewers," 2015).

Although tournament matches began in 1930, it was not until the 1966 final match that the FIFA World Cup was televised with play-by-play commentary on English language broadcasts (Chisari, 2006). Moreover, it was not until 1982 that the final match incorporated both play-by-play and color commentary. On the other hand, the FIFA Women's World Cup final match has been televised with both play-by-play and color commentary since its inception in 1991. Play-by-play commentators, as their title suggests, are those who walk viewers through the game by explaining what is occurring during each play. Although they tend to have a great deal of knowledge about the sport they are providing commentary for, many times they exhibit their expertise through their knowing of player's names, numbers, and pertinent background information and stories. Color commentators, on the other hand, are implemented into broadcasts because of their expert knowledge of the sport. Oftentimes, color commentators are former players or coaches whose expertise can lend a hand in explaining why a certain play occurred and what players were intending to do throughout the game.

Following the 2018 FIFA World Cup final match, the winning federation pocketed \$38 million to be split among the players, while the second place team earned \$28 million to be split among the players (Hess, 2018). The 2015 FIFA Women's World Cup winning federation pocketed \$2 million to be split among team members, while the second place team earned \$1.4

million (“Women FIFA,” 2015). For comparison, the \$2 million earned by the winning team in the 2015 FIFA Women’s World Cup final is \$6 million less than that earned by the teams who placed 17th-32nd in the 2018 FIFA World Cup tournament, who each earned \$8 million (Hess, 2018).

Possible Effects of Gendered Commentary

Research on effects of gendered portrayals underscore the potential societal implications of how gender is portrayed in media. As Harwood and Anderson (2002) explain, the media have a large hand in the transmission and perpetuation of stereotypes of social groups. Not only does the media work as a mirror for existing social forces, they also operate as a causal agent of them (Williams, Martins, Consalvo, & Ivory, 2009). Because of this, regardless of a consumer’s age, race, or gender, given how diverse media consumption is, as well as the overall quantity of media consumption, it is both “obvious” and “inevitable” that as consumers of media, we “will be affected by these experiences somehow” (Gauntlett, 2008, p. 2).

As noted, effects of media can be seen in various groups of society. In children, social learning occurs at both the micro and macrosocial settings. Among those macrosocial learning settings are mass media effects, which can constitute television viewing (Green, 1997). In a study conducted with children, Aubrey and Harrison (2004) found that when it came to children who were exposed to gender stereotypes on television, those children were more likely to endorse, as well as display gender stereotypes than that of children exposed to gender counter-stereotypes (p. 138). These effects are also experienced by female consumers as well. Eisend (2009), explains that consumption of gendered stereotypes can negatively impact life opportunities for women. This includes lower body satisfaction and decreased self-dignity through physical stereotyping of women, such as through specific beauty ideals and expectations.

Additionally, through stereotypical displays of motherhood, women can experience restrictions on self-development and potential career advancement opportunities that counter those portrayed in the media (p. 419). Keeping this in mind, not only does repeated consumption of gender stereotyped messages have the potential to impact expectations for others in society, but they can also perpetuate internally within an individual.

Gerbner (1998) explored this phenomenon and posited that television viewing frequency has effects on viewer beliefs and perceptions of the world that become “inescapable” (p. 178). Moreover, the more television that people watch, the more likely that their views are going to reflect those that are transmitted through television (Shrum, 2017). Although the expansion of television through the implementation of cable and satellite channels might lead one to believe that consumption is diverse, “most television programs are by commercial necessity designed to be watched by large and heterogeneous audiences” (Zillmann & Bryant, 2002, p. 45). Because of this, given the consistency of television messages and the high frequency of their consumption (Shrum, 2017), heavy viewers of television tend to think that real life mirrors what is portrayed on television, thus leading to the social homogenization effect of “mainstreaming” (Borah, 2016; Gerbner, 1998). Given what is known about gender role portrayals in media, including the emphasis on traditional gender stereotypes, as well as over-sexualization and underrepresentation of women, links between exposure to these messages and real life expectations can be presumed.

The Present Research

As Eastman and Billings (2001) previously explained, when words of sportscasters are consistently repeated in ways that are similar to one another, they can provide a framework for not only the sports experience, but for nonathletic situations as well. Literature has been clear in showing that not only are female athletes underrepresented in numerous realms of sport media,

but when they are shown, their efforts are trivialized and they are portrayed in ways that seek to sexually objectify them. Moreover, when it comes to sports broadcast commentary specifically, trivialization perpetuates through ambivalent language, gender marking, and extraneous commentary that sheds light on gendered expectations and takes away from their roles as athletes. When considering the potential media effects of gendered coverage, the importance of this study grows exponentially. Additionally, although research of gender-based broadcast commentary has been explored in pinnacle sporting events, such as the Olympics and the NCAA basketball championships, research is lacking when it comes to the FIFA World Cup and the FIFA Women's World Cup. Considering their massive nature as a sporting event, as well as a viewing event, exploration of the men's and women's FIFA World Cup is both practical and necessary. Keeping this in mind, given what is known about the literature reviewed until this point, the following research questions are proposed:

RQ1: Are there differences between commentators' descriptive evaluations of male and female soccer players in commentary of FIFA World Cup and FIFA Women's World Cup final matches?

RQ2: Are commentator role (play-by-play or color) and commentator sex associated with differences in commentators' descriptive evaluations of male and female soccer players in commentary of FIFA World Cup and FIFA Women's World Cup final matches?

Method

The following section details the research methodology that was chosen for this thesis, as well as its application and reasons for selection. Additionally, the sample selected is detailed, the commentary categories are discussed, and coding and data analysis procedures are addressed.

Design

This study employed a content analysis to explore broadcast commentary of the 2014 and 2018 final matches of the FIFA World Cup and the 2011 and 2015 FIFA Women's World Cup final matches. A content analysis can be described as "a systematic technique for analyzing messages within the dynamics of the full communication context rather than as something isolated and arid" (Budd, Thorp, & Donohew, 1967, p. 333). As Kolbe and Burnett (1991) point out, these communication contexts can be analyzed at many different levels, including through images, words, roles, and more, therefore creating a wider realm of research opportunities. Advantages of this methodology are that they allow the researcher to ask questions about the communication messages that are being produced without having to witness the communication directly. Moreover, because the messages are specifically intended for the receiver, researcher attention does not bias the respondent (Budd et al., 1967). A content analytic approach also allows for "an empirical starting point for generating new research," (Kolbe & Burnett, 1991, p. 244) as well as the addition of intercoder reliability, which results through two different "judges" assigning the same rating to an object (Lombard, Snyder-Duch, & Bracken, 2002, p. 589). Previous studies of gendered differences in broadcast commentary have used a content analytic approach (Billings et al., 2002, Billings et al., 2010; Christopherson et al., 2002; Hallmark & Armstrong, 1999; MacArthur et al., 2017; Tuggle, 1997; Tuggle & Owen, 1999). Given that this study examines evaluations of male and female athletes by play-by-play and color commentators

in a broadcasted sporting event, this methodology was selected because it is most conducive to what the study aims to discover.

Sample

The sample selected for this thesis includes the last two final matches of the FIFA World Cup and the FIFA Women's World Cup. On the men's side, this includes the 2014 (Argentina vs. Germany) and the 2018 (France vs. Croatia) FIFA World Cup final matches. On the women's side, this includes the 2011 (Japan vs. United States of America) and the 2015 (Japan vs. United States of America) FIFA Women's World Cup final matches. Given the gap in time between each World Cup final match on both the men's and women's side (4 years), selection of these particular games had much to do with their recency, as well as the overall lack of access to games occurring in years prior to those chosen.

The games obtained for analysis were those made available on English language television through the official network broadcasting the games in the United States. This included an ABC broadcast for the 2014 final, a FOX broadcast for the 2018 final, an ESPN broadcast for the 2011 final, and a FOX broadcast for the 2015 final. Additionally, the game copies obtained had to include commentary from the official start of the match until the official conclusion of the match. All four games were analyzed to ensure that commentary included clear audio and contained the correct play-by-play and color commentators. For the 2014 final, this included commentary of Ian Darke (PxP) and Steve McManaman (color) and for the 2018 final this included the broadcast commentary of John Strong (PxP) and Stuart Holden (color). The 2011 final included the commentary of Ian Darke (PxP) and Julie Foudy (color) and the 2015 final commentary was that of JP Dellacamera (PxP), Tony DiCicco (color), and Cat Whitehill (color).

Preliminary Procedures

In accordance with the work of Billings, Halone, and Denham (2002), word-for-word transcriptions of the four games were produced using the paid transcription service Sonix. To ensure correct transcriptions of each game, following the programs' initial transcription, the researcher re-watched each game to correct any inaccurate commentary. Initial transcriptions consisted of commentary from the play-by-play and color analysts with clear distinctions of who was speaking and when. Commentary from sideline and studio broadcasters was transcribed but was not included in the full analysis. Additionally, commentary that occurred outside of actual gameplay, including during the pre-game and post-game coverage, as well as during halftime, was transcribed, but was not included in the final analysis. Any inaudible or indiscernible commentary was replaced by the symbol "[...]." This resulted in a total of 168 total pages of broadcast commentary from play-by-play and color commentators across the four games.

Following their transcriptions, commentary from each individual game was then analyzed from the beginning of the match (i.e. first whistle) until half-time (45:00 + any stoppage time) and then from the start of the second half (i.e. first whistle after halftime) until the end of the match (i.e. when the referee signals it is over, 90:00 + any stoppage time) and a list of descriptive phrases, which could be present in the form of words, phrases, or sentences (Eastman & Billings, 2001) were compiled and organized into a master spreadsheet. Because the 2014 FIFA World Cup went into overtime and the 2011 FIFA Women's World Cup went into overtime, as well as penalty kicks, descriptive phrases during this extra time were also collected. Any descriptive phrase that included an [...] were excluded from the master list of descriptor phrases. In order for a line of commentary to qualify as descriptive, Eastman and Billings (2001) explain that it must refer to an individual player in a way that is not factual or neutral, but instead contains some

presence or absence of bias or pattern. Moreover, commentary dedicated to statistics, including goals and assists, as well as to who passed or controlled the ball would fall under the factual category, unless accompanied by additional adjectives to describe a player. Any commentary about the team as a whole, the team's coaches or staff, or any players not present in the action were not included in the analysis (Eastman & Billings, 2001). Keeping this in mind, a total of 475 total descriptor phrases across all four games were collected.

Once these phrases were compiled, based loosely on the coding procedures of MacArthur et al. (2017), the descriptive phrases were then organized based on (a) the year of competition (i.e. 2011, 2014, 2015, 2018), (b) the minute (i.e. timestamp provided by Sonix), (c) game time (i.e. first half; second half; overtime; penalty kicks), (d) broadcaster sex (i.e. male or female), (e) commentary type (i.e. PxP or color), and (f) athlete sex (i.e. male or female).

Unit of Analysis and Coded Variables

The unit of analysis for this study was the descriptor phrase, which is defined by MacArthur et al. (2017) as “any adjective, adjectival phrase, adverb, and adverbial phrase used by a network-employed individual” (p. 416). Following initial organization, each descriptor was analyzed and coded for presence based on a slightly altered combination of 17 classification categories offered by Billings (2002) and MacArthur et al. (2017). However, deviating slightly from MacArthur et al. (2017), this study treated these classification categories as separate, non-mutually exclusive variables, rather than as categories of a single variable. These variables include: (a) concentration (attention or focus); (b) athletic strength (physical power or attributes); (c) intelligence and mental skill (mental ability, strength, or attributes); (d) athletic ability (general athletic skills); (e) composure (ability to handle or control themselves); (f) commitment (dedication or devotion to cause, play, action, or moment); (g) experience/leadership (past

encounters or involvement in sport); (h) outgoing/extroverted (unreserved personality traits or attributes); (i) modest/introverted (reserved personality traits or attributes); (j) emotional (outward and observable feelings or emotions); (k) attractiveness/looks and appearance (physical qualities and outward body features); (l) size/parts of body (extremities size, ability, or shape); (m) background (age, club, former or current life, living, or playing experiences); and (n) other (commentary not belonging to a category). For the purposes of this study, following the transcription of each game, the researcher added three additional categories. These include: (o) soccer specific skill (talent and ability specific to sport of soccer); (p) fortune (success or failure as something of chance, rather than created); and (q) team orientation (role or effort in regards to the team). Full definitions of each variable category were clearly defined in a codebook (see Appendix A). Each descriptor was coded for presence or absence of each of these variables.

Coding

A codebook (see Appendix A) was created with instructions for the organization and analysis of each descriptive phrase, as well as with the specified variable categories, their full definition, and various examples of each variable. The primary researcher coded 100% of the 475 descriptor phrases from all four final matches. Following this, a second coder underwent a training session and was provided the codebook and instructions that clarified coding responsibilities. Once the training session was completed, the second coder was then randomly assigned 15% ($n = 72$) of the total descriptor phrases for assessment of intercoder reliability. The subsample used for assessment was not known to the primary coder during the coding process and was analyzed independently. No formal checks for intercoder reliability were employed during the training process.

Using the Scott's pi reliability coefficient to compare agreement between the two coders with a suggested threshold for acceptable reliability of 0.7 (Frey, Botan, & Kreps, 2000), intercoder reliability for all 17 categories resulted in an overall average of $\pi = .71$. Individual reliability coefficient values for each variable were (a) concentration (1), (b) athletic strength (.21), (c) intelligence and mental skill (.65), (d) athletic ability (.74) (e) composure (1), (f) commitment (.88), (g) experience/leadership (.90), (h) outgoing/extroverted (1), (i) modest/introverted (1), (j) emotional (.88), (k) attractiveness/looks and appearance (-.007), (l) size/parts of body (.38), (m) background, (.87), (n) other (.63), (o) soccer specific skill (.27), (p) fortune (.85), and (q) team orientation (.80).

As Artstein and Poesio (2008) point out, in instances where a disproportionate amount of data falls into one category, there is a higher chance for agreement for that category. However, because of this, in instances where there is a lower amount of data falling into a category, even though the two coders might agree on a large proportion of the items, due to the prevalence skew, the reliability coefficient for measures such as (k) attractiveness/looks and appearance, (l) size/parts of body, and (o) soccer specific skill will remain low. As is evidenced by a handful of the aforementioned reliabilities, that was the case in this study. Because reliability coefficients for some variables were affected by the skew in prevalence, agreement percentages were also used to assess reliability. Average agreement across all 17 categories was 96.4%. Individual agreement for the each variable were (a) concentration (100%), (b) athletic strength (91.7%), (c) intelligence and mental skill (95.8%), (d) athletic ability (97.2%), (e) composure (100%), (f) commitment (98.6%), (g) experience/leadership (97.2%), (h) outgoing/extroverted (100%), (i) modest/introverted (100%), (j) emotional (98.6%), (k) attractiveness/looks and appearance

(98.6%), (l) size/parts of body (95.8%), (m) background, (97.2%), (n) other (88.9%), (o) soccer specific skill (84.7%), (p) fortune (98.6%), and (q) team orientation (95.8%).

Data Analysis

Following completion of the coding process, in an attempt to best answer the research questions, analyses compared prevalence of other coded commentary descriptor variables across coded commentary of men's and women's games. Following the analysis, chi-squared tests with a 2-tailed significance threshold of .05 were employed to determine the differences between comments for male and female athletes, as well as the differences between broadcaster sex and broadcaster type on commentary employed.

Results

Of the 168 total pages of transcribed commentary, a total of 475 descriptor phrases were collected and coded, resulting in 543 total variable occurrences across all four of the analyzed games. Prior to answering the research questions, a distribution analysis was conducted in order to better understand how often each variable occurred across the four games. The results are accounted for in Table 1.

Table 1

Variable Occurrence Across All 475 Descriptor Phrases Collected

Variable	%	<i>n</i>
A. Concentration	1.74	7
Men's: "his concentration levels were really good"		
Women's: "Hope Solo coming for it, gets distracted a little bit"		
B. Athletic Strength	4	19
Men's: "strong from the goalkeeper"		
Women's: "she can run through people"		
C. Intelligence and Mental Skill	4.42	21
Men's: "look how quick he was to read the danger there ..."		
Women's: "her play dropping deep has been intelligent"		
D. Athletic Ability	11.58	55
Men's: "Matuidi out-jumped by Lovren"		
Women's: "Here is the speedy Ohno"		
E. Composure	3.58	17
Men's: "Demichelis, cool as you like"		
Women's: "and what calm composure from Abby Wambach"		
F. Commitment	7.58	36
Men's: "Pavard threw his body in there"		
Women's: "Kumagai has battled play for play"		
G. Experience/Leadership	12.21	58
Men's: "first final he's played in his professional career"		
Women's: "...and she's been in six World Cups"		
H. Outgoing/Extroverted	0	0
I. Modest/Introverted	1.05	5
Men's: "ego free, grounded, professional footballer..."		

Table 1 Continued

Variable	%	<i>n</i>
Women's: "Amy LePeilbet, one of the quieter members of the side..."		
J. Emotional	3.16	15
Men's: "...the happiest man in the building right now..."		
Women's: "gets a little shout from an angry Abby Wambach"		
K. Attractiveness/Looks & Appearance	.42	2
Men's: "he certainly looks very, very, groggy"		
Women's: "they're going to have to bronze that beautiful dome of hers"		
L. Size/Parts of Body	4.21	20
Men's: "...for the lanky Thomas Müller"		
Women's: "Aya Miyama, only five feet nothing at all"		
M. Background	18.11	86
Men's: "here's Lavezzi of Paris Saint-Germain"		
Women's: "youngest player in the squad, Alex Morgan"		
N. Other	16.21	77
Men's: "it is indeed Ivan Strinić struggling"		
Women's: "Hope Solo is just bored"		
O. Soccer Specific Skill	10.95	52
Men's: "Manuel Neuer, best goalkeeper in the world"		
Women's: "best header in the world in Abby Wambach"		
P. Fortune	2.32	11
Men's: "he got a bit lucky there"		
Women's: "great effort really from Cheney, very unlucky"		
Q. Team Orientation	13.05	62
Men's: "here's the captain, Philipp Lahm"		
Women's: "Sauerbrunn to me has been the unsung hero"		
Total		543

As outlined in Table 1, every variable category was accounted for across the four games except that of (h) outgoing/extroverted. Of the 475 descriptor phrases analyzed, the three variables that occurred most frequently were (m) background ($n = 86$), (n) other ($n = 77$), and (q) team orientation ($n = 62$). Aside from (h) outgoing/extroverted, which did not occur, the

variables that occurred least frequently were (k) attractiveness/looks and appearance ($n = 2$), (i) modest/introverted ($n = 5$), and (a) concentration ($n = 7$).

Research Question 1

The first research question (RQ1) asked whether or not commentators' descriptive evaluations of male soccer players in FIFA World Cup final matches differed from the evaluations of female soccer players in FIFA Women's World Cup final matches. Chi-square results for research question 1 are outlined in Table 2.

Table 2

Descriptor Variable Occurrence for Men's and Women's Games

Variable	Men's	%	Women's	%
A. Concentration	4	1.90	3	1.13
B. Athletic Strength	5	2.38	14	5.28
C. Intelligence and Mental Skill	6	2.86	15	5.66
D. Athletic Ability	25	11.90	30	11.32
E. Composure	6	2.86	11	4.15
F. Commitment	12	5.71	24	9.06
G. Experience/Leadership	26	12.38	32	12.08
H. Outgoing/Extroverted	0	0.00	0	0.00
I. Modest/Introverted	4	1.90	1	0.38
J. Emotional	12**	5.71	3	1.13
K. Attractiveness/Looks & Appearance	1	0.48	1	0.38
L. Size/Parts of Body	11	5.24	9	3.40
M. Background	41	19.52	45	16.98
N. Other	33	15.71	44	16.60
O. Soccer Specific Skill	24	11.43	28	10.57
P. Fortune	1	0.48	10**	3.77
Q. Team Orientation	26	12.38	36	13.58
Total	237		306	

Note: * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

As Table 2 revealed, there were few significant differences in the evaluations that commentators provided for male soccer players to those provided for female soccer players. Moreover, statistical significance was only reached for two of the seventeen variable categories. The largest differences between evaluations for males and females occurred for comments deemed (j) emotional and those deemed to have been about (p) fortune. Male soccer players received a higher frequency of comments about them being (j) emotional, $\chi^2 (1, N = 475) = 8.33$, $p = .0039$, to that of female soccer players and female soccer players garnered more evaluations about their (p) fortune, $\chi^2 (1, N = 475) = 6.73$, $p = .0095$, to that of male soccer players. As noted, the remaining variable categories did not reach statistical significance.

Research Question 2

The second research question (RQ2) asked whether a commentator’s role, either play-by-play or color and a commentator’s sex were associated with differences in commentators’ descriptive evaluations of male and female soccer players in commentary of FIFA World Cup and FIFA Women’s World Cup final matches. Chi-square results for part one of the second research question are outlined in Table 3.

Table 3

Descriptor Variable Occurrence Based on Commentator Role

Variable	Play-By-Play	%	Color	%
A. Concentration	4	1.28	3	1.85
B. Athletic Strength	9	2.88	10	6.17
C. Intelligence and Mental Skill	8	2.56	13**	8.02
D. Athletic Ability	31	9.90	24	14.81
E. Composure	9	2.88	8	4.94
F. Commitment	20	6.39	16	9.88
G. Experience/Leadership	53***	16.93	5	3.09
H. Outgoing/Extroverted	0	0.00	0	0.00

Table 3 Continued

Variable	Play-By-Play	%	Color	%
I. Modest/Introverted	3	0.96	2	1.23
J. Emotional	10	3.19	5	3.09
K. Attractiveness/Looks & Appearance	0	0.00	2*	1.23
L. Size/Parts of Body	10	3.19	10	6.17
M. Background	79***	25.24	7	4.32
N. Other	48	15.34	29	17.90
O. Soccer Specific Skill	25	7.99	27**	16.67
P. Fortune	6	1.92	5	3.09
Q. Team Orientation	42	13.42	20	12.35
Total	357		186	

Note: * $p < .05$, ** $p = < .01$, *** $p = < .001$

As Table 3 displays, few significant differences were present when it came to the evaluations of male and female soccer players based on commentator role. Of the seventeen variable categories analyzed, statistical significance was reached for five of the seventeen. A color commentator was more likely to attribute (c) intelligence and mental skill descriptors to a player, $\chi^2(1, N = 475) = 7.07, p = .0078$, than that of a play-by-play commentator. Similarly, color commentators were more likely to employ the (k) attractiveness/looks and appearance descriptor to a player, $\chi^2(1, N = 475) = 4.32, p = .0377$, than that of a play-by-play commentator, as well as the (o) soccer specific skill descriptor, $\chi^2(1, N = 475) = 7.84, p = .0051$. Conversely, play-by-play commentators utilized the (g) experience/leadership descriptor more frequently for players, $\chi^2(1, N = 475) = 23.20, p = < .0001$, than color commentators, as well as the (m) background descriptor, $\chi^2(1, N = 475) = 38.00, p = < .0001$. The remaining variable categories did not reach statistical significance.

The second part of the second research question (RQ2) asked whether a commentator's sex was associated with differences in the descriptive evaluations of male and female soccer players in commentary of FIFA World Cup and FIFA Women's World Cup final matches. Chi-square results for part two of the second research question are outlined in Table 4.

Table 4

Descriptor Variable Occurrence Based on Commentator Sex

Variable	Male	%	Female	%
A. Concentration	7	1.77	0	0.00
B. Athletic Strength	13	3.29	6	7.50
C. Intelligence and Mental Skill	11	2.78	10**	12.50
D. Athletic Ability	44	11.14	11	13.75
E. Composure	11	2.78	6	7.50
F. Commitment	27	6.84	9	11.25
G. Experience/Leadership	55**	13.92	3	3.75
H. Outgoing/Extroverted	0	0.00	0	0.00
I. Modest/Introverted	5	1.27	0	0.00
J. Emotional	13	3.29	2	2.50
K. Attractiveness/Looks & Appearance	1	0.25	1	1.25
L. Size/Parts of Body	16	4.05	4	5.00
M. Background	80**	20.25	6	7.50
N. Other	66	16.71	11	13.75
O. Soccer Specific Skill	37	9.37	15*	18.75
P. Fortune	7	1.77	4	5.00
Q. Team Orientation	53	13.42	9	11.25
Total	446		97	

Note: * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

As is evidenced in Table 4, similar to that of part one, few significant differences were present when it came to the evaluations of male and female soccer players based on commentator sex. Statistical significance was reached for four of the seventeen variable categories analyzed.

Results explain that female commentators frequented the (c) intelligence and mental skill descriptor, $\chi^2 (1, N = 475) = 11.29, p = .0008$, more than that of male commentators. Moreover, female commentators also employed the (o) soccer specific skill descriptor more often, $\chi^2 (1, N = 475) = 5.28, p = .0216$, than that of male commentators. The (g) experience/leadership descriptor was more frequently employed by male commentators, $\chi^2 (1, N = 475) = 8.13, p = .0044$, than female commentators, as well as the (m) background descriptor, $\chi^2 (1, N = 475) = 8.64, p = .0033$. The remaining variable categories did not reach statistical significance.

Discussion

Guided by two research questions, this thesis aimed to discover whether broadcast commentary provided for FIFA World Cup and FIFA Women's World Cup final matches differed based on the sex of the athletes competing. Moreover, it was interested in exploring if commentator role, either play-by-play or color commentator and commentator sex had an impact on the descriptive evaluations employed in those final matches. Keeping in mind the magnitude of an event like the FIFA World Cup and the FIFA Women's World Cup, as well as the minute amount of research that gender-based language and broadcast commentary have received specific to the sport of soccer, the ultimate goal of this research was to fill a gap in an already large body of research.

Summary of Results

In looking at the first research question, which was specific to the differences in descriptive evaluations employed by commentators for male soccer players and those employed for female soccer players, findings proved that there was little difference between the sexes. Moreover, although 17 coding categories were compared, only two were used in significantly different proportion across games featuring male soccer players and those featuring female soccer players. Of those two significant categories, findings showed that a male soccer player more frequently received evaluations about emotions, whereas a female soccer player more frequently received evaluations about fortune. While previous research into gender roles and gender roles in sport have pointed out that females, more often than males, are often shown and described in ways that touch on their emotional tendencies (Angelini, MacArthur, & Billings, 2012; Morgan, 2007; Trolan, 2013), other research in broadcast commentary and sport have contradicted such stereotypical expectations (Billings, Angelini, & Eastman, 2005; MacArthur et

al., 2017). Seeing that these evaluations were more frequently provided by play-by-play commentators, this may speak to a changing tone in broadcasting specific to soccer and a shift to more matter-of-fact evaluations of male soccer players during in-game action. However, because the previous research mentioned did not explore soccer specifically, cross sport comparisons within a study would be needed to substantiate whether or not soccer commentary is different than commentary for other sports. The second of the two significant findings for the first research question was that a female soccer player was more likely to be described in terms of fortune. Although previous research about female athletes have noted their success being due to something unbeknownst to them, include that of luck (Billings et al., 2002), the findings in this study should be put into perspective. Despite being titled “fortune,” the coding category encompassed *both* success and failure as something of chance, rather than being created. Therefore, comments about being fortunate, as well as being unfortunate were to be included in coding. Keeping this in mind, while a female soccer player was more likely to be evaluated in this way, of the ten “fortune” evaluations that a female soccer player received, the majority of the commentary were attributions of being unlucky and unfortunate rather than being lucky and fortunate, which is in contrast to the aforementioned research. While this again may speak to a shift in tone in broadcasting specific to soccer, more cross sport research within a study, as well as more qualitative research is needed to substantiate these claims.

The second of the research questions was interested in knowing whether the role of the commentator, be that play-by-play or color, and the sex of the commentator had an impact on the prevalence of evaluations employed for male and female soccer players. Similar to the findings for the first research question, while there were some differences in the evaluations employed based on commentator role, the majority (71 percent) of the 17 categories found no significant

differences between the two. Play-by-play commentators are the primary speakers during a sporting event and are known more for their articulate and accurate descriptions of what is occurring on field, as well as their ability to pose questions for the color commentator in the booth (“The sportscaster,” n.d.). Moreover, a play-by-play commentator is the one who knows the stories behind the scenes and is keenly aware of the former experiences, both on and off the field, of a player. Keeping this in mind, considering the role of the play-by-play commentator, it is appropriate that the findings attributed a higher frequency of comments about player background, as well as player experience to play-by-play commentators. Conversely, color commentators are usually, though not always, current or former athletes in a specific sport (“The sportscaster,” n.d.) and therefore, it is also appropriate that the findings suggest that color commentators were more likely to discuss player intelligence and mental skill, as well as player skill specific to the sport of soccer. Because of their insight into the sport and the game, as well as their understanding of specific skillsets that a player may possess, the higher frequency of these comment types is to be expected. Findings also show that color commentators were more likely to evaluate a player in regards to attractiveness and looks and appearance in this study. Evaluations of this type occurred in the 2011 final match and the 2014 final match, which saw Julie Foudy and Steve McManaman fulfilling the role of color commentator, respectively. Although speculative, because the two pundits also fulfilled the role of color commentator for group stage and knockout games leading up to the final match, there may have been an increased comfort in broadcasting from game to game that resulted in comments about attractiveness and looks and appearance. However, given the low frequency of these descriptive evaluations ($n = 2$), more research is necessary to draw a clear relationship between broadcaster role and evaluations of this kind.

The second part of the second research question concerned whether the sex of the commentator had an impact on the descriptive evaluations of male soccer players and female soccer players. Again, the majority (76 percent) of the 17 categories found no significant differences, however there were some categories that differed based on commentator sex. Findings show that male commentators were more likely to employ descriptive evaluations about player experience, as well as player background. As the findings from the first part of the second research question explained, play-by-play commentators were more likely to employ these same evaluations. Therefore, because male commentators were the only individuals who fulfilled the role of play-by-play commentator, given that significance was reached for commentator role, significance would also be reached for commentator sex. Findings also show that female commentators were more likely to employ evaluations about player intelligence and mental skill, as well as soccer specific skill. Because ten of the 13 total intelligence and mental skill evaluations provided by color commentators were also provided by a female, significance in this category was expected. Moreover, because 15 of the 27 total soccer specific skill evaluations provided by color commentators were also provided by a female, significance was also to be expected. Although qualitative research is needed to better understand the content of each evaluation, because females talk about females differently than males do (Staff, 2009) and because female broadcasters were only present in games featuring female players, this may speak to why these evaluations occurred. While previous research has explored the differences between male and female commentators (Billings et al., 2002), because female commentators only occurred in games featuring female athletes, more research is needed to establish and better understand trends related to female commentators and evaluation type.

As was the goal of this research, findings within this study provided further insight into an already large body of research. However, said findings were not consistent with results typically found in the study of broadcast commentary and athlete sex in other sports. The results within this paper showed that specific to the sport of soccer and FIFA World Cup and FIFA Women's World Cup final matches, there is not much of a difference when it comes to the prevalence of descriptive evaluations of male and female soccer players. Additionally, commentator role and commentator sex did not play a massive part in the differences that did occur, as many of the findings were consistent with the expectations for commentator role. Although it has become somewhat of an expectation in this field of exploration, the typical differences in commentary prevalence that have occurred in previous research did not occur in this study.

Limitations and Future Research

Despite the valuable insight gained from this study, a number of limitations did present themselves throughout the research. To begin, given the overall formatting of the World Cup, the sample being analyzed was a bit inconsistent in regards to time. Although the World Cup occurs every four years for both the men and the women, unlike an event such as the Olympics, they do not occur in the same year, every four years. While the four-year gap between events will not change, because there is a one-year time difference in the men's and women's final matches, future research would be wise to explore match commentary from World Cup's that occur consecutively, as the 2014 and 2015 games were the only games that occurred back-to-back in the sample analyzed in this study. With increased participation in social movements such as #MeToo and #TimesUp, as well as the recent suing of the U.S. Soccer federation by members of the United States women's national soccer team for gender discrimination (Hays, 2019), there is

a potential for differences in commentary type, style, and content over time. Therefore, more consistent and telling results might occur with multiple sets of games being analyzed that occur back-to-back. Similarly, analyzing a broader swath of games, including group stage games and knockout matches may also be wise to see if patterns found in final matches hold consistent across more games.

In addition to the differing competition dates, the broadcasters for each event were also not the same across each of the analyzed games. Although Ian Darke did provide play-by-play commentary for one of the men's games and one of the women's games, he was the only recurring broadcaster in the four games analyzed. Moreover, female broadcasters were only present for FIFA Women's World Cup final matches and did not provide commentary for any of the men's competitions. For the sake of consistency, future research would be wise to explore games where the play-by-play and the color commentators are consistent from the men's side to the women's side. Additionally, because cultural contexts influence individual understandings of gender (Fixmer-Oraiz & Wood, 2018), future research may find it wise to take nationality into account when comparing differences in commentary.

Beyond these two limitations, as previously noted, due to the issue of prevalence for some of the categories, intercoder reliability did present itself as a limitation for this study. Despite high levels of agreement across all 17 categories, the Scott's Pi statistics for some categories were extremely low. Keeping this in mind, future research might look to employ formal checks of intercoder reliability throughout the training process, as well as re-coding in the event that time allows it. Additionally, research might also look into clarifying some of the coding categories, making them more broad or narrow, or combining some of the categories to

create more cohesion amongst coders. This is in addition to the potential for qualitative analysis of coding categories to explore implications

The final limitation that should be noted is in regards to researcher interpretation. Because the researcher was responsible for transcription of each game, as well as the interpretation of the transcriptions and the collection of all 475 descriptor phrases, it should be made clear that these interpretations are based solely on the researcher's experience and knowledge of the sport, as well as the context of each phrase. Moreover, it should not be assumed that these phrases and their interpretation are universal but instead are specific to this study.

Conclusion

With female athletic participation continuing to grow across all sports, the emphasis on and interest in research pertaining to athlete sex and the relationship it has with broadcast commentary will continue to grow. While said research has yet to expand fully to the sport of soccer, by exploring events like the FIFA World Cup and the FIFA Women's World Cup in this paper, it should be made clear that broadening the research horizon is practical and necessary. Not only were there few differences between how male and female soccer players were evaluated, few differences arose in regards to commentator role and sex. With that in mind, further research could help to prove that the findings here were either an anomaly or solidify the notion that soccer commentating is different than that of other sports. These findings make clear that further research is necessary in order to better understand where the sport of soccer stands in regards to broadcast commentary, descriptive evaluations, and the role that athlete sex has with the two. Regardless of the scope, direction, or specific aims of this future research, with the 2019 FIFA Women's World Cup on the horizon, there is no better time to start.

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APPENDIX A: Codebook

***Based on a combination/alteration of categories and definitions from:**

Billings, A. C., Halone, K. K., & Denham, B. E. (2002). "Man, that was a pretty shot": An analysis of gendered broadcast commentary surrounding the 2000 men's and women's NCAA Final Four basketball championships. *Mass Communication and Society*, 5(3), 295-315. doi:10.1207/s15327825mcs0503_4

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(a) Year:

2011, 2014, 2015, 2018

(b) Minute:

Sonix timestamp

(c) Game Time:

First Half = 1

Second Half = 2

Overtime = OT

Penalty Kicks = PK

(d) Broadcaster Sex:

Male = M

Female = F

(e) Commentary Type:

Play-by-play = P

Color = C

(f) Athlete Sex:

Male = M

Female = F

*Note: Case ID's begin at the number 2. Case ID's run from #2 - #476.

Variables (No = 0, Yes = 1)

(a) Concentration: Includes commentary about a player's attention or focus on the game or the sport.

Examples: "he lost his focus there" ... "she's just so locked in right now" ... "just a careless play from her" ... "he is in the zone" ... "gets a little distracted"

(b) Athletic Strength: Commentary directed toward a player's physical power or attributes.

Examples: "she is just so powerful" ... "just muscles his opponent off the ball" ... "fights off his player" ... "uses her body to shield off the defender"

(c) Intelligence and Mental Skill: Commentary about a player's mental ability, strength, or attributes, including that of in-game strategy and decision making.

Examples: "he read the defense well there" ... "she is a very smart soccer player" ... "such a clever play from her" ... "great recognition to see the play was on"

(d) Athletic Ability: Includes commentary directed toward general athletic skills, including those of speed, endurance, agility, flexibility, coordination, and others similar.

Examples: "she just blows past everyone" ... "he'll run all day long" ... "he will be a test for this defense" ... "she beats her defender" ... "out-jumps the defender"

(e) Composure: Commentary that describes an athlete's ability to handle stressful situations or their ability to control themselves.

Examples: "look at her confidence on the ball" ... "a few nervous moments for him" ... "he is so sound in defense" ... "she is comfortable on the outside" ... "shows such poise"

(f) Commitment: Includes commentary aimed toward describing a player's dedication or devotion to a cause, play, action, or moment.

Examples: "she will not give up" ... "he was determined to get to that ball" ... "look how she fights in for this" ... "he is battling in there" ... "he is just so persistent"

(g) Experience: Commentary that touches on a player's past encounters or involvement specific to the sport or on the expertise that a player possesses about the game or sport.

Examples: "he is a former FA Cup champion" ... "this is her 85th appearance for the team" ... "he's been with the squad since 2008" ... "earning her 32nd cap today"

(h) Outgoing/Extroverted: Includes commentary about a player's unreserved personality traits or attributes.

Examples: "he's got a little bit of swagger" ... "she is the team jokester"

(i) Modest/Introverted: Commentary about a player's reserved personality traits or attributes.

Examples: "so shy she couldn't even talk" ... "he's been pretty quiet today"

(j) Emotional: Includes commentary about a player's outward and observable feelings and emotions.

Examples: "she is the happiest person in the arena" ... "she angrily jogs back on defense" ... "he's complaining about the call" ... "he is clearly very frustrated"

(k) Attractiveness: Commentary having to do with a player's physical qualities or outward body features.

Examples: "she is incredibly beautiful" ... "his sleek body is the perfect build for the game"

(l) Size/Parts of Body: Commentary dedicated toward a player's extremities and their size, ability, or shape.

Examples: "he's almost six feet tall" ... "what a strike with that big left foot" ... "he hit that on his sweet spot" ... "she is lean goalkeeper" ... "such a good little player"

(m) Background: Includes commentary about a player's age, club team, former or current life, living, playing, or education experiences.

Examples: "the 20-year-old who hails from Quebec" ... "he plays for Real Madrid" ... "recovering from an ACL tear" ... "oldest player in the tournament" ... "mother of one"

(n) Other: Includes commentary not belonging to a category.

(o) Soccer Specific Skill: Refers to commentary that describes a player's talent and ability specific to the sport of soccer, including, but not limited to that of specific position, as well as shots, goals, saves, passes, touches, and finishing ability.

Examples: "he is the best goalkeeper of all time" ... "her heading ability is second to none" ... "so good in the midfield" ... "can hit it from anywhere"

(p) Fortune: Refers to commentary that describes a player's success or failure as something of chance, rather than being created.

Examples: "how lucky did she get there?" ... "unfortunate way to finish that play" ... "she got a bit unlucky on that one" ... "fortunate to have only received a yellow card"

(q) Team Orientation: Includes commentary that refers to a player and their role or effort in regards to their team specifically.

Examples: "he is carrying this team on his back" ... "she is a key player for them" ... "he is the captain" ... "she will be the target up top for them" ... "he is the unsung hero" ... "player of the game/tournament"