

"We're always looking for females": gender disparities and power dynamics in the sports journalism industry [abstract only]

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“We’re always looking for females”: Gender Disparities and Power Dynamics in the Sports Journalism Industry’

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Abstract

With regard to the various criticisms which have been leveled at the profession of sports journalism (Rowe, 2007), over the past decade little improvement has been made with regards to the gender disparities that continue to exist within the profession, with fewer women reporting on, and writing about sport, compared to men. In fact, while there are numerous opportunities for women to gain employment as political, business, crime or health reporters, sports journalism continues to be dominated by male journalists (Frayse and Mennesson, 2016; Strong and Hannis, 2007). This disparity bears a semblance with the lack of coverage that is often afforded to female athletes (Black and Fielding-Lloyd, 2016).

Indeed, while there is a wealth of work exploring how gender is framed within the media, this paper will seek to examine the media careers of six professional women working within the sports journalism industry. Drawing upon interviews conducted with women working for local (Yorkshire, UK) and international (Sky Sports) media organizations, interviewee responses revealed the gender dynamics and power relations that structured working environments as well as the prescribed roles that women performed when working in these environments. This included discussions of the challenges that the women faced as well as apparent improvements which had been made for women in the sports media industry.

From these responses, specific attention is afforded to exploring how each woman responded to questions relating to their career development, career ambitions and the opportunities available to them to progress within the industry. In doing so, Elias and Scotson’s (1994) ‘established-outsider’ relations and Matthews’s (2014) ‘pastiche hegemony’ will be used to examine the power relations that frame working environments as well as the potential

opportunities which are available to challenge working environments within the media industry.

Keywords

Sports journalism, pastiche hegemony, established-outsiders, power, gender, sports media industry, working environments

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