

Three Case Studies of the Women's National Basketball Association (WNBA) in
U.S. Sport Media: Deleuzian Analyses of Media Events Surrounding Diana
Taurasi, Becky Hammon and Maya Moore

by

Chia-Ying Liao

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

Faculty of Physical Education and Recreation

University of Alberta

Abstract

Previous feminist sport media studies have noted that media narratives surrounding the Women's National Basketball Association (WNBA) often portray its successes as proof of feminist achievements in women's sport (Banet-Weiser, 1999; McDonald, 2000, 2002; McDonald & Cooky, 2013; Wearden & Creedon, 2002). Using critical feminist perspectives, this research has further argued that these celebratory narratives of gender equality masked reproduction of hegemonic ideologies of masculinity and whiteness. Using a poststructuralist Deleuzian perspective, in my dissertation I focus on construction of normative female sporting bodies through the mediated WNBA.

My dissertation consists of three cases studies on contemporary WNBA-related media events that each draw on a different Deleuzian concept. The first case study focuses on Diana Taurasi's alleged drug use in Turkey during 2010/11. I use Deleuze's concept of assemblage to analyze what elements were drawn in to express Taurasi's drug using body and what structures were articulated within the process. Through this analysis, I describe a shift in attention from the biochemical effects of banned substances to the information processing regarding a doping body, as well as a split between Taurasi's private and public body. I further argue that these movements enabled and reified two structures, *American standard* and *professionalism*, through which the normalcy of Taurasi's athleticism was measured and declared.

The second case study focuses on Becky Hammon's naturalization to Russia and representing the Russian Olympic team in 2008. I use Deleuze's

concept of cartography to map how two nations, the U.S. and Russia, were articulated through the ways in which Hammon was allowed to access and be affiliated with each spatial partition/nation in media. I depict a non-oppositional relation between the nations that legitimated Hammon's migration to another country for her Olympic glory. This map shows that the supplementary space, Russia, could be correctly experienced only when it supports and nurtures the normative functions of the primary space, the US—such as Hammon's "regular" job as a WNBA star.

The third case study focuses on Maya Moore's first year with the WNBA in 2011. Using Deleuze's concept of becoming, I examine the reoccurring "savior" narrative that surrounded Moore's entrance to the WNBA in the media. I first demonstrate how the media illustrated Moore's ability to redefine the WNBA. I further discuss how her normativity was constructed through athleticism and profitability rather than gender and race in the commodified media scape of women's professional sports.

My Deleuzian analysis revealed a process of constructing normative professional athletes whose sporting bodies were primarily articulated through standards of the winning records and these athletes' profitability. Therefore, a different type of ideal professional women basketball player from the feminized, sexualized, or racialized player traced by the previous feminist sport media research emerged. This media ideal continues, nevertheless, to be constructed within the commercialized context of the U.S. that emphasizes individual success and the superiority of the American professional sport.

Dedication

For P. P. Liao

You are my light.

“They say that every snowflake is different. If that were true, how could the world go on? How could we ever get up off our knees? How could we ever recover from the wonder of it?

By forgetting. We cannot keep in mind too many things.

There is only the present and nothing to remember.”—Jeannette Winterson, *The Passion*

Acknowledgement

This dissertation is partially funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC).

I would like to thank my Supervisory Committee: Dr. Pirkko Markula, Dr. Marvin Washington, Dr. Dan Mason, and Dr. Lisa McDermott, who was on the committee till early 2014. I am extremely grateful for the time and effort you gave this project, and for all the invaluable feedback that pushed me and the project further.

During this long journey, I have met amazing people. As someone challenges stillness, I am greedy for stability. Thank you for many days and nights of talks on theories, research, and life. You keep me sane, and your friendship is one of the most precious gifts that I have ever received.

Also, I am extremely fortunate to have unconditional support from my family. While far away, they are home.

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Chapter One:
Introduction

Overview

I have always been interested in exploring how women's sport and female athletes are understood and articulated in the media. In this dissertation I aim to contribute to sport sociological media research by demonstrating the nuances that a Deleuzian perspective can offer (Markula, 2004; Woodward, 2009) and by examining the portrayal of the Women's National Basketball Association (WNBA) in U.S. mainstream media using three case studies.

In the field of feminist sport media studies, a variety of theoretical perspectives have been employed to guide researchers' interrogations of women's sport and female athletes in the media. Among the most prominent perspectives are liberal feminism, critical feminism, intersectionality (including critical race theories), and Foucauldian theory (Markula, 2009). Yet continuous developments in the field have introduced other theoretical perspectives, such as queer theories (McDonald, 2002; King, 2009), psychoanalytic approaches (Helstein, 2007; Syke, 2007), the Derridean perspective (Markula, 2009b) and the Deleuzian framework (Markula, 2004; Woodward, 2009). In this dissertation, I adopt a Deleuzian perspective, which has only recently been introduced to sport media studies, in order to further contribute to the theoretical development of sport sociology. Particularly, I aim to demonstrate how the Deleuzian approach enables the researcher to experiment with asking different questions that may lead to more nuanced readings of female sporting bodies in sport media. For example, instead of asking how gendered, raced, or national identities are ideologically constructed in media texts, a Deleuzian analysis reaches beyond examining differences

produced through the identity pre-determined by the researcher. In this dissertation I, instead of identity construction, interrogate the relationships that are developed in the media texts to articulate and express a (normative) female sporting body in media texts. I further examine how certain articulations become comprehensible or possible in this process. Using a Deleuzian perspective, I ask what meanings of women basketball players are possible in sport media texts. Not limited by a focus on identity, I hope to be able to expand current sport sociological readings of women's sport using the particular example of the WNBA and three WNBA players.

I decided to use WNBA players as my case studies for several reasons. First, it is notable that the WNBA has had remarkable longevity compared to other attempts to run commercially viable women's professional sport leagues in the United States. In addition, as a loyal fan and zealous observer of the league, I have always been interested in understanding how the WNBA constructs a place for itself in U.S. (women's) elite sporting culture, both economically and culturally. During its 18-year operation, the league has gone through different phases of representing itself and its athletes. In the early years, aspects of conventional femininity—feminine appearance, heterosexual romance, and nuclear families—were usually highlighted in league-wide media campaigns and mainstream media (Banet-Weiser, 1999; McDonald, 2000, 2002; Wearden & Creedon, 2002). Yet, from my observations, the league has since forgone its “obsession” with conventional femininity, and has focused more on athleticism and athletic bodies. Muscular and sweaty female sporting bodies are often

featured on the front page of the WNBA's website and in media reporting of the games. Occasionally, usually at a formal event, the website will show athletes in typically masculine attire—for example, suits, ties, and bowties. In addition, athletes' romances have generally become invisible. These developments tend to contradict the strategy that feminist sport media scholars call the “feminine apologetic” (Ware, 2011, p. 84), in which female athletes' conventional femininity is emphasized to compensate for their display of athleticism that is considered to be masculine, and thus *unfeminine*. I have found the WNBA's current “progressive” representation of its athletes fascinating.

Besides my personal interest in the league, this examination of the WNBA also contributes to feminist sport media research on the league. Over the years, the WNBA has attracted the interest of feminist sport media studies (Banet-Weiser, 1999; King, 2009; Lisee & McDonald, 2012; McDonald, 2000, 2002; McDonald & Cooky, 2013; Wearden & Creedon, 2002). Yet, these studies used portrayals of conventional femininity (e.g., family/team oriented well-mannered good heterosexual women) as their entrance point. For example, they examined how feminine ideals were used to reaffirm gender hegemony by sexualizing and trivializing female athleticism (Banet-Weiser, 1999; Lisee & McDonald, 2012; McDonald & Cooky, 2013) and to articulate normative whiteness (Banet-Weiser, 1999; McDonald, 2002). In this dissertation, I utilize a Deleuzian perspective to approach the WNBA in media from a different angle. I define “media” as textual-based media (such as newspapers, magazines and blogs) to limit the scope of my samples. In addition, instead of examining all the media texts surrounding the

league, I have chosen three case studies involving WNBA players: Diana Taurasi's drug use case, Becky Hammon's naturalization as a Russian citizen and her consequent Olympic appearance with the Russian team, and Maya Moore's entrance as a "savior" of the WNBA. I chose these particular cases for several reasons. First, within media reporting on the WNBA, these cases received significant attention and thus, each one provides me with a good number of media texts to analyze. Second, each case offers an intriguing topic for Deleuzian analysis. Diana Taurasi's case provides scandalous bad news; Becky Hammon's case crosses national lines; and Maya Moore's case redefines "ideals" in/through the WNBA.

In this introductory chapter, I describe two main components of my dissertation: the WNBA and the Deleuzian perspective. I first present background information on the development of elite women's basketball in the U.S. and the WNBA to locate my case studies within the particular context of a developing women's professional sport league. In this section, I also introduce the three athletes and their respective media cases. Finally, I outline Deleuzian rhizomatic ontology to set the stage for my departure from identity-based analysis.

Women's Elite Basketball in the United States

Women's basketball in the U.S. has evolved from a game with "women's" rules to its current form where women play with the same rules as men. In the old version of women's basketball, the court was divided into three areas between which the players were not permitted to cross, each player was limited to three dribbles, and no close contest of the ball was allowed (Spears, 1991), whereas the

current game makes only small modifications to time, ball and court sizes (depending on the league and the level of play) compared to the men's game. Along with the evolution of rules and styles, women's basketball has also grown in popularity and visibility in the media. With much credit to personnel from several dominant collegiate programs, including the legendary coach at the University of Tennessee, Pat Summitt, college level basketball started to gain significant national media exposure and attention in the 1990s (Wojciechowski, 2012). According to ESPN, the official broadcast partner of the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA), the annual NCAA tournament is currently one of their most viewed programs (Evans, 2014; Henderson, 2012; Pickle, 2004). The popularity of women's basketball at the college level has fostered an environment from which nationally recognized basketball stars have emerged. Players like Tina Thompson, Chamique Holdsclaw, Sue Bird, and Candace Parker made names for themselves on the national sport scene during their stellar collegiate careers. The attention surrounding women's college basketball and college stars has also helped to nurture interest in women's basketball at a professional level.

The WNBA

Women's professional basketball blossomed in the U.S. in 1996.¹ This was in part a response to the U.S. women's basketball team's remarkable gold medal run in the Atlanta Olympic Games in 1996. In the fall of 1996, the American Basketball League (ABL) launched its first season of women's basketball in eight cities with high-profile players, including nine members of the

1996 U.S. Olympic gold medal women's basketball team (Anthony, Caudill, & Mixon, 2012). Players like Jennifer Azzi (an NCAA champion), Dawn Staley (one of the most prolific and respected point guards in American women's basketball history), and Teresa Edwards (a then three-time Olympic gold medalist in 1988, 1992 and 1996) were on ABL's team rosters in its inaugural season ("History of the American Basketball League", n.d.). In the same year, the National Basketball Association (NBA) announced its plan to launch a women's professional league, the WNBA. Just like the ABL, the WNBA also started with eight teams (Charlotte, Cleveland, Houston, Los Angeles, New York, Phoenix, Sacramento, and Utah).² Its roster also included 1996 Olympic medalists (Lisa Leslie, Sheryl Swoopes, and Rebecca Lobo) and high-profile collegiate stars (such as the first number one draft, Tina Thompson) ("All-Time WNBA draft list", n.d.).

While both leagues were born out of the increasing popularity of elite women's basketball in the U.S., they operated in different ways (Anthony et al., 2012). First, the ABL was an independent sport organization, while the WNBA was associated with and subsidized by the NBA. Second, ABL teams were owned independently and they mostly played in separate arenas from the local NBA teams (if there was one). All of the WNBA's founding teams were in cities where there was already a local NBA franchise to pair up with. The WNBA teams played at the same arenas as the local NBA teams and with coordinated/similar logos and team names. Third, and arguably the most significant difference, was that the ABL played a regular basketball season, from fall/winter to spring

(October to April), whereas the WNBA played in the non-traditional basketball season, starting in May and ending in August (Banet-Weiser, 1999; McDonald, 2000). This difference also justified the salary difference between the two leagues: in the ABL the average salary ranged between \$70,000-80,000 but in the WNBA only between \$30,000-35,000 (Anthony, et al., 2012). By the end of 1998, after two and a half years of operation, the ABL folded and left the WNBA as the sole women's professional basketball league in the United States.³

Some have argued that the WNBA's survival is largely due to the backing of the NBA (Anthony et al., 2012; McDonald, 2000; Walker, Satore, & MacIntosh, 2012; Zang, Lam, Cianfrone, Zapalac, Holland, & Williamson, 2011). For example, the NBA's resources and its relationship with major media outlets and corporate sponsors helped the WNBA, a start-up league, to acquire "a large influx of capital" (Anthony, et al., 2012, p.113) and national, even international, visibility (Heath, 2006). During its first six seasons, 1997-2002, the WNBA averaged over 10,000 fans per game (including post-season games) (Zange, et al., 2011)⁴; and broadcasting contracts with national television stations—NBC, ESPN, and Lifetime—allowed the WNBA to attain approximately 413,000 viewers per game (Anthony, et al., 2012). The early success of the WNBA also inspired demands from other NBA franchises for WNBA expansion in their cities (Anthony, et al., 2012).⁵ As a result, in 1998, franchises were added in Detroit and Washington; in 1999 in Orlando and Minnesota; and in 2000 in Seattle, Indiana, Portland, and Miami.⁶ However, after five years of operation, signs of trouble started to show: in 2003, the average regular-season attendance dropped to under

9,000 and declined steadily to 7,479 in 2006. Franchises in Portland and Miami folded in 2002; Cleveland, one of the founding teams, in 2003; Charlotte in 2006; and Houston in 2009. The founding team in Utah relocated to San Antonio, Texas, in 2009. In 2009, the league also cut the team roster from 13 to 11 players (Walker, et al., 2012).⁷

Yet there was also good news. In 2007 the league signed a new television and digital broadcast contract with ESPN/ABC⁸ (independent from the NBA's broadcast contract) that gave "the league rights fees for the first time" (Associated Press, 2007), and in the following year, there was a 36% increase in merchandise sales. In addition, from 2007 to 2009 there was a steady increase in regular-season attendance, which brought the number back up above 8,000 per game in 2009 (Walker, et al., 2012). While the NBA was in a labor dispute in 2011,⁹ the WNBA secured an eight-figure league-wide marquee sponsorship deal. This deal allowed the sponsor's logo to be displayed on the jerseys of 10 out of 12 WNBA teams (those without their own jersey deals), as well as on courts and outside the arenas where WNBA games were played (Lombardo, 2011). While TV viewership remained low (about one tenth of the NBA ratings), in 2009 the league launched a new feature called *WNBA LiveAccess* that provided immediate digital access to games not broadcasted on ESPN/ABC and archive access to all games in the season. From 2009 to 2011, this feature was free for all, but in 2012, it required a \$4.99 subscription fee and in 2013 and 2014, \$14.99. Even with a \$10 price increase in 2013, the services subscription numbers experienced double-digit growth, which gave the league another income stream (Glass, 2013). In 2013, the

league signed another multiple-year presenting sponsorship deal. This deal gave the right to the sponsor to display their signage and name during WNBA Draft (which is broadcast by ESPN) and the half-time report show during every nationally broadcast game (Manahan, 2013).

In addition, the league changed its operational structure to gain more independence from the NBA (Walker, et al., 2012). In 2002, the league allowed “teams to be owned by non-NBA owners and located in non-NBA markets” (“WNBA timeline”, n.d., “October 8, 2002”). The first independently owned team started operating in Connecticut (relocated from Orlando) in 2003, and all three expansion teams that have since joined the WNBA are run by independent owners. Currently, six out of twelve WNBA teams are independently owned: Atlanta, Chicago, Connecticut, Los Angeles, Seattle, and Tulsa (relocated from Detroit).¹⁰ This change in operational structure also opened the door for teams to pursue their own sponsorships (Anthony, et al., 2012; Walker, et al., 2012). In 2009, the Phoenix became the first team in the WNBA and the NBA to sign a team marquee jersey sponsorship, which, according to media reports, would bring the team \$1 million annually (Sandomir, 2009). There are six teams that currently hold team marquee jersey deals: Indiana, Minnesota, Phoenix, San Antonio, Tulsa, and Washington (Glass, 2014).

The WNBA in U.S. media

According to previous feminist sport studies on the WNBA, media narratives surrounding the league often portrayed it as proof of feminist achievements in gender equality in the U.S. (Banet-Weiser, 1999; McDonald,

2000, 2002; McDonald & Cooky, 2013). These scholars argued that the demand for professional basketball leagues in 1996 was discussed in the media as a result of the trail-blazing civil rights amendment Title IX¹¹ (Banet-Weiser, 1999; McDonald, 2000). By tying the league to the feminist political landmark Title IX, the league was considered a feminist victory, a testament to equal opportunities for women in the professional (sport) realm in the U.S., although the league's launch was motivated more by business than political reasons (Anthony, et al., 2012; Walker, et al., 2012). Scholars further argued that WNBA athletes were represented as responsible and hard-working good women who were grateful to have the chance to play the game they loved at home (Banet-Weiser, 1999; McDonald, 2000, 2002; McDonald & Cooky, 2013). Since the fall of the Women's Professional Basketball League (WBL) in 1981, American women collegiate basketball athletes wanting to pursue professional basketball careers had to move overseas, mainly to Europe (Anthony, et al., 2012). Hence, the launch of the WNBA (and the ABL for that matter) offered American elite women's basketball players the chance to finally come home.

The image of "grateful good women," Banet-Weiser (1999) argued, helped direct attention away from the short season and the low(er) salaries offered by the WNBA in comparison to overseas leagues (Anthony, et al., 2012). McDonald (2000) asserted that this image also reaffirmed the end of gender inequality and the arrival of what she labelled *the post-feminist era*, where gender equality has been achieved, where women have choices and freedom and consequently, where feminist politics might not be necessary anymore. This

image of a post-feminist WNBA could also be observed in, for example, the “Title IX generation” (Keri, 2009), the younger generation of WNBA athletes who were born and grew up after the implementation of Title IX. The athletic achievements of this younger generation of athletes are celebrated as the result of growing up without gender barriers to participate in sport and to continuously pursue elite sporting careers (Oliva, 2012; Pelton, 2012). In this dissertation, I continue to examine Title IX generation WNBA players in the media, but my starting point differs from those of previous research. Using a Deleuzian perspective, I do not assume gender or any predetermined identity (such as race or sexuality) as my starting point to examine whether the equality of such identities has actually been reached. Instead, I recognize that the WNBA and women’s elite basketball players have, nevertheless, carved out a normative space for themselves in contemporary mainstream U.S. sport media. Thus, I aim to interrogate the conditions and possibilities for these professional female basketball bodies to be constructed and expressed as normative, acceptable, and even celebration-worthy in media texts.

The Cases: Diana Taurasi, Becky Hammon, and Maya Moore

In this dissertation, I examine the WNBA’s mainstream media presence through three case studies involving three prominent WNBA stars: Diana Taurasi, Becky Hammon, and Maya Moore. My reasons for selecting these cases relate to my personal interests and intellectual curiosity. As a fan, the cases surrounding these three stars are memorable media events in WNBA history; as a scholar, they each offer a particular angle of entry to understand the WNBA in U.S. media: a

“scandalous star;” an unpatriotic All-American; and a newcomer who was to revolutionize the sport.

These three players are often considered feature players in the league and their respective teams. Taurasi and Moore were both women’s basketball superstars from a dominating college program at the University of Connecticut. Their transition to the professional level was highly anticipated, and they did not disappoint. Both players quickly established themselves as franchise players who could carry the teams on and off the court. Becky Hammon is a slightly different story. Playing for a less prominent college program, she was considered an underdog. She came into the national spotlight in her senior year (1999) in college when, against all odds, she led her team, Colorado State University, to the NCAA tournament’s Sweet Sixteen.¹² However, this did not give her recognition or a head start on her professional career: Hammon went undrafted (not selected by any team during the draft) to the WNBA that year. Fortunately, she was picked up as a free agent by the New York Liberty, and it was during her time with the Liberty that Hammon gradually gained respect as a star player. In 2007, she was traded to San Antonio and became the franchise player around whom the team was built.

For this dissertation, I selected three particular media cases surrounding these players. The first case is about Diana Taurasi’s doping charge in 2010/11 in Turkey. In December 2010, the U.S. media broke the news that Taurasi had tested positive in her Sample A for a mild banned substance (Modafinil) while she was playing with a Turkish professional club, Fenerbahçe Istanbul. U.S. sport media

continuously followed the development of the story: from another positive result in Taurasi's Sample B, to the termination of her contract with the club, to her final exoneration by the Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS). This media case offered an opportunity to look at a sporting scandal involving a high-profile player in a league that prided itself on its "good women" players. Instead of exploring how femininity was reproduced, I focus on how Taurasi's drug using body was constructed and expressed in the media texts.

The second case is about Becky Hammon's naturalization to Russia in 2008 and participation in the Russian national team in the Beijing Olympics. In early 2008, Hammon made the announcement that she had acquired Russian citizenship and planned to participate in the Russian training camp for the Beijing Olympics. This announcement attracted the interest of U.S. mainstream sport media, and evoked discussion about national loyalty and Olympic glory. She was interviewed about her decision, and then about her experiences with the Russian team. During the Olympics, Hammon's, and thus the Russian team's, progress in the tournament was also continuously updated in U.S. media. This case provided a space to explore "exported" elite athletes in U.S. media. I examine how the United States and Russia were defined through articulating Hammon's traverse between the two nations.

The third case is about Maya Moore's rookie year (2011) in the WNBA. In U.S. media, it appeared that Moore, an exceptional college player, was celebrated as "the savior" who would elevate and redefine the league. As soon as Moore finished her last college game in early April 2011, discussion about her

immediate impact on the WNBA started to emerge in the media. This savior narrative is not rare in media pertaining to the WNBA,¹³ Moore's case, I consider, provided a contemporary opportunity to explore the possibilities and conditions for the re-articulation of an ideal WNBA athlete in the media.

In my dissertation, I use a different concept to analyze each individual case; I explain each in more detail in connection with the individual case studies in Chapters Two, Three, and Four. In the following I introduce Deleuzian rhizomatic ontology to discuss my departure from the predominant critical cultural studies perspective for analyzing women's sport in media and to set a backdrop for my later analyses.

Deleuzian Rhizomatic Ontology

In my work, I draw on French poststructuralist Gilles Deleuze's rhizomatic philosophy. Situated within the poststructuralist tradition, a Deleuzian perspective assumes an ontology of multiple truths (Markula & Silk, 2011) and considers realities to be fragmented and contested. These realities demonstrate a dynamic environment where a truth is always a product of struggles and where the Truth¹⁴ "has lost any status or finality" (Sarup, 1999, p. 3). This departs from the modernist view that Deleuze and Guattari¹⁵ (1987) characterized as a tree model. In order to better demonstrate the nuances that the Deleuzian rhizomatic ontology brings to feminist sport media studies, I first briefly discuss the tree model and, specifically, what a tree-model feminist sport media research approach looks like. I then introduce rhizomatic ontology and how I employed the rhizomatic model in my study.

According to Deleuze and Guattari (1987), a tree is grounded with one root (or one set of roots) as its foundation. This singular root can extend and produce diversity: a tree can contain multiple trunks, branches, and leaves that look and work differently from the root. Yet, despite the differences, this diversity is always supported by and can always be traced back to the ultimate origin, the root. Furthermore, these differences are structured in a linear order: the root links to the trunk; the trunk supports branches; and the branches sprout leaves. Deleuze and Guattari used this image to describe the logic of modernist philosophy that asserts there is a transcendental Truth upon which realities are produced and experienced. Feminist sport media studies subscribing to this logic would base their analyses on a particular Truth about society, sport, and the media with the purpose of interrogating how media representations, and the media realities produced by these representations, have sprouted from this Truth. For example, feminist sport media research based on the tradition of critical cultural studies, one of the modernist social science traditions (Markula & Silk, 2011), is founded on the premises of hegemony in society (e.g., the patriarchal/gendered structure), “the gendered media system” (Creedon, 1998, p. 93) and sport as a space that reproduces and reinforces “an ideology of male superiority” (Duncan & Messner, 1998, p. 170). Combined with the political inclination of this theoretical tradition, these types of media analyses focus on revealing how “‘facts’ [about female athleticism] are constructed, framed, foregrounded, obscured, and forgotten” (McDonald & Birrell, 1999, p. 292 cited in McDonald & Cooky, 2013, p. 196) in

order to unmask the working of hegemonic ideologies in the construction of repressive media realities (Messner, 1988).

Consequently, this tree-model analysis tends to focus on a particular aspect of media realities. Because the presumed knowledge about media realities of women in sport is the manifestation of hegemony and hegemonic ideologies of gender (and other intersecting identities), a critical media analysis focuses on this particular aspect, ideological construction, in the media representation of women in sport.¹⁶ While this interrogation of ideological construction has been productive in revealing oppressive operations of sport media, I argue that its concentrated focus on ideological construction might overlook other differences, contradictions, and paradoxes in media realities, especially those that may not be considered as coinciding with hegemonic ideology. In this dissertation, I depart from the tree model and the tradition of critical cultural studies, which is one of the most predominant theoretical perspectives in feminist sport media studies, to align my research with Deleuze and Guattari's (1987) conceptualization of the rhizome.

If the tree model is anchored in an understanding of one root as an origin of all knowledge, the rhizome model of knowledge production recognizes and emphasizes multiplicity of knowledges and understandings (Lawley, 2005). Deleuze and Guattari (1987) used the rhizome to illustrate an open-ended process of knowledge production (Colman, 2005) in which, instead of pre-determined positions or directions, there are constant interrelational movements between points where "possibilities of the other, possibilities of change and transformation" (Linstead & Pullen, 2006, p. 1303) in knowledge creation persist. Literally, a

rhizome is a bundle of plant stems from which new roots may sprout. Without being limited by an “original” root, a rhizomatic entity could potentially transform and multiply itself through developing connections (Schrift, 2000). With the capacity to grow new roots from different points, there is no definite and ultimate root from which all rhizome sprouts necessarily grow. Instead, rhizomatic roots are productive in creating new entities, but also products of these entities.

Hence, the model of the rhizome assumes no start or end point, but exists only as an in-between, with various elements coming and going, connecting and parting in order to form an identifiable entity (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987; Schrift, 2000). Precisely, this model concerns how realities, actualizations via connections, configure a truth (Colebrook, 2002; Olkowski, 1999). Because the rhizome model is based on connectivity (an ability to connect to form an entity) thinking rhizomatically means focusing on situations where connective forces are generated (Colebrook, 2002b): the focus is placed upon how connectivity configures relations, and how these relations draw boundaries for a “functional” entity and depict a comprehensible truth. A root of the rhizome is not a pre-determined destination/origin, but a conjunction produced through interacting lines (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987). Hence, when using this model to explore women’s sport in media, the main purpose is to explore how female sporting bodies connect in the media to produce “believable” media realities. This approach focuses on the process of articulating relationships in media texts. It examine how elements, including im/material (such as ideals and bodies) and non/discursive (such as space and histories/rules) ones, emerge and connect to

articulate and express a plausible media reality that narrates a believable story of female sporting bodies. In the end, it asks what kind of truth(s) is configured through and illuminated by these exercises of connectivity.

The difference between a tree-model and a rhizomatic analysis of the media construction of female sporting bodies, then, lies in their priority (Grossberg, 1996). The former approaches the media with a pre-determined knowledge about ideological construction. It aims to reveal the masking of authentic female sporting bodies and critiques the ideological reproduction of a repressive gender hierarchy. Nonetheless, there have been more sophisticated approaches, such as intersectionality, that take into consideration more than a singular identity and thus the more complex and sometimes contradictory nature of identity construction (Elling & Luijt, 2009; Jamieson, 1998; Nylund, 2003; Scraton, 2001; Yep, 2007). I argue that these approaches still root themselves in the goal of disclosing the workings of hegemonic ideologies, though these workings sometimes might present contradictions within the ideologies. The latter, a rhizomatic analysis, does not prioritize working ideologies through a particular identity or ways to categorize/hierarchize. Without presuming the truth/root to be disclosed, it examines what types of truths about female sporting bodies spring from this production of media realities. It aims to explore how these ways of categorization come to exist through media texts. However, it should not be assumed that rhizomatic analysis envisions a situation with total freedom, where there are no constraints imposed on how a sporting body can be articulated in media texts. As I explained earlier, from a Deleuzian perspective, the body within

the media text acquires meaning by connecting with other elements in the text. These connections are not formed randomly. They are governed by what DeLanda (2006) refers to as the *logic of obligatory contingency*. The logic of obligatory contingency takes into account the influence of contexts (such as the existing gender hierarchy in society or the history of racial relations in the U.S.) as well as the “randomness” in exercising connectivity. While a context might direct how connectivity may be exercised, how it would influence and what influences it might have depends on how the context is engaged/enacted through exercises of connectivity (Massumi, 1992). Unlike the tree model that describes a linear causality between the context and reality, the rhizomatic model presumes that the relation between a context and a media reality is a reciprocal and retrospective “non-hierarchy.” For example, instead of assuming that media texts are filled with ideological constructions that mask the reality (a linear causality), a Deleuzian approaches these texts with an openness to multiple possibilities of connection that all create certain representations (of women athletes) that, in turn, impact how further connections might be formed. Consequently, how connectivity is exercised or what connections are developed cannot be fully pre-determined by the context. Contextual influences need to be unpacked by examining the presence and the process of a particular media reality and by asking how these connections are made plausible in this given scenario. This focus on presence and process allows for “critical freedom” (Patton, 2000, p. 85).

Critical freedom denotes a creative and pragmatic experimentation with connectivity in order to interact with contexts differently (Deleuze & Guattari,

1987; Goodchild, 1996; Massumi, 1992; Patton, 2000). It is not the opposite of constraint or limitation. I find critical freedom a particularly useful concept to understand contemporary capitalist society, where a wide diversity of people can share ideas and lifestyles in popular media. Popular trends come and go quickly, to be continually replaced by different ones. People accept and even worship trends, people, and types of bodies that would previously have been seen as deviant. Rebels sometimes become heroes in contemporary society. To analyze critical freedom in a (media) context where nothing seems to be stable and fixed, where freedom to be different is an expectation, the researcher needs to ask: how and what differences become visible, normal, and even commendable; how are “normative” bodies developed through various connections and relations; what do the connections tell us about the different forces working in a given situation; and what constraints and possibilities come with the expectation of freedom?

Using a Deleuzian perspective in this dissertation, I am interested in exploring aspects of critical freedom in the context of the media reality of the WNBA. I analyze how professional female basketball bodies become visible, comprehensible, and even normative in the media. I see the launch and continuous success/survival of the WNBA as an example of previously “deviant” female bodies becoming more acceptable in the mainstream. While still containing some stereotypical feminized/sexualized images, the media around the WNBA are not afraid to show and celebrate strong, aggressive, muscular, and even “nonconventionally feminine” female sporting bodies.¹⁷ I examine the WNBA’s mainstream media presence using a different Deleuzian concept in each analysis.

In my first analysis of Diana Taurasi's doping charge in 2010/11 in Turkey, I rely on the concept of *assemblage* to examine how her drug using body was formed and articulated in U.S. sport media. In the second analysis of Becky Hammon's participation in the Russian national team in the 2008 Beijing Olympics, I use the Deleuzian concept of *cartography* to map out the ways in which each nation (the U.S. and Russia) were experienced and defined in this media event. In the third analysis of Maya Moore's first WNBA year, I utilize Deleuze's concept of *becoming* to examine a recurring savior narrative in the media to present Moore as the one who could "save" and redefine a more attractive/successful WNBA.

The Structure of the Dissertation

In this dissertation, I use a poststructuralist Deleuzian perspective to frame my examinations of these cases. In Chapters Two, Three, and Four, I present the individual case studies on Taurasi, Hammon, and Moore in U.S. media. Each of these cases is presented in a completed paper form—with its own introduction, literature review, theory, method, discussion/analysis, conclusion, and bibliography. To tie the project together through broader themes and implications, I provide a conclusion chapter at the end of this document.

¹ There was another women's professional basketball league in the U.S. before 1996. The Women's Professional Basketball League (WBL) ran from Fall 1978 to Spring 1981.

² In the subsequent years, there have been expansions, relocations and terminations of teams, and changes and restructuring in ownership. In 2014, in its 18th year of operation, the WNBA currently consists of 12 teams located across the U.S. in both NBA and non-NBA cities: Atlanta, Chicago, Connecticut, Indiana, Los Angeles, Minnesota, New York, Phoenix, San Antonio, Seattle, Tulsa, and Washington.

³ In 2001, besides its competitive amateur league, the National Women's Basketball League (NWBL) launched a NWBL pro league, which played during the WNBA's off-season. However, the NWBL folded in 2007, which again left the WNBA as the only women's professional basketball league in the United States.

⁴ A quick comparison with the attendance numbers of other/men's professional basketball leagues in the U.S. might be helpful to understand the number here. The NBA's Development League (D-League) averaged about 3,000 attendees in 2010 (Associated Press, 2010). In 2013, the NBA averaged 17,721 (D.D.M., J.M.F, P.K., & K.N.C, 2014).

⁵ It should be noted that this demand also emerged from considerations about the efficient use of resources. Facilities were best put to use by having another basketball team play during the non-regular basketball season (Anthony, et al., 2012).

⁶ Seattle and Portland hosted the original ABL teams.

⁷ The number of players on a team roster has been increased to 12 players as a result of the 2014 Collective Bargaining Agreement (Associated Press, 2014).

⁸ The contract between the ESPN and WNBA was extended for another six years in March 2013. According to the report by *Sports Business Daily*, it is worth \$12 million per year (Lefton & Ourand, 2013).

⁹ The NBA faced a lockout in their 2011/2012 season due to the failed negotiation of the NBA's Collective Bargaining Agreement between the owners and the players. It caused the delay and shortening of the 2011 season by about two months.

¹⁰ The ownership group of the Washington Mystics since 2005, Lincoln Holdings LLC acquired the Washington Wizards in 2010, and thus the local Washington (DC) WNBA and NBA teams are currently under the same ownership.

¹¹ This bill prohibited "discrimination based on sex in education programs or activities which receive Federal financial assistance" ("Title IX and Sex Discrimination", n.d), and hence fostered an environment for developing women's athletic programs in the U.S. school system.

¹² Sweet Sixteen refers to the round in which 16 teams are left in the tournament of 64 teams. For a mid-major school, the advance to Sweet Sixteen is often considered an admirable achievement.

¹³ Besides Moore, players like Diana Taurasi, Candace Parker, and most recently Brittney Griner were all described as ones who would “save” the league by redefining the sport, and thus expanding the fan base, when they entered the WNBA.

¹⁴ Here I use *Truth* with capitalization to convey a sense of specificity and singularity that comes with the modernist search for the ultimate. When I use ‘truth’ without the capitalization, I describe a sense of uncertainty, instability, and fluctuation.

¹⁵ Felix Guattari was a French philosopher and psychotherapist with whom Deleuze collaborated for several landmark publications, most notably the two volumes *Capitalism and Schizophrenia: Anti-Oedipus* (1983) and *A Thousand Plateaus* (1987).

¹⁶ Some might state that the concept of intersectionality overcomes such limitations confining the research to allow for the comprehension of differences (Yep, 2007). I argue that this concept is situated in the modernist logic that considers that there is a Truth about people who are at a particular intersection of multiple identities and examines how hegemonic ideologies work at this intersection. I include a more comprehensive discussion of intersectionality in Chapter Four.

¹⁷ For example, Brittney Griner, who is 6’8” with a deep voice, and who wore suits and sneakers (rather than a dress/skirt and heels/flats) to the WNBA Draft, was heavily featured in league-wide marketing campaigns and was the focus of substantial media coverage of the WNBA as one of the most highly anticipated new players of 2013.

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Chapter Two:

**“The Only Thing I am Guilty of is Taking Too Many Jump Shots”: A
Deleuzian Media Analysis of Diana Taurasi’s Drug Using Body as an
Assemblage**

Introduction

In this study, I use the case of Diana Taurasi's 2010 doping charge to explore how a female sporting body is articulated U.S. sport media. In December 2010, Taurasi, a high profile American women's basketball athlete, tested positive for a banned mild stimulant in her urine sample while playing in Turkey during the offseason of the Women's National Basketball Association (WNBA, the primary American professional league). Although this happened overseas, because of the implications of doping (such as Olympic bans) and because of Taurasi's high popularity, it quickly caught the attention of U.S. sport media. The development of this case was followed closely by the media until Taurasi's appeal to the Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS), the supreme court for sport, won her a not-guilty verdict in February 2011. In this study, I develop my research using the Deleuzian concept of *assemblage* (DeLanda, 2006; Deleuze & Guattari, 1987; P. Patton, 2000; Wise, 2011) to explore how Taurasi's drug using body is articulated through different connections and elements in the media.

This research contributes to the feminist sport media literature in several ways. First, this study contributes to the development of Deleuzian work in feminist sport media studies. A Deleuzian perspective attends to connections and alliances that bring an event, like Taurasi's drug use, into existence (Markula, 2004; Woodward, 2009). I argue that this new departure point might offer a different view in our understanding of the complexity of media production in women's sports. Second, it adds to the research examining media narratives of doping in women's sports by providing a concrete case study in a North American

context (Burke, 2001; Burke & Roberts, 1997; Burke & Symons, 1999; Lock, 2003; Magdalinski, 2001). Third, it contributes to studies of the WNBA from an angle of crises and scandals. Most previous feminist sport media studies of the WNBA have focused on good women media images (Banet-Weiser, 1999; McDonald, 2000, 2002; Wearden & Creedon, 2002). Only one of the studies (McDonald & Cooky, 2013) explored the bad news side of the WNBA. This, I consider, has to do with the fact that there have not been many visible WNBA controversies or scandals in mainstream media. In this sense, the “scandal” of Diana Taurasi offers a nuanced angle from which to explore the WNBA in media.

My paper unfolds in the following way: I begin by reviewing extant research on media narratives about doping in women’s sports. I follow this with an explanation of my theoretical framework and methods before moving to my analysis and discussion. Finally, I discuss my case study approach and my analysis of this *assemblage* formation.

Doping, Sport and Women

Doping, the use of banned performance enhancing substances, is a popular topic in sports related studies. Sports sociologists have developed a contextual understanding of this phenomenon that takes into account the social and cultural structures operating in doping events. For example, some researchers have reflected on how the competitive nature of sporting culture may encourage athletes to adopt illegal methods to get ahead in the game (Dimeo, 2010; Mazanov & Connor, 2010; Stewart & Smith, 2008). Some examined the complex relations present in the anti-doping system (e.g., athletes, anti-doping authorities) through a

lens of figurational sociology (Dunning & Waddington, 2003; Hanstad, 2008; Waddington, 2010; Wagner, 2010). Others (Christiansen, 2010; Denham, 2000, 2008; Jackson, 2004; Magdalinski, 2001; Rutecki & Rutecki, 2010; Sefiha, 2010; Stewart & Smith, 2010) focused on the aspect most relevant to my study – the representation of doping bodies in sport media. Overall, sport media scholars have taken two distinct approaches to media narratives about doping. First, they have considered media narratives as conveying an over-exaggerated moral panic that creates antagonistic portrayals of athletes and sports leagues (Denham, 2000, 2008; Rutecki & Rutecki, 2010; Sefiha, 2010). Second, they have examined sport media as a vehicle that reinforces hegemonic ideals of the disciplined amateur gentleman (Christiansen, 2010; Jackson, 2004; Magdalinski, 2000; Stewart & Smith, 2010). These studies have offered useful insights for unpacking the social meanings and values attached to media representations of doping. However, feminist sports scholars (Burke, 2001; Burke & Roberts, 1997; Burke & Symons, 1999; Davis & Delano, 1992; Teetzel, 2006) have raised questions about these prior studies' overwhelming focus on men's sports. Sports feminists have argued that overlooking women in anti-doping media narratives indicated that these meanings and values were gender-neutral. Such omissions marginalize women's experiences in sports and further reproduce the masculinist nature of sports. They have proposed to examine doping as a gendered issue in order to explore how gender/sex is implicated in the case of the "natural" sporting body.

Teetzel (2006) examined the juxtaposition of the International Olympic Committee's (IOC) drug and sex test procedures. She pointed out that the IOC

uses the same laboratory to conduct drug and sex tests. Only performed on female athletes, sex testing, similar to drug testing, monitors chemical and hormonal components in athletes' bodies. Teetzel argued that this similarity implies how female athletes' drug uses and sex alteration/deviation are considered to be closely related. Davis and Delano (1992) also argued that there is a parallel between the fear of women's use of banned substances and the fear of transgressions across the binary division of female and male sex. They examined portrayals of women in anti-doping campaign posters and found a prevalent warning message about gender ambiguity as a consequence of substance use.¹ They argued that these warnings were about preventing athletes from committing offences against the "physical gender dichotomy" (p. 2). By indicating that muscular female bodies might become men, these posters reinforced hegemonic masculinity in sports, and justified the expectation that natural female athletic bodies be "feminine enough" (not too muscular or/and athletic). Burke also discussed how gender hierarchy was reinforced through the perception of female dopers (Burke & Roberts, 1997; Burke & Symons, 1999). Burke and Roberts (1997) illustrated that women's violation of sports regulations and of gender norms has been synonymized. They found that women who were accused of involvement with performance enhancing substances, of participating in "deviant" acts, were often also deemed as deviating from conventional feminine beauty standards: they were described as "freak[s], ugly" (Burke & Symons, 1999, p. 15).

Furthermore, Magdalinski (2001), Lock (2003), and Mean (2013) discussed how this aesthetic scrutiny operated in sport media. Particularly, they

examined (conventional) femininity and its intersection with sexuality and/or race in media representations of female athletes and (alleged) female dopers.

Magdalinski (2001) demonstrated how Samantha Riley, an Australian Olympic swimmer who tested positive for a banned substance in 2006, and how a media strategy of sexualization saved Australian sports from “falling from grace”. In the media, Riley was often portrayed as an ideal woman: petite, feminine, and friendly. These images were contrasted with the big muscular portrayals of several Chinese swimmers who at that time were the focus of high profile doping charges. Madgalinski argued that Riley’s feminized media image, in contrast to those of the Chinese swimmers, helped to support her claim that she made the honest mistake of taking a headache pill. This perpetuated the narratives that real female dopers were un-feminine (the Chinese swimmers) and that real/feminine women could not be real dopers. Consequently, Riley’s later comeback to the international swimming stage, according to Madgalinski, encountered little to no suspicion in Australian sport media about drug use. Lock (2003) examined “the heterosexual matrix” (p. 399) in the construction of femininity in media portrayals of several female athletes. She stated that the concern about women-becoming-men in anti-doping narratives was about the disruption of a heteronormative order of sex, gender, and sexual desire, where men and women are supposed to have oppositional attributes to attract and be attracted to the opposite sex. She argued that aesthetic scrutiny of female dopers was also about (hetero-)sexuality. Parallel to Madgalinski, Lock argued that female dopers who could be considered heterosexually desirable, such as Florence (Flo-Jo) Griffith-Joyner and Katrin

Krabbe, were rarely condemned with strong moral undertones. Their “heterosexual performance is so good that it trivializes [their]...rule-breaking” (p. 407). Lock argued that hostility against muscular/masculine (non-conventional-feminine) female dopers was rooted in the lesbian-phobia of women’s sports, a fear that kept heteronormativity in check in and via sports.

Mean (2013) investigated the intersection of gender, sexuality, and race in the media framing of Marion Jones from the prime of her career to her doping scandal and finally to her redemption. According to Mean, before the doping allegation and her conviction, Jones’ media images were framed by “ordinary (mainly White) femininity” (p. 79) presenting her as “the sweet, pretty, kind, approachable, and heterosexual girl” (p. 79). This framing, Mean argued, “effectively constructed an idealized pedestal for Jones as the untouchable embodiment of feminine American athletic prowess” (p. 80) and negated all the red flags that later became visible in the media condemnation of her guilt. Yet Mean asserted that this idealization in fact later evoked more intense media reaction to the doping charge. She observed that when compared to media narratives around other White (or) male dopers, media narratives around Jones seemed especially punitive and unforgiving. She was portrayed as a manipulative and untrustworthy seductress who lied to fulfill her ambitions. Mean argued that Jones not only breached sporting rules, but also the “trust and expectations of her...as the symbol of American success” (p. 83) that had allowed her to challenge traditional boundaries of gender and race. During Jones’ post-prison era, her attempt at redemption was mainly framed around the re-emergent narrative of

a hard-working athlete, loving mother, and wife; basically “an ordinary, heterosexual woman” (p. 87).

In conclusion, these media analyses of (alleged) female dopers explored how conventional femininity, along with Whiteness and heterosexuality, was employed to construe correct/deviant female athleticism, and thus the innocence or guilt of the female athlete (Lock, 2003; Magdalinski, 2001; Mean, 2013). Written primarily from a critical cultural studies perspective, these studies draw upon specific paradigmatic premises. The critical cultural studies perspective critiques hierarchy of domination/oppression reproduced through ideological construction (Markula & Silk, 2011). Consequently, critical sport media research investigating female athletes aims its critiques at media circulation of gendered ideologies that undermine female athleticism to reveal how gender hierarchy is reproduced through media texts (Magdalinski, 2001; Mean, 2013; Messner, 2002). For example, based on this perspective, an analysis of media representation of female dopers investigates how hegemonic masculinity is reproduced in sport media by feminizing women and marginalizing female athleticism. Particularly, in the case of doping, it focuses on how accusations of (intentional) drug use by a female athlete is often associated with her deviance from “ordinary”/conventional femininity (Lock, 2003; Magdalinski, 2001; Mean, 2013). This perspective has offered a direction and tools to understand the gender(ed) and other identity-based hierarchies produced by ideologically constructed female doping bodies. Nonetheless, I argue that critical sport media research may also be limited to an analysis of oppressed identities produced in/via the media. It sets up an

antagonistic relationship not only between dominant and oppressed identities, but also between the body and the media. It treats a body as if it is a fixed and merely passive reference point for media texts to project codes through, as if the body's only contribution to the process of meaning production is as a reference point to what it is. King and McDonald (2007) critiqued the tendency to treat the body as a reference point, finding this approach insufficient to comprehend complex social structures. In contrast to the identity-based approach, poststructuralist theorists question the finality of the body as a representation of identity (Chow, 2002; Markula & Silk, 2011; Sarup, 1999). Within this tradition is the body of work by Gilles Deleuze, on which I rely to examine the media case of Taurasi's doping charge.

An Assemblage in the Media

In this study, I utilize the Deleuzian concept of assemblage to examine the process of Taurasi's drug using body being articulated in the media. Further relying on the work of DeLanda (2006) and P. Patton (2000), I structure a two-axis approach to conceptualize and analyze assemblage formation in media texts. In this section, I first set the stage for my study by locating the media (and media texts) in the assemblage analysis. Then, I discuss what my two-axis approach entails.

Instead of taking identity as a starting point, Deleuze and Guattari (1987) proposed to understand a body through what it does. They argued that it is impossible to understand a body using any predetermined facts (e.g., female) or positions (e.g., oppressed). A body always negotiates with its environments, and

as a result, develops various relations in order to express what it is/can be (Deleuze & Parnet, 1987; P. Patton, 2000; Wise, 2011). In other words, a body is defined by how it develops relations within a context (Colebrook, 2002). Although Taurasi's drug using body, from a critical cultural studies perspective, can be understood by analyzing Taurasi's (oppressed) identities (e.g., what her body is—a Latina woman who might not be “conventionally feminine”), I focus on the process of what Taurasi's body does and how it connects with various elements (such as people, ideas, and objects) within media space (Colebrook, 2002; Deleuze & Guattari, 1987; Wise, 2011). Deleuze and Guattari (1987) created the concept of assemblage to describe how a body is expressed through its relations and connections developed in the media (Malins, 2004). An assemblage is a collection of elements (such as organizations, people, objects, history, and ideals) gathered in order to produce an effect, to express a meaning or identity (Goodchild, 1996; Wise, 2011). I see U.S. sport media as a space that offers a range of elements and rules for Taurasi's drug using body to negotiate in order to connect with elements to become comprehensible. To further elaborate on my understanding of assemblage formation in the media, I now introduce the two-axis approach (DeLanda, 2006; P. Patton, 2000) that I use to guide my analysis.

I develop my two-axis framework to examine the assemblage formation of Taurasi's drug using body in the media based on DeLanda's (2006) and Patton's (2000) work on assemblages. They suggested understanding an assemblage through two dimensions: first, its interiority—components that build the assemblage; and second, the process of synthesizing the components in order for

the assemblage to function. I structure my examination of assemblage formation accordingly into a two-part analysis. I explore first the components (what elements were drawn in and how they were connected to form a whole to express Taurasi's drug using body in the media) and second the structure (what orders were produced and exemplified during this formation) of this media event.

Components

The assemblage components are based on two aspects: elements and relations. Elements refer to the different organizations, people, and objects of the assemblage. For instance, in U.S. sport media texts of Taurasi's drug using body there were references to different sport organizations, athletes, and objects. These elements were drawn in to connect with Taurasi's body and form this drug using assemblage. In media texts, these connections could be observed as references describing Taurasi in this event. Yet, expressing Taurasi requires more than merely a group of individual elements (Colebrook, 2002; DeLanda, 2006; Goodchile, 1996; Massumi, 1992; P. Patton, 2000). When drawn into a whole, these elements need to be organized in way that allows them to find balance and thus function together. More importantly, to understand assemblage formation around Taurasi, the researcher needs to account for how these elements are organized, how they are put together, how they impact the formation of the assemblage, and finally, how its elements can be expressed. As a result, in order to examine what an assemblage is formed upon, besides its individual elements, I also have to look at the order and organization these elements produce via the relations that they form.

Furthermore, it is non-predictable² how the differences will be connected and configured into a plausible entity and what relations they will form (DeLanda, 2006; Massumi, 1992). As a collection of elements, an assemblage is merely a temporal and spatial presence that results from a process of negotiation (Colebrook, 2002; Goodchild, 1996). Each element comes in carrying a range of possibilities for connecting in a given context (DeLanda, 2006). Hence, when the elements gather together, there are no specific ways that they must organize, but a range of plausible and valid “orders.” This process of gathering elements functions to produce an acceptable and comprehensible temporal whole in which elements or relations look reasonable enough to hold together in this context (Colebrook, 2002). Because of this flexibility, the meanings of an assemblage—what its elements express—cannot be pre-described, but can only be understood retrospectively through a detailed examination of what is produced during a connecting process (DeLanda, 2006; Massumi, 1992; Olkowski, 1999; Wise, 2011).

Structures

Furthermore, the collection of components does not exist in isolation. For an assemblage to function, to be able to become a comprehensible whole, there are rules and structures that govern and delimit the components and their possibilities (DeLanda, 2006; Olkowski, 1999; P. Patton, 2000). The impact of these rules is present from the very beginning. The process of assemblage formation is initiated by forces that are strong enough and effective enough to stir up movement. In Taurasi’s drug use case, the forces that ignited its formation

were her connection to Modafinil, as enunciated by the positive test result. Taurasi is one of the most popular American women's basketball athletes, and thus any news about her could cause a commotion in U.S. media, even if it is a negative event that happened outside the country. After her drug use, Taurasi entered the media (a realm of texts, including images and sounds) and the production of an assemblage began when Taurasi's drug using body was apprehended with/into texts and was formed into an assemblage (Olkowski, 1999). The process is not a random act emerging from a vacuum, because it is fuelled by impacting forces and filtered through the space and its conditions (available elements and rules). These forces come into the space at particular angles and levels of intensity allowed by the structures within the space. For example, in U.S. media, Taurasi is often considered one of the most decorated American female basketball players. Hence, it is reasonable to imagine that her athletic ability would play a part—even a significant part—in this assemblage formation. In addition, Taurasi's usual media appearances are made in a presumably gender neutral fashion.³ Hence, it would not be a surprise if this particular assemblage formation was not dominated by ideals of conventional femininity.

However, it is important to remember that the structures do not simply dictate what and how the assemblage will be formed (DeLanda, 2006; Deleuze & Guattari, 1987; Massumi, 1992). Structures define the possibilities for negotiation: they present orders measuring the proximity and significance of elements, and assess and define how different elements can be connected (DeLanda, 2006). At the same time, these structures rely on elements to materialize relations that

sustain their existence and accumulate their legitimacy (Massumi, 1992). In other words, structures and components operate in a vortex-type fashion: while structures define elements, they are at the same time produced through the configuration of elements. Therefore, structures are not simply imposed upon the formation process, but evolve with the process, alongside the components that they define and delimit (Malins, 2004; P. Patton, 2000). Hence, in this study, instead of looking outward to the imposing structures, I focus on the orders produced and exemplified during this formation. Focusing on production allows me to acknowledge the flexibility that illuminates elements' possibilities for negotiating with the conditions set around them, as well as to take into account the fluidity of structures to be actualized differently (Massumi, 1992; P. Patton, 2000).

To conclude, the concept of assemblage offers a lens to comprehend how Taurasi's drug using body is formed and expressed in U.S. sport media from a standpoint of *what it does* (Colebrook, 2002; Deleuze & Guattari, 1987; Olkowski, 1999; Wise, 2011) instead of what it is (an identity). To identify the components of this assemblage, I examine the elements drawn in and the relations that they formed, and how they are organized into a coherent whole. To analyze the structure—the overarching orders defining and delimiting how elements can be positioned in a given context (DeLanda, 2006; Olkowski, 1999; P. Patton, 2000)—I explore the forces producing the drug-use media event. Framed by this approach, I understand the media event as a process of assemblage formation in which media texts enable Taurasi's drug using body to connect to other elements and express this body's meaning(s). Although I do not focus on identifying the

oppressed identities that are distorted by hegemonic ideologies in Taurasi's media representations, I do not presume a total freedom in this formation (DeLanda, 2006; P. Patton, 2000). I see this particular assemblage as neither a random nor a necessary result. I acknowledge that there are structures that delimit the formation of this assemblage and I plan to examine these boundaries. Identifying the two axes of assemblage formation, components and structure, I intend to answer following questions: What elements are brought into the process of articulating Taurasi's drug using body? How are these elements connected to address Taurasi's drug using body? How are these relations organized to articulate a "reasonable enough" female drug using body in the media texts?

A Case Study of Diana Taurasi's Positive Drug Test

Using a case study approach, I present a Deleuzian media analysis of Diana Taurasi's positive drug test in 2010. A case study method is more commonly used in sports management than in sports sociology. Case studies often combine both quantitative and qualitative methods and are conventionally based on a post-positivist paradigm that aims to describe the true nature of a social phenomenon (Markula & Silk, 2011; Yin, 2003). Nevertheless, there are also advocates for purely qualitative case studies (Stake, 2005). For example, Stake (2005) asserts that the case study approach "is defined by interest in an individual case, not by the methods of inquiry used" (p. 443), and thus, it is flexible enough to incorporate different techniques and methods and to be utilized for a variety of methods and even paradigms (Flyvbjerg, 2011; Markula & Silk, 2011). For this paper, I designed a case study based on the Deleuzian framework, which is

situated in the poststructuralist paradigm. In the following, I discuss my selection of the case and my data collection, followed by a brief background of Diana Taurasi and the doping charge based on my reading of this media event.

Case Selection and Data Collection

Deleuze (1992) emphasized a focus on events to examine the actualization of multiplicity and articulation (Stagoll, 2005). However, his work provides little operational detail about how to define and identify them. I believe this lack of detail can be made up for by using the case study method's guidelines for case selection. According to Stake (2005), a case in the case study approach was defined as a "bounded system" (p. 135) that might illustrate a social phenomenon in a given context (Markula & Silk, 2011). This system contains the complexity of the said phenomenon and, at the same time, contains various interacting parts that function together as an individual whole (Flyvbjerg, 2011). A case can be considered as an event observed at a specific location, and it can be found in different forms. A case for examination could be a sports organization, a sports event, or a media event (such as Taurasi's doping charge) (Markula & Silk, 2011).

Stake (2005) and Yin (2003) pointed out that the process of selecting a case should be determined by the purposes and questions of a study. For this exercise of theory and exploration of the WNBA, I intended to explore how a WNBA athlete's sporting body is articulated in U.S. media in a "scandalous" event. With this intention, I faced a rather limited choice of cases, since the WNBA does not have many highly publicized negative news stories/events. Taurasi's doping charge was one of the very few WNBA-related scandals that

were visible in U.S. mainstream media and was also the most recent one. As a result, I considered this event to be a suitable choice for my case study. Yet, it should be noted that this doping charge did not happen directly in the WNBA. Taurasi tested positive during the WNBA's offseason and in Turkey. However, Taurasi being one of the most recognized WNBA athletes, this test result attracted U.S. sport media attention. In addition, in media texts, Taurasi was often referred to in relation to the WNBA and/or Phoenix Mercury. Hence, I argue, it was plausible to position this case as a scandal of the WNBA that then provided a site to explore the formation of a WNBA sporting body.

Furthermore, my research questions focus on the process of articulation in sport media. I needed to find a time span that could show this process most clearly. To this end, I framed the timeline of my media sample during the high-times of this event, in December 2010—when news of Taurasi's drug test result started to surface and attracted attention in U.S. media—and March 2011—about one month after she was exonerated by the CAS and when the impact and interest started to die down. In this study, I used purposeful sampling (M. Patton, 1990) to collect sports articles from three mainstream American newspapers (*The New York Times*, *USA Today*, and the *LA Times*), mainstream online sport media (*ESPN* and *SI*), and specialized basketball and women's basketball websites (*SLAM* and *SB Nation*) via *Factiva* and *Google Search*. I searched for items published during December 2010 and March 2011. From this search I collected 11 items from print media (5 items from *New York Times*, 4 *L.A. Times*, and 2 *USA Today*); and 33 from online sources (15 items from *ESPN*, 12 *SB Nation*, and 6

SLAM). These 44 media items included news articles, comments, interviews, and discussions, some of which included photographs.

Data Analysis

I acknowledge that there were multiple ways that this media data could have been analyzed. Nonetheless, in this study, I formulated my analysis using the concept of assemblage, and asked questions about elements, relations, and the organization of relations. I processed the media texts in two stages. During the first stage, I conducted a close reading of the texts and identified main elements (Malins, 2004; Markula, 2004) drawn in by/through Taurasi's drug using body. They included people (e.g., Marion Jones and Kelli White), organizations (e.g., the WNBA, WADA, and FIBA EuroLeague), objects (e.g., Modafinil), regulations (e.g., the IOC regulation about athletes' doping charges), and space (e.g., nations). I recorded these elements and descriptions in a chart (Appendix 1). The descriptions illustrated how the elements were drawn in and how they functioned. After this process of documentation, I attended to these elements' positions and the relations formed in the process to explore how they were positioned and how they expressed (Colebrook, 2002) Taurasi. In the second stage, I examined the structures articulated and materialized through this process. I explored the ways in which the components were organized to show how a drug using body and/or a female sporting body could be defined and comprehended in sports.

A Story of Diana Taurasi in the Media

Diana Taurasi is often considered one of the best American women's basketball players (Associated Press, 2011). She started acquiring wide recognition in U.S. sport media while playing with University of Connecticut, one of the most successful American women's college basketball programs. She was instrumental in the program's three consecutive NCAA championships and was awarded multiple individual honors for her performance (Voepel, 2011). But this is only the beginning of her journey toward becoming one of the most recognizable and popular women's basketball players in the U.S. With a great deal of media attention, she was drafted first by the Phoenix Mercury to the WNBA in 2004 (Floyd, 2010), and has been considered the face of the league ever since.⁴ In 2004, she was also selected to the U.S. Olympic team and went on to capture her first of three (including one in 2012) Olympic gold medals (Longman, 2010; Rohlin, 2011). Besides her American career, since 2004 she has been paid lucrative salaries to play in Europe during the WNBA's off-season (Associated Press, 2011a). It was during her 2010-11 EuroLeague season that she tested positive for a World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) banned substance, Modafinil (Associated Press, 2010; Cherner, 2010). To appeal this conviction with the CAS, Taurasi hired a high-profile sports lawyer, Howard Jacobs (Longman, 2011), whose main strategy was attacking the reliability of the Turkish lab,⁵ where samples from athletes of Fenerbahçe—the Turkish club Taurasi was playing for at the time—were usually sent (Assael, 2011). This strategy proved to be successful when Taurasi was exonerated from the charge and from impending suspension in February 2011 (Voepel, 2011a).

A Two-Axis Analysis of Diana Taurasi's Drug Using Body

I organize the discussion of my results based on my analysis of the two parts of assemblage formation, the components and the structures of Taurasi's drug use case in U.S. media.

Components

In this section, I introduce the main elements occupying media coverage and intersecting in the formation of this assemblage, such as Taurasi, Modafinil, the WNBA, the U.S. Olympic squad, the EuroLeague/Fenerbahçe Istanbul, anti-doping policies/regulations, and legal and test proceedings. In order to explore how they contributed to forming the assemblage articulating Taurasi's drug using body, I examine how these elements intersected in the assemblage formation (DeLanda, 2006; P. Patton, 2000; Wise, 2011) and how they were organized in this mix to address and express various meanings of Taurasi's drug using body.

The media event was initiated by the entrance of Taurasi's Modafinil using body into the media. Two elements, Taurasi and Modafinil (the substance Taurasi was tested with), seemed to take center stage and mediate how other elements were involved. In media texts, Modafinil was described as a legal substance for medical use—it is used to treat Attention Deficit Disorder and narcolepsy by decreasing anxiety and tiredness (Associated Press, 2010, 2011a; Longman, 2010, 2011; Assael, 2011)—but an illegal substance in sporting contexts (Cherner, 2010; Rohlin, 2010; Voepel, 2011). Modafinil's illegal status was defined by regulations of WADA, an agency monitoring anti-doping policies in sports worldwide (World Anti-Doping Agency, 2011). Modafinil was presented

as a mild-offense substance that only became an issue when used for sports. This set the backdrop to contrast the athletic and non-athletic Taurasi/body, and to comprehend/articulate Taurasi's level of wrong-doing in this process. I will further discuss this later in the analysis.

During this media event, I argue, Taurasi's body was decorated with various athletic affiliations such as the WNBA/Phoenix Mercury, USA Basketball, the NCAA/University of Connecticut, and the EuroLeague/Fenerbahçe Istanbul. She was presented as the cornerstone of their success.⁶ With these relations, Taurasi was deciphered as a highly proficient athletic body who was capable of achieving great victories, delivering intense athletic performances, earning lucrative professional contracts, and obtaining a spot on the starting line-up for the national Olympic squad (Associated Press, 2010a, 2011b; Floyd, 2010a; Longman, 2011; Rohlin, 2011; Voepel, 2011b). Nonetheless, not all her relations with these organizations were positioned equally. This formation happened in U.S. media, and thus it was reasonable to see Taurasi's American affiliations in closer proximity. From this reading, Taurasi's careers with the University of Connecticut, the Phoenix Mercury as well USA Basketball were the focal points in descriptions of her athletics. With only a handful of exceptions, pictures showed Taurasi wearing either a Team USA or Mercury jersey (Gay, 2011; Petersen, 2010). Taurasi was referred to prominently as the "WNBA star" (Associated Press, 2011), "[the] WNBA's Diana Taurasi" (Schilken, 2011), and "the former Connecticut women's basketball star" (Associated Press, 2011b). Taurasi's performance abroad was peripherally positioned, despite her drug using body being formed in

Turkey, which should have granted the country high significance in this event. As the title, “Diana Taurasi fails drug test in Turkey” (Associated Press, 2010) and the enclosed photo of Taurasi in a Phoenix Mercury jersey (Petersen, 2010) showed, Turkey was positioned as simply a location where a WNBA star got charged for doping. Furthermore, her EuroLeague career was shown as merely a worthwhile *off-season* endeavor, a profitable second job (Associated Press, 2010a; Longman, 2011; Voepel, 2011, 2011a). While her American affiliations were drawn in to build the main pillars of her athleticism, her successes abroad were downplayed as side notes. I assert that this peripheral positioning not only assured the superiority of American sports, but more importantly, located the Modafinil in Taurasi’s athletic body as taking place in a secondary space, Turkey. As a result, Taurasi’s contact with Modafinil could not directly impact her “core” athleticism.

This arrangement of Taurasi’s athletic affiliations was also observed in the levels of intensity with which sport media responded to Taurasi’s drug using body. According to my observation, while there was a noticeable amount of concern and discussion about her future with the WNBA and the U.S. Olympic squad, there was little concern about her disaffiliation with the EuroLeague. Personnel from the WNBA/Mercury and USA Basketball were asked for comments on the test result. USA Basketball and the WNBA were both “monitoring the situation” (Voepel, 2011; Shaun, 2011). The coaching staff from both the Phoenix and USA Basketball was quoted as supporting (Pollack, 2011) and “stand[ing] by her” (Associated Press, 2011b). Yet, no staff from the Turkish club were asked or cited regarding her suspension and eventual termination from Fenerbahçe. Anti-doping

policies of the WADA, the International Olympic Committee (IOC), and the WNBA were cited to aid discussion about “whether Taurasi’s W.N.B.A. eligibility would be affected” (Longman, 2011) or if “her status with the U.S.A. Olympic team could be in jeopardy” (Cherner, 2010). But her terminated contract with Fenerbahçe,⁷ which cost her over a million dollars, was shown as having a minimal effect, was mentioned nonchalantly in passing, and was sometimes simply a side note to concerns about her future with the Olympics and the WNBA: “Diana Taurasi’s Olympic ... career grew more uncertain ... when ... her club team in Istanbul had terminated her contract” (Longman, 2011). Previous cases with similar violations were also produced and studied: for example, the case of Kelli White, a U.S. World Championship track and field medalist previously charged with use of Modafinil, illustrated the possibility of an Olympic suspension based on her positive tests (Associated Press, 2010, 2011a, 2011b; Longman, 2010). Doping charges of other well-known professional athletes—Rashard Lewis, Barry Bonds, Mark McGwire, and Sammy Sosa—were brought in to illustrate the possible damage to the WNBA’s reputation that Taurasi’s case might cause (Parham, 2011; Pollack, 2010; Ray, 2011). In such a sense, I argue, Taurasi’s dismissal from the Turkish club was portrayed as having minimal effect, but the possible fragmentation of her American career attracted much more intense attention. This juxtaposition further demonstrated an order where the legitimacy of Taurasi’s athletic performance, of her athletic body, rested within the US, and again, indicated the distance between Modafinil and Taurasi’s athletic core.

Furthermore, I consider that locating the immediate contact point between Modafinil and Taurasi in Turkey, the secondary space of her athletic body, not only quarantined Modafinil and its possible effects to the periphery, but also turned her drug using body, Taurasi's relation with Modafinil, away from the issue of athletic performance enhancement. Arguably, being situated on the outskirts of Taurasi's athletic body, it became easier for this relation to attract non-athletic elements into the mix. Coupled with whispers about Modafinil's recreational use as a party drug (Longman, 2010; Pollack, 2010), Taurasi's previous Driving Under the Influence (DUI) charge hinted at the possibility that Taurasi could have used Modafinil in a non-athletic context (Associated Press, 2010, 2011b; Longman, 2010; Tanneyhill, 2011; Parham, 2011; Voepel, 2011). I argue that divorcing Modafinil from Taurasi's sport career helped make the constant praise and celebration of her achievements safe. Even though media texts did not unanimously assert Taurasi's innocence (Pollack, 2010), there were no questions about the credibility of her remarkable achievements, of her status as one of the best American women's basketball athletes.

In my reading, shielding her athletic performance from Modafinil also made room for further indulgence in the testing procedures connecting the substance to Taurasi and the legal proceedings separating them. Taurasi's legal team, led by Jacobs, a high profile American sports lawyer with expertise in doping, reportedly commented on flawed testing procedures at the Turkish lab (Associated Press, 2010a, 2011b, 2011c, 2011d; Pollack, 2011a; Voepel, 2011b). His legal strategy of attacking the credibility of the laboratory was clearly

documented: the legal team coupled their questioning about the reliability of the Turkish laboratory—by presenting both the flaws in their procedures and several other dubious results they have produced—with Taurasi’s statements of innocence and her polygraph test (Assael, 2011). Taurasi’s affiliation with Jacobs also led to her association with some of his former clients, such as Floyd Landis, Zach Lund, and Marion Jones (Associated Press, 2011b; Voepel, 2011b). Although association with these athletes who were convicted for doping might express a suspicion of guilt, I assert that how these names were positioned speaks louder than any implication of wrongdoing. These names were in fact distanced from Taurasi’s performance. They were items on Jacobs’ resume, demonstrations of his experience handling high profile doping cases. Combined with the interest in the legal strategies of Taurasi’s appeal, connections to these names put Jacobs in closer proximity to banned substances—in this case, Modafinil—than Taurasi. Based on this reading, Jacobs was situated between Modafinil and Taurasi, which again kept Taurasi’s athletic body away from the substance. Whether or not Taurasi did use the drug, the legitimacy of Taurasi’s drug using body rode on the appeal, which depended on the success of Jacobs’ legal moves.⁸ Taurasi’s drug using body was further removed from her athletics and situated in a realm of legality. Taurasi’s relation with Modafinil was not really about her athletics, but about information processing: how the lab administered the test and how the CAS saw the test’s validity (Sluggett, 2011).

Structures

In the first stage of analysis, I attended to the articulations and explored the relations and expressions produced by/through elements. In this second stage, I explore how structures—overarching orders defining and delimiting doping and Taurasi's athletic body—may be produced and re/articulated through the assembling process (Colebrook, 2002; DeLanda, 2006; Patton, 2000).

As soon as Taurasi's drug using body entered U.S. media, the biochemical effects of Modafinil were one of the first references drawn in to comprehend and articulate her body: this substance is usually used to “counter excessive sleepiness” (Associated Press, 2010a) and “creat[e] enhanced states of happiness” (Pollack, 2010) and it “does not cause the anxiety and jitteriness associated with amphetamines” (Longman, 2010). This tendency to introduce a substance's effects is a common theme in the articulation of drug using bodies. For example, anti-doping policies and promotions are often built upon narratives about how they alter users' bodies (Davis & Delano, 1992). Furthermore, as previous sport media studies on female doping bodies have stated, female dopers' guilt has often been assessed in relation to how their appearance conformed to (hetero-)normative femininity (Burke & Roberts, 1997; Burke & Symons, 1999; Davis & Delano, 1992; Magdalinski, 2001). I argue that this assessment can only be possible when understanding doping as a corporeal event, one where the physicality of the dopers changed. While this connection between unfemininity and the suspicion of drug use was not established in the formation of Taurasi's body, the lack of concern about Taurasi's (non-)femininity might be understood based on the cited effects of Modafinil. As explained in the media, Modafinil is

usually used to reduce anxiety (Associated Press, 2010; Longman, 2010; Rohlin, 2010; Voepel, 2011). Due to its calming effect, it can be argued that Modafinil feminizes its female users,⁹ instead of potentially masculinizing them. Hence, I argue that this “feminizing effect” has caused confusion in the dominant gendered doping narrative that warns about gender-cross (Davis & Delano, 1992), about female dopers turning into men. I further argue that this confusion, or an inability to affiliate the use of an illegal substance with an “incorrect” change of physiques, afforded a chance to comprehend this event not as a corporeal one. In the particular case of Taurasi, her doping was comprehended as a legal event and measured with legality, not biochemical effects. With legality, a drug using body can only be properly constructed through correct procedures: it can only be meaningful when its relation to the said substance is uttered properly by following correct testing procedures. Hence, a doping body is not merely an altered or enhanced body, but one that fits particular designed codes and profiles—in this case, the WADA’s regulations. In the end, during Taurasi’s articulation, a doping body is defined more as an incorporeal existence in information processing, a profile that is carefully and lawfully labeled and identified (Sluggett, 2011).

In addition, I consider that the confusion caused by Modafinil’s feminizing effect is one of the reasons for the lack of visible femininity/feminization of Taurasi in this formation. I argue that Modafinil’s feminizing effect made it difficult to present conventional femininity, or the lack thereof, in a way consistent with previous media studies (Davis & Delano, 1992; Lock, 2003; Magdalinski, 2001; Mean, 2013) that interpreted conventional femininity as proof

of innocence and divergence from conventional femininity as proof of guilt. As conceptualized above, one goal of the articulation process is to produce a comprehensible whole, to make sense of Taurasi's drug using body. This lack of consistency between conventional femininity and drug use, I suggest, caused the avoidance of connecting, or of actively dismissing, Taurasi's femininity during this media event. However, it should not be assumed that Taurasi was able to "transcend" the binary of wo/men in sport. Disengagement with Taurasi's femininity, I argue, hinted at a refusal to label a feminized female body as bad/unnatural; or a non-feminized female body as good/natural. Nonetheless, based on my theoretical framing, I want to explore how the normalcy of a female athletic body was actively produced and expressed. To this end, I turn to the process that kept Taurasi's athleticism "safe" from the contamination of Modafinil, which was then presented as the base for pronouncing her normalcy.

In my reading of this assemblage, I describe a scenario where Taurasi's athletic body was split into the primary and secondary, the American and European body. I argue that this split kept Taurasi's American athletics pure and safe from Modafinil, while marginalizing Turkey/Europe in Taurasi's athletic body. As a result, the split produced a hierarchy that illuminated an interesting distortion of the public/private divide pertaining to women in sport media. For example, in events of drug use, as previous studies have asserted (Lock, 2003; Magdalinski, 2001; Mean, 2013), female athletes' public bodies—their athletic, performing bodies—have been articulated through their private bodies. The normalcy of a woman's athletic body (i.e., having not been

intentionally/significantly contaminated by performance enhancing substances) is often articulated through her private normativity such as hetero-sexuality and having good/"normal" family life. Yet, in the formation of Taurasi's drug using body, there was no clear division between her public and private. It could be argued that her doping charge was positioned as a private deviance. The location where her drug using body was formed, her career with the EuroLeague, was positioned as a part-time job (Associated Press, 2010a, 2011a; Voepel, 2011, 2011a), a supplemental endeavor to support her legitimate career choice, the WNBA. The drug charge was aligned with her private moments such as her previous DUI charge (Associated Press, 2010, 2011b; Longman, 2010; Tanneyhill, 2011; Parham, 2011; Voepel, 2011). In such a way, I suggest that Taurasi's public body, her core athletics, as I termed it in the prior section, continued to be celebrated (Associated Press, 2011, 2011c; Floyd, 2010a; Longman, 2010, 2011; Rohlin, 2011; Schilken, 2011; Voepel, 2011). When associated with her legitimate profession, Taurasi was a commendable athletic personality, a hardworking and accomplished female athlete. Her normalcy was not based on her private normativities, but her public, (real) profession. Undoubtedly, this ambivalence still produced a similar normative female professional athlete who played hard and achieved greatness. I want to stress the visibility of this split, a perceptible separation between public/professional and private/personal. In this media event, Taurasi was allowed to be the villain, the "bad" woman, in this story, as long as she was still a good professional.¹⁰ I argue that this sense of

professionalism is what underlies the boundaries of a legitimate female athletic body in this formation.

I further argue that this split also articulated a sense of American superiority in both athletics and science/legality. As mentioned, the various elements of Taurasi's professional career were received differently in the media. The WNBA was seen as a legitimate profession and the EuroLeague as an off-season pursuit. While many high-profile and highly decorated WNBA athletes such as Lauren Jackson, Sue Bird, and Candace Parker also competed in the EuroLeague year after year, I still observe that this narrative of "lack of competition" still prevails in how Taurasi's EuroLeague achievements were positioned. As described previously, her EuroLeague championships were not viewed as highly as her NCAA and WNBA ones, or even as her performances with the U.S. Olympic squad. The accomplishments that she earned in Europe were not conceived as "well-deserved" as those in American-based competitions. This hierarchy illustrated how U.S. media recognized a legitimate athletic body according to an *American standard*, where "American-ness" was the foundation for the measurement of athletic bodies. Regardless of the legitimacy of this common narrative, this position does show how a normal—and natural—female sporting body is created based on a particular American standard. In Taurasi's case, she was an accomplished American athlete who encountered a possible deficit in Turkey. The attack on the credibility of the Turkish lab also reiterated a similar sentiment: the Turkish result/standard could not be trusted, especially when the positive test result produced in Turkey was viewed against how easily

the media got behind Taurasi's proclamation of innocence. I consider this to be a situation in which her normalcy was built around her American successes, and where suspicion about her possible artificial and drug-enhanced athletics was only pronounced in Europe. This split demonstrates lenience toward incidents occurring outside of (legitimate) American sporting events. By presenting non-American events as lacking legitimacy, this formation constructed a sense of an 'American standard' that should be used to justify the rightness or wrongness of an athletic body.

Conclusion

In this paper, I examine the articulation of Taurasi's drug using body in U.S. media through a Deleuzian perspective, and particularly through the concept of assemblage. Assemblage offered a lens to attend to a process of organizing a group of heterogeneous elements to express reasonably comprehensive meanings (Goodchild, 1996; Malins, 2004; Wise, 2011). Using this lens, I focus on how a comprehensive female sporting body is formed and how this process defines normativity by articulating Taurasi's drug using body. I examine various elements attracted by Taurasi's drug using body, and relations developed by these elements in order to express this drug using body. During the process, I observe how the focus of anti-doping narratives shifted from the bio-chemical aspects of the substances involved to information processing (Burke, 2001; Davis & Delano, 1992; Lock, 2003; Magdalinski, 2001; Mean, 2013; Slugget, 2011; Teetzel, 2006). In addition, I also note the split between the good woman and the good (female) athlete. Taurasi's normalcy—that she was not artificially enhanced—was closely

tied to her normal, yet extraordinary legitimate athletic career: NCAA, WNBA, and the U.S. national squad. The dearth of comments about her femininity does not indicate that Taurasi and her media image went against norms, but that a normative female athletic body could also be defined based on legality, professionalism, and an American standard. This observation, I argue, is an example of the nuances that a Deleuzian perspective can offer.

By not starting the analysis with Taurasi's possible oppressed identities (e.g., woman and Latina), I am able to pay attention to influences that might not directly ride on identity in this media event. Considering the complexity and fluidity of contemporary society, it is necessary to have the ability to understand social phenomena from various dimensions. Stepping away from the anchor of identity could be a beneficial endeavor for feminist sport media studies (King & McDonald, 2007), and, as shown, the work of Deleuze could be useful for this venture. Nevertheless, there are dimensions of this media event that this paper is not able to address. While Taurasi's doping charge happened in Turkey, my analysis focused solely on U.S. media texts. Therefore, I am not able to provide a more global understanding of formation of a drug using female sporting body. In addition, my analysis concentrates on an individual event in a selective media sample. As a result, the scope of the *process* and what elements might be involved was limited.

Future research could address this limitation using a genealogy of Diana Taurasi's media images similar to Andrews's (1996) examination of Michael Jordan and the expression of race through various events and stages of his career.

This genealogical approach would reveal more complex interactions of historical, social, and political forces that might not be visible in one isolated event.

Furthermore, my analysis brings attention to the WNBA players' overseas careers.

Future studies could explore how structures such as the "American standard" continuously evolve and/or are redefined through increasingly close relations between non-American professional leagues and the WNBA. For example, currently the WNBA has a section on its official website called *WNBA Players Abroad*, containing updates on players' off-season whereabouts and their team affiliations. This section could serve as an intriguing space to observe how elite/professional female sporting bodies are defined in U.S. media by professionalism intertwined with the American standard in an era of globalization and internationalization.

¹ For example, one poster said, "The only way to tell a male and female penguin apart is by autopsy. After years of steroid use, the same may be true of humans" (Davis & Delano, 1992, p. 11).

² Nonpredictable is different from "unpredictable." The latter might indicate the opposite of predictable, i.e. totally random; the former describes a situation where, while it is plausible to narrow down to a range of possibility based on conditions, it is impossible to be sure how the result will turn out until it actually happens.

³ The lack of interest in Taurasi's femininity seems to be common in her overall media image. She is not often portrayed in a "feminine apologetic" way—not shown in "feminine" appearance or not linked to (hetero-sexual) romance. This becomes especially clear when compared to other WNBA featured players such as her U.S. and former college teammate Sue Bird, who is often shown as the all-American sweet girl next door; Candace Parker, whose romance with husband Shelden Williams and pregnancy with their daughter Laila Nicole Williams was well documented in sport media; or Maya Moore, who was

presented in the media as the sweet, humble daughter of a single mother, Kathryn.

- ⁴ She has been featured in league-wide marketing campaigns since her draft, and was honored as one of the “Top 15 players of All Time” in 2011, the WNBA’s 15-year anniversary (“Diana Taurasi honored”, 2011).
- ⁵ The lab had a record of suspension by the WADA for its suspiciously skewed test results and flawed testing procedures.
- ⁶ All of the teams Taurasi has played for could be considered dominant, especially during their “Taurasi eras.” She has won championships with all teams, some in multiple.
- ⁷ She was suspended by Fenerbahçe right after the positive result from her Sample A. And after the result of her Sample B, her contract was terminated.
- ⁸ Standing alone, Taurasi’s polygraph test might not have been able to produce her innocence. Thus, it can be said that Taurasi was not the driver of this appeal.
- ⁹ It can be argued that conventional femininity is about being mild-mannered and not aggressive.
- ¹⁰ While it could be argued that her Latina background contributes to the media acceptance of her “wild child” image and this alleged wrong doing, I hesitate to make such an argument due to several reasons.
First, it should be noted that it is rare that Taurasi is identified as Latina in mainstream U.S. media. This could be credited to what previous feminist sport media studies referred to as a “colourless” phenomenon in women’s sport media about racial minority athletes (Banet-Weiser, 1999; Douglas & Jamieson, 2006; Jamieson, 1998). However, this phenomenon describes the silencing of race/ethnicity difference in favor of conventional “colourless”/white femininity. According to research, when these female athletes are deemed not conventionally feminine, their racial/ethnic backgrounds become visible (Douglas & Jamieson, 2006; Jamieson, 1998; Schultz, 2006; Spencer, 2004): their “deviances” are comprehended through their racial/ethnic otherness. This crediting of race/ethnicity for female athletes’ divergence from conventional femininity (e.g., images of well-mannered and mild-tempered good women) does not seem to describe Taurasi’s nonracially specific wild child media image, and the absence of Taurasi’s race/ethnicity in this assemblage formation.
Second, my analysis focused on what occurred—what elements were drawn in and what relations were established to express the whole. This

conceptualization led me away from any pre-determined identities, and only referred to them when they emerged. Yet, I assert that this is not an apolitical approach to media formation. Instead, this perspective allows me to acknowledge possibilities that might not be visible when approached with an identity-based lens. For example, instead of foregrounding race in my discussion, I was able to posit a question about colorless/white, wild/bad femininity, and ask how in the face of prevailing reproductions of good women images, a wild child could be celebrated without having to specify that she was not “one of us,” not white.

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Chapter Three:
Mapping Nations with Becky Hammon's Olympic Pursuit: A Deleuzian
Media Analysis

Introduction

In May 2008, a few months prior to the Beijing Summer Olympics, high-profile Women's National Basketball Association (WNBA) player Becky Hammon announced that she would take on Russian citizenship and represent Russia in the Olympics. While adopting a second citizenship to compete in the Olympics is not an unusual practice for athletes,¹ Hammon's story became one of the most talked about topics in U.S. sport media on women's basketball during 2008 Olympics: arguably only second to the coverage of the U.S. national team. The prospect of a successful American athlete who was often perceived as a small-town American success story² carrying the Russian banner evoked debate over such topics as patriotism in sport and the meanings of nations represented by Olympians.

The media interest in Hammon's story offers an opportunity to examine the articulation of nations in an international mega sport event. Particularly, this event provides the angle of the construction of nations, which has rarely been addressed in sport media studies. When examining migrated athletes in Olympic media, previous sport media studies focused on *imported* athletes who immigrated into the nations (e.g., Elling & Luijt, 2009; Jackson, 2004). My analysis of U.S. media's representation of Becky Hammon, an American-turned-Russian Olympian, can contribute to the field by presenting a case study about how nations were constructed through an *exported* athlete. I frame my analysis of Hammon's media event based on a Deleuzian idea of cartography to explore how nations were perceived and articulated with(in) media space (Deleuze & Guattari,

1987; Kaufman, 1998; Martin-Jones, 2006). I ask: What relations are drawn in to articulate Hammon and Hammon's Olympic quest in U.S. media, and how? How did these relations open access for Hammon to be located within particular nations? How are nations, especially the U.S. and Russia, defined in U.S. media through this articulation?

The Deleuzian framing contributes to the theoretical development of “post-identity approaches” in feminist sport media studies (King & McDonald, 2007). Without disregarding Hammon's nationality, my Deleuzian analysis of the event focuses on the process which prioritized relations and put her identity as secondary—as one of the factors potentially delimiting how relations could be developed (Grossberg, 1996). This study also illustrates how the Deleuzian perspective might offer a different entrance point for feminist sport media studies to unpack complexity in media representation of female sporting bodies (Markula, 2004; Woodward, 2009).

In the following sections, I first review the extant feminist sport media research on female athletes and the articulation of nation and national identity. I follow this with an explanation of my theoretical framework and methods before moving to my analysis and discussion. In the theory section, I introduce the idea of *cartography*, and how I use it to conceptualize the articulation of nation in women's sport media. I then discuss my analysis using mapping techniques that have been developed mainly based on the work of Kaufman (1998) and Martin-Jones (2006). In the end, I propose further considerations for studies of sport media and nations.

Nationalist Sport Media as a Feminist Issue

Sport media scholars have argued that mega-international sport events such as the Olympics “epitomize[] [a unified] national identification” (Miller, Lawrence, McKay, & Rowe, 2001, p. 61). These sporting events structure space and sporting bodies according to nationalities. Sporting bodies are decorated by national symbols and colors and pitted against those from other countries. In sport media, as scholars have found, athletes are often represented in an antagonistic manner with a distinct “nationalistic bias” (Sabo, Jansen, Tate, Duncan, & Leggett, 1996, p.16; Inthron, 2010; Poulton, 2004): athletes from the nation are portrayed as strong, superior, and relatable, while their foreign counterparts are painted as different (from the national ideals), inferior, and irrelevant (Boyle & Haynes, 2009; Poulton, 2004; Sabo et al., 1996; Wenner, 1989). Scholars have argued that this type of representation essentializes national identity and produces the nation under a unified idea, a superior community fighting against alien foreign threats (Lee, Jackson, & Lee, 2007; Maguire & Poulton, 1999; Vincent, Kian, Pedersen, Kuntz, & Hill, 2010).

In feminist sport media studies, scholars have further examined how the ideal of a unified, glorious, victorious, and superior nation is perpetuated through nationalist sport media representations of women’s sport (Borcila, 2000; Bruce, 2009; Capranica & Aversa, 2002; Koh, 2009; Lippe, 2002; Stevenson, 2002; Wensing & Bruce, 2003), raising concerns about the “masculinist nature” (Stevenson, 2002, p. 212) of the nationalist ideal. They have argued that female athletes are often portrayed in a similar manner to foreign athletes—different,

inferior, and irrelevant—in favor of masculine narratives of national sporting heroes. In doing so, femininity is marginalized as something “foreign” that is incompatible with the national ideal (Borcila, 2000; Bruce, 2009; Koh, 2009; Lippe, 2002; MacNeill, 2009; Wu, 2009). Furthermore, scholars noted that when female athletes started to become more common in international events, there was a double gesture at work in the media representation of national sporting heroines. On one hand, when women succeed in sport, they become “more than” women, transcending “womanness”/foreignness to become heroic symbols representing the nation. Yet, on the other hand, when they fail, their foreignness resurfaces as the reason for their failure (Borcila, 2000; Capranica & Aversa, 2002; Koh, 2009; Lippe, 2002; Wensing & Bruce, 2003). This double gesture, scholars argued, reaffirms hegemonic masculinity, characterizing femininity as an inadequacy that female athletes must try to overcome in order to properly represent the nation and to truly be one of *us*.

Feminist sport media scholars also explored how hegemony is reinforced through intersections in the representation of national female sporting heroes. For example, Gardiner (2003), Elling and Luijt (2009), and Wensing and Bruce (2003) investigated how racial difference was reproduced in nationalist media representations of female athletes. They found that although successful racial minority female athletes were celebrated as national heroes and as testimonies to racial reconciliation, their portrayals were usually distinct from other members of racial/ethnic minorities. These successful athletes were often represented as sweet, friendly, and unthreatening girls-next-door, in contrast to the typical “dangerous

or erotic” (Elling & Luijt, 2009, p. 143) portrayals of minorities (Gardiner, 2003; Wensing & Bruce, 2003). Sport feminists argued that these celebratory representations of minorities should not be mistaken for the achievement of racial equality in national sport. These “positive” portrayals reproduce the “right” kind of femininity—one that is less threatening and, in other words, closer to normative femininity. This sentiment further marginalizes minorities by reiterating the idea that only when conforming to the right image, to the less exotic and more normative, can foreign minority women athletes be celebrated as national heroes (Elling & Luijt, 2009; Gardiner, 2003; Rowe & Stevenson, 2006). Only when minority women are not *them* can they represent *us*.

Elling and Luijt (2009) examined immigrant identity by looking at representations of Mia Audina,³ who migrated from Indonesia to the Netherlands, in Dutch media during the 2004 Athens Olympics. When Audina was celebrated for winning a medal for the Netherlands, her otherness—her exotic appearance and “less-feminine” demeanor—and her national sporting heroine status were depicted side by side (Elling & Luijt, 2009, p. 141). Elling and Luijt argued that instead of producing a more inclusive Dutchness, the attention to her otherness functioned to further exclude this otherness from the ideal constructed through her Olympic victory. Her foreign origin and her immigrant status were constantly used to excuse her difference, and to serve as a reminder that Audina, a non-white, south-Asian-origin woman, was never an “ordinary” Dutch woman. In another study of how intersecting identities shape media representation, Hill and Kennedy (2009) examined how ideal Britishness was reproduced through the intersection

of race, gender, class, age, and sexuality of middle distance runner Kelly Holmes after her winning performances in the 2004 Athens Olympics. They argued that because of Holmes' multiple intersecting outsider-identities, it became difficult for the media to articulate a coherent image for her as a typical British sporting heroine: she was a bit too old and not feminine, white, or even middle-class enough. They pointed to the difficulty the media had in coherently integrating multi-otherness into uniform national ideals, thus producing and perpetuating an otherness that fell outside of those ideals.

In previous media research on female athletes and nations, scholars have highlighted how (sport) nationalism, underscored by hegemonic masculinity, is constantly reproduced in/through the representation of national sport heroines (Borcila, 2000; Capranica & Aversa, 2002; Elling & Luijt, 2009; Gardiner, 2003; Koh, 2009). Written primarily from a critical cultural studies perspective, this research was conducted based on specific paradigmatic premises. For the most part, the critical cultural studies perspective presumes that identity determines individuals' positions relative to social oppression. It aims its critiques at revealing how the ideological construction of identity functions to produce and reaffirm existent hierarchies and oppressions (King & McDonald, 2007). This approach concentrates its view on the particular mission of unmasking oppression. Hence, it approaches media texts using pre-determined identity categories and focuses on revealing/critiquing oppression from the perspective of a particular identity. Nonetheless, there are other ways to approach media texts that can provide further insight into what is produced. In this study I adopt the Deleuzian

perspective to examine the formation of the nation in sport media texts without first anchoring my analysis of nations in identity and hierarchy.

Deleuzian Cartography and Nations in Sport Media

In this study, I use the Deleuzian idea of *cartography* (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987) as my theoretical guide to examine how nations—a particular type of spatial partitions—are articulated in U.S. sport media. In this section, I discuss how I conceptualize my media analysis of Becky Hammon using cartography. I am particularly inspired by Kaufman (1998), who conceptualized how space may be experienced and expressed as a result of navigation; and Martin-Jones (2006) who examined the construction of nations in minor cinema using a practice of mapping. Below, I first detail what navigation entails, and how space is illuminated and defined by it. Then I introduce the practice of mapping and discuss how space may be articulated through this practice.

Navigation

From a Deleuzian perspective, it is not possible to pre-determine how media space is organized. The organization of the space can only be identified by exploring how the space is engaged (Kaufman, 1998). Following Deleuze, Kaufman conceptualized a space as merely an abstraction prior to navigation—a series of occurrences happening with/in the space. This space, and its inherent properties/conditions, comes into actualization when it is engaged by occurrences. How it will be actualized depends on how it is engaged and what relations are developed via the navigation. In other words, it cannot be decided beforehand what a media space looks like and how its spatial conditions work to partition

possibilities in the space (e.g., by assuming that male national sporting heroes are always placed at center stage). Drawing from Kaufman's (1998) work, I present two aspects of navigation: *the scope*, which illustrates enacted conditions for space articulation; and *perceptions*, which describe how the space might be experienced by developing relations with it.

Scope: Conditions. To map the scope of navigation—the process through which occurrences develop relations in space—I first have to examine how this navigation entrances into the space. An entrance is an act of crossing into the media space. It happens when an event becomes relevant in the media space and thus gains a visible place in it. Not just any event can enter the (media) space, because each space has certain characteristics or properties—rules, flows, density, textures—that define a range of possibilities of what may happen with/in this space. These properties act as thresholds or boundaries that set limitations and grants on how a space may be engaged and thus, what may enter and become visible in the space. Yet, these boundaries do not cause effects that can be fully predetermined. While these properties exist, they only become real, effective, or valid when enacted. How they impact the navigation also relies on how they are engaged by the navigation. The thresholds, the boundaries of the space, are defined by the act of entering: only when a navigation becomes visible and viable in the space can the conditions in effect be known. An entrance is not just an act of crossing pre-determined lines, but also an act of materializing the boundaries. It defines and draws the thresholds by successfully engaging with the space. An examination of the entrance aims to identify the spatial properties that frame and

put conditions on a particular navigation, in my case the media event of Becky Hammon. For example, Becky Hammon's story had to cross a certain threshold to exist, to become "newsworthy," in U.S. media. Hammon had a life-long dream to participate in the Olympics, but this dream entered the media space and was able to become map-able only when she announced that she would join the Russian Olympic team. I consider this announcement as the act of entering. How this announcement was deemed newsworthy—how Hammon's dream became visible and viable in U.S. media—illuminates a particular way of engaging that allowed navigation to become possible in this media space. This entrance, then, further hints at how the navigation of this media event was framed around, for example, Hammon's naturalization, her being a well-known and popular American basketball star, and the Olympic structures that categorize Olympians by national affiliation.

Here my analysis departs from the critical feminist analyses of mediated sport identities. If those analyses begin with a pre-determined concept of (national) identity that is then shown to play out in media representations, I enter my analysis with Hammon's entrance. The focus of my analysis is decided by the occurrence of this media event. Yet, this entrance alone only gives a glimpse of what the enacted and engaged spatial properties are. It does not demonstrate how the navigation will engage with them. For example, from the entrance, it is clear that the nations involved in Hammon's event were of some importance: naturalization, *All-American* athlete, and her national affiliation in the Olympics all seem to hinge on/be based on ideas of nations and citizenship. Yet, this

entrance does not show how these ideas of nations and citizenship affect and condition the navigation of this particular media event. Again, in a space, there are pre-existing properties (for example, histories, social structures, and identities), but they are not essential or the only ways of engaging and articulating these properties in the space (P. Patton, 2000). Hence, in order to map out how these properties are engaged, it is crucial to focus on the navigation of the articulated media space instead of relying on pre-determined orientations such as nationalist ideology in sport media. In my study, I analyze how this articulated space is oriented with these properties by exploring general themes. I, thus, consider the overall tone and directions of media texts about Hammon representing the Russian Olympic basketball team.

In the end, although I do not take identity (Hammon's nationalities) as a predetermined entrance point for my examination, I still plan to explore how nations become intelligible through Hammon's navigation. I analyze how nations were engaged in an event of a high-profile American-born-and-raised athlete representing the Russian Olympic team. While a space's orientation tells us what conditions are in place, it does not necessarily translate into how a navigation accessed, related, and actualized these conditions. How these spatial properties, this conditioned space, function to delimit and enable particular occurrences depends on the "experiences" produced with/in these conditions (Colebrook, 2002; Massumi, 2002). Hence, to further explore how nations are articulated by Hammon's Olympic endeavor in the U.S. media, I discuss another part of navigation, perceptions.

Perceptions: Relations. Perceptions describe the realities articulated by the navigation. They elucidate the details of the space, describing what can be accessed in the navigated space and how. Kaufman (1998) defined navigation as a series of occurrences that experience space. As described above, this navigation, these experiences, are delimited by particular spatial properties and overall orientation. Nonetheless, this orientation does not dictate how exactly these occurrences manoeuvre through particular spatial properties and conditions. For example, it is not unusual in sport that athletes, even Olympians, have dual citizenships. In 2008, there was another naturalized citizen on the Russian men's Olympic basketball team, J.R. Holden, who, like Hammon, was an American who migrated to Russia to advance his basketball career. Both Hammon and Holden have dual-citizenship status—as born-and-raised Americans who naturalized to and played for Russia—yet their events have not evoked equal levels and types of scrutiny in sport media.⁴ While orientation defines how the space is organized and partitioned, individual manoeuvres can steer navigation in different directions so that navigation has several potential ways of evolving with/in the space. Manoeuvres experience the space by exercising and experimenting with its accessibility. They connect and develop relations with the space in particular ways, and by doing so, they illustrate how the space can function, how the engaged properties and partitions can direct and impact perceptions and experiences of the space.

To unpack perceptions or ways of experiencing the space, I analyze the relations developed through connections with/in the conditioned space (Braidotti,

1994; Kaufman, 1998; Martin-Jones, 2006; P. Patton, 2000). I examine how Hammon's Olympic endeavor is positioned in relation to, for example, people, organizations, histories, and background stories in order to produce a media story about an athlete migrating across national borders.

Mapping Nations

Analyzing navigation provides insight into how media space is oriented and partitioned and how these compartmental arrangements may be accessed (Kaufman, 1998). I understand nations as one compartmental arrangement of space. I frame my discussion of nations, particularly the U.S. and Russia, based on Martin-Jones's (2006) practice of mapping. He defined mapping as listening to "a struggle between contrary pulls" (p. 35). As mentioned, there is always more than one "right" way to experience the space, to exercise and demonstrate the accessibility of partition. Consequently, any event is necessarily pulled in several different directions in a space. Therefore, the accessibility, relations, and perceptions actualized in an event are the result of contesting pulls. They provide insight about what can belong to particular compartmental spaces, nations. Hence, to map the nations defined by this media event, I attend to how and when Hammon's event accessed different nations (particularly the U.S. and Russia). For example, when and how did Hammon have the access to Russia, to being Russian? When and how did she have access to the United States, to being American?

To summarize, in this study I use navigation and the practice of mapping to comprehend how an event interacts with and articulates a media space (Kaufman, 1998). The purpose of mapping is to express a space's orientation and

accessibility in a given context. Mapping does not intend to replicate a “real” representation of the space, but detects how space can be and has been defined and articulated. I do not intend to investigate the production of a unified representation of national sporting heroes. Instead, I explore how each nation can be perceived and defined through Becky Hammon’s Olympic endeavor in U.S. sport media (Kaufman, 1998; Martin-Jones, 2006).

A Deleuzian Case Study of Becky Hammon’s Olympic Dream

Using a case study approach, I present a Deleuzian media analysis of Becky Hammon’s Beijing Olympics endeavor. A case study method is more commonly used in sports management than in sports sociology. Case studies often combine both quantitative and qualitative methods and are conventionally based on a post-positivist paradigm that aims to describe the true nature of a social phenomenon (Markula & Silk, 2011; Yin, 2003). Nevertheless, there are also advocates for a purely qualitative case study (Stake, 2005). They assert that the case study approach “is defined by interest in an individual case, not by the methods of inquiry used” (p. 443), and thus it is flexible enough to incorporate different techniques and methods and to be utilized for a variety of methods and even paradigms (Flyvbjerg, 2011; Markula & Silk, 2011). For this paper, I designed a case study based on the Deleuzian framework, which is situated in the poststructuralist paradigm. I consider that a poststructuralist case study approach differs from the conventional, post-positivist, case study by its purposes and objectives. Instead of looking to discover the true nature of nations in U.S. sport media, my goal for this case study is to illustrate how sport media construction of

nations can be comprehended from this perspective. Particularly, I rely on a Deleuzian framework to concentrate on the process of the construction of nations in U.S. media through a female sporting body. In the following, I discuss my selection of the case followed by a brief introduction of Becky Hammon; I then present my data collection and media samples.

Case Selection and Data Collection

In a Deleuzian conceptualization, an “event” is a crucial place to observe and examine processes of actualization and articulation (Deleuze, 1992; Stagoll, 2005). However, how an empirical researcher might operate with this concept, the “event,” and how to select and define boundaries for a Deleuzian event, is not clearly established in his theorization. Hence, in my Deleuzian analysis, I rely on the case study method’s guideline for selecting cases to help me frame my research and samples. According to Stake (2005), a case in this approach is defined as a “bounded system” (Stake, 2005, p. 135) that might illustrate a social phenomenon in a given context (Markula & Silk, 2011). This system contains various interacting parts that function together as an individual whole, and at the same times showcases the complexity of the said phenomenon on a smaller scale (Flyvbjerg, 2011). A case can be found in different forms. A case for the examination of how the nation and sport media are intertwined could be a sports organization (e.g., a national team), a sports event (e.g., the Olympics), or a media event (e.g., Hammon acquiring Russian citizenship and representing Russia at the Olympics) (Markula & Silk, 2011).

Stake (2005) and Yin (2003) stated that a case selection should be decided based on research questions and objectives. In this study, I am interested in mapping how nations are articulated through athletes' navigation across national boundaries in U.S. media around the WNBA, and women's basketball and sport in general. To this end, I selected the high-profile case of Becky Hammon, a popular American women's basketball athlete who announced her naturalization to Russia and her intention to join the Russian national team and compete in the 2008 Olympics. At Beijing, Hammon was the only American WNBA player who naturalized and represented another country.⁵ Hammon's decision attracted a substantial amount of U.S. media attention for the duration of the Olympics. Many U.S. major media outlets published stories about her transition to Russia. Hammon's case offers an opportunity to explore the construction of nations through an athlete straddling national boundaries. It also presents a situation of dual citizenship that might provide a chance to observe the back-and-forth forces that pull Hammon between the U.S. and Russia. Analyzing this type of motion can shed light on accessibilities, and thus definitions, of nations.

Furthermore, my research questions explore how media space was navigated during the event, and how nations as spatial compartments were illuminated by this navigation. Hence, I chose the timeline for my media sample as the time during which this event attracted the most attention in order to have a better and clearer view of this navigation: from April 2008—the month during which the news of her joining the Russian team was revealed—to October 2008—the month after the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games. Precisely, I used purposeful

sampling (M. Patton, 1990) to collect relevant media texts during the time period. I used *Factiva* and *Google Search* to collect data from three mainstream U.S. newspapers (*The New York Times*, *USA Today*, and *LA Times*), two mainstream online sports websites (*ESPN* and *SI*), and the WNBA official website.⁶ Through this search, I collected 22 items from print media (6 items from *The New York Times*, 5 *L.A. Times*, and 12 *USA Today*); 10 from sports websites (7 items from *ESPN*, 3 *SI*); and 4 from the WNBA's website. These 36 media items included news articles, comments, interviews, and discussions, some of which contain photographs.

Data Analysis

In my analysis of how nations were constructed in this media event, I utilized Deleuze's concept of cartography to "make a map" of Becky Hammon's journey to Olympic glory in U.S. media. I acknowledge that there are multiple ways to approach this media event. Nonetheless, based on the Deleuzian framework, in this study I conducted my analysis as a practice of mapping. The Deleuzian practice of map making differs from tracing and recording the paths traveled (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987). It is used to further explore conditions and possibilities opened up by navigation and to describe space with particular orientation and accessibilities defined through/with navigation (Kaufman, 1998). In making this map, I considered how the space became perceptible by the occurrence of this navigation. I used the following questions to guide me through the analysis: What relations are developed in U.S. sport media to articulate Hammon and Hammon's Olympic quest, and how? How did these relations open

access for Hammon to be located within particular locations (i.e., nations)? How are nations, especially the U.S. and Russia, defined through these accessibilities? To answer these questions, I structured my analysis in to several steps. First, I examined the entrance and the overall themes to narrow down the scope—the overall orientations—of this navigated space (Appendix 2). Then I explored the various relations drawn to exemplify and support the overall themes, in order to depict the accessibilities—how the space can and should be comprehended and experienced—articulated through this navigation. After analyzing the outlines of orientations and accessibilities, I then examined what relations and “experiences” were allowed to form within each particular spatial partition. I then discussed how nations were defined by accessibilities and experiences illuminated through this navigation (Martin-Jones, 2006).

Becky Hammon and Her Road to the Olympics

Becky Hammon, the protagonist of this media event, is considered one of the best-known WNBA players in the past decade. She is the featured player for the San Antonio Silver Stars⁷ and has been presented in several league-wide marketing campaigns, was voted (by fans) to the starting line-up for the All-Star Game multiple times (“Becky Hammon”, n.d.) and was selected by fans in 2011 (out of 30 nominees) as one of the *WNBA’s Top 15 Players of All Time* (“Becky Hammon Named to WNBA Top 15”, 2011). Nonetheless, her road to stardom has not been as smooth as other WNBA superstars like Diana Taurasi, Sue Bird, and Candace Parker. Growing up in South Dakota, the Heartland of the United States, Hammon played for a mid-major college basketball program at Colorado State

University. In her senior year, she surprised the nation by leading the program to the Sweet Sixteen in the NCAA tournament. Yet this “Cinderella story” of a mid-major program did not get Hammon the recognition she needed to be drafted to a WNBA team (Steeg, 2008). Undrafted in 1999, she was later signed by the New York Liberty. While playing as a back-up guard under the shadow of veterans Teresa Weatherspoon and Vickie Johnson, Hammon’s popularity grew steadily in the Big Apple. The year of 2004 marked her surge to stardom. After Weatherspoon was traded to the Los Angeles Sparks, Hammon took over the start point-guard position and also became the team co-captain (Shelton, 2006).

Yet, her glory with the Liberty was short lived. In 2007, Hammon was traded to the Silver Stars for the second overall pick (Lawrence, 2008). She finished her first year with the Silver Stars as the league leader in assists-per-game and the second in the league’s MVP vote (Schwarz, 2008). In the same year she also was voted into the starting line-up of the West All-Star team and led the Silver Stars—a team ending the previous season as sixth out of seven—to a second-place regular season finish and to the Western Conference Finals. After one of her best WNBA seasons, she went to Russia and joined CSKA Moscow, with whom she signed a professional contract with a clause asking her to also participate in Russia’s Olympic training camp (Steeg, 2008). In early 2008, after being absent on the list of invitees to try out for the American Olympic basketball team, Hammon announced her decision to acquire Russian citizenship and join the Russian Olympic team (Drehs, 2008).

The Mapping of Becky Hammon's Olympic Quest

In the first part of my analysis, I discuss the scope of the map by exploring Hammon's entrance into the media space and the main themes emerging from media texts surrounding this media event. I then present the perception by analyzing the relations developed in this media coverage.

The Scope: Mapping Orientations

This media event started in April 2008 when news of Becky Hammon's naturalization and decision to represent Russia broke into U.S. sport media. Although Hammon's Olympic quest/dream existed long before this (Caple, 2008; Drehs, 2008; Schwarz, 2008), her journey to the Olympics became intelligible in this space, and thus map-able, only when it crossed a threshold and started to engage with the media in April 2008. Mapping the entrance and overall themes outlines the contours of the articulated space and illuminates how navigation becomes "capable" within this space.

The title that announced the entry point of Hammon's Olympic quest into U.S. media read: "Hammon's Olympic dream puts her in Russian uniform" (Drehs, 2008). This event crossed into the media realm and became a capable navigation—a newsworthy story, so to speak—when Becky Hammon acquired the status of an Olympian. I argue that this entrance demonstrates the existence of a threshold based on measurement of one's (athletic) ability, indicated by affiliation with the Olympics. This measurement illustrated a condition for engaging with this media space: how this condition was fulfilled for this event to become engage-able further points to the overall orientation of this media space.

This entrance was made when an All-American (Drehs, 2008; Lawrence, 2008; Schwarz, 2008; Steeg, 2008) woman became a Russian Olympian. Based on my analysis, I argue that it was about Hammon's becoming an Olympian, about her affiliation with the Olympics. I am not surprised to see that one of the main themes was about competing at the Olympics. Hammon's Olympic dream was described as the "ultimate" (Steeg, 2008) athletic goal for a female basketball athlete who did not grow up in an era where a professional basketball career was possible in the United States. For years she had dreamt about playing internationally (Caple, 2008) and "the opportunity to play on the Olympic stage was too compelling to pass up" (Schwarz, 2008). The Olympics that Hammon attended was "more like an international sports festival" (Araton, 2008) where athletes came together to enjoy the solidarity of people. Hence, athletes' migrations were not banned by the Olympic Committees and sometimes migrations between nations were even praised in the media (Adelson, 2008; Araton, 2008a; Brennan, 2008; Lawrence, 2008). Plenty of others, coaches and players alike, the articles declared, have done the same—coming to or leaving the U.S. for the pursuit of Olympic glory (Araton, 2008, 2008a; Brady, 2008; Brennan, 2008; Steeg, 2008). After all, "[f]or sportsmen, your first aim, your first dream [is] about the Olympics" (Caple, 2008), even if that means to join/help another country (Schwarz, 2008). This theme depicted that the Olympics did not ask for full national allegiance, and the possibility and acceptance of "country-hopping" (Brennan, 2008) set Hammon's migration against the backdrop of two other themes: career advancement and her "part-time" status as a Russian.

Even with her impressive career in the WNBA, Becky Hammon was not shortlisted by USA Basketball as a prospect for the 2008 Olympic squad (Caple, 2008; Drehs, 2008; Klein, 2008; Schwarz, 2008; Voepel, 2008). During the negotiation of her professional contract with CSKA Moscow, the possibility of going to the Olympics came up and she accepted it (Araton, 2008; Johnson, 2008; Lawrence, 2008; Steeg, 2008). According to U.S. media, her naturalization to Russia was “all about business” (Wolff, 2008); and she “just want[ed] to play basketball” (Caple, 2008). I argue that this move was characterized as yet another surprising breakthrough in her basketball career: from a national-team reject to an Olympian and a medalist in the end. It showcases her resilience and reinforced the underdog story she had always been known and praised for: the small town girl who worked hard to make it to the big league (Lawrence, 2008; Schwarz, 2008; Steeg, 2008). Her decision was just “her version of the Jeffersonian pursuit of happiness” (Brady, 2008a)—going where her Olympic dream could be actualized (Brennan, 2008; Plaschke, 2008). Moreover, Hammon’s migration did not solely benefit her (she fulfilled her Olympic dream), but also the Russian national team. Russia needed a point guard; and when the U.S. left out one of the most energetic guards in women’s basketball, the media reported that the Russians were more than happy to “take her over” to improve their team (Brady, 2008b; Johnson, 2008; Voepel, 2008a; “Notes and Quotes”, 2008). The camaraderie that formed between Hammon and other Russian athletes and staff was cast in the light of “the original Olympic spirit . . . unity” (Lawrence, 2008) across national boundaries (Brady, 2008; Elliott & Harvey, 2008; Wolff, 2008). In the U.S. media, this collaboration

was considered a cultural exchange experience, an opportunity for Hammon, an American player, to learn about the other country, for example, the “European steps” (Voepel, 2008). In the end, Hammon’s decision to join Russia and Russia’s recruitment of her were both characterized as being more about basketball, career, and business than politics (Brady, 2008b, Caple, 2008; Elliot, & Harvey, 2008; Plaschke, 2008) or “nationalist fidelity” (Araton, 2008).

My analysis reveals that basketball was seen as having the capacity to unify people and transcend differences across nations. Nonetheless, I argue, this idea did not fully dislodge the idea of nationalism in the Olympics, nor did it disengage this navigation from the prominent properties of nations in the media. “Country-hopping” (Brennan, 2008) was seen as a common and somewhat acceptable practice in sport; yet not without conditions. Hammon’s road to the Olympics encountered concerns and criticisms. Cold War history and the contemporary invasion of Georgia⁸ were discussed in connection to Hammon’s migration (Araton, 2008a; Brady, 2008a, 2008b; Caple, 2008; Schwarz, 2008; Steeg, 2008; Wolff, 2008). Against this historical backdrop of contentious relations, Hammon’s migration was indicated as a dangerous manoeuvre (Drehs, 2008) that might risk her reputation as “the consummate All-American girl” (Schwarz, 2008). For example, Ann Donavon, the head coach of the 2008 U.S. women’s basketball squad, recalled her own role in the historical triumph over the rival Russian team during the Cold War era, and called Hammon an unpatriotic “traitor” (Caple, 2008; Araton, 2008a; Brady, 2008a; Klein, 2008; Lawrence, 2008; Plaschke, 2008; Wolff, 2008). The disagreement between the U.S. and

Russia in the Russia-Georgia crisis was also referenced in the media (Araton, 2008a; Caple, 2008; Wolff, 2008). In my reading, on one hand, this crisis and the disagreement were presented alongside Hammon's alliance with Russia to reiterate the difference between these two nations. On the other hand, they were used as "check-up points" to see if Hammon had strayed from America. I argue that this reference to the Georgia-Russia crisis showed an underlying concern about Hammon's naturalization to Russia: there was a danger that an All-American player might fully integrate into and be assimilated by Russia.

In response to this theme was the theme of the "part-time Russian" (Brady, 2008a). It was made clear that Hammon's heart was always American and that she would "still [be] an American girl" (Schwarz, 2008) who would put her hand over her heart during the American national anthem even when she was in the opponent's uniform (Adelson, 2008; Anderson, 2008; Caple, 2008; Plaschke, 2008; Shpigel, 2008). In the media space, Hammon's tie to Russia was artificial, weak, and temporary. She had no familial ties to Russia (Drehs, 2008; Johnson, 2008); she "[spoke] no Russian and [was] not a full-time resident" (Schwarz, 2008); she admittedly did not know the words to the Russian national anthem (Brady, 2008; Voepel, 2008a); and she was not even really Becky Hammon in Russia, but *Rebekka* Hammon (Araton, 2008a). She was Russian *for pay* (Araton, 2008a; Associated Press, 2008; Brady, 2008c; Caple, 2008; "Notes and Quotes", 2008) and was only Russian when she stepped on the court. As the legendary American player Lisa Leslie said after the US-Russia match at the women's basketball semi-final: "I didn't speak today with Becky...because...she was

Russian *today*” (emphasis by me, Brady, 2008c). In the end, Hammon’s affiliation with Russia was not serious enough to hinder her “American-ness:” if anything, this endeavor was a way to pursue her *American* dream (Araton, 2008a; Brady, 2008a; Wolff, 2008).

By exploring the entrance into and themes of the space, I map out the contours and particular orientations of the articulated media space around Hammon’s move to play for Russia. First, I outline the articulated media space as having boundaries that mark one’s (athletic) ability to affiliate with the Olympics, to become an Olympian. This navigation, Hammon’s Olympic quest, was able to ignite the event’s venture into U.S. sport media when Hammon acquired her status as a Russian Olympian. This orientation further manifested in the articulation of general themes. I identify three predominant themes emerging from this media event: sport without border, all about career advancement, and part-time Russian. I argue that these themes illuminate disintegrating nationalism in the Olympics with some conditions: sport should be apolitical; and the hopping should be temporary, artificial, partial and for a commendable purpose (in Hammon’s case, her career fulfillment). How did these orientations condition the experiences of the space? In the following, I map perceptions of this navigation to explore what can be envisioned, articulated, and produced in the context of these possibilities and conditions.

Perceptions: Mapping Relations

To map out the perceptions of this event, I explore the relations developed in its media coverage (Kaufman, 1998). Perceptions describe the realities

articulated by the navigation. They elucidate the details of the space by determining what can be accessed in the navigated space and how. To unpack perceptions or ways of experiencing the space, I explore how Hammon's Olympic endeavor is positioned in relation to, for example, people, organizations, histories, and background stories in order to produce a media story about an athlete migrating across national borders. I examine what the relations were and how they were formed in media texts. One of the most prevailing relations presented in media texts was that involving other athletes and coaches. Various other cases of athletes changing nationalities and/or transferring to other national teams were drawn in to comprehend Hammon's naturalization to and representation of Russia. Many American and Russian basketball-related personnel were asked to comment on Hammon and her endeavor. Hammon was placed side-by-side with other American basketball athletes who had put or intended to put on other countries' jerseys for the Olympics. For example, as mentioned before, J.R. Holden, a former NCAA Division I player, who also naturalized to Russia and played with their 2008 men's team; Deanna Nolan⁹ and Kelly Miller, two other American WNBA players who joined the Russian training camp for the 2008 Olympics (Lawrence, 2008; Steeg, 2008); and Chris Kaman, an American NBA player who competed for the German team (Araton, 2008a; Dwyre, 2008; Plaschke, 2008). Additional cases of American-related country hopping—either Americans naturalized to other countries, or naturalized American athletes/coaches from other countries, were presented (Araton, 2008; Brady, 2008; Brenna, 2008; Caple, 2008). In comparison to Hammon's case, these stories did not capture much

media attention. Nonetheless, they were presented in Hammon's navigation to demonstrate the trend of switching nations to compete in the Olympics. These connections seemed logical considering the scope of the Olympics. However, I find the emphasis on *for the Olympics* intriguing and worth further discussion.

The emphasis on Olympic glory focused attention onto the parts of Hammon's contract with CSKA Moscow that aided her Olympic pursuit. The financial aspect of the contract—the generous salary and the bonuses for winning the Olympic medal—was clearly documented (Araton, 2008a; Brennan, 2008; Caple, 2008; Drehs, 2008; Lawrence, 2008; Plaschke, 2008; Schwarz, 2008; Steeg, 2008). Yet media reports overlooked the fact that the contract with CSKA (through which Hammon acquired Russian citizenship) was first and foremost a professional contract, instead stressing its role in Hammon's Olympic dream. Due to Fédération Internationale de Basketball Amateur (FIBA) regulations, having a European citizenship gives an athlete more power to negotiate better salaries (Drehs, 2008; Schwarz, 2008). Consequently, naturalizing to a European country is a common practice among many high-profile American WNBA players who also play in the EuroLeague (Caple, 2008). Yet, in the media, the main function of the CSKA contract was presented as a way for Hammon to actualize her Olympic dream and to buy Russia an Olympic medal (Drehs, 2008), while it also had the minor effect of getting Hammon “a nice bonus” (Schwarz, 2008).

In my reading, equating the CSKA contract with Hammon's and Russia's pursuit of Olympic glory might professionalize the Olympics, but at the same time, it could also amateurize the CSKA and the Euroleague, where many WNBA

athletes play and make money during the “off-(professional-) season.” This contrast between the professionalized WNBA and the amateur-ized CSKA/EuroLeague would be better exemplified by looking at how the WNBA was implicated in media texts. More often than not, Becky Hammon was referred to as a WNBA athlete, and her WNBA statistics and achievements were cited to present her as a proficient athlete (Brady, 2008a; Caple2008; Drehs, 2008; Steeg, 2008). Her former and current coaches from the Liberty and the Silver Stars were interviewed for comments (Lawrence, 2008; Schwarz, 2008). These relations anchored Hammon as a WNBA athlete. However, what was more telling was the juxtaposition of the WNBA and the Olympics, and the Russian/EuroLeague (in which CSKA Moscow competes) and the Olympics. The Olympics, despite being the destination and focus of the navigation, was positioned as a “break” (Colston, 2008) from professional basketball, the WNBA. When the Olympians were competing, the WNBA players who were not selected to national teams were probably “back home lounging by the pool” (Voepel, 2008a). After the break was over, the Olympians returned to resume regular life (Associated Press, 2008a; “Chat with WNBA President”, 2008). This contrast distinguished the nature of the WNBA as different from the Olympics: the former as the professional league providing “regular” jobs and the latter as a realm for “pure”/amateur pursuit of sport excellence. In contrast to the Silver Stars, CSKA Moscow was positioned alongside Hammon’s Olympic quest as one of the factors that led her to the Russian national team (Araton, 2008a; Johnson, 2008; Lawrence, 2008; Steeg, 2008). The CSKA was the means to Hammon’s Olympic pursuit: while it paid

well—better than what the Silver Stars paid her as their featured athlete (Cagle, 2008; Drehs, 2008; Schwarz, 2008; Wolff, 2008)—it was never supposed to be anything but an “exception,” a temporary divergence from regular working days, just as the Olympics is a once-every-four-year sport festivity in which some American athletes “suddenly becom[e] [non-Americans]” (Plaschke, 2008). All these relations portrayed the CSKA merely as an aid to Hammon’s noble pursuit of Olympic glory, but not as another (more) profitable career choice in comparison to the Silver Stars and the WNBA.

Hammon’s endeavor also brought to light the exile history of American women’s basketball athletes (Steege, 2008; Voepel, 2008; Wolff, 2008). Hammon was compared to the previous generation of American elite women’s basketball athletes who had to travel overseas, mainly to Russia, to pursue their professional careers after college. I consider that highlighting this history during Hammon’s navigation also underlined the fact that American women no longer need to leave the U.S. for their professional basketball careers, as they now have the WNBA. This coincides with celebratory narratives often surrounding the WNBA as the great feminist achievement that granted women equal opportunities to play basketball professionally (Banet-Weiser, 1999; Wearden & Creedon, 2002). My analysis indicates that the venture to/through Russia then became a supplement, a type of add-on to Hammon’s regular life. The descriptions of her Russian career also illuminated an attitude of benevolence with which young Americans go to help “people in need” and at the same time enrich their own life experiences. In this media articulation, the story started like this: despite having a great

professional career with the WNBA, Hammon still felt that something was missing. Taking measures into her own hands, she went “where [she was] wanted” (Schwarz, 2008) and where she could fill in the missing piece in her already accomplished (basketball) life, Olympic glory (Araton, 2008a; Drehs, 2008; Schwarz, 2008; “Notes and Quotes”, 2008). This attitude was further exemplified by the relations established and illuminated between Hammon and the Russian team, and the American squad and the Russian team.

Hammon, an American, was seen as someone who could possibly single-handedly alter the destiny of the Russian national team. Hammon was “this something” (Schwarz, 2008) for which the Russians had “waited so long” (Voepel, 2008a) to “help them believe in themselves” (Elliott & Harvey, 2008). This vision of Hammon as a savior became clearer when the media event ventured to cover the USA-Russian matchup. Although this matchup was surrounded by antagonistic Cold War history (Brady, 2008b, 2008d; Caple, 2008; Schwarz, 2008), the rivalry between the U.S. and the Soviet Union (Wolff, 2008), and a number one seed (the U.S.) upset by the Russian squad in the 2006 World Championship semi-finals (Araton, 2008a; Johnson, 2008), the political agony and sport rivalry faded into the background for the dramatic showdown between “Becky Hammon (Russia) vs. Team US” (Aldeson, August 9).¹⁰ The focus on Hammon reduced the competition between two national teams into a story of an American-turned-Russian-only-on-the-court against her own nation, the powerhouse that was expected to win the gold. This narrative was illustrated by a photo of the two teams lining up on the court: looking through the shoulders of

two American players (with *USA* written on the back of their jerseys), one saw a smiling Hammon in a warm-up shirt with *Russia* on the chest (Dalziel, August 9). The victory of the U.S. over Russia in the Olympic semi-final was credited to the successful shut-down of Hammon (Anderson, August 21; Brady, August 22; Johnson, August 22a): Team USA “paid a lot of extra attention to her [Hammon]” and their “[h]ard picks, hard shoves, hard elbows, oppressively hard defense... making Hammon pay” (Plaschke, 2008). Despite this loss, Hammon bounced back and “[led] Russia to a victory” (Associated Press, 2008b) at the bronze medal match against China with her 22-point performance. The focus on Hammon’s significance in the successes or failures of the Russian team again draws attention to the prevailing vision of American hero/ines saving—or attempting to save—the day for the world, or for Russia in this case. This appears to connect back to a previously mentioned attitude of benevolence: while Hammon failed in the match against the U.S., she “helped” Russia to win an Olympic bronze medal (“Chat with WNBA President”, 2008), and had “the time of [her] life” (Brady, 2008c)—it also didn’t hurt that “the US team [still] look[ed] strong without her” (Caple, 2008).

Mapping relations established within the articulated space, I discuss the realities produced via this navigation: the Olympics and CSKA/EuroLeague were painted as amateur and part-time undertakings; Hammon’s Russian Olympic quest was presented not only as a noble pursuit of her dream, but also as a benevolent attempt to assist the Russians. In the following section, I outline how nations might be defined through these realities.

These Mapped Nations

Despite the acceptance of country-hopping, I do not find national boundaries absent in this navigation. Rather, the country-hopping manoeuvre highlighted the possibilities of travelling through nations, articulating how each country can be accessed and thus, defining what the nation is about. To conclude my mapping, I discuss how I examined the articulation of the two nations, the U.S. and Russia, through the accessibilities illuminated in this navigation. Particularly, I focus on the contesting pulls (Martin-Jones, 2006) on Hammon to be located in the U.S. or Russia during this media event to discuss how nations were defined through what abilities and qualities Hammon demonstrated in order to be allowed in and affiliated with the respective nations.

In my reading, the general tone of this media event was about an American athlete becoming a Russian. Hammon was seen as a good All-American woman who dared to pursue her American dream through Russia (in the process becoming a Russian). I argue that her migration to Russia and her becoming a Russian player was accepted with conditions: that her heart was still with the U.S.; that this was only a temporary venture; and that it was done out of a noble and benevolent intention. In a sense, Hammon was never able to fully settle in Russia; her heart and her intention (her Jeffersonian pursuit of happiness), was still in/with the U.S. What was in Russia then? From the texts, I argue, surpluses of American abundance. Hammon was not essential for the American squad (therefore she did not make the cut), but could be helpful for the Russian team to perform better (Elliott & Harvey, 2008; Lawrence, 2008; Voepel, 2008a).

Furthermore, Hammon's athletic dream was supplementary to what she had already accomplished in the WNBA (Schwarz, 2008; Steeg, 2008). The *bonus* Hammon got paid for her Olympic endeavor with Russia (Wolff, 2008) was only an extra to her WNBA salary. Finally, Olympic glory was achieved during the *extra* time that Hammon got to play basketball during the WNBA's Olympic break (Caple, 2008). These relations formulated through media texts, I argue, defined the U.S. as the norm for a standard of living, and Russia as a place for what was not needed in the U.S. For example, in this media event, Hammon's Russian naturalization was described as her "personal" pursuit during a break from her "real" job, the WNBA (Associated Press, 2008a; Voepel, 2008a). Through this characterization, the WNBA was defined as her regular, "real" profession, but Hammon's CSKA contract was Olympic-ized and thus amateurized, as something additional to her day-to-day job.

This sense of extra, I consider, positioned Russia as a secondary and supplementary space—a space that was not necessary, but functioned to support the primary space of the United States. For example, Russia was a place where the surplus of American abundance, such as the extraordinary amount of basketball talent, could flow into and become useful and helpful. This transmission/transaction of American surplus not only indicated a sense of benevolence, but also demonstrated the wealth, and thus superiority, of the United States. Hammon's naturalization was presented as a result of her failure to make U.S. national team (Adelson, 2008; Drehs, 2008; Voepel, 2008), but at the same time, as something that could help the Russian team be better¹¹ (Brady, 2008b;

Caple, 2008). Furthermore, I argue, this sense of benevolence enabled Hammon to travel in Russia and become Russian with little repercussion. In Russia, Hammon could do good things and help those in need. More importantly, this good-doing in Russia also enriched and rejuvenated Hammon and provided a chance for her to fill the missing piece in her “normal” life (Drehs, 2008; Schwarz, 2008). In such a way, Russia functioned to digest the overflow of less talented players from the U.S. and turn them into something that could further nurture and contribute to the United States. In media texts, Russia was not a land suitable for permanent settlement. Hammon’s venture to Russia was commendable because it was temporary and part-time: she came “home” and back to work, after she took her shot at Olympic glory (Associated Press, 2008a; Lawrence, 2008; Voepel, 2008a).

Furthermore, I argue, because Russia was articulated through its supplementary function to the U.S., other possibilities within Russia that might not serve this “current” purpose were considered precarious and not always welcome. This scenario exemplified the forces (Martin-Junes, 2006) pulling Hammon in different directions in this media event. For example, the high salaries paid to American female basketball players by Russian professional teams was not considered normal, but exceptional—it only happened due to Hammon’s athletic talents and achievements that then led to Hammon’s passport status which granted her the premium salary rate (Drehs, 2008; Schwarz, 2008; Wolff, 2008). Thus, this high salary was not used to reconsider or even critique the one offered by the WNBA. It was an enticingly exotic attraction to charm people away from their day-to-day real lives. These resistances and refusals to locate Hammon in

Russia with these types of relations (with a real job) also illustrated what Russia was not about: it was not a space for serious profession, but temporary excitement.

Conclusion

Through this study, I hope to contribute to existent feminist sport studies on nationalist media narratives around mega events in several ways. First, I present a type of case that is often under-studied in the field. The previous studies on migrated athletes focused on those who immigrate to the nations where the media was located (Elling & Luijt, 2009; Jackson, 2004) whereas my research focuses on a case of an athlete immigrating *out of* the nation, the United States. Also, by examining this case with Deleuzian cartography, I demonstrate how this theoretical tool can be used to explore the construction of the nation in a sport media event. In this map, nations are differentiated by the types of accessibilities that they exemplify in a given context. Though a practice of mapping, I explore how nations were articulated in this story about an athlete crossing national borders during the Olympics. My map shows how nations were defined through their accessibilities, that conditioned who and what could come in and be located within this partitioned space (Kaufman, 1998; Martin-Jones, 2006).

Furthermore, this map demonstrated the strengths of the Deleuzian perspective, especially in the face of ambiguity and fluidity of “identity.” In this case, Hammon, an exported athlete who has “too many passports” (Braidotti, 1994, p. 33), could not simply be presented as a foreign threat or a native heroine. In this study, without anchoring the construction of nations on Hammon’s nationalities, I am able to acknowledge power in a more fluid sense. Power

manifests in navigation as exercises of abilities to enter and to experience the space (Kaufman, 1998; Martin-Jones, 2006; P. Patton, 2000). These exercises are not without conditions. The event, the athlete in the center of it, and the space come with their own conditions, such as athletic achievement, international politics, and trans-national economics. Against this backdrop, nationality could be a restraint, a pass, or both, in the interaction with spatial arrangements. More importantly, nationality is not considered the ultimate cause of particular kinds of representations, such as that of foreign athletes as inferior. With a Deleuzian approach, I take into consideration the various conditions in the articulation of nations in sport media.

Nonetheless, what I can do with this study is limited by several methodological conditions. I only examine one case with a selective group of media. It can be argued that mainstream media—printed or online—is not the main media that people use to get information, and that it has a difficult time dictating how events are represented. Considering the fact that “new media” has become more and more prevalent and influential in people’s lives, it could be a useful site to explore how nations are narrated in that particular space. By concentrating on mainstream media, I overlook other online media where nations were also articulated. For example, this event was also widely debated in online forums and individual sport blogs. It could be beneficial to further map out how nations are experienced and constructed through fans’ voices in these spaces in the future. Furthermore, although I focus on Hammon’s case in my mapping of nations, her dual-citizenship is hardly an isolated case in this current age of

globalized sports. For example, in the WNBA, it is common practice for athletes to play overseas during the off-season. In order to have better negotiation power, many American (women) players, including high-profile ones, have acquired second citizenships. On the men's side, there have been cases of NCAA and NBA athletes naturalized to other countries to reach the Olympics. Mapping these navigations could provide further insights into how sports dis/engage with national boundaries (Braidotti, 1994).

¹ Around the same time as Hammon's announcement, another American basketball athlete, J.R. Holden, traveled a similar path, acquiring Russian citizenship and representing Russia in the 2008 Olympics.

² Unlike many other WNBA stars who have been bathed in media hype, being acclaimed by the media as destined for greatness since their collegiate careers, Hammon's rise to stardom is the story of an underdog. Hammon played at a mid-major program in college, went undrafted (to the WNBA), but eventually became the feature player for a successful WNBA team, the San Antonio Silver Stars. Her hard-fought success has been often described as the classic American Dream come true—a hard-working small town girl from the Heartland making it to the big league.

³ Audina was a Dutch Olympic medalist in badminton in 2004 who had won an Olympic silver medal for Indonesia in 1996.

⁴ For example, when one performs a google search with the phrase, "J.R. Holden Olympics," the first page is a list of webpages mostly from non-U.S. and non-news outlets, with one exception from *Time.com*. However, when searching "Becky Hammon Olympics," one gets articles that feature Hammon from sources such as the L.A. Times, USA Today, and ESPN.

⁵ Hammon is not the only American-born female basketball player to join the Russian team. In 2008, Deanna Nolan and Kelly Miller both joined the Russian training camp for the 2008 Olympics (Lawrence, 2008; Steeg, 2008). Currently, another American player, Epiphanny Prince, is on the roster of the Russian national team. Prince has been playing with the team at some international competitions (Associate Press, 2013).

⁶ Because many non-American athletes play in the league, during major international basketball events such as the Olympics, the WNBA usually makes a special effort to feature the American squad and its international players.

⁷ The team changed its name to the San Antonio “Starts” in the 2014 season.

⁸ Tensions between Russia and Georgia had been escalating since early 2008, but open hostilities began at the end of July and the beginning of August. At one point during the conflict (July/August), the Russian troops crossed Georgian borders and occupied Georgian cities. The U.S. government openly condemned Russia’s action. While they did not put military forces in Georgia, they sent aid and non-combat troops to the Black Sea area for peace-keeping.

⁹ While she might be not as popular as Hammon, as a WNBA player Nolan was as equally decorated as Hammon. She was a three-time WNBA Champion, one-time Final MVP, two-time WNBA first team and five-time WNBA All-star.

¹⁰ These histories were cited to ponder the gravity of Hammon’s migration (Brady, 2008a; Drehs, 2008; Johnson, 2008; Lawrence, 2008; Plaschke 2008): had it not been Russia that this All-American girl was playing for, would there still have been this much controversy?

¹¹ This was an intriguing position, especially considering the Russian team beat the U.S. at the semi-final of the World Championship in 2006 without Hammon.

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Chapter Four

Becoming the WNBA: A Deleuzian Media Analysis of Maya Moore's WNBA

Rookie Year

The Women's National Basketball Association and Its "Saviors"

Now in its 17th season, the Women's National Basketball Association (WNBA) continues to attract talented players. Big-name college players such as Diana Taurasi, Candace Parker, Maya Moore, and the "Three to See" ("The '3 to See'", 2013) in 2013—Brittney Griner, Elena Delle Donne, and Skylar Diggins—have come into the league accompanied by media hype generated by stellar collegiate careers. I refer to these new athletes who are surrounded by this kind of media hype as "savior[s] of the league" (DishNSwish, 2011). In this study, I explore this recurring savior narrative through the case of Maya Moore, one of the most highly anticipated rookies of recent years, who joined the league in 2011 after her extremely successful and high-profile college career with the University of Connecticut.

This study will contribute to feminist sport media studies mainly in two ways. First, it adds to existing research about the WNBA (Banet-Weiser, 1999; McDonald, 2000, 2002; McDonald & Cooky, 2013; Wearden & Creedon, 2002), one of the most visible and lasting women's professional sport leagues in North America. Second, this study contributes to the development of Deleuzian sport media studies (Markula, 2004; Woodward, 2009) by demonstrating how a Deleuzian perspective can provide a "(post)identity" (King & McDonald, 2007, p.1) framework to explore how elite female sporting bodies are produced in the sport media. In the case of a black female athlete such as Maya Moore, identity-based feminist sport media research would ask how intersected ideologies of gender and race are reproduced through her representations (Jamieson, 1998;

Scraton, 2001; Scraton & Flintoff, 2002; Yep, 2007). Approaching it from a Deleuzian perspective, I frame my analysis with the concept of *becoming* (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987; P. Patton, 2010), and focus on how Moore's abilities were "exercised" to articulate her into this new ideal of the WNBA without first presuming racialization and/or sexualisation in the media. Through this approach, I then explore the underlying standards that identify, assess, and rank the correct "functions" of an elite female basketball body.

In the following, I first review previous feminist sport media studies that use the concept of intersectionality to analyze differences within the identity of women represented in sport media. Using this research as a departure point, I discuss how a Deleuzian perspective might contribute to the reconceptualization of difference by introducing *becoming* (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987; Grossberg, 1996; Hickey-Moody & Malins, 2007; P. Patton, 2010). I then present my case study and media sample and my analysis of Maya Moore's becoming.

Intersectionality in Feminist Sport Media Studies

In the recent development of feminist sport media studies, scholars have employed the concept of intersectionality to expand the focus from a singular identity to consider intersections of multiple identities such as gender, race, class and sexuality (King & McDonald, 2007). The concept of intersectionality was developed mainly by black feminists in response to the silencing of black women's experiences under the umbrella of a generic "womanness" (Dewar, 1993, p.12) and also under the civil rights movement where 'blackness' was voiced mostly by black men (Acker, 2008; Collins, 2000; hooks, 1981). In order to

overcome the double trap (Vertinsky & Captain, 1998) caused by singular-identity politics, black feminists advocated acknowledging “intra-group difference” (Crenshaw, 1991, p. 1241, as cited in King & McDonald, 2007, p. 8) to give voice back to the experiences of people with multiple intersected oppressed identities (such as black women). Black feminists proposed the concept of intersectionality to explore how a multitude of ideologies operate through the intersection of, for example, gender and race, to produce the silence and double exclusion of black women (Andersen, 2008). Sport feminists have incorporated this perspective into their research in order to unpack how hegemonic ideologies work through the intersections of identities in media representations of women’s sport and female athletes (Carrington, 2002; Nylund, 2003; Scraton, 2001; Scraton & Flintoff, 2002; Vertinsky & Captain, 1998; Yep, 2007). In this literature review, I focus on research that uses intersectionality to explore intersections of gender and race with other identities in order to illustrate how media texts have been examined using this prevailing feminist perspective. I first survey studies that examine the intersection of gender and race; I then proceed to look at research incorporating class and sexuality, which are two of the most commonly examined intersected identities used in reference to racial minority women in U.S. sport media.

According to previous research, athletes’ racial identities are often invisible in media representations of women’s sport. Taking up the concept of intersectionality, feminist sport media researchers have examined how this phenomenon, which they label colour-blindness, reaffirms gendered and racialized ideologies through “colour-less” representations of racial minority

athletes (Banet-Weiser, 1999; Douglas & Jamieson, 2006; Jamieson, 1998). They have argued that this phenomenon might be seen as a sign of progress, especially when comparing it to the racialization and the constant reinforcement of racial stereotypes in media representations of men's sport. However, they show that the portrayals of racial minority women athletes in fact reiterate hegemonic ideologies of gender—by portraying female athletes as (good) women first—and racial hierarchy—by positioning blackness and non-whiteness as deviance (Banet-Weiser, 1999; Elling & Luijt, 2009; Jamieson, 1998). Researchers have argued that these types of media portrayals align with the hegemonic masculinity embedded in sport and reproduce “emphasized femininity” (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005, p. 848). Racial minority female athletes were accepted and even celebrated by media because they were first and foremost good women who were family oriented, well-mannered and excellent role models for girls. Furthermore, these colourless portrayals indicated that a universally good and correct femininity was, and should be, racially unspecific, or as the research pointed out, racially normative, not non-white (Jamieson, 1998; Vertinsky & Captain, 1998). Consequently, non-whiteness, such as blackness, became marginalized and even excluded from normative femininity. The researchers also demonstrated their arguments by presenting cases in women's sport in which race became a signifier (Elling & Luijt, 2009; Jamieson, 1998; Schultz, 2005; Spencer, 2004). When the racial identities of minority female athletes became visible in the media, they were used to signify the athlete's divergence from normative femininity. For example, Schultz (2005) pointed out that the media criticism of

tennis player Serena Williams's catsuit—a tight fitting, one-piece outfit—in the 2002 U.S. Open often contained racial undertones. Williams's deviance from correct femininity was portrayed as a signification of her blackness. Consequently, it was implied that the correct femininity was not black, not non-white. By exploring the phenomenon of colour-blindness at the intersection of gender and race, this research concluded that representing race as irrelevant in women's sport was not a progressive move for racial equality. Rather, it not only reiterated a normative notion of acceptable femininity, but also reaffirmed the normativity of whiteness.

Other feminist sport media researchers have used intersectionality to interrogate the intersection of class, gender, and race (Carrington, 2002; Collins, 2004; Douglas & Jamieson, 2006; Jamieson, 1998; Spencer, 2004). Carrington (2002), for example, argued that racial differences were historically closely tied to class divisions, and the (amateur) ideal of sport tied to middle-class ideology. Examining media representations through the intersection of gender, race, and class, these researchers discussed how ideals of white middle-class women were reproduced in celebrations of racial minority women (Collins, 2004; Spencer, 2004). They argued that in sport media, the successes of minority female athletes were portrayed as an escape from “ghetto” culture and as a testament to their successful adaptation to an ideal (white middle-class) lifestyle, especially when putting these athletes side-by-side with other racial minorities in their communities (Banet-Weiser, 1999; Douglas & Jamieson, 2006; Jamieson, 1998; Spencer, 2004; Wearden & Creedon, 2002). For example, Douglas and Jamieson

(2006) and Jamieson (1998) examined media images of Nancy Lopez, a Latina professional golfer. They discussed how her media presentation was at odds with the portrayal of her Latino community in the United States. They argued that the celebratory images of Lopez were about more than just her athletic achievements; they were also about her transformation into “a credentialed middle class...woman” (Jamieson, 1998, p. 346) with an acceptable lifestyle. Lopez was presented as an eloquent, well-educated woman with a successful nuclear family, in contrast with her Latino relatives, who were portrayed as high-school dropouts, some of who could barely speak English. In sum, feminist sport media researchers exploring the intersection of gender, race, and class described a theme of “Cinderella from the ghetto” (Spencer, 2004, p. 125) underlying celebratory media representations of racial minority female athletes. They argued that this theme also imposed individual responsibilities on those who failed to escape the lower class and conform to an acceptable and normal lifestyle (Collins, 2004; Douglas & Jamieson, 2006).

There are also researchers working around the intersection of gender, race, and sexuality in sport media representations of racial minority women.

Researchers have generally agreed that one of the most common and prevailing ideological practices in women’s sport media is to sexualize female athletes (Messner, 2002). Women athletes were routinely sexed up in sport media, presented as desirable and suitable sexual objects for (heterosexual) men, and/or portrayed as attractive and/or good wives. As a result, the potential for these images of athletic, strong, and muscular women to disrupt and challenge the

gendered stereotypes and hierarchy was undermined. Researchers have used intersectionality to examine how the sexuality of racial minority women manifests differently in sport media representations of racial minority women (Collins, 2004; Newhall & Buzuvis, 2008; Schultz, 2005). Overall, they presented two different media practices: de-sexualization and hyper-sexualization/eroticization. For example, Schultz (2005) argued that the media sensualisation of Serena Williams's buttocks in her tight fitting catsuit during the 2002 U.S. Open illustrated the eroticization of black feminine sexuality. In contrast, Newhall and Buzuvis (2008) discussed the asexual representations of Jennifer Harris, a black college basketball player, in the media surrounding her lawsuit against Rene Portland, the head coach of the Pennsylvania State University women's basketball program at which Harris played. However, Collins (2004) argued that these asexual representations of racial minority women were not opposite to the repressive (over-)sexualizing media practices. Eroticization presented racial minority women as desirable but inappropriate, while desexualization implied they were undesirable or that they should not be desired. Both types of media representations indicated racial minority female sexuality as deviant and dangerous compared to the normal heterosexual, white, patriarchal middle-class family, and thus to be outlined or silenced.

To conclude, the concept of intersectionality has been utilized to examine how dominant ideologies might work and be reproduced in representations of multiple oppressed identities of racial minority female athletes (King & McDonald, 2007; Markula, 2009; Yep, 2007). The research has argued that

instead of breaking white, middle-class, heteronormative ideologies, these seemingly celebratory and positive media representations of racial minority women have actually marginalized and silenced any challenges these women might pose as a result of their athletic achievements and popularity.

Notwithstanding the contributions of this research, I consider that an intersectional approach can be limiting. While it acknowledges intra-group difference, I argue that intersectional feminist sport media research is still based on the premise of identity politics. Its goal was to find more sophisticated ways to define identity in order to more precisely identify ideological workings through identity positions (Vertinsky & Captain, 1998; Yep, 2007). As a result, it fell back on polarizing logic to consider identities—for example, black women versus black men or black women versus white women—and it continues to categorize identities in a generalized manner. In other words, although this research rejected the idea of women as a homogeneous group (Collins, 2000; Davis, 2008; Nylund, 2003), it assumed another universalization. It challenged universal woman-ness by arguing, for example, for an essential black woman-ness that supposedly differed from white woman-ness. Furthermore, it also presumed that there are particular clear ideals of women that are considered as normal and acceptable. Because of these premises, intersectionality theorists are able to identify and critique the repressive practices of “normalization” and the silencing of non-white femininity. In the end, I argue that the intersectional feminist sport media research reproduced what it set out to challenge—the hierarchy and oppression emerging from the practice of universalization.

In this study, I follow the direction set out by intersectionality: to comprehend intra-group difference. However, I do this using a Deleuzian perspective. I employ particularly the notion of *becoming* to conceptualize difference as “an unspecified, but specifiable, positivity” (Grossberg, 1996, p. 94). From a Deleuzian perspective, differences are not considered to be defined by identity such that a black woman is different from a white woman. Instead, difference—such as people’s skin colors, histories, professions, and sexual organs—offer potentiality to be differentiated by a particular kind of logic to produce identity categories. The Deleuzian perspective, thus, considers identity as an *afterthought*, as a result of the organizing logic propelling the articulation of difference.

Identity, Difference and Becoming

...to think of...difference in ways that do not refer back to an a priori identity or the fantasy of a future unified identity. (Brigham, 2005, p.222)

In this section, I discuss how a Deleuzian framework and the concept of *becoming* can provide a tool to overcome the limitations of intersectionality theory. Before I explain my approach, I illustrate how “identity” is positioned and approached in an intersectional approach and then in a Deleuzian perspective. I further elaborate the concept of becoming, and how a feminist sport media study that does not start from a pre-described identity might be conceptualized.

As mentioned, intersectional feminist sport media studies generally approach the study of media representations using pre-identified intersections of oppressed identities in order to unpack ideological workings through them. This approach is based on the main premise that there is an existing identity hierarchy.

In this model, identity, as socially constructed, is shared by individuals within a group and it unifies their social positions as either marginalized or dominant. In this scheme, the powerful group works to maintain their privileged differences, and thus their dominant position, through ideological control. Ideologies are systems of beliefs that make socially constructed ideas appear natural and just (Cole, 1993). For example, as previous feminist sport media research has indicated, ideologically constructed femininity sexualizes, marginalizes, and trivializes women athletes but makes such practices appear to be natural aspects of women's sport. In order to perform a critique based on an intersectional premise, I would have to know who is oppressed and who is dominant to identify the oppressed identities for my analysis and then further determine the hegemonic ideologies that define these identities. If I analyzed Maya Moore's media images through this approach, I would first identify her intersecting oppressed identities (e.g., black, woman) and examine how several ideologies operate through the representations of these identities. I would analyze Moore's media representations to demonstrate how whiteness and generic woman-ness was celebrated and how black femininity was marginalized. For example, if Moore was portrayed as mild-mannered, I would link this to (white) middle-class feminine ideals. And then I would argue that such images were used to emphasize correct femininity, and marginalize her blackness/black femininity. Or I would assert that the celebration of her extraordinary athleticism functioned to mark her as an outlier, which then connoted how blackness was constructed in sport media as naturally physically superior (Collins, 2004; Schultz, 2005; Vertinsky & Captain, 1998). In this

approach, identity precedes the analysis, and the separation based on identity is an unchallenged premise.

Instead of positioning identity as the basis of difference, a Deleuzian perspective considers identity to be a result of a particular organizing logic that categorizes multiplicity into same/different (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987; Hickey-Moody & Malins, 2007). To clarify the nuances of this perspective, I consider it worthy to stress the difference between an ideology and this type of organizing logic. This difference lies in how sameness is prioritized. Identity as ideologically structured considers sameness as the cause of differences. The privileged (who can be recognized based on their identity) create and reproduce hegemonic ideologies to reaffirm this uniqueness, this sameness about their identity, to occupy and maintain their cultural and political vantage positions. The Deleuzian conceptualization of organizing logics does not credit their existence as a pre-identified group of people—or any privileged sameness, such as economic status or reproductive organs. Rather, it considers that these logics emerge from the historical involution of a human society (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987; Goodchild, 1996; Grossberg, 1996). These organizing logics articulate how limits and boundaries can be drawn, and what and who can connect—be allowed in, be considered as correct and acceptable—in the territory of the category (Massumi, 1992). In other words, this perspective considers sameness not only as a result of particular organizing logics, but also as an assessment of *connectivity*, an ability to form connections. Hence, my Deleuzian examination of identity construction would not focus how distorted sameness was imposed on the category, but how

the limits of the category are (re)drawn through the development of connections between elements to articulate Maya Moore.

Furthermore, I conceptualize my exploration of this process of connecting through a concept of *becoming* (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987; May, 2003). Becoming describes how a process of forming alliances between entities that are previously separated may lead to a scenario of “self-overcoming” (Schrift, 2000, p. 153). To form an alliance, these entities connect with their territories, and this process opens up a possibility to move each other’s boundaries. In other words, through a process of becoming, by connecting to others—those that previously do not belong within this territory—an entity, a category, may be reconsidered and redefined. Becoming considers the instability in the defined categories and boundaries and the possibility of transforming/transformation through exercises of connectivity and developing new connections (May, 2003; Olkowski, 1999; P. Patton, 2000; Schrift, 2000). In this study, I position Moore’s entrance to the WNBA as a process of becoming and the narrative of her redefining the WNBA as an indication of possible self-overcoming of the league. This narrative could show that the WNBA always has the potential to be redefined by new connections, such as those to high profile newcomers like Maya Moore. Nonetheless, it should be noted that becoming is not a unilateral process. When connecting, boundaries for all the supposedly separated parties are crossed, and thus possibly deformed. In other words, becoming does not describe a process of imitation (which would indicate that one party loses itself and turns into the other). Yet, becoming can be observed and explored from a particular angle (Massumi, 1992). In my study, I

focus on how Moore was connected to the WNBA and how she was articulated through different connections to showcase how she might belong to this professional basketball league. In addition, I examine how the process of articulating a WNBA's Maya Moore—how these connections developed in order to demonstrate that she could be “one of them”—might re/construct a definition of WNBA players.

Furthermore, the concept of becoming highlights the active un/doing of an identity. For example, Markula (2004) explored the becoming of Victoria Beckham, former singer of pop group the Spice Girls and currently the wife of former soccer player David Beckham, through multiple alliances and connections made in media texts. Markula described how Beckham's conventional femininity was constructed through “a performing body” (p. 165) that intensively invested in fashion and her husband in order to be categorized as a (ideally) feminine woman. Seeing becoming as a process of un/doing illuminates the potential for change (Lawley, 2005; Massumi, 1992; P. Patton, 2000). The ability “to become” highlights the *capacity* of each body to connect (Colebrook, 2002): becoming is enabled not by who one is (identity), but by what one can do to connect to different elements and “others.” This connectivity is further determined by the context of the individual body, which provides the organizing logic for becoming (Grossberg, 1996; Hickey-Moody & Malins, 2007). This logic creates standards for the *functionality* of one's capacity; it defines what a particular capacity should do and produce. For example, in (professional/elite) sport, what a body can do is often understood and measured by a standard of competition. A “functional

athleticism” is more than merely being able to perform athletic movements, for example, jumping high, running fast, or taking physical contact. These abilities need to be exercised in particular ways and at the right times to achieve a perceptible “ideal” result such as scoring a point, stopping an offensive play, or winning a game. An examination of how connections were developed through the articulation of Moore’s capacities can reveal the logic underlying the definitions of an ideal WNBA player and the normative elite, professional, female sporting body.

In conclusion, using the conceptual tool of becoming, I concentrate on how connectivity is—or is allowed to be—exercised in/through the media to configure a common and recognizable WNBA and elite female sporting body. Instead of anchoring my analysis in a predetermined whiteness or intersection-ness (e.g., black femininity), I examine how the process of becoming in the event takes precedence. I consider Moore’s entrance into the WNBA as an event of becoming, where an alliance between the athlete and the professional league is formed. I examine what and how Moore’s abilities (what she could do) were articulated through different relations. I then analyze how these relations constructed and expressed this new ideal of a WNBA player; and I attend to the organizing logic illuminated by this process. Using this theoretical framework, I have formulated the following research questions: How did Maya Moore “become” the new ideal WNBA player in this media event? How do the different relations developed elucidate a Moore who could save and redefine the WNBA? What does

this construction of Moore say about the logic underlying a (new) ideal WNBA player?

A Case Study of Maya Moore

Using a case study approach, I present a Deleuzian media analysis of one of the highest-profile rookies in the WNBA, Maya Moore, to explore the prevailing narrative of a savior who will redefine the league. I collected my data from selected mainstream and specialized media during the WNBA's 2011 season, Moore's first year with the league. In the following, I explain my approach to the case study and media sampling. I then briefly summarize the story of Maya Moore as told in the media, followed by a description of my analysis techniques.

This Case of Maya Moore

A case study method is more commonly used in sports management than in sports sociology. Case studies often combine both quantitative and qualitative methods and are conventionally based on a post-positivist paradigm that aims to describe the true nature of a social phenomenon (Markula & Silk, 2011; Yin, 2003). Nevertheless, there are also advocates for a purely qualitative case study (Stake, 2005). They assert that the case study approach "is defined by interest in an individual case, not by the methods of inquiry used" (p. 443), and thus, it is flexible enough to incorporate different techniques and methods, and can utilize a variety of methods based on different paradigms (Flyvbjerg, 2011; Markula & Silk, 2011).

For this paper, I designed a case study based on the Deleuzian framework, which is situated in the poststructuralist paradigm. Deleuze proposed to focus on

events where different movements, including becoming, may be initiated and connected to different entities and people (Deleuze, 1992; Stagoll, 2005).

However, he provided little operational detail about how to define and identify such an event for analysis. I believe this lack of detail can be made up for by “interest in an individual case” (Stake, 2005, p. 443) in the case study approach.

According to Stake, a case is a “bounded system” (p. 135) that contains the complexity of the said phenomenon, and yet functions as an individual whole (Flyvbjerg, 2011). A case can be in different forms: a sports organization, a sports event, an athlete, or a media event (Markula & Silk, 2011).

Stake (2005) and Yin (2003) further explained that a case that can showcase the phenomenon should be selected according to research objectives and questions. In this paper, I intended to investigate the frequently occurring media narrative of the savior used in relation to the WNBA, the most prominent and long-standing women’s professional team sport league in the U.S. and North America. I wanted to explore what the constant inclination to redefine in the savior narrative can tell us about U.S. media production of the ideal WNBA and about normative female sporting bodies in general. In recent years, there have been a few highly anticipated newcomers who have been given savior status in the media. Maya Moore, who joined the league in 2011 after her record-breaking college year, is one of those players who were showered with media hype in their rookie year. For this reason, I considered the media event of Moore’s first year in the WNBA as a reasonable case for my examination of the savior narrative.

I decided to select a group of media during a definite timeframe that could clearly illustrate the developments of Moore's relations. While my research questions are about Moore's becoming in the media during her first WNBA season, due to the scope of this paper it would be implausible to examine every publication. Using purposeful sampling (M. Patton, 1990), I collected media samples from three mainstream American newspapers (*The New York Times* and *USA Today*), mainstream online sport media (*ESPN* and *SI*), and specialized basketball and women's basketball websites (*SLAM* and *SB Nation*). I used *Factiva* and *Google Search* to search for items published from April 2011—when Moore finished her last collegiate basketball game¹—to September 2011—the month in which Moore won the WNBA Championship and the Rookie of the Year Award. From the search, I collected 50 news articles, comments, interviews and discussions, some of which included photographs.²

Maya Moore, “A Once-In-A-Lifetime Player”³

In the 2011 WNBA draft, all eyes were on one graduating player: Maya Moore, an instrumental member of the University of Connecticut's 2009 and 2010 NCAA championships and of the team's highly publicized record setting winning streak.⁴ Even with a heartbreaking loss in the semi-finals at the 2011 NCAA Tournament—and thus a failed attempt at an NCAA championship title during Moore's last year of college basketball—there was no denying Moore's superior athletic ability/performance and brilliant collegiate career (Gardiner, 2011; Hays, 2011). During her college career, she helped the University of Connecticut (UConn) win 150 games out of 154 (Voepel, 2011); she also acquired a long list

of individual achievements: the fourth-highest total points scored in the history of collegiate women's basketball (Rabjohns, 2011), two time Associated Press Player of the Year, four time All-American (Longman, 2011), three time Wade Trophy winner (the only player who has ever received three of this prestigious award for female college basketball athletes) (ESPN.com News Services, 2011), two time Honda-Broderick Cup as the Collegiate Woman Athlete of the Year (the first back-to-back winner) (Rosenstein, 2011), and a 3.669 GPA (Rykoff, 2011). Voepel (2011) described the way that Moore's college career ended: "UConn's Moore leaves [an] incredible legacy...[that] completely dwar[fs] one loss."

With these high accolades, unsurprisingly, Moore was selected first by the Minnesota Lynx in the WNBA's 2011 draft (Associated Press, 2011; Hogg, 2011; Horrow, 2011; Litel, 2011). Moore's turning professional and her arrival in Minnesota was enthusiastically welcomed by fans and commercial interests. The Lynx's season ticket sales, as well as the amount of team sponsorships significantly increased immediately after Moore's draft (Horrow, 2011a). Moore also signed a high-profile sponsorship deal with the Jordan Brand, a subdivision of Nike Inc. (Associated Press, 2011a; Castillo, 2011; Dorsey, 2011; Hutchins, 2011; O'Leary, 2011; York, 2011). During mid-season, Moore became the only rookie (and the only Lynx player) voted to be on the starting line-up for the WNBA's 2011 All-Star Game⁵ (Associated Press, 2011b; Hoppes, 2011). Also, Moore's jersey, which was only made available after her draft to the Lynx in April 2011, quickly became the best-selling WNBA jersey on NBAStore.com (ESPN.com News Service, 2011). She helped transform the Lynx, a team that

finished fifth out of six teams in the Western Conference (with a 13-21 record) in 2010, into WNBA champions in 2011 (Associated Press, 2011c; Gerstener, 2011; Litel, 2011a; Parham, 2011; Wills, 2011). At the end of the season, she earned herself recognition as WNBA's Rookie of the Year (Associated Press, 2011c; Voepel, 2011a).

Analysis Technique

I acknowledge that there were multiple ways that this media data could be analyzed. Nonetheless, I designed my media textual analysis based on the Deleuzian conceptualization of becoming (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987; Olkowski, 1999; Patton, 2004; Schrift, 2000), and Markula's (2004) and Coleman's⁶ (2008) analysis of becoming in/through media images of women. I explore how connections were made through these media texts, how these connections illustrated the WNBA's Maya Moore through her abilities, and what the celebration of these abilities could say about this (new) ideal of a WNBA sporting body. To this end, I first explored the general themes emerging from the media event of Maya Moore's first year with the WNBA (Appendix 3). These themes provided a sense of who the WNBA's Moore was. I then examined the relations developed to support the formation of an alliance between Moore and the WNBA. These relations demonstrated Moore's doing during this event, and an examination of these relations illuminated what capacity was exercised during the event and how. Through analyzing the relations, I was able to further explore Moore's connectivity in this event.

Becoming of Maya Moore

In this section, I present my Deleuzian media analysis of Maya Moore during her first year with the WNBA. Using the concept of becoming, I structure my results based on the two stages of my analysis. I first outline the general themes in media texts depicting Moore as a savior. Particularly, I focus on two prevailing themes describing the WNBA's Moore: elite athleticism and high popularity. Then, I examine what relations were formed in/through media texts to support these two themes. In the second stage, I discuss how these themes and relations demonstrated specific abilities of Moore and this (new) ideal of the WNBA defined through Moore. Finally, I explore how these abilities and the newly defined ideal illuminated the underlying logic measuring what a (ideal) WNBA player and a professional female sporting body should be able to do (Hickey-Moody & Malins, 2007).

The WNBA's Moore

Based on my reading, the media story of a WNBA rising star presented two of Moore's key aspects: her elite athleticism and her high popularity. I consider that these two main themes outlined the general characteristics of the WNBA's Moore and illuminated what this "newer generation" (Associated Press, 2011b) of the WNBA was about. In this section, I discuss my analysis of these themes, the relations developed to support these themes and how these relations expressed Moore's capacity.

Elite athleticism. One of Maya Moore's qualities that was constantly discussed in the media was her remarkable athleticism. More often than not,

Moore's athleticism was showcased through her statistics and the number of recognitions and trophies she received. Numbers such as 3036 (the total points scored during her college year; Rabjohns, 2011), 14.2 and 4.8 (the average points scored and rebounds per game in the mid-2011 season; Associated Press, 2011b) and one (the order that she was drafted in 2011) were attached to Moore's athleticism. Her overall count of awards and recognitions were present in a less definite manner, but still portrayed in a vaguely quantitative manner to show a highly achieved athlete who was "starting to run out of space to put all of her trophies" (ESPN.com News Services, 2011). I argue that through the use of numbers, Moore's athleticism was presented as a quantifiable entity that could be compared and connected outside of her immediate contexts across years/classes/generations with that of a larger group of prominent American female basketball athletes. For example, she was the fourth highest scoring female basketball athlete in NCAA history, surpassing American women's greats such Chamique Holdsclaw and Cheryl Miller (ESPN.com News Services, 2011). Like other high profile University of Connecticut alumni Sue Bird, Diana Taurasi, and Tina Charles, she was the number one pick in the 2011 WNBA draft (Voepel, 2011b); she was the only player ever to receive the Wade Trophy (a prestigious recognition for female college athletes) three times.

In these texts, Moore's athleticism was also narrated through connections with players against whom she played that constructed descriptions of the players' experiences playing with and against Moore. For example, pictures of Moore in the air ready to release her jump-shot, flying past the defender for a lay-up, and

grabbing a rebound over an opponent (Bengs, 2011; Johnston, 2011; Sherman, 2011) were used to illuminate Moore's ability to overpower other players. Devereaux Peters, a University of Notre Dame player, described her assignment to guard Moore in the 2011 NCAA semi-final: "I feel like she scored on me every time I guarded her... It doesn't matter if you're in her face, if you have a hand up, if you tip the ball—she's going to get her points" (Hays, 2011). In addition, there were also experiences alluding to her abilities other than scoring (DishNSwish, 2011; Daley, 2011; Parham, 2011a). They illustrated her intense devotion to each play, and how her intensity affected other players. For example, Moore's Lynx teammate, veteran Taj McWilliams-Franklin, commented: "...what I saw was Maya diving, hustling, running, getting rebounds, getting loose balls. It's what's always set her apart" (Voepel, 2011a). Others remembered Moore's desire to win as well as her mental strength to stay calm under pressure and fight through tough times, and how these qualities motivated them to do better, consequently turning the momentum of the game in favor of their teams (Parham, 2011). I consider that these experiences depicted a different type of relation from those that emerged from Moore's numbers and achievements. The statistics connected Moore to other players using quantitative measurements and presented Moore's athleticism as isolatable and objective, able to transcend different contexts. However, the athleticism produced through other players' experiences described a contextual athleticism, an affective⁷ one (Goodchild, 1996). Consequently, in this media event Moore was not only illustrated as skilful, but also contagious and "impactful." Her athleticism was capable of impacting other moving bodies,

connecting and “collaborating” with them to produce a sporting experience, or more importantly, a win for her team. I argue that this affective athleticism is contextual and interactive: it does not stand alone in the absence of people—either other players or even Moore herself. These two types of athleticism—quantitative and affective—portrayed Moore as a superior player, not just in terms of physicality, skill, and achievements, but more importantly, in terms of her impact, her ability to move people and to shape other people’s sporting experiences.

High popularity. In addition to her elite athleticism, Moore’s popularity was also highlighted in media texts. In particular, I found that her ability to effectively motivate fans and attract sponsors was emphasized. The media presented various sales numbers to showcase how the public and her fans received the launch of Moore’s professional career. For example, the Minnesota locals’ excitement at having Moore on their team was evident—within 24 hours of the draft the Lynx increased their season-ticket holder numbers by 150 (Horrow, 2011a). The enthusiasm of WNBA fans in general was demonstrated through the surging numbers of Moore’s jersey sales at NBAStore.com (ESPN.com News Service, 2011a): after about two months on the market, her jersey became the best-selling WNBA jersey for the sales period of October 2010 to June 2011.⁸ I argue that relating Moore to these sales numbers in the media illustrated how she could effectively connect to for-profit organizations: the WNBA, as well as the Lynx. These texts told a story about how well her popularity translated into marketability and profitability. She, as a feature attraction, had brought in a considerable amount of revenue for the team and the league. Furthermore,

Moore's profitable popularity was also exemplified by one of the most attention-grabbing announcements during her first year in the WNBA. In May 2011, Moore was the first female basketball athlete to sign with the Jordan Brand, an elite sub-brand of Nike Inc., before her WNBA season even started (Associated Press, 2011a; Castillo, 2011; Dorsey, 2011; Hutchins, 2011; O'Leary, 2011; York, 2011).

This unprecedented endorsement brought Maya Moore into relation with an exclusive group of elite professional basketball athletes from the National Basketball Association (NBA), including Carmelo Anthony, Chris Paul, and Dwyane Wade.⁹ I consider that this relation indicated Moore's ability to cross the gap between men's and women's basketball, and even more so, her ability to convert her popularity into profitability for sport organizations as well as for herself. Also, this endorsement connected Moore with the athlete after whom this brand is named, Michael Jordan (Associated Press, 2011a). This connection to Jordan not only illustrated Moore's marketability (just like Jordan's), but, I argue, also identified Moore with one of the most memorable aspects of Jordan's career: as the brand's logo, a silhouette of his signature jumpman image illustrated his jumping ability and his air-time. Precisely, I argue, Jordan's airtime was about more than simply physicality, but also a particular type of affective and profitable athleticism. Jordan's airtime brought him fame and wealth, because his jump became a spectacle, a performance that could move the fans and the viewers. Moore's alignment with this image gave her a pair of "jumpman wings" (Dorsey, 2011). Therefore, I argue, Moore's endorsement did not simply present an "elite" athleticism but also an affective one that could bring enticing and mesmerizing

experiences like the “fly time” did. In other words, the association with Jordan’s jumpman image further illustrated that Moore’s affective athleticism could connect and move not only players and coaches, but also fans, and thus, money and profit.

In summary, I examine these two main emphases in the media texts—athleticism and high popularity—as results of various exercises of connectivity (Colebrook, 2002; May, 2003). My examination illustrates how these emphases were built upon various relations. Overall, the WNBA’s Moore was shown to be able to transcend time and space to join a group of U.S. basketball standouts and cross the divide between men’s and women’s basketball markets. In addition, this Maya Moore was also able to deeply impact other players as well as attract fans and sponsors.

This “New Generation” of the WNBA

In this section, I present a further examination of the aforementioned relations to understand how they were results of exercised connectivity, and then turn back to define what can be connectable, what can belong to the (new) WNBA. This formation of two capacities of Moore articulated the particular logic that defined what a (ideal) WNBA player, a professional female sporting body, should be able to do (Hickey-Moody & Malins, 2007). In the following, I discuss what this new WNBA and this “future of women’s sport” (York, 2011), exemplified through Moore, is about.

As discussed, presenting Moore as a superior, affective, and profitable athlete was the main reason she was a new rising star, the savior of the WNBA.

Moore's superior athleticism was articulated through numbers as well as through her impact on other players. I consider that this association with/through numbers illustrates a situation where her athleticism was captured by various markers, such as awards and trophies, games won, points scored, and steals-per-game. These markers portrayed a moving body with a static status, and a quantifiable matter that could be dissected and categorized. Consequently, this categorization made it possible to compare Moore to other players without needing them to be physically present. Yet, I argue, although these markers could take Moore "out of context" to compete against other athletes, it was telling that Moore's numbers, no matter how impressive, were only compared to former female basketball athletes¹⁰ (ESPN.com News Services, 2011; Longman, 2011). This situation underscored a particular logic of organizing (elite) female sporting bodies in U.S. sport media that presented an insurmountable categorical difference between men's and women's basketball and athleticism. Nonetheless, I found that this categorical difference was overlooked/overcome on occasions, particularly when showing Moore's connections in less quantitative or more interactive ways, such as those moments depicted through "experiences." I argue that these moments and connections depicted an expressive sporting body that could be comprehended in isolation, but required others (audiences or recipients of the affect, such as opponents, teammates, and coaches) in order to be assessed. In such a way, Moore's affective connectivity was also about abstract and relational performance. At times, Moore was not confined to identity categories based on gender and race; yet, it was not because she broke the categorical rules, but because she was able to

disengage with the overarching categories. Affect focuses on the moments, on the moving, on the experiencing. Through this characteristic of affective connectivity, Moore was able to connect/compare to men's basketball players (Daley, 2011). Yet, this expressive Moore should not be mistaken as "free." I consider that this expressive Moore was still assessed and comprehended using particular "linguistic" rules such as those of (elite) basketball and sports. For example, her dedicated hustle for loose balls would only make sense if that was the "right" kind of intensity to display in an elite basketball game. While Moore's expressive sporting body seemed to detach from some categories, she did not escape other standards. What, then, are these standards? I argue that her interactions and experiences with other players, and even fans and sponsors, all concerned winning. The opponent was challenged and dominated (Bengts, 2011; Bennet, 2011; Johnston, 2011; Sherman, 2011; Hays, 2011). Her intensity and drive to win the game exuded from her interactions with the court space and with other players (Gerstener, 2011; Voepel, 2011; 2011a). She was celebrated as a "winner" (Associated Press, 2011a; Castillo, 2011a; Voepel, 2011b; Wills, 2011).

Furthermore, Moore's popularity also seemed to overcome some predominant categories in sport media (e.g., gender). As discussed above, her popularity was demonstrated through her ability to bring in profit. I argue that these for-profit relations illuminated forces of the commodification of female sporting bodies. Yet, it should be noted that in this media event, Moore was seldom sexualized or objectified as previous feminist sport media scholars have observed of many popular female athletes. Rather, the selling point of this

WNBA's Moore was her intensity and her "beautiful jumpers" (Parham, 2011a). In signing with the Jordan Brand, the company's spokesperson cited her desire to win as one of the main reasons they wanted her on their team (Associated Press, 2011a; Dorsey, 2011). Fans were buying tickets to experience seeing and feeling excited about Moore's performance (Horror, 2011a). I consider that this force of commodification may be termed the commodification of "affect." It might be argued that because the WNBA is a professional sport league, it is not surprising that athletes are assessed by how well they can excite fans and increase sales. However, if we consider how the WNBA, and elite women's sport in general, is often tied to the idea of gender equality and the success of feminist politics (Banet-Weiser, 1999; Wearden & Creedon, 1998), it might open up another direction for discussing the sale of experiences and the commodification of affective sporting bodies. In order to be profitable, female sporting bodies have to be able to connect and move people who can afford to consume, to buy season tickets, licensed WNBA jerseys, or brand-name sneakers. This force of commodification turns political energy to consumption: athletes, the league, or the sponsors advocate certain political goals by encouraging consumption, and fans participate by buying (LaFrance, 1998). Commodification measures political impact by how much consumption something evokes. It should be noted that I do not propose that consumption, commodification, and feminist politics—in particular, the gender equality with which the WNBA is often associated—are mutually exclusive. Rather, I want to point out that measuring popularity, and thus political impact, through consumption encourages women's sport and female

sporting bodies to be appealing to the masses—not only in a quantitative sense, as in the number of people, but also in a qualitative sense, such as the level of intensity of the force responding. This measurement of popularity and political impact, therefore, envisions a very particular and limited type of political potential in and through sport, one that can attract money.

Conclusion

To conclude, in this study, I explore the media event of Maya Moore turning professional in order to examine how Moore's alliance with the WNBA functioned to configure a new generation of U.S. female professional basketball athletes. I particularly focus on the two prominent themes in the media, athleticism and popularity, and how different relations built these themes, and explored the organizing logic propelling the measurement of Moore's capacities in order to present her as "extraordinary." First, I observe that Moore's athletic abilities seemed to transcend the identity categories she was affiliated with. Her race and gender did not confine her to be represented through the hegemonic ideologies—such as emphasized femininity or deviant black femininity—identified in previous intersectional feminist sport media studies (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005; Schultz, 2005; Spencer, 2004). Yet, I argue, her abilities were re-captured by the standards prevailing in professional/elite sports. Her athleticism was deemed exceptional because of competitiveness. She could consistently, effectively, and affectively produce winning performances. Also, her popularity was deemed worthy of celebration because she could attract more fans and break into different markets. When juxtaposing these standards with the

embedded celebratory feminist narrative around the WNBA, I argue that the new ideal produced through Maya Moore also presented a rather narrowly defined idea of feminist politics—one that appeals to the people who can afford to pay to see WNBA games and buy merchandise, and one that, thus, accentuates the profits from professional sports.

This study expands on existing research of media portrayals of popular female elite athletes. It provides a different angle from which to approach the construction of “ideals” in sport media, using a case study of one of the most celebrated young female basketball athletes in the United States. The predominant approach in feminist sport media studies would anchor this exploration in Moore’s oppressed identity—her status as a black woman athlete—and examine how oppression is reproduced through media representations of her identity. Utilizing a Deleuzian perspective, I examine how the savior narrative surrounding Moore resulted from an exercise of connectivity (Colebrook, 2002). Using the concept of becoming to frame my analysis, I focus on the process of articulation and explore how Moore’s abilities were used to construe this new WNBA. Experimenting with a new approach to a popular subject in sport media studies, the (re-)production of feminine ideals, I demonstrate the nuanced understandings that might come from a different look at identity construction. I am able to see how a focus on an expressive and affective sporting body may overcome the prevailing emphasis on identity categories in feminist sport media. In this study, I show that Maya Moore’s sporting body was detached from identity categories,

even momentarily, and yet she was re-captured by rules and orders, such as competitiveness (winning) and profitability (affect), in elite/professional sport.

I am aware this case study cannot make any generalizations about women's sport, or even the WNBA, in the media. Nonetheless, I consider that this lens might be particularly useful to examine the construction of normative female sporting bodies in events that are celebrated as political landmarks. For example, in 2013, an extraordinary new player came into the WNBA, and was again crowned with the status of one who would revolutionize the league and the sport of women's basketball. After her much publicized college career, Brittney Griner, a Baylor graduate and one time NCAA champion, standing six foot eight inches and with a wing span of seven foot two inches, publically came out as a lesbian. Regardless, her dunking ability put her in ESPN sport highlights multiple times. Her coming out, I considered, was treated as a celebratory moment in many sport media outlets as a chance for a more progressive women's basketball, or even American society¹¹ (Fagan, 2013). Without dismissing advocates for a more diverse sporting environment, as demonstrated in this study only considering elite sport as transcending identity categories is problematic. There are always contradictory and complex forces underlying sport that can re-capture an elite sporting body, even one that was presented as transcending existing identity categories and hierarchies.

In addition, I am also acutely aware the absence of race in my discussion. This is mainly due to the focus of this analysis. As mentioned, my analysis does not start from identity categories, but focuses on the themes that emerged from

media texts and were made comprehensible in this particular media event. For example, I am able to discuss gender as a categorical difference because of the seeming incompatibility of Moore's athleticism and other male athletes articulated in the media. Moore's racial background was rarely referred to in this particular media event. It might be argued that the absence of discussion about Moore's blackness echoes what previous feminist sport media research referred to as the colourlessness in women's sport media (Banet-Weiser, 1999; Douglas & Jamieson, 2006; Jamieson, 1998) that excluded non-whiteness from ideal female athleticism. However, I hesitate to conclude that Moore's blackness was repressed in the process that represented her as the ideal. Moore's blackness was not fully absent in the media. It was obvious in the photographs that she was, indeed, a black female athlete. These photos made it clear that a black woman was capable of redefining the WNBA. I consider, however, that the question about Moore's race that emerges from this analysis should be about why and how race became perceptible but unaffectionate, and what this perceptible unaffectionateness says about the organizing logic of elite female sporting bodies in U.S. media. This question would require another in-depth discussion that might be out of the scope of this paper.

In the end, the main purpose of this study is to provide a tool for feminist sport media studies to comprehend the limitations and potentials of sport without a fixation on identity categories. A focus on Deleuzian becoming may lead us to reconsider the seemingly increasing openness to diversity in elite professional

sport, and popular culture in general, where the idea of marketability is undeniably prominent.

¹ The University of Connecticut was defeated in the Final Four of the NCAA Tournament on April 3, 2011.

² I collected 5 items from the *New York Times*, 10 *USA Today*, 22 *ESPN*, 5 *SLAM* and 8 *SB Nation*.

³ Geno Auriemma, the head coach of the University of Connecticut women's basketball team, was quoted commenting on Moore's college career (Horrow, 2011).

⁴ The program's 90 consecutive wins during the 2008-2011 seasons break the previous record set by the University of California, Los Angeles' 88-game winning streak in the early 70s, then the longest in NCAA history.

⁵ The starters for the All-Star Games are selected according to fans' votes, and substitutions by the team coaching staff. Being on the starting roster, in other words, shows players' recognizability and popularity.

⁶ Coleman (2008) did not directly use becoming to examine media texts but used it to develop a critical practice to consume media images of women.

⁷ The word "affect" is not used here to describe personal feelings or emotions. Rather, it refers to an intensity that can cause impacts, that can move and be moved by others (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987; Goodchild, 1996). For example, Moore's ability to move other players, to have them chase her around the court, or to have them motivated to play with her refers to the type of affect used by Deleuze.

⁸ She was the second player with a top-selling jersey during her rookie year; the other player was the extremely popular Candace Parker.

⁹ Wade was still with the Jordan Brand in 2011, but in 2012 signed with Li-Ning.

¹⁰ This categorical difference was also evidenced by the reluctance, or even dismissal, to compare UConn's 90-game winning streak during Moore's junior and senior years to the record (88 games) set by the men's team of the University of California, Los Angeles in the 1970s (Dorsey, 2011).

¹¹ It should be noted that there were also nonchalant reactions toward her coming-out, “[b]ecause it was a woman” (Borden, 2013). Nonetheless, in this suggestion of a future study, I am interested precisely in either the celebratory or nonchalant narrative, because, to an extent, they both point toward a “normative” lesbian female sporting body.

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Chapter Five:

Conclusion

Conclusion

In this concluding chapter, I first present a brief summary of my Deleuzian media textual analyses on Diana Taurasi, Becky Hammon, and Maya Moore. I then discuss how this dissertation contributes to feminist sport media studies by expanding its theoretical scope with a Deleuzian framework, and with three case studies, how it deepens our understanding of the WNBA in the media. In particular, I summarize the common themes of my analyses in order to demonstrate how a Deleuzian perspective can open up space for feminist sport media studies, especially regarding the construction of female sporting bodies. Furthermore, I reflect on the limitations of this dissertation and envision possible future directions that could emerge from it.

Summary of the Three Papers

For my dissertation, I conducted Deleuzian media textual analyses of three WNBA-related case studies. I investigated Diana Taurasi's doping charge in 2010/11 using the concept of *assemblage*; Becky Hammon's naturalization to Russia and participation in the Russian national team at the 2008 Beijing Olympics using the practice of *cartography*; and Maya Moore's celebrated WNBA rookie years in 2011 using the idea of *becoming*. Through these case studies, I demonstrated how a Deleuzian perspective might provide a departure from identity-based examination, and thus, illuminate different aspects of the media articulation of normative female sporting bodies.

In the first paper, I explored the assemblage formation of Diana Taurasi's doping body in the corresponding media event (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987). I used

the concept of assemblage to describe how a body is expressed through its relations and connections as developed in the media (Goodchild, 1996; Malins, 2004; Wise, 2011). Examining the assemblage formation of Taurasi's drug using body, I formulated a two-axis analysis to explore the components and structures that were articulated during the media event. In media texts, I analyzed the elements that formed relations with Taurasi in order to express her "drug using body." Mainly, I discussed how the juxtaposition of Taurasi's athletic careers in the U.S. and in Turkey relegated her "tamed" athleticism to Turkey, the periphery, and how it split Taurasi's athletic body into public and private, real work and leisure. I then examined the overarching rules that were illuminated by this expression. In the end, I illustrated the intricate process whereby certain meanings for *professionalism* and *American standards* were articulated, in addition to anti-doping narratives that moved from the bio-chemical aspects of substances to information processing (Slugget, 2011).

In the second paper, using the Deleuzian concept of cartography (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987; Kaufman, 1998; Martin-Jones, 2006), I mapped the production of nations in the media about Becky Hammon's naturalization to Russia in 2008. I read nations as compartments of the sport media space articulated through accessibilities exemplified by a particular navigation. To understand how the U.S. and Russia were defined in this media event, I mapped the scope and the perceptions produced through Hammon's navigation. The scope concerned the orientations of the space, and I described the scope by examining the general themes that emerged around Hammon's appearance in the Olympics. Perceptions

referred to experiences that were formed with/in the space. I explored these experiences by looking at the relations that were developed in the media coverage, to understand how the space might be perceived and thus, comprehended (Kaufman, 1998). By mapping the scope and perceptions of the media space, I discussed how the two nations were defined in the media through the ways Hammon accessed and connected to them. Particularly, I focused on the forces that pulled Hammon to be located either in the U.S. or Russia (Martin-Jones, 2006). Based on my analysis, the United States emerged as the primary space where normative and “regular” experiences happened. Russia occupied a supplementary position: its correct function was to support those normative U.S.-based experiences.

In the third paper, I explored the savior narrative surrounding the WNBA’s 2011 Rookie of the Year, Maya Moore. I used the concept of becoming to understand the “self-overcoming” (Schrift, 2000, p. 153) tendency in the construction of what it means to be an ideal WNBA athlete. My analysis of becoming revealed that the construction of Maya Moore as the new ideal of the WNBA was expressed by her ability to form alliances (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987; May, 2003). I examined the relations and capacities illuminated in the process of articulating a WNBA’s Moore, and elucidated the ways this process functioned to configure a new generation of the WNBA. Particularly, I focused on two prominent themes in the media, athleticism and popularity, and how they were reinforced by the different relations formed in Moore’s media narratives. I discussed how the commodification of affect (the ability to connect and be

connected) seemingly propelled Moore's representation away from identity categories (e.g., gender, race) with which she and the league were previously affiliated. In the end, I concluded that her normativity was constructed through athleticism and profitability rather than through gender and race in the commodified media scape of women's professional sports.

Research Contribution

With this dissertation, I have contributed to feminist sport media studies in several ways. I expanded the theoretical repertoire of sport sociology, and more precisely, feminist sport media studies, by further developing Deleuzian feminist sport media research (Markula, 2004; Woodward, 2009). I not only demonstrated the possibilities that a Deleuzian perspective offers for examining the construction of female sporting bodies in the media, but also presented systematic textual analysis methods to utilize this perspective as well as concepts for empirical exploration. As the longest standing women's professional team sport league in the United States, the WNBA has attracted the interest of many feminist sport media scholars (Banet-Weiser, 1999; King, 2009; Lisee & McDonald, 2012; McDonald, 2000, 2002; McDonald & Cooky, 2013; Wearden & Creedon, 2002). I contributed to this body of research with three contemporary cases. As well, I demonstrated different angles of entrance into the examination of the WNBA in the media made possible by the utilization of the Deleuzian perspective.

Previous media studies on the WNBA mostly focused on how femininity (e.g., ideals of hard-working, mild mannered, eloquent, team- and family-oriented good women) was reproduced through media images of the WNBA and WNBA

athletes to reaffirm hegemonic ideologies embedded in sporting culture and in society in general. These feminist sport media studies have given us valuable political insights about how oppression and domination continuously work through the media articulation of particular identities of WNBA sporting bodies (such as gender, race, and sexuality). Using a Deleuzian framework, I was able to step back and approach media texts without being limited to pre-determined identity categories. I expanded my attention from a sole focus on identity to one that acknowledged the complex forces that engaged to produce and delimit how “functional” and normative elite sporting bodies might be comprehended, articulated, and expressed in U.S. mainstream media. Nonetheless, while I did not start from pre-determined identity categories, I did not deny the existence of identity in the process of articulation. For example, in Hammon’s media event, her nationalities, her affiliations with nations, worked to give her mediated body abilities to access the two nations. My Deleuzian analyses allowed me to prioritize forces, elements, relations, and structures that might not directly relate to identity. I was thus able to acknowledge changes in predominant identities if they emerged during these events. For example, while ideals of conventional femininity—the images of family- and team-oriented good women (Banet-Weiser, 1999; McDonald, 2002; McDonald, & Cooky, 2013; Wearden & Creedon, 2002)—are still alive and well in the WNBA, as demonstrated in my case studies, other types of WNBA sporting bodies—such as Taurasi’s “wild” body, or Hammon’s (part-time) Russian athletic body—are also being considered and celebrated as normative. Recognizing and acknowledging these “different normative” bodies

provided me with a way to explore what was making these shifts possible, and then to critically reflect on how these new possibilities might be delimiting. I elaborate on this by providing a discussion of and reflection on some common themes in my three case studies.

Based on my analyses, I argued that “deviant,” “abnormal,” or different bodies can be integrated into the category of normal, if they exemplify correct “functions” and are able to produce the right things according to the possibilities and constraints of the given context. Based on my three case studies in the context of professional women’s basketball, elite female sporting bodies were celebrated for their exceptional athletic achievements. As described in the media, these three athletes were commonly praised for their ability to produce victories: Taurasi and Moore won multiple championships and the Silver Stars turned around its losing record after Hammon joined its roster. The athletes’ ability to act “correctly” as high achieving sport stars was one of the main reasons for their visibility in the media. Furthermore, my analyses demonstrated that their athletic achievements made it plausible for them to be “different” from existing norms: for Taurasi’s private and public bodies to be separated (despite her DUI charge and infamous hot temper, she was still a well celebrated player); for the All-American Hammon to access Russia (and also for the Russian Hammon to return to the U.S.); and for Moore to change and redefine WNBA ideals. Their extraordinary abilities as basketball players carried them over the constraints and structures that lay before them. In the three cases, I depicted an environment in which female athletes, similar to their male counterparts, were judged based on their performance, not on

the appearance of their bodies, in contrast to what previous feminist sport media studies have described (e.g., Messner, 2002; Magdalinski, 2001). The emphasis on athleticism instead of feminization and sexualization might be seen as a sign of a more gender-neutral sporting environment, or the post-feminist era, where equality has arrived and feminist politics are no longer needed. However, I hesitate to offer such a congratulatory conclusion. I argue that the celebration of these athletes articulated definitions of an elite female sporting body only in order to reinforce the underlying logic of sport: being able to move in *winning ways*. Therefore, although the three elite women basketball bodies in my analyses were not predominantly represented through their identity categories, they were recaptured by another set of sporting standards that limited what a “correct” elite, celebrity female basketball body should be able to do (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987): they should be able to win.

In addition, I would like to comment on the connection between this standard of winning and the measurement of *profitability* that emerged most strongly in my analysis of Maya Moore’s media representation. Profitability was not entirely absent in the mediated cases of Diana Taurasi and Becky Hammon. In Diana Taurasi’s doping case, her normalcy was mainly articulated in the context of her profession and her deviancy was located in the leisure/private sphere. Becky Hammon’s “positive Russian experience” was painted in the media as a profitable navigation; in this way, a profitable “foreign” elite sporting body was allowed to be articulated as a normative American body. These cases showed us a glimpse of what Deleuze and Guattari (1983) described as the singularity of

capital in the capitalist society and its de-/re-territorializing forces that break down and take over structures (Deleuze & Guattari, 1983). Riding on the force of capital, these elite female sporting bodies were able to break through the constraints that identity categories (e.g., femininity, whiteness) had previously established in women's sport. Yet it is crucial to reiterate that I did not mean that this breakdown of barriers meant the end of normalization or categorization. Rather, I wanted to point out the potential limitation of solely focusing on identity and to critique the constraints produced through identity categories. By approaching these cases without first identifying an identity category to analyze, I was able to critically reflect on a force that was seemingly working against the constraints of identity categories, but that in fact worked to measure and categorize the players based on their "selling points."

Furthermore, I consider the correct "functions" of these female sporting bodies—as described above, the ability to win and profitability—as illustrating a specific American standard. It might appear self-evident that the U.S. media promotes ideas that dominantly characterize American culture. While it is important to acknowledge and critically reflect the role of the nation in mediated sport (Wenner, 2013), it is not possible to evidence these dominant ideas without analysis. Based on a Deleuzian perspective, contextual influences on articulation and expression cannot be fully predicted beforehand, but must be comprehended and examined through careful analysis of the texts. By simply stating that these media cases were located within the American context does not sufficiently describe what the American standard in play is, and how this context defines the

media articulation. In my analyses, I illustrated a clear American preference for celebrating its own culture in particular ways (e.g., as a/the benevolent savior of the needy Russians; as providing credible truths/results in contrast to “shady” Turkey) that then defined the normative female sporting body accordingly. For example, the American standard emerged through the juxtaposition of Taurasi’s relations with the U.S. and Turkey. Her American athleticism was presented and protected as core and “real,” and her Turkish as a peripheral and recreational sporting environment that didn’t really matter. The superiority of American athleticism and scientific and legal processes was constitutive of Taurasi’s normalcy but was also constructed through the articulation of Taurasi’s normative sporting body. Becky Hammon’s “acceptable foreignness” was articulated based on a particular American experience that her foreign endeavor could lend itself to: the pursuit of the American dream, both in terms of athletic/Olympic glory and a lucrative Russian contract. As Maya Moore operated directly within the “proper” American context, this sense of an American standard was not equally emphasized. Nonetheless, here I want to return to the discussion on the commodification of affect. In my earlier discussion, I stated that Moore’s normative sporting body was evaluated based on how well it could connect to a particular “market,” in Moore’s case, the American sport market.¹ Hence, I argue that American standards still played a role, although subtly, in making sense of and defining what should be the right function of elite (female) sporting bodies in Moore’s articulation. The standards that assessed and re-captured Moore’s sporting body as affective were American standards: the ability to win and to

make profit. In the end, I argue, this is another nuance that my dissertation can contribute to feminist sport media studies: to be able to critically reflect on the role of the nation in the media articulation of female sporting bodies without having to limit the focus to “nationalism.”

These three common themes—the winning way, profitability, and American standards—demonstrated how a Deleuzian perspective might illuminate media portrayals of the WNBA, and of women’s sport in general, from a non-identity-based angle. Thus, this framework enables the researcher to tell stories about aspects of the media construction and articulation of female sporting bodies apart from conventional femininity. In this dissertation, I chose a starting point different from a pre-determined identity category such as gender, race, sexuality, nationality, or even the intersections of multiple identity categories (Banet-Weiser, 1999; Borcila, 2000; Magdalinski, 2001; Messner, 2002). This allowed my analyses to account for the broader complexity of connections that made sense of these normative sporting bodies that, to a degree, defied existing norms about their affiliated identities. It is crucial to emphasize again that I do not necessarily consider my findings to be a celebration of more equal media representation of sporting women. Instead, the political and ethical intention of a Deleuzian analysis is to unpack how possibilities and constraints are enacted and exercised in a particular reality, and how a truth about female sporting bodies can be constructed through these exercises. In doing so, I propose an examination beyond the ostensible stillness of the truth and recognition of the possibilities and constraints of this truth (Lawley, 2005; Patton, 2000).

Limitations and Future Directions

Despite the aforementioned contributions, I recognize that there are limitations in this project. Nonetheless, these limitations, I consider, point to future research directions that could build upon this dissertation. First, one of my main objectives for this dissertation was to explore the new directions that a Deleuzian perspective could provide for feminist sport media studies. This project demonstrated how this perspective can be used to examine changes and fluctuations in the articulations of normative female sporting bodies in media texts in order to reconsider the potentials and restrictions of women's sport in media. However, Wenner (2013), a prominent sport media scholar, has pointed out that sport media studies tend to focus on media texts—and sometimes audience readings/receptions—but that they often overlook the production/political-economic side of media. I admit that this dissertation also encounters this limitation. Nonetheless, it should be noted that this is not a limitation of the Deleuzian perspective and its applications. Rather, this is a decision made due to the scope of this dissertation. The idea of critical freedom might also lead to considerations of and suggestions for the ethical production and consumption of women's sport in media. For example, Deleuze and Guattari (1987) proposed the concept of a *body without organs*. This concept elucidates ethical ways to loosen the hold of repetitive and solidified standards that assess bodies' functions, categorize them and then articulate them as “comprehensible.” In this dissertation, I have already discussed the standards currently employed to express three normative women basketball bodies in the U.S. media. It would be a worthy

future endeavor to examine how different forces and elements work in the space of the media industry to choose which mediated bodies to include, how to express them, and/or how a general audience consumes and connects with these ways of configuring mediated bodies. Based on this exploration, one could formulate further suggestions for how a general audience and media personnel could be critical toward the common and predominant ways of configuration and could experiment with different relations with the forces and elements.

Furthermore, I also acknowledge absence of so-called “social media” in my sample and theorization. While some of my media sources could be considered new media, such as SBnation, which is a collection of blog entries, they are all what I would refer to as “not-democratic” new media. Only authorized personnel could publish main articles and entries on the websites. Although there is a comment function for others to leave their thoughts, these “interactions” are not prioritized or emphasized on these websites. In current society, democratic/interactive media such as twitter and Facebook are extremely popular. These media open up a less censored space to allow different types of flows and forces to form a “media event.” Due to these characteristics, more careful theorizing is required to understand formation through this type of media. Although I did not include this media space, I wholeheartedly agree that it would be a beneficial future endeavor to explore this interactive space.

Second, I acknowledge that these case studies do not fully map the media surrounding the events examined or the WNBA. This project focused only on three athletes and only on specific events during their careers. In the WNBA’s

past 17 seasons² there have been many memorable and significant events and players that are worthy of close attention. Taurasi has been with the WNBA since 2004, Hammon 1999, and Moore 2011. These selected events are by no means the only ones in which they have made waves in U.S. sport media. Therefore, three selective cases studies do not reflect the entirety of the forces and processes configuring these three players' WNBA careers and the WNBA in the media. Moreover, my examinations were conducted using a small number of highly selective texts from American media sources. These conditions, no doubt, drew specific boundaries and particular contexts for the relationships that were able to emerge from the cases. For example, all three players are born-and-raised Americans (although Hammon and Taurasi both hold also non-American citizenships). Consequently, it was not a surprise to see that media events about them in the U.S. media carry some sense of American superiority or emphasis on their American achievements. In addition, some of the media sources I selected can be considered "pro-WNBA" (i.e., ESPN³ and SBnation.com). I acknowledge that it is possible that these pro-WNBA media outlets produced articles with tones and perspectives different from other less supportive media; however, I selected them because the chance of finding media texts in these sources was higher. Nonetheless, these methodological limitations point to future directions that could grow from this project. As the longest standing women's professional team sport league, the WNBA is significant in U.S. women's sporting culture. As shown in my project, the media around the league and its athletes is a space where elements come to negotiate their place in the configuration of elite female sporting bodies

in the United States. Given the chance, it would be beneficial to investigate these three media events using broader sample sources (e.g., new media, social media, and blogs) and/or to examine other media events related to the WNBA to paint a broader picture of how the league and its athletes function in the articulation of elite female sporting bodies. For instance, there are several prominent international WNBA players, and some of them (e.g., Lauren Jackson, an Australian athlete) have been feature players for their respective teams. A future examination of international WNBA players might be able to demonstrate more clearly the role of nation in the media articulation of female sporting bodies.

In addition to the aforementioned possibilities that emerge from the limitations of this dissertation, my findings reveal a few other areas for potential future research. Particularly, I have become interested in one of the themes I discussed in my case studies, the commodification of affect. In the future, I would like to investigate how this theme might function in the rise of professionalization of elite women's sport in general. For example, according to ESPN (Evans, 2014), the viewer rating for the 2014 NCAA Women's Basketball Championship between the University of Connecticut and the University of Notre Dame was up 40% from 2013, and was the most-viewed women's college basketball event in a decade. Using women's soccer as another example, according to a report by the Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA) a significant increase in viewership in both the U.S. and Canada was observed during the 2011 Women's World Cup in Germany (KantarSport, n.d.). Examining the phenomenon of increasing viewership of elite women's sport could further elucidate how affect (a

sort of abstract intensity that evokes movements and reactions) is packaged to promote and sell elite female sporting bodies and women's sport.

To conclude, in this dissertation I presented Deleuzian analyses of three high-profile media events involving prominent WNBA athletes. These analyses contributed to Deleuzian feminist sport media studies, as well as to media studies of the WNBA by adding three contemporary case studies. I approached the events from a Deleuzian perspective to explore the shifting ideal of elite female basketball bodies in U.S. media. This perspective offered tools to frame my examinations that were different from those of previous studies of WNBA media representation. My Deleuzian analyses focused on the forces working to articulate the league and athletes into *reasonable* female sporting bodies with different elements and in different surroundings. Furthermore, I demonstrated how a Deleuzian framework could be beneficial for post-identity feminist sport media studies. Instead of privileging identity, my analyses illuminated fluid—"empowering" yet constraining—processes working in and through U.S. sport media to articulate elite female basketball bodies. These processes were productive in the sense that they exemplified ways of producing different, normative, and comprehensive bodies in the context of elite and professional sports. They were limiting in the sense that they continuously drew boundaries around the right functions of a normative elite female sporting body. My findings pointed to a complex articulating process in contemporary society, particularly in popular sport media where a wide variety of bodies was allowed to become visible and popular. By illuminating this complexity, this project opened up space

for future studies to consider how to ethically negotiate this seemingly progressive diversity in sport media.

¹ In the media, Moore was particularly celebrated for her ability to broaden the WNBA's fan base and to attract people who usually only paid attention to men's sport. Hence, the market that was used to evaluate Moore's popularity was not only "the market for women's sport," but rather a more generic American market.

² May 16, 2014 will mark the start of the 18th season of the WNBA.

³ ESPN is the official media partner of the WNBA.

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Appendix: Examples of Analysis Charts

Appendix 1: Diana Taurasi

Elements	Quote
WNBA	<p><u>December 24th, 2010</u> Title: <i>WNBA: Diana Taurasi tests positive for modafinil, according to the Turkish basketball federation</i> WNBA star Diana Taurasi tested positive for banned substance ... January 3rd, 2011 Title: <i>WNBA's Diana Taurasi's backup sample also tests positive for banned substance</i> <i>Picture of Taurasi in Phoenix Mercury's Jersey</i> When Diana Taurasi ... the WNBA superstar's backup doping sample. Taurasi signed a multiyear contract extension with the Phoenix Mercury in August. She has led the WNBA in scoring the last four years.</p> <p><u>January 6th, 2011</u> Taurasi, who has led the WNBA in scoring (22.6 points per game) for the last four years... The WNBA released a statement Wednesday...</p> <p><u>February 1st, 2011</u> Subtitle: <i>The Southland native and WNBA star says she never heard of modafinil before testing positive for it.</i> She was the first prominent WNBA player to test positive for a banned substance. Taurasi said she intends to return to the WNBA when the season begins in June.</p>
Modafinil	<p><u>December 24th, 2010</u> Title: <i>WNBA: Diana Taurasi tests positive for modafinil, according to the Turkish basketball federation</i> WNBA star Diana Taurasi tested positive for banned substance modafinil... Modafinil is used to counter excessive sleepiness due to narcolepsy, shift work sleep disorder or sleep apnea... Modafinil has been involved in several doping-related controversies.</p> <p><u>January 6th, 2011</u> Taurasi's "A" sample tested positive last month for modafinil -- a banned substance used to counter excessive sleepiness due to narcolepsy, shift-work disorder or sleep apnea...</p>

Appendix 2: Becky Hammon

Themes	Items
Antagonizing Dichotomy	<p data-bbox="500 348 824 380"><u>ESPN, June 6, M. Voepel</u></p> <p data-bbox="500 401 1323 506">USA Basketball says Hammon did have a shot at playing for the Americans. Donovan says Hammon can't play for Russia and simultaneously claim to be a patriotic American.</p> <p data-bbox="500 527 919 558"><u>ESPN, July 12, Associated Press</u></p> <p data-bbox="500 579 1300 758">Although the Americans would love another crack at the Russians to avenge the world championship loss ... An added level of intrigue has arisen for that potential matchup with Becky Hammon -- one of the WNBA's most popular players -- playing for the Russian team.</p> <p data-bbox="500 779 954 810">"That's un-American" Leslie said...</p> <p data-bbox="500 831 846 863"><u>ESPN August 9, M. Voepel</u></p> <p data-bbox="500 884 1289 1020">"It's a little bit different than the American style that we play," she said. "It's a lot of penetrate and kick. They take those big European steps. I think they'd get called for traveling in the United States, but here it's perfectly legal..."</p> <p data-bbox="500 1041 854 1073"><u>ESPN August 9, E. Adelson</u></p> <p data-bbox="500 1094 1252 1167">Title: "These showdowns could produce the most drama in Beijing"</p> <p data-bbox="500 1188 1276 1293">Photo: (Centre: Becky Hammon in Russian warm-up jersey smiling toward the camera; both side: two American players' backs, slightly off focus)</p> <p data-bbox="500 1314 1138 1346">Caption: Becky Hammon (Russia) v.s. Team USA</p> <p data-bbox="500 1367 1317 1440">Even Hammon says "everyone wants to see the Russia-America matchup."</p> <p data-bbox="500 1461 1308 1598">... a lot of Americans find fault with a South Dakota woman wearing red without the white and blue. Hammon says she doesn't want to face the Americans in Beijing, but she's already played against Team USA in a warm-up</p> <p data-bbox="500 1619 951 1650"><u>LA Times, August 21, K.C. Johnson</u></p> <p data-bbox="500 1671 1292 1808">The Olympic women's basketball semifinal between the U.S. and Russia needed another ... Yet there it is, South Dakotan Becky Hammon wearing the red and white -- but no blue -- of Russia, a move Leslie initially described as "un-American."</p>

Appendix 3: Maya Moore

NCAA	U Conn and college 'Career	<p>ESPN.com</p> <p><u>Hays, G., April 3</u></p> <p>Pic: Maya Moore tried to get around Notre Dame, but couldn't beat the Irish by herself.</p> <p>Moore finished with 36 points, far and away the most she scored in any of the four games the Huskies lost during her four college seasons. It wasn't her most efficient night, not with 14-of-30 shooting from the field and 3-of-7 shooting from the free throw line, but she did her part, including a barrage of late shots to pull her team within four points in the closing minutes.</p> <p>"I feel like she scored on me every time I guarded her," Peters offered with a respectful shake of her head. "She is great. It doesn't matter if you're in her face, if you have a hand up, if you tip the ball -- she's going to get her points. We really tried to focus on not letting her get 3s or at least have them contested. But even sometimes that wasn't working. She's going to get hers. And I think today, we didn't let everybody else get theirs. The other games, we let Kelly Faris get hers or Bria Hartley get hers. Today, we contained everybody else and just let her do her thing."</p> <p>"I'm going to think more about the best player in the history of the Big East and maybe the best student-athlete in the history of college basketball," Auriemma said. "And I'm not going to let her be defined by what happened tonight."</p> <p><u>Voepel, M. April 3</u></p> <p>Sunday, however, the plan that Moore has followed so diligently did go awry. The No. 1 seed Huskies fell to fellow Big East school Notre Dame 72-63 in the national semifinals, ending Moore's career short of a third consecutive national championship.</p> <p>Moore did everything she could against the Irish, finishing with 36 points, 8 rebounds and 4 steals as she played 40 minutes. The 6-foot forward became the school's all-time leading scorer this season -- she finished with 3,036 career points, which ranks fourth all-time in NCAA Division I women's basketball -- and in the process won an unprecedented third Wade Trophy as the nation's top player.</p>
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