

Paper Proposal and Annotated Bibliography

Gender Relations

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For my paper topic I was intrigued by the idea of sexual harassment and the differences those who identify as male or female may have. There are plenty of videos with women walking down busy streets recording the harassment they face, such as cat-calling. As a woman I have my own fair share of experiences even in a small university town such as Sackville NB. I then became intrigued by the discussion of how sport controls our bodies and due to recent sexual harassment charges being laid upon coaches of female athletes I decided I wanted to explore the topic further. Sexual harassment in sports takes on a unique dimension due to the power relationships established with coaches and because of the necessary focus on athletes' bodies. From high school sports to pro-athletes anyone can experience types of sexual harassment. The topics for this paper hence will be on female athletes and research that depicts how frequent they experience sexual harassment, what types of sexual harassment are experienced more so, and at what level of sport might experience more sexual harassment. The overall focus is to gain a perspective of how women in sports are affected by sexual harassment and or sexual assault, based on available research.

There is a difference in defining sexual harassment and sexual assault, where some would consider sexual harassment more on the institutional level in some cases, while sexual assault mainly personal. For this paper sexual harassment is being defined as unwanted attention, or invasion without consent; including written or verbal abuse, fondling or unwanted physical contact, offensive phone calls or photos, etc. While sexual abuse is being defined as behaviour that appears to be wanted, but is not including things like rape, groping, indecent exposure, or any forced sexual activity.

I also wanted to discuss the underlying misogyny that is often tagged along with women in sport, and how misogyny is often the first steps in too much larger issues such as sexual

harassment/assault. Misogyny is defined as dislike of, contempt for, or ingrained prejudice against women. People that often think less of women in sport or react differently to their behaviour even if the same as a male athlete are misogynistic. Take for example Serena Williams being given penalties in her most recent match over words with an official that wouldn't have been given a second glance if she were a man (BBC.Sept 2018).

The paper will be outlined in a manner such as; an introduction in to sexual harassment and other key definitions, a history of women in sport, how women are treated differently in sports, level of sexual harassment and assault based on the level of sport (recreational, university, professional etc), and also briefly highlight recent world events of coaches being charged, as well as misogynistic sports events. Permitting research, I would like to compare to sexual harassment statistics to men in sports, and also highlight the negative effects women in the athletic industry are experiencing as a result of sexual harassment/assault.

Annotated Bibliography

BBC. US Open 2018: Serena Williams' claims of sexism backed by WTA - BBC Sport. (2018, September 10). Retrieved from <https://www.bbc.com/sport/tennis/45468290>

This source is one of the examples I wanted to use to show the difference in how a professional woman athlete was treated and depicted, compared to her male counterparts in the sport. It is a BBC article and is written in a more feminist perspective, because this is a new event it is mostly news articles which may come across in a bias perspective, but I plan to verbalize the behaviour of male tennis athletes in similar situations from other articles as well. Serena Williams is known as the best woman tennis player, and viewing the US open match footage, compared with the penalties and comments by other officials and sketch artists I believe it's an important thing to mention.

Brackenridge, C. (1997). 'he Owned Me Basically... *International Review for the Sociology of Sport*, 32(2), 115-130. doi:10.1177/101269097032002001

The focus of this paper is on the female victim, and the consequences of abuse on women and girls. It discusses a very well-organized definition of sexual assault and abuse that I plan on using. A brief history of current research of sexual assault in sport is given, which is a good introduction to the topic, and gives you an idea of the little amount of research present and the potential for under representation. I chose this paper as it gives a good explanation of why sexual assault happens in sport, and how coaches are afforded a rare power and intimate ability with women athletes. They are afforded the respect and authority and are in a power position over not just their athletes, but the parents and administrators who want success for their child but also success in the sport for notoriety.

Dolance, S., & Messner, M. A. (2003). Taking the Field: Women, Men, and Sports. *Contemporary Sociology*, 32(5), 560. doi:10.2307/1556461

This is a book written about the importance of western sport and gender, sexual discrimination, sexual harassment, sexual abuse, and sexual violence. Messner discusses how this is important both on and off a playing field, seeking to pursue readers into a form of social awareness and transition. Messner does discuss gendered performance in relation to symbolic interactionism, however he only mentions gender inequality in passing, choosing to focus more on males as the center of western sport, and how the aggressive behaviour they display is charged with sexual aggression. Messner argues that the athletes who are most likely to perpetrate sexual violence are not only participants in revenue-producing contact sports but are also high-status members of their peer group

Krauchek, V., & Ranson, G. (1999). Playing by the rules of the game: Women's experiences and perceptions of sexual harassment in sport. *Canadian Review Of Sociology And Anthropology*, 36(4), 585-600. doi:10.1111/j.1755-618X.1999.tb00965.x

I liked the context of this article, as it acknowledges the male dominated industry that sport is/was when this article came out. It describes how sport has been resistant to feminism and liberalism and remains a conservative entity. It calls for a more radical feminist analysis of sport, which identifies issues of sexuality and the body, and a more serious questioning of male power. The author's research focused on interviews with 32 female athletes and locate their experiences of sexual harassment within the broader context of gender harassment and discrimination which shapes much of their experience in sport. Krauchek and Ranson discuss the possibility of challenging sexual harassment in sport by changing the terms of women's participation.

Downside of this article is that it is a bit older, so social media has changed and women's participation in sport has improved since this article came out.

Volkwein-Caplan, K., Schnell, F., Devlin, S., Mitchell, M., & Suter, J. (2002). Sexual harassment of women in athletics vs academia. *Journal of Sexual Aggression*, 8(2), 69-82. doi:10.1080/13552600208413340

The premise of the article is to compare the level of sexual harassment women in sports deal with compared to women in perhaps a more academic field. Women in sports have a high concentration on their physique, are often in less clothing, and because sports are more physical may be in contact with people drawn to that attribute more so. The study analysed which sexually harassing behaviors female college students (athletes vs non-athletes) had experienced throughout their sporting/educational career in both high school and college. The results indicated that women in academia were more aware of what condones sexual harassment than women in sports in the same age bracket (high-school and university). It raises the question of power and authority figures, is it perhaps that the female athletes accept the coach as the higher authority figure more easily than the students accept their teachers?