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# The Power of Networks: Social Capital and its Influence in College Student Perceptions of Sexual Harassment of Female Sports Reporters

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The power of networks: Social capital and its influence in college  
student perceptions of sexual harassment of female sports reporters

by

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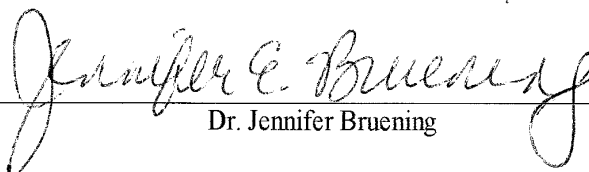
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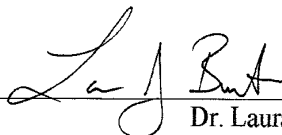
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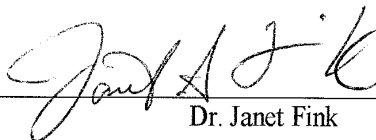
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### Abstract

For decades, women have sought legal remedy as they tried to break through the metaphorical glass ceiling in a male-dominated workforce. In their efforts to make it to higher positions of power, many endured the subtle taunts and comments, while others struggled with blatant discrimination and environments that clearly did not welcome women (Hardin & Shain, 2005a; 2005b), including their own place of work (Hardin & Whiteside, 2009). In multiple studies, female sports journalists admitted to sexual harassment, but dismissed it as part of the job (Hardin & Shain, 2006; 2005a; 2005b). Public outcry over this phenomenon is minimal, and when it does occur often the victim is the one facing sanctions (Disch & Kane, 1996). This study utilized masculine hegemony and gender role expectations within social capital theory to uncover if negative social capital influenced future sport managers and journalist perceptions of sexual harassment using a sample of  $n=81$  from a large Northeastern university. Results using MANOVA and Kruskal-Wallis tests demonstrated significant differences between men and women on accepting sexual harassment ( $p<.05$ ). Correlations between subscales using Kendall's  $\tau$  also showed significant positive relationships between trust and locker room norms ( $p<.001$ ), trust and information networks ( $p<.01$ ), trust and adherence to beliefs about traditional gender roles ( $p<.001$ ), information networks and locker room norms ( $p<.001$ ), and locker room norms and adherence to beliefs about traditional gender roles ( $p<.001$ ). Results are discussed within the context of social capital and gender roles.

## Chapter I: Introduction

August, 2010. I flip through the television stations as I sit on my bed, the fans blasting on me as my only method of keeping cool in the sweltering, sticky heat of mid-summer in the Northeast. Buzz, buzz. My television, a hand-me-down that my grandmother left behind after her death, makes a dull hum with each change of the channel. Snippets of sound travel through the room as I continue surfing, relatively disinterested. I finally settle on ESPN, looking to hear how my favorite baseball team did that night. Instead, SportsCenter anchors announce breaking news: NFL quarterback Brett Favre accused of sending obscene text messages, voicemails, and photographs to former Jets employee Jenn Sterger, according to the Web site Deadspin.com.

Now, the allegations of sexual infidelity were nothing new, as countless stories of professional athletes cheating on their partners seem to make news every year. Tony Parker, Kobe Bryant, and Tiger Woods are just some of the players who have made headlines with sex scandals. It was the fact that Favre allegedly harassed a female reporter and that this came to the surface that surprised me. Sterger claimed to have proof – material evidence of pictures he sent and text messages received by the future Hall of Famer. She also saved the voice messages left on her cell phone requesting her to spend time with him.

A month later, more allegations of sexual harassment came out of Jets camp – this time by Mexican television reporter Ines Sainz. According to The New York Post, which broke the story, Sainz stated that multiple Jets players were instructed by head coach Rex Ryan to throw balls in her direction so that they could accidentally run into her. In addition, while in the locker room, multiple cat calls were directed toward her. Media and

private citizens across the country deemed her attire that day as inappropriate and many questioned why she was surprised to have these comments made toward her.

As a former female sports journalist who covered female sports, including a two-time national championship basketball team that had the nation's longest winning streak in Division I history, I never had an experience where I was uncomfortable talking to players in a locker room. During the women's first championship season, I spent my time getting interviews from the starters and spending the rest of the time on the locker room floor with some of the other athletes playing cards while they were ignored by the rest of the media pack.

The one time that I did cover men's basketball (I was filling in for the beat writer for the campus newspaper during a major blizzard that crippled much of the transportation to the stadium), I interviewed players in the weight room after the game, along with all of the other reporters – all of whom were male. My associate editor walked me through the process, preparing me for what to expect. Once I got there, the room smelled like sweat. The players each sat in a chair a few feet from each other, surrounded by equipment and reporters in their faces. Perspiration rolled down their faces as they sat in their clothes and jackets, ready to leave as soon as the interview process was over. And the only other time that I covered a men's sport was while interning at my hometown newspaper and reporting on a minor league baseball game. The writers in the department – also all male – told me to “expect to see a lot of penis” when I interviewed players after the game. That made me extremely uncomfortable at the prospect, especially since I had gone to the team's Media Day a month earlier to talk with all of them about the upcoming season. I was 21.



Fortunately, the game went to extra innings, sparing me from that incident. Instead of the locker room, I literally ran down to the field to speak with the coach, finishing the story within a 15-minute window. But it was that night that I learned of an allegation of a female reporter being subject to sexual harassment from a visiting baseball team while in the locker room. Outraged, her male coworker posted a blog entry discussing the events that transpired that night, though other blogs discredited his claims. Other writers in the press box were discussing the event, but the female reporter never came forward to address the situation. To this day, I have no idea what happened in that room. All I remember is the discussion among the handful of press core in that room, with nothing coming to fruition as a result. No investigation occurred, the blog post was removed, and the only evidence it existed are a few blogs in response to the event questioning the accuracy of the given accounts.

Being a part of this industry for the brief time during college, many men I encountered were amazed by the fact that I was interested in sports. I frequently got comments of “that’s so cool” and “you must be an awesome girlfriend” from people. I was the only female who stayed on the sports staff for the entire four years of my undergraduate career. A few stayed for a semester or two, but often left the group with frustration at feeling pigeon-holed into covering women’s sports. I also came across that dissatisfaction while interviewing for an internship with that same minor league baseball team that I would cover a few years later, getting asked “Why do you only cover women’s sports?,” knowing that the implication was that I must not have been as qualified a writer as my peers.

Flash forward a few years, and my interest in the trend of females in sport journalism piqued during a sport law class in which we had to do a case analysis paper on a legal topic relevant to sports. I chose to examine what appeared to be a growing trend in female reporters being sexually harassed by their male professional athlete sources. I soon uncovered other major instances of similar events occurring and found the results of the events startling, as it often seemed that there were conflicting viewpoints on the matter. The conclusion? There seems to be no definitive solution or even policy on how to handle sexual harassment in the locker room.

What these stories point is to a larger issue, one that is complex and oftentimes difficult to pick apart. The trend in society appears to be to blame the alleged victim for the incidents occurring, pointing to the attractiveness of the female as a justification for why this harassment happened. This approach ignores the underlying reasons for why a male athlete may harass a female reporter, and the societal implications of these behaviors being glossed over by the general public once a commissioner or coach makes a formal statement or establishes a penalty. In the Jets' case, the team had to undergo media relations workshops paid for by the owner. In Favre's, commissioner Roger Goodell concluded that there was not enough conclusive evidence to reprimand Favre for the alleged circumstances, but fined him \$50,000 for not cooperating with the league's investigation (Campell, 2010). Public outrage was nonexistent toward the athletes; instead Sterger and Sainz became the brunt of many jokes. Media members – both men and women – pointed to the women's good looks and dress as reasons for why they would become harassed, posting scantily clad pictures of them on air and online. For those wishing to enter a career in these fields, this problem hits close to home. It is an

issue that must be dealt with on both sides, creating headaches as the public waits to hear the verdict on punishment. Their ultimate decision, however, is not made in a vacuum. Instead, it is made with the input of decades of voices guiding moral compasses. It is imperative to thus uncover the influences in college students' lives to gain a better understanding of how sexual harassment issues will be dealt with by the next generation of sport managers and media members as women still fight to break gender barriers.

### **Women in Sport**

It has often been said that there is no place in sports for a woman – at least throughout American history. For hundreds of years, propaganda dominated social thought, warning women of the dangers of sport to their physical health and fertility. Running was thought to harm female reproductive organs, and due to the nature and significance of women as child bearers, society constantly discouraged women from participating in sport (Coakley, 2007; Phillips & Phillips, 1993). When they did partake in events, only “ladylike” sports such as tennis and golf were permitted (Phillips & Phillips, 1993). On the other hand, no one questioned a man's place in sport, a realm often requiring brute strength and aggression and that solidified heterosexual men as the dominant social group (Adams, Anderson, & McCormack, 2010).

It was not until a major social movement brought about during the feminist revolution in the 1960s that those preconceived notions in America began to change. Until that point, few women were permitted to work in sports journalism and when they did hold a position, many were banned from locker rooms. Regarded as a pioneer in this domain, Mary Garber worked around the system to get her stories and had the support of her editors and several coaches that were progressive for their time (Garber, 1990). Still,

she was kicked out of press rooms and forced to wait an hour to speak with players as male reporters entered locker rooms freely to get a story (Garber, 1990).

With the introduction of Title IX by Congress in the 1970s, sports slowly became a place of possibilities for girls and women alike. Participation rates continued to increase as this legislation mandated equal opportunity for boys and girls interested in playing sports at school (Hardin & Greer, 2009). The passage of Title VII during the same decade also gave legal footing for women to move into the sports field as reporters without newspapers denying employment based on gender. The legislation states that no employer can “limit, segregate, or classify his employees or applicants for employment in any way which would deprive or tend to deprive any individual of employment opportunities or otherwise adversely affect his status as an employee, because of such individual’s race, color, religion, sex, or national origin” (1964). Still, coaches, managers, and owners closed locker rooms to women journalists claiming to be protecting both the privacy of the athletes who were in a more vulnerable position and the virtue of a woman (Ricchiardi, 2004). Meanwhile, male sports reporters entered the locker rooms much more freely, given access to inside information and scoops that truly define the success or failure of reporters.

The dynamics of the female sports reporter in the locker room changed drastically after a New York state district court prohibited managers and coaches from closing locker rooms to women due to an unfair economic advantage (*Ludtke and Time, Inc. v. Kuhn*, 1978). In essence, the court found that closing locker rooms to one group of people based on gender was discriminatory since reporters rely on information given during locker room interviews. Moreover, the court’s decision outlined the locker room as a

place that was already open to the public because of the presence of male reporters. Therefore, arguing to close it for the privacy of athletes was not a logical argument. By 1990, the major four sports leagues allowed for both men and women to be in the locker rooms after games, some even before the game and during select practices (The Baltimore Sun, 1990).

In spite of all these social changes, sport continues to be a contested ground that academics claim is rooted in masculine hegemony (Hardin & Shain, 2005b). In this power structure, the dominant group reinforces its power by the consent of everyone involved in the culture (Hardin et al., 2006; Hardin & Shain, 2005b). Additionally, media continue to hold much of the power in shaping societal views, according to social learning and cultivation theories, which together suggest that the more exposure to specific portrayals of a person, the more likely it is that a media consumer will believe those portrayals to be true. A quick examination of professional sports demonstrates the ability to control an image and create a public persona that may not align with what happens behind closed doors. Furthermore, a plethora of studies examined media coverage of male and female athletes, pointing to media bias in both print and broadcast journalism (Billings, Angelini, & Eastman, 2005; Bishop, 2003; Hardin, Chance, Dodd, & Hardin, 2002). In addition, many of these sports are written about or discussed by men, providing few role models for women aspiring to become sports writers. Therefore the barrier is two-fold for women, wishing to enter a field within a field dominated by men.

### **Conceptual Framework**

Countless studies abound on sexual harassment and of the experiences of females, pointing to gender roles and expectations as well as masculine hegemony as explanations

for this phenomenon (e.g. Das, 2009; Keyton & Menzie, 2007; Wilson & Thompson, 2001). One goes so far as to develop the “sexual harassment mythology” as a parallel to rape myth, drawing similarities between victim-blaming in both rape and sexual harassment cases (Lonsway, Cortina, & Magley, 2008). Conversely, general workplace sexual harassment has rarely been examined using social capital to interpret the outcomes related to these negative behaviors. In fact, no studies have examined sexual harassment of female reporters by male athletes using a social capital lens as an alternate form of understanding why professional athletes are successful at avoiding public persecution by the media or team when allegations or substantiated occurrences of sexual harassment arise.

### **Social Capital Theory**

Humans do not exist in a vacuum, but rather use cues or symbols from their social world throughout their lifetime to develop ideas of appropriate norms, attitudes, and behaviors by adapting to their surroundings (Bandura, 2001; Bussey & Bandura, 1999). From observing the actions of others at a young age, people develop a sense of right and wrong. As they continue to mature, they are constantly adapting to their environments, learning how to integrate into a group of people (Bandura, 2001). They model the behaviors they have seen rewarded and tend to avoid those that they see result in adverse effects. Expanding on this further, Coleman (1988) posited that the success of an individual is embedded in his or her interactions based on three variables: group norms, trust (both intra and intergroup), and information networks. Combining these elements results in a measure of what he deemed social capital. The more social capital that is derived from these three forms, the more success an individual realizes. For the most

part, this has been applied to both economic and school settings as a way to explain why some individuals succeed when so many others struggle (Coleman, 1988), though a handful have examined the role of sport has in developing success (Clopton & Finch, 2010; Putnam, 1995).

### **The Problem**

Unfortunately, even in the face of landmark cases such as the *Ludtke* decision, this practice of sex discrimination continues today (Pennington, 2011), and takes many forms. Though only recently defined by legislation and further interpreted by state and federal courts, sexual harassment is not a novel idea, and while same-sex harassment does occur, it is often females who are the victims and men the perpetrators (Tinkler, 2008). For decades, women have sought legal remedy as they tried to break through the metaphorical glass ceiling in a male-dominated workforce. In their efforts to make it to higher positions of power, many endured the subtle taunts and comments, while others struggled with blatant discrimination and environments that clearly did not welcome women (Hardin & Shain, 2005a, 2005b), including their own place of work (Hardin & Whiteside, 2009).

Journalists often uncover the scandals, broadcasting the wrongdoings of politicians, celebrities, and athletes alike. But what happens when the tables are turned on them – when someone in the press core is a victim of sexual harassment?

Indeed, it is a difficult balance to maintain for reporters, as being granted access to the locker room is a rite of passage for those aspiring to maintain a career in the sports world. In there is where raw emotions and true interactions can be observed, a place where athletes are in their zone and away from the public eye (Garber, 1990). Genuine

responses and previously well-kept secrets can be recorded, allowing a more human angle to any story. It is where reporters get the meat of their features or game recaps.

There have been a handful of instances in which a female reporter has been sexually harassed while interviewing athletes in the locker room and that has gotten attention from the media. Perhaps the most notorious incident came 20 years ago. In 1990, Boston Herald's New England Patriots beat writer Lisa Olson was conducting an interview in the locker room when several players showed their genitals and made obscene remarks to her (Disch & Kane, 1996). Though she did not bring the story to the press, the media caught wind of the event and published the story. The owner for the Patriots at the time, Victor Kiam, came out in support of his players, calling her a "classic bitch" and saying that what players did was not out of line; the commissioner gave the players and owner a relatively menial fine (Oates, 1990). The NFL commissioner launched an independent investigation spearheaded by Philip Heymann who collected detailed reports of the events, corroborated by other players in the locker room when the incident occurred. What occurred next was not support from any players or the public, but instead assaults and death threats to Olson from fans, prompting her to leave the United States for her native Australia (Sharp, 1997). The case was settled out of court, never developing a verdict on the matter (Tracy, 2010).

A few months later, a college basketball player flashed his genitals at a female reporter while in the locker room. The coach apologized but no formal action was taken (Sharp, 1997). Just four years earlier, a reporter named Shelley Smith was grabbed by Bubba Paris, a 300-pound San Francisco 49ers player, and dragged through locker room showers as he shouted "This is what you wanted to see, isn't it?" (Sharp, 1997). Unlike



other incidents, however, two teammates stepped in and pulled Smith from Paris's grip (Sharp, 1997).

Gaining passage into what can best be described as a sanctuary for athletes, a place of both figurative and literal vulnerability, is consequently a double-edged sword for female journalists. Access delineates the amateur from the beat reporter, establishing credibility within the realm of reporters and fans. On the other hand, access also casts suspicion on motivations for females to be in the locker room. In sum, a true dilemma presents itself when a female reporter is harassed by one of her sources in a space that would suggest privacy but ultimately becomes a podium of publicity.

### **Purpose**

Recent allegations made by female sports reporters of sexual harassment by male athletes while on the job make it vital to examine perceptions of this phenomenon from both sides of the issue: the journalist and the sports manager. As league and team officials often sweep the few instances of sexual harassment reported under the rug, legal experts say that the law does not necessarily forbid behaviors of this nature (Graves, 2010). Therefore, gaining the insight of future journalists and sport managers on this topic will be beneficial in determining how social capital during college can shape organizational culture and affect attitudes pertaining to the acceptance of sexual harassment within sport. Sport management majors are of particular interest (rather than those in other sport-related fields) as these are individuals who will in some way be in a position to create change as leaders within sport – sitting in various departments across sport. Indeed, previous research focused on practicing female sports reporters' experiences with sexual harassment (Hardin & Whiteside, 2009; Hardin & Shain, 2006, 2005a, 2005b), working women's experience with sexual harassment (Dunn & Cody, 2000) or university

students' general perceptions of sexual harassment (Balogh, Kite, Pickel, Canel, & Schroeder, 2003; Dunn & Cody, 2000). No known study, however, specifically examined the opinions of college students entering the field of sport as they prepare for their careers. Given that a majority of the women in sport journalism admitted to being a victim of sexual harassment (Hardin & Shain, 2006, 2005a, 2005b), it is imperative to understand how the new generation of sports reporters and managers will handle the situation and exactly what is influencing their decision-making processes in developing any form of corrective action.

This study attempts to explain how social capital may frame the perspective of both sport managers' and journalists' acceptance of sexual harassment, uncovering networks of information utilized by students in both the journalism and sport management majors, the level of trust among each group as well as intergroup trust, and the norms that guide the relationship between reporter and athlete. It will also utilize social capital as the main framework to examine gender role stereotypes and masculine hegemony within both sport management and journalism college students' norms. This particular research aims to better understand answers to the following questions:

RQ1: Is there a difference between sport management majors and journalism majors in their level of acceptance of professional male athletes' sexual harassment of female sports reporters?

RQ2: Is there a difference between males and females in their level of acceptance of professional male athletes' sexual harassment of female sports reporters?

RQ3: Is there a relationship between the level of acceptance of sexual harassment and social capital?

## Chapter II: Literature Review

### The Female Sports Reporter

The sports department of a newspaper is often considered less legitimate in comparison with other sections such as news due to its entertainment focus (Oates & Pauly, 2007; Miloch, Pedersen, Smucker, & Whisenant, 2005). Despite the fact that some argue for its serious nature and equal footing with hard news, these reporters are often still looked down upon among coworkers and supervisors as not being true journalism because of its interest in softer news (Oates & Pauly, 2007). Critics often argue that sports provide an escape from the dismal headlines plastered on the front pages and nothing more.

To further complicate matters, sport is a predominantly male field; only 11 percent of women work in sports departments (Hardin & Shain, 2006) compared with the 38 percent working in news (Hardin, Dodd, & Lauffer, 2006). Therefore, women in this field not only struggle to earn the credibility given to their male counterparts as journalists, but also often face gender barriers in their chosen career (Coventry, 2004). For example, the 1920s coverage of boxing by a female sports reporter required a full explanation to readers as to why she was suitable for the job despite the fact that she was qualified, and also required a focus on the social aspects of the sport to quell dissonance experienced by reading a sports story penned by a woman (Kaszuba, 2009).

Still, women express their dissatisfaction with being the token female in the department, stating that holding a position seems to alleviate everyone else's anxiety about a lack of diversity in the sports department while doing nothing to advance the status of women in sports departments (Hardin & Whiteside, 2009). Although the explicit reason for having a woman on staff has changed, the trends within journalism remain the

same – low rates of hiring and even lower rates of promoting women in the media (Hardin & Shain, 2005b). Indeed, a successful reporter exudes qualities aligned within society's definition of masculinity, while the more emotional individual is frowned upon on the job (Hardin & Whiteside, 2009; Hardin & Shain, 2006). These desired characteristics thus create a dilemma for the aspiring female sports journalist, conflicted between her assigned gender expectations and her desire to move forward (Hardin & Whiteside, 2009; Hardin & Shain, 2006; Dillon, 2000). In spite of major shifts in the political realm, they are often confined to the more marginal jobs with sports broadcasting positions and thus lack power within their field (Coventry, 2004). Perhaps somewhat surprisingly, the women in the Hardin and Shain focus group study pointedly state that the attractive sideline reporter “bimbos” ruin the credibility of the serious female journalist, but not the men who are their supervisors and determine their promotions (2006, p. 330).

The idea of a woman as a sport journalist is not new, nor did it begin after the introduction of Titles VII or IX. Rather, women broke into the sports journalism field during the Golden Age of the 1920s (Kaszuba, 2009). At that time, the motivation for having a woman on staff was often to get a “woman's angle” to sports, to gain female readership without promoting the sport itself but rather those stories only peripherally connected to the event (Kaszuba, 2009). Yet, this humanistic element is the same reason given when asked what benefits women bring to the field (Hardin & Whiteside, 2009; Thiel, 2004). Consequently, research participants voiced the need to adopt traits associated with masculinity, such as having a thick skin and being more assertive, in

order to be more successful while also occasionally using their femininity to their advantage to get answers (Hardin & Shain, 2006).

In addition to discrimination within their place of employment, women have also historically been prevented from entering locker rooms and forced to watch as male reporters got scoops (Miloch et al., 2005; Fuller, 1992). People use privacy as a reason to close doors, yet neglect to acknowledge male reporters' presence in the locker room or the fact that there are cameras filming in these private spaces. Furthermore, no story has been reported of a manager or coach objecting to a male reporter being in a professional female athlete's locker room. Some writers and athletes even speculate that women use their looks to get their positions or are interested in seeing men in vulnerable positions and flirt with sources to get a story (Hardin & Shain, 2006; Disch & Kane, 1996).

While women are accused of using their looks to their advantage, there are other instances when women report being sexually harassed because of their looks. According to one study based on survey responses from female sports reporters, "almost half (48%) reported being sexually harassed, most often by sources, and usually in locker rooms (Hoshino, 1998)" (as cited in Hardin & Shain, 2006). In order to better understand women in sports media, Miloch et al. (2005) conducted a survey of 78 female sports writers from a professional organization. Their findings, though not representative, demonstrate that a majority of these women faced discrimination from athletes and coaches, as well as within their place of work. Another survey showed that 64 percent of 144 women sports writers either disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement "I have never felt sexual discrimination while performing my job duties" (Hardin & Shain, 2005b, p. 6). In addition, a study of 112 female sports writers found that 57 of them had

experienced sexual harassment within the last year, 31.3 percent of the sexual harassment coming from coworkers and a combined 33.4 percent from athletes and coaches (Pedersen, Lim, Osborne, & Whisenant, 2009).

Though the studies referenced above are based on survey responses and thus may not capture the true number of harassment cases or the representativeness of all the female sport journalist population, the findings are still relevant. Indeed, it appears a trend of discrimination exists within sports journalism that remains unreported. Christine Brennan and other female sports writers acknowledge that the gestures and comments are made, but that it is something to be dealt with in the line of duty, a causality of doing a day's work for the sports journalist (Hardin & Shain, 2005a; Brennan, 1990). Consequently, when cases are brought to the public, there are negative responses toward the victims of harassment (McCarthy, 2011). As a result, reporters learn to ignore the negative environment in which they work, making it impossible to force change in sport journalism.

Indeed, reports slowly continue to surface without any major action taken by leagues or media, perhaps because of an overarching acceptance of this sexist behavior as a way to reinforce masculinity (Jimerson, 2001; Disch & Kane, 1996; Curry, 1991). Another explanation could be accepting this behavior from men in general, as the participants in Hardin and Shain's study (2006) demonstrate the willingness of women in the sports field to dismiss much of the sexual harassment occurring on the job as "men being men" or as part of the job.

### **Public Perception of Sexual Harassment**

Throughout the 1990s, headlines screamed of major sex scandals involving public officials, from Clarence Thomas to then-president Bill Clinton. Court cases and legal battles threw the topic of sexual harassment into the public discourse, bringing to light the issue facing workers in today's world. Just like for the public, sexual harassment is a topic of great interest in academia. It is examined from multiple facets, including reasons for why one might harass (Das, 2009), public perception of harassment (Tinkler, 2008), and reactions from bystanders of harassment (Hitlan, Schneider, & Walsh, 2006; Gruber & Bjorn, 1986). In fact, at least one study using surveys of more than 4,000 federal workers between 1987 and 1994 demonstrated that the more attention given to sexual harassment by the media and in supervisor discourse, the more often employees identified behaviors as constituting hostile environment sexual harassment (Pickerill, Jackson, & Newman, 2006). This suggests the power of leaders within corporations and in the public to shape perspectives on sexual harassment.

Not only is the way an account of harassment described important, but also the way in which the accused handles the situation (Dunn & Cody, 2000). Dunn and Cody's study (2000) employed the use of a hypothetical situation based on media reports of a real event and asked 709 participants to rate the credibility of the woman's story, whether she was sexually harassed, and responses by the accused that ranged from taking full responsibility and justifying actions to denying any responsibility. Findings from that study indicated that when the accused takes responsibility, people are more likely to give him or her the benefit of the doubt, although they also rated people who simply denied the accusation more credible than those who made excuses (Dunn & Cody, 2000).

Additionally, denials drew more speculation on the part of the alleged female victim's credibility and image in the work place (Dunn & Cody, 2000). Furthermore, the study demonstrated that women are much more likely to perceive sexual harassment as a serious issue than are men, similar to other studies that also examine male and female perceptions of sexual harassment (Dunn & Cody, 2000). Though the sample was not representative and cannot be used to predict the American public's reactions, it does shed light on the way that outsiders perceive sexual harassment and the parties involved.

Along a similar thread, a study of the effect of delayed reporting of sexual harassment on college student perspectives of the issue revealed that reporting an incident immediately cast away much of the suspicion from an accuser (Balogh et al., 2003). Conversely, when an alleged victim brought a case forward years after the fact, people questioned motivations for the revelation. In reality, many people who are sexually harassed do not feel comfortable coming forward – perhaps due to fear of negative consequences such as losing a job or due to a lack of a support system (Balogh et al., 2003; Pedersen et al., 2003). Therefore, the impulse to wait may be detrimental - the longer he or she waits, the more likely the account is discredited. An earlier study of 240 university students also underscored the importance of the viewer's attitudes about traditional gender roles as a mediating effect in how much responsibility is assigned to the perpetrator with those conforming to societal norms more likely to take some of the blame away from the perpetrator (Valentine-French & Radtke, 1989). Once again, adherence to these social norms may mitigate the impact of sexual harassment allegations on an athlete.



### **Sexual Harassment at Work**

Sexual harassment verbiage did not enter the political realm until the 1960s, with the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Pedersen et al., 2009). In the defining piece of legislation for President Lyndon Johnson's administration, Congress incorporated several remedies for discrimination. Quid pro quo sexual harassment was the first type to be specifically addressed and recognized by employers and employees (Pickerill et al., 2006) in a 1976 district court case decision, *Williams v. Saxbe*. This incorporated undesired requests for sexual favors and comments directed at the victim that employees needed to tolerate in order to keep a job or receive a promotion. On the other hand, this legal definition excluded much of the occurrences between coworkers as well as the work environment and office culture. It was not until several years later that a hostile work environment became integrated into sexual harassment law (Pickerill et al., 2006). This harassment covered anything sexual in nature such as pictures posted or conversations that occurred throughout the course of a routine day as part of the organization's culture (*Robinson v. Jacksonville Shipyards, Inc.*, 1991). For either form of harassment to occur, however, it must be unwelcomed by the victim or make the victim feel uncomfortable carrying out the tasks associated with his or her job.

Of course, what exactly sexual harassment means to both the judicial branch and the general population even today is unclear. Though quid pro quo harassment includes unwanted sexual advances, the basic premise is that the victim must put up with the harassment to keep a job or to obtain a promotion. Therefore, simple requests for dates on repeat occasions, although uncomfortable or even a nuisance, does not necessarily equate with quid pro quo harassment as defined by law. On the other hand, hostile environments

created in a workplace would be actionable under law, though exactly what is considered offensive to some may not be offensive to all (Tinkler, 2008; Keyton & Menzie, 2007).

A study conducted by Hitlan et al. (2006) investigated reactions to harassment by surveying 208 women at a southwestern university. In particular, the researchers investigated how sexual harassment affected working women, and if witnessing or experiencing it then affected reactions to being harassed for the first time or seeing someone else harassed. Results showed that 78% of the participants in this study had experienced at least one instance of sexual harassment on the job. Interestingly, though women reported being more upset when the frequency of harassing increased, they also reported lower levels of being upset when witnessing multiple instances of sexual harassment. The researchers attempted to explain this phenomenon by suggesting that women who see it being done to others feel less isolated as opposed to women who feel they are being personally attacked while on the job (Hitlan et al., 2003, p. 193). This implication is even more relevant when considering an environment where these behaviors are normal, and the impact it may have on shaping people's attitudes toward the situation. If this is common and women are constantly harassed, it is possible that they may begin to internalize it as part of the job – much in the way that female reporters claim occurs in the locker room (Brennan, 1990).

Based on these findings, it appears that the cultural norms within the organization truly play an impact on a woman's psyche in the workplace. If she has coworkers also experiencing harassment, even though she is aware of what is happening, she appears to feel less lonely. This points to networks and support as being crucial to combating or enabling harassment by individuals and also that is created within a workplace.

Furthermore, Tinkler's study (2008) in particular demonstrates the subjectivity of sexual harassment and the difficulty in determining what is appropriate. Though there are legal definitions, in many ways it goes beyond simply what makes one uncomfortable. If women are acclimated to that culture, however, and accept it as a necessary evil or part of the job, then there may be little that is done to change the organizational culture.

A larger scale project was conducted by Das (2009), who analyzed information collected from the 1992 U.S. National Health and Social Life Survey in 2,999 interviews and surveys to examine more closely sexual harassment in the workplace by looking at power differentials from two angles. The first angle was taken from differences in power between the harasser and the victim, which she stated can be broken further into hierarchy determining the power differentials, or organizational culture and norms that create perceived threats to men. This "power-threat" hypothesis (Das, 2009, p. 910) postulates that women who become more assertive in the workplace are more likely to be harassed. In other words, women like Lisa Olson who act outside the realm of normal femininity are more likely to be victims of harassment than those who conform. The second hypothesis used as a framework was routine activities, or that those who harass perceive a benefit to doing so. What is interesting is that much of the survey asked people about their sexual histories – and the researcher found a positive correlation between people who had sexual contact at a younger age and being a victim of sexual harassment. Results showed that nearly the same percentage of men and women in their 20s reported being sexually harassed (39% for women and 36% for men), whereas when in their 30s, a higher percentage of women (44%) reported sexual harassment than men (34%). The researcher concludes that the routine activities approach better fits with explaining sexual

harassment in the workforce due to the fact that women at different levels of authority reported similar levels of sexual harassment. She does make note, however, that gay men may be harassed more often because of power differentials. This study will not examine same-sex harassment of a reporter, nor of harassment of homosexual male sports reporters due to the fact that there have been no allegations made by male reporters against a male athlete.

### **Social capital's influence**

Every day, interactions between individuals shape life perspectives on various topics. These interactions, or networks, have been studied by several scholars, most notably Coleman (1988) to better understand people's success in life. These networks lead to a form of resources called social capital. Social capital is devised of three main components: norms, information networks, and trust. These three are believed to work together to form the success of a person's relationship in allowing him or her to then move beyond current status. Norms guide the behaviors of all members in a group. Through either explicit conversations or implicit knowledge of acceptable behavior, every individual learns the expectations (Coleman, 1988). Sanctioning certain behaviors also signals to group members what is not permitted within the group. The classic Bobo doll case illustrated this concept by a child's observation of physical violence against a doll and seeing either that person punished or rewarded to see that child's consequential decision. The child that saw punishment was less likely to engage in violent behaviors toward the doll than the child that saw violence rewarded (Bandura, 1986, as cited in Fireman & Kose, 2002). Therefore, it is possible that if men or women observe sexual

harassment without negative consequences, they may be more likely to perceive that behavior as acceptable.

In addition to the ethics codes of journalists, it is important to understand exactly what moral guidelines future reporters actually carry out in the course of their work. One study conducted by Reinardy and Moore (2007) examined perceptions of 212 journalism students at a university to compare attitudes of ethics between intro-level students and those graduating. This study in particular looked at how the students developed a moral compass through their classroom instruction while in college, examining the relationship between external pressures and applicability of lessons learned in the classroom to the work experience. The findings showed that these two groups of students did in fact have a significant difference in terms of their average scores on various statements, including writing direct quotations for sources (intro-level students in general scored lower on the moral reasoning scale) and misleading sources to get information for a story (graduating students in general scored lower on the moral reasoning scale) (Reinardy & Moore, 2007). These results demonstrate that moral reasoning is dependent not just on age, but also on context of a situation. The researchers posited that the results may reflect the shaping of attitudes and ethical behaviors when actually applied to a newsroom environment, citing stressors on the job as potential reasons for relaxing moral standards.

### **Masculine Hegemony in Sport**

As already mentioned, sport is a field that is considered a man's domain on a societal scale. A casual examination of advertisements during professional games gives a glaring look into the marketer's conception of who is watching, advertising sleek luxury cars driven by a beautiful woman or rich man, trucks for hard labor, facial shavers, and

alcohol commercials with men drinking light beer being told to “man up.” Researchers argue that while sports continue to be promoted and discussed in both small circles and large-scale venues as a place for men, women trying to break into the field on any side will face marginalization (Hardin et al., 2006; Hardin & Shain, 2005b). In a survey of 144 female sports writers, 64 percent expressed experiencing sexual discrimination at work while performing job duties and 85 percent said that sexual discrimination is a problem for women working in sports media, even though 75 percent felt the opportunities for women were better today than ever before (Hardin & Shain, 2005b). Furthermore, 60 percent did not believe that female sports reporters were taken as seriously as male sports reporters by fans (Hardin & Shain, 2005b). This again points to the difficulty of establishing credibility as a reporter for women and researchers have sought to uncover an explanation for why this is true, using both a lack of role models in the field and the sources of information for future journalists as possible causes.

Similar to norms, information networks are crucial to the development of a human being due to the social nature of an individual. Bandura (2001) argued that mass media are sources that identify for people appropriate behaviors. For example, watching violent television shows or movies where there were few adverse affects produced higher levels of acceptance of violence as a positive way to resolve conflict. These sources of information provide people with a view of the world and can enlighten much of their experiences. Similarly, Messner, Duncan, and Cooky (2003) point to the importance of media in shaping world views about sports and gender, which is becoming more relevant with the popularity of today’s social networking sites in addition to broadcast media. Of course, media are not the only forms of communication or information. Oftentimes it is

the peer network and familial connections that guide the dispersion of knowledge (Coleman, 1988). Certain parents encourage their children to succeed in education and all aspects of life, providing more resources to their children when bonds are formed, but strong communities also play a role in the development of social capital (Coleman, 1988). On the other hand, those without strong communities may lack this critical element to advance in mainstream society.

A study of eight sports journalism textbooks revealed that 89 percent of athletes discussed were men and that women were more often discussed on the periphery of sports than they were as participants (Hardin et al., 2006). Though this sample is small and thus cannot be generalized to all texts used in academic instruction, the findings demonstrate how media propagate masculine hegemonic notions of sports and sport journalism within the training of America's future journalists. In this same vein, league commissioners and managers of specific teams are in positions of power to disseminate information about codes of conducts and expectations for their players. Indeed, today's commissioners of the four major professional sport leagues in America (NFL, NBA, MLB, and NHL) have varying degrees of power to punish athletes in various forms for indiscretions off the field, even without any formal charges (Young Kim & Parlow, 2009). The fact that they choose to publicize the punishment makes it appear as though the leagues are committed to maintaining the public's trust of the organization; yet the fact that they choose to respond after media spread the word about off-field incidents and the subjectivity of how severe a punishment an occurrence warrants also sends an implicit but powerful message (Parlow, 2010; Young Kim & Parlow, 2009). For example, Michael Vick was suspended for several years from the NFL for dog fighting,

whereas countless allegations, and even substantiations, of sexual assault or harassment by players may warrant several games of suspension if at all with perhaps a fine to be paid by the athlete (Jenkins, 2010; Disch & Kane, 1996).

Like information networks and norms, trust also plays a large role in social capital. The more trust between members of a group to fulfill an obligation, the more social capital available to individuals within that system (Coleman, 1988). It is formed between members who bond with each other and a “shared sense of belonging” (Clopton & Finch, 2010, p. 378). Furthermore, Putnam (1995) suggested that the quality of these relationships is essential to the bond; the more reciprocity in a relationship, the better the level of social capital. Thus, if a reporter is giving as much to the relationship as an athlete, there is a higher level of trust between the groups than if there is not as much investment in the relationship. The same can be said of journalist’s coworkers and teammates of athletes. Trust can be characterized as either vertical/top-to-bottom trust or horizontal/peer-to-peer trust (Clopton & Finch, 2010). On the other hand, if group members cannot trust each other, then there are weak forms of social capital that each person can utilize.

It is important to note that not all forms of trust are beneficial, as strong bonds between members of a group can lead to behaviors and attitudes that are not permitted in the mainstream (Clopton & Finch, 2010). In fact, research on deviant behaviors points to the importance of negative peer cultures as a major influence in youth development (Bernburg, Krohn, & Rivera, 2006; Quigley, 2003; Bjerregaard, 2002), as well as the role modeling of negative behaviors by siblings and parents as crucial to understanding deviance (Aaron & Dallaire, 2010; Craine, Tanaka, Nishina, & Conger, 2009). Despite



the negative or positive behaviors within the group, it follows that the more trust that exists within a system, the more social capital accessible to each individual within that system. Examining how negative behaviors, attitudes, and norms within groups impact the acceptance of sexual harassment will be crucial to this study's analysis.

### **Gender Norms: Roles, Schemas, and Congruity**

Starting months before birth, humans in American society become gendered. Parents anxiously await the news of whether they are having a boy or a girl, and once received, they begin their preparations. Everything from the name, the toys, the color of the room and the clothes has social meaning attached to them (Wilbourn & Kee, 2010). Once born, children are integrated into a gendered society, and learn from a young age what the expectations are for other girls and boys (Bussey & Bandura, 1999). They also learn the social sanctions that come with stepping beyond those boundaries. Years later, this shapes the decisions that children make for all paths of life, including their job choice.

These simple role expectations have resounding effects for everyone well beyond the early stages of learning what it means to be a functioning human being in civilization. Some researchers argue that it is the reason for sex discrimination in the workplace (Wilbourn & Kee, 2010). Wilbourn and Kee (2010) examined the way that 57 third-grade children process and internalize gender schema and found that most often children would alter or ignore details that were counter to the traditional social roles the children developed for men and women, particularly men. Interestingly, they struggled more with men who had traditionally female roles, such as a nurse or secretary, than females with traditional male roles, such as a doctor or police officer (Wilbourn & Kee, 2010) and

posit that women breaking the gender barrier in many fields today is responsible for their ability to conceptualize women in those roles. Again, this study points to the importance of having exposure to various sources of information and networks of support.

An additional study using three different methods with a total of 468 students examined the impact gender role expectations have on career goals for men and women by using role congruity as an explanation for maintaining gender divisions (Evans & Diekman, 2009). Although this study used a sample of convenience and is not known to be representative of the whole population, there are stark patterns in the results of its test populations, specifically that there is a significant correlation between goals of a specific gendered individual and their gender beliefs (Evans & Diekman, 2009). Women are often encouraged and socialized to be more communal, whereas men are taught to be individualistic and driven, also known as agentic (Evans & Diekman, 2009). This may explain why women more often choose paths in nursing and teaching, while men choose science and technology more frequently. It also may provide an explanation for why it appears to be extremely difficult to change social attitudes about the acceptance of men and women in atypical career fields. Furthermore, socialized gender roles often set up a power differential with men assuming more authority, creating a catch-22 for women in male-dominated fields. Females often voice the need to get ahead by adopting attitudes socially aligned with their male coworkers including being ambitious and outspoken, but are then looked down upon as being arrogant and unpleasant (Eagly & Karau, 2002). This presents a constant dilemma, one that makes it challenging to negotiate an individual identity.

In addition to difficulties asserting authority, women in the workforce are often perceived to be inferior to males in terms of ability and are even sometimes discredited for being attractive (Hardin & Shain, 2006). Interestingly, the media are most often the ones criticized by academia for their depictions and descriptions of female athletes, pointing to their physical appearance and remarking on their elegance or grace instead of using language that discusses their physical abilities, strength, or endurance (Billings, Angelini, & Eastman, 2005; Billings, 2007). This depiction of females, however, is not foreign to the sports reporter. Popular sports journalism textbooks at several universities lack examples of women breaking into the field, perpetuating sports as a male domain (Hardin et al, 2006). The language itself becomes a point of contention, garnering backlash against mainstream sports magazines that also more often hold photo shoots that are best described as two ends of a spectrum of a “typical woman” portrayal: either with female athletes posing in highly feminine clothing and makeup, or partially or fully nude (Carty, 2005; Bishop, 2003; Fink & Kensicki, 2002).

The argument made by many academics is the sexualized portrayal of women lowers the dissonance experienced by fans of the female athlete – who in many respects breaks away from the traditional societal definition of what it means to be a woman – to align with traditional measures of femininity (Harrison & Secarea, 2010). Consequently, the public accepts the coverage of females and the media discourse of sexuality as normal (Bussey & Bandura, 1999). Following this thread, the public becomes desensitized to the sexualized language used to discuss women in sports, cultivating an attitude of acquiescence (Messner et al., 2003). Much research has been developed in this arena, as researchers continue to grasp for an understanding of why sexual harassment and

degradation of women in a modern world not only exists but is also a prevalent attitude of many sports fans, male and female alike.

One avenue of research of gender theory explores the impact information has on developing gender schema. A study conducted by Hardin and Greer (2009) investigated the networks of information children had that led to perceptions of sports as either masculine or feminine in conjunction with the growing rate of female participation in all sports to see if attitude changes correlated with increased participation. Though it was limited by a lack of a representative sample, it did in effect measure how large an impact media have in contrast to the impact of peer networks on shaping cultural norms for its sample and points to a potentially significant point for future research. Using Bandura's social cognitive theory as a conceptual framework, the results showed that in general males and females rated certain sports as either masculine or feminine similarly. Specifically, interpretations of the masculinity of basketball, swimming and rugby varied along gender lines; the researchers posited increasing numbers of females entering these sports as a reason for them being viewed as less masculine than in the past. Additionally, they found that people who engaged in physical fitness were less likely to polarize sports as hyper masculine or action sports, while also framing those sports previously concerned neutral or feminine as being more masculine. Furthermore, the study showed that those who consumed sports media were more likely to consider sports masculine, possibly due to saturation of the market by male athletes (Hardin & Greer, 2009).

To further examine how much of an influence media truly have on public perception, Harrison and Secarea (2010) studied this phenomenon with 180 undergraduate students – mostly female – and their perceptions of female athletes based

on how sexualized they were by fabricated media accounts, manipulating the skill level and attractiveness of the female as portrayed in the article. They uncovered that the more attractive a female is rather bluntly discussed by the media, the less credibility she had as an athlete, even when compared with less flattering descriptive accounts of females considered to be comparatively lacking in athletic ability. It is possible that this is due to general acceptance in popular culture that women are not athletes. At the same time, the limited number of participants in the study makes it difficult to know whether or not this is representative of the region, let alone an entire country. Nevertheless, it is meaningful in that the researchers uncovered a negative relationship between attractiveness and credibility as an athlete.

Yet, little attention has been given to media members who themselves are objectified while on the job – often female sports reporters. They, too, deal with the struggles of working in a male-dominated field and gaining acceptance among their peers while also maintaining their femininity as constructed by society. Those that do study this topic often point to the importance of support networks and role models as encouraging women to pursue a career in sports journalism (Hardin & Whiteside, 2009; Hardin & Shain, 2006; 2005a; 2005b). Furthermore, several studies conclude that hegemonic masculinity reinforces the attitudes that women are not as qualified within the sports field or are nothing more than sex symbols (Hardin & Shain, 2006; Miloch et al., 2005). Similarly, the perception of having to choose between career and family often results in brevity of women's sports journalism careers. Those who do stay around to move up in the rankings often then adapt attitudes traditionally deemed masculine, being thick-skinned and career-driven (Hardin & Shain, 2006).

Based on the research questions previously discussed, and the literature outlined in the current chapter, the following hypotheses will be tested:

H1: Sport management majors will report a higher acceptance of sexual harassment rooted in trust between members of the group than journalism majors.

H2: Journalism majors will have higher scores on accepting sexual harassment based in journalism norms than sport management majors.

H3: Sport management majors will report higher levels of acceptance of locker room culture than journalism majors.

H4: There will be a statistically significant difference between journalism and sport management majors' acceptance of sexual harassment rooted in their information networks.

H5: Men will provide higher levels of acceptance of sexual harassment rooted in trust between members of the group than women.

H6: Men will score higher on levels of acceptance of locker room culture in comparison to women.

H7: Men will have a higher level of acceptance of sexual harassment rooted in their information networks than women.

H8: Men will have a higher acceptance of sexual harassment rooted in acceptance of traditional gender roles than women.

H9: There will be a statistically significant positive relationship between higher levels of group trust and adherence to locker room norms.

H10: There will be a statistically significant positive relationship between higher levels of adherence to journalism norms and traditional gender roles.

H11: There will be a statistically significant positive relationship between trust and information networks.

H12: People with higher scores on acceptance of sexual harassment based on traditional perceptions of gender roles will be more likely to accept locker room norms.

H13: Individuals who report higher scores of accepting sexual harassment based on group trust will also report more acceptance of sexual harassment adherence to traditional perceptions of gender roles.

### **Chapter III: Research Methods**

The current study attempts to better understand the perceptions college students entering the world of sports have of sexual harassment of employees within their field or carried out by someone within their future career choice. Given the hypotheses developed for this study, the research design is survey-based responses framed within social capital theory and concepts of gender theory.

#### **Participants**

A large Northeastern university served as the setting for this study, where 50 percent of undergraduate students and 52 percent of graduate students are female, according to the university's most current factsheet. The two majors of interest combine for a total of 205 students at the university (131 in journalism and 67 in sport management). There are 67 juniors and 71 seniors in the journalism department, in comparison to 32 juniors and seniors and 24 graduate students in the sport management department. The university does not have a graduate-level journalism program.

A convenience sample of  $n=83$  students at the university was collected during a three-week period from participants during the spring semester of 2011 (see Table 1). Parameters were set so that informants had to be upperclassmen or graduate students studying either journalism or sport management at the university. These two majors were of particular interest to this study due to the public division between the journalists and the sport managers/athletes contingents about a reporter's right to a locker room, as is evidenced in the literature previously referenced.

Students were recruited in two upper-level undergraduate journalism copywriting classes and three upper-level and graduate sport management classes, as recommended



by key faculty members within each department. The campus newspaper staff who attended department meetings was also included in this study if they met the above criteria. The student investigator distributed surveys in person to each class and office space, and prompted students to complete the survey as honestly as possible and only if they so desired. It took participants between 10 and 15 minutes to complete the survey. In order to maintain anonymity and promote honesty, responses were not connected to any individual. Additionally, respondents were instructed to leave the survey blank if they chose not to participate, so as to try to minimize the impact of inaccurate responses. Consequently, the results exclude information from two respondents, leaving a final number of 81 participants for this study.

### **Measures**

The survey instrument developed for this study was composed of 51 statements relating to aspects of social capital (norms, trust, and information networks) and adherence to norms associated with traditional gender roles. The survey utilized a seven-point Likert scale, asking participants to circle responses on the scale with 1 being “strongly disagree”, 4 “neutral” and 7 “strongly agree.” This psychometric scale is widely accepted for obtaining people’s perceptions (Nanna & Sawilowsky, 1998). In addition, the researcher collected information on whether or not the students had completed either media or sport law classes, as well as ethics classes in their major respective majors.

Due to the fact that there is no current survey of college student perceptions of male professional athletes and sexual harassment of female sports reporters, an instrument needed development to encompass the three main aspects of social capital and incorporate perspectives on gender within sport. To develop validity, one of the

researcher's advisors whose work is grounded in social capital theory reviewed each item of the instrument once the questions were developed. Each item served as a measure of sexual harassment rooted in an aspect of social capital – either in the form of norms, information networks, adherence to traditional beliefs about women, or group bonding as a medium for this to occur. These were developed to separate social capital into its three components to examine specific influences in the college student's life.

The level of trust between colleagues to support either the accuser or the accused may be significant to the acceptance or rejection of sexual harassment and can guide interactions between groups. In fact, female reporters' motivations for being in athletes' locker rooms are often called into question when allegations of sexual harassment occur (Ricchiardi, 2004; Disch & Kane, 1996). Therefore, the scale incorporated seven questions rooted in trust: No. 6, 8, 16, 24, 26, 33, and 38 (e.g. "Athletes have every right after games to full privacy in the locker room," see Appendix H). Questions 6, 16, 33, and 38 were reverse coded so as to reflect the correct direction of level of trust on the continuum from 1 to 7 with 7 being higher levels of trust. Survey items No. 4 ("As a sports manager, I care more about what my athletes do on the field or court than in the locker room") and 39 ("As a journalist, I would not report sexual harassment for fear of losing access to my sources") are coded within the locker room and journalism norms subscales, respectively, but also as a crosscheck of the perception of trust by journalists of sport managers and vice versa to determine if there are different levels of trust between the groups to report sexual harassment.

In addition to trust, norms of both groups were incorporated into the survey to gauge behaviors and attitudes that are accepted by future journalists and sport managers

that may also constitute or result in acquiescence to sexually harassing behaviors and environments. For example, journalists may feel the need to protect a source or keep their mouths shut about instances in order to maintain their position within a media outlet. Eight items within the survey are aimed to measure whether this belief is accepted throughout the upperclassman community in the university's journalism and sport management programs: No. 1, 3, 5, 11, 12, 39, 40, and 46 (e.g. "Journalists should give the highest priority to protecting their sources, regardless of the personal costs"), see Appendix H). Questions 1, 3, 11, and 40 were reverse coded so as to reflect the correct direction of level of acceptance of journalism norms on the continuum from 1 to 7 with 7 being higher levels of norms. It is critical to know the answers to these questions to better understand if journalism norms guide decisions about reporting sexual harassment or even the lag time between the events and the report of the incident.

At the same time, locker room culture has been widely criticized for maintaining masculine hegemony and norms that affirm negative perspectives about women and homosexuality (Curry, 1991). Since the locker room is often where the instances of sexual harassment are reported to occur, this subscale was the largest of the five with 16 questions on the behaviors and norms within a locker room: No. 4, 10, 13, 14, 17, 19, 21, 23, 25, 29, 30, 32, 37, 43, 44, and 49 (e.g. "Locker rooms are the athletes domain," see Appendix H). Of these, questions 21, 37, and 43 were reverse coded to reflect the correct direction of adherence to locker room norms on the 1 to 7 scale, with 7 being the highest level of adherence to those norms. Furthermore, the subscale on adherence to beliefs about traditional gender roles developed for this study was used to see how students responded about sexual harassment when framed from a perspective in which women are

foreigners in both locker rooms and sports in general, and men are the experts on sport and make jokes about the inferiority of a woman in some capacity. Fifteen questions – No. 7, 9, 15, 18, 20, 22, 28, 31, 34, 35, 41, 47, 48, 50, and 51 – comprised this subscale (e.g. “Female sports reporters have less credibility than male sports reporters.”). Like the other subscales, questions 47 and 48 were reverse coded to portray the proper direction on the 1 to 7 scale of accepting traditional gender roles/beliefs with 7 being the highest level of conformity.

Finally, information networks were also important to investigate. That is, who within a group of people is considered a source of guidance for prohibiting sexual harassment (coaches, players, coworkers)? The media have been criticized for their role in maintaining the dichotomy of men as the premier standard for athletics and sexualizing sport for women when they are covered, but it is also valuable to know if there are other sources that people believe can make a difference in perceptions of sexual harassment. Questions 2, 27, 36, 42, and 45 form the subscale on information networks (e.g. “If there were more female sports reporters, there would be fewer instances of athletes making sexual comments directed at women in the locker room,” see Appendix H). Only question 42 required reverse scoring to properly reflect the directionality of response on the strongly disagree to strongly agree scale.

### **Analysis**

Data were run through R, a collaborative statistical package available for free online (for more information, see <http://www.r-project.org/>). Nominal variables major and gender were coded numerically, with journalism students entered as 1 and sport management students as 0 and males as 1 and females as 0. The items were coded by

themes according to the three elements of social capital – trust, information networks, and group norms – and the responses tallied and averaged to develop a mean score for each subscale. Each item served as a measure of sexual harassment rooted in an aspect of social capital – either in the form of norms, information networks, adherence to traditional beliefs about women, or group bonding as a medium for this to occur. Gender and major served as independent variables for this study when making intergroup comparisons based on responses to the subscales of trust, information networks, adherence to journalism and locker room norms, as well as gender role expectations.

Several analyses were done to ensure accuracy in reporting ordinal-based responses. First, a multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was utilized to compare differences between gender and major on the five subscales. An analysis of variance (ANOVA) was then conducted on gender to identify which specific subscales yielded statistically significant differences. As a check on the significance level of a standard parametric test, the Kruskal-Wallis Rank Sum (KW) test was employed to investigate significant differences between groups, with regard to these subscale scores. This non-parametric test has been well established as a powerful alternative in situations where the underlying assumptions of the normality and continuity of data are in question, especially in the case of ordinal Likert data (Nanna & Sawilowsky, 1998).

In order to measure associations between the subscale responses, a simple Kendall's  $\tau$  statistic was utilized. Similar to the KW test, the Kendall's  $\tau$  avoids the limiting assumptions of its parametric counterpart, Pearson's  $r$ , by focusing on the relative agreement between corresponding observations instead of absolute terms

(Somers, 1962). The significance level was set at  $\alpha=.05$  for both the KW and Kendall's  $\tau$  tests.

## Chapter IV: Results

Research on sexual harassment yields results showing that masculine hegemony plays a large part in the way in which people interpret sexual harassment. In addition, perceptions evaluated show that there is no public consensus on what behaviors constitute sexual harassment even though it is defined within law. This study attempted to better understand journalism and sport management students' perspectives on the culture of their future organizations to see if these at all influenced accepting various degrees of sexual harassment.

### *Differences by major*

The first set of hypotheses developed under RQ1 aimed to develop patterns of differences between journalism and sport management majors. A MANOVA revealed that there are in fact no significant differences overall between these two groups ( $p=.20$ , Table 2).

*H1: Sport management majors will report a higher acceptance of sexual harassment rooted in trust between members of the group than journalism majors.*

This hypothesis is founded in the idea that sports journalism is a competitive, individualistic career path, whereas many sports are oriented around teamwork and cooperation. Based on the results from the MANOVA, there is in fact no evidence to support significant differences between majors on the trust subscale, consisting of answers to questions pertaining to trust between journalists and athletes/sport managers. Both groups disagreed, almost to the point of strongly disagreeing, with the idea that women reporters should expect sexual comments being directed toward them by male athletes (journalism majors  $M= 1.68$  and sport management students  $M= 2.35$ ).

*H2: Journalism majors will have higher scores on accepting sexual harassment based in journalism norms than sport management majors.*

The items that compose this scale evaluated certain tenants of journalism such as protecting a source or going into a locker room after the game to get a scoop. The MANOVA yielded no evidence for statistically significant results for this subscale between majors. Students in both majors answered similarly to this subscale, comprised of statements regarding a reporter's right to a locker room and appropriate relationships between reporters and sources as evidenced by reporters accepting date requests from their athlete sources (journalism  $M= 4.15$ ,  $SD= 0.59$ ; sport management  $M=4.06$ ,  $SD= 0.72$ ).

*H3: Sport management majors will reporter higher levels of acceptance of locker room culture than journalism majors.*

Statistical analysis of responses broken down by major through MANOVA reveals that H3 is not supported by this particular sample. Students of sport management and journalism had similar responses to questions pertaining to athletes being able to do and to say what they want in the locker room and that there is an expectation of privacy. Both groups were undecided about this subscale, relating to whether or not it is acceptable for athletes to make crude jokes around reporters and if on-field expectations for behavior should be different from locker room expectations (journalism  $M= 3.98$ ,  $SD=0.82$ ; sport management  $M=3.85$ ,  $SD=0.80$ ).



*H4: There is a statistically significant difference between journalism and sport management majors' acceptance of sexual harassment rooted in their information networks.*

Both groups overall seemed relatively neutral on their opinions of the role of a coach and teammates in taking action against sexual harassment, though both slightly agreed with the idea that male athletes making sexually charged jokes and comments are doing nothing different from the rest of men in America when talking with friends (journalism  $M= 4.75$ , sport management  $M= 4.95$ ). Similarly, the groups took a neutral stance on whether a coach should suspend players who make sexual comments to female reporters. There was no support for differences of opinions between the majors on whether more female sports writers could help improve the climate as to minimize sexual harassment.

### **Differences Between Men and Women**

Aside from the differences (or lack thereof) explored by major, sexual harassment research has pointed to the differences men and women have on the issue. Therefore, the following group of hypotheses is based on RQ2, whether there are differences by gender on particular aspects of social capital theory. A MANOVA revealed that there are in fact statistically significant differences between answers of men and women on this survey ( $p<.01$ ). An ANOVA was then utilized to evaluate the breakdown by subscale responses, crosschecked with the Kruskal-Wallis rank sum test (Table 4, see Appendix B for boxplots of average scores for each subscale).

*H5: Men will provide higher levels of acceptance of sexual harassment rooted in trust between members of the group than women.*

The ANOVA revealed no support for H5 for gender differences in level of trust impacting perceptions of sexual harassment based on their responses to the trust subscale ( $p=.06$ ). On the other hand, the Kruskal-Wallis test reveals that there is in fact a statistically significant difference when removing the standard parameters associated with the ANOVA ( $p<.05$ ). Women scored lower on this subscale than did men on average ( $M=3.21$ ,  $SD=.57$  versus  $M= 3.47$ ,  $SD=. 64$ , respectively) when answering questions relating to distrust of women's motives in the locker room and lacking a right to complain about harassment when in the locker room.

*H6: Men will score higher on levels of acceptance of locker room culture in comparison to women.*

Due to the fact that men in general are more likely to become professional athletes given the opportunities that exist, this hypothesis was developed to examine if men in general share norms with athletes when it comes to the locker room as discovered in other research. Indeed, the ANOVA revealed a significant difference between men (mean= 4.09,  $SD= .96$ ) and women (mean= 3.68,  $SD= .66$ ) in the study ( $p=.01$ ), supported also by the Kruskal-Wallis test ( $p<.05$ ). For example, men were more likely to agree with statements that men make jokes that do not align with personal beliefs and that men should be comfortable with seeing naked people in locker rooms. This scale also included statements about different expectations for professionalism on the field and in the locker room.

*H7: Men will have a higher level of acceptance of sexual harassment rooted in their information networks than women.*

This premise is based on research that shows that women are more sensitive to behaviors labeled sexual harassment than are men. An ANOVA revealed no significant differences between genders ( $p=.65$ ), also demonstrated by the Kruskal-Wallis test ( $p=.76$ ), on items relating to role models within their potential professions.

*H8: There is a statistically significant difference between men's and women's acceptance of sexual harassment rooted in acceptance of traditional gender roles.*

Previous research demonstrates that those who adhere to attitudes associated with traditional gender roles are more likely to accept harassing behaviors. Given the unfortunate reality that men are more likely to sexually harass a woman than women are men (though this does occur), this hypothesis was developed to test if traditional attitudes affected tolerance of sexual harassment by professional athletes. This was supported by both the ANOVA ( $p<.05$ ) and the Kruskal-Wallis rank sum tests ( $p<.05$ ), with men on average scoring higher to adherence to traditional gender roles (mean= 4.03, SD= .62) than women (mean= 3.71, SD= .52).

Items within this subscale pertained to the way a woman looked and dressed, as well as a woman stepping into male domain as a reporter entering a locker room. Respondents also answered statements related to the power differential between athletes and reporters, and the belief that men in general are more interested in sport than women – both of which men scored more than a full response higher, a statistically significant difference according to the KW test ( $p<.001$  and  $p<.01$ , respectively).

### **Relationships Between Social Capital Items**

The final group of hypotheses were framed by RQ3, examining if there is any relationship between scoring on each of the subscales for all participants. For this, the mean scores on all subscale items were correlated using Kendall's  $\tau$  in order to develop meaningful connections with ordinal data (see Tables 5 and 6).

*H9: There is a statistically significant relationship between higher levels of group trust and adherence to locker room norms.*

It was hypothesized that since locker room sports are based around the need to succeed as a team, people who bought into locker room culture also exhibited higher levels of trust of members within that group. Results showed that there is indeed a positive relationship between these variables with  $\tau = .49$  ( $p < .001$ ; Appendix B). Therefore, those students who scored higher on being able to trust teammates or coworkers were also more likely to score higher on the ideas that a locker room is an athlete's domain that reporters infringe upon when entering.

*H10: There is a statistically significant relationship between higher levels of adherence to journalism norms and traditional gender roles.*

Research on female journalists show that the characteristics most prized by media corporations align with traits assigned as typically masculine. Therefore, this hypothesis aimed to understand if this were indeed the case for journalists and sport managers. Kendall's  $\tau$  revealed that there was in fact no significant relationship between these two subscale scores ( $\tau = .07$ ,  $p = .36$ ).

*H11: There is a statistically significant relationship between trust and information networks.*

Future reporters' and sport managers' information networks include the people with whom they surround themselves (professors, colleagues, peers, teammates, friends, family). Since both programs at this university are small and therefore promote closeness between people in their respective programs, it follows that there may also be more trust between members of these groups. Indeed, running Kendall's  $\tau$  uncovered a weak, positive relationship (.25) between these two subscales that was also significant ( $p < .01$ ; Appendix C). Participants who were more likely to score higher on trust were also more likely to accept sexual harassment when people within their networks did not take action (for example, a coach refusing to punish a player for sexual harassment).

*H12: People with higher scores on acceptance of sexual harassment based on traditional perceptions of gender roles are more likely to accept locker room norms.*

Since both traditional perceptions of gender roles and locker room norms are rooted in masculine hegemony where the heterosexual man is king according to a plethora of research on this topic, this hypothesis was developed to test if this was the case for sport management and journalism students who had yet to enter the world outside of college. Kendall's  $\tau$  did reveal a weak, but statistically significant, relationship between these two subscales ( $p < .001$ ; Appendix D). People who scored higher on items relating to placing the fault on female reporters' appearances and dress were also more likely to excuse behaviors of male athletes when in the locker room.

*H13: Individuals who report higher scores of accepting sexual harassment based on group trust will also report more acceptance of sexual harassment adherence to traditional perceptions of gender roles.*

The final hypothesis tested examined the relationship between group trust and adherence to traditional perceptions of gender roles. These two items were of interest since research reveals experienced dissonance with women and men in non-traditional roles, which may also relate to a distrust of people who step outside their ascribed gendered expectations (in this case, female sports reporters). Analysis revealed that there was in fact a weak relationship between these variables that was statistically significant ( $\tau = .30, p < .001$ ). Students who scored higher on items relating to distrust of female reporters' motives to be in the locker room also scored higher on adherence to traditional beliefs about women, such as women not having as much of an interest in sports and less credibility as a reporter (Appendix E).

A final positive relationship emerged as statistically significant, yet was not hypothesized. This was the relationship between information networks and adherence locker room norms. With  $\tau = .42$  and  $p < .001$ , this relationship yields results showing that those who accept the locker room norms are also more tolerant of behaviors and attitudes of people within their information networks (such as coaches) when it comes to sexual harassment (Appendix F).

## Chapter V: Discussion

The goal of this study was to better understand the role that social capital may play in college students' perceptions of sexual harassment as they prepare to face a possible challenge in their future careers. This survey encompassed statements about norms, trust, and information networks that would either relax a standard about sexual harassment or, in fact, was a form of sexual harassment. Some of these norms reflected masculine hegemony with the belief that athletes have more power than female reporters and that the locker room is the athlete's domain. In addition, it was necessary to examine gender role beliefs to discover if the way in which one views a female sports reporter is influenced by ideas that women do not belong in sports in the first place. Past literature suggests this is rooted in many ways within the organizational culture (and norms) of sport managers and sport journalists.

The results demonstrate that there is no support for the first set of hypotheses that examine differences between journalism and sport management students. The fact that there is no evidence to suggest a difference, however, is itself important, because it is possible that there are similar perspectives on the topic within these groups. When considering the rate at which sexual harassment goes undisclosed by female reporters, a question to ask is whether or not she is doing so because of the workplace culture that may in fact align closely with locker room norms. Indeed, the world of sports journalism is a place of work that, too, is dominated by men (Hardin & Shain, 2006). The journalism students in this study scored no differently on accepting locker room culture in general than did the sport management students. If both groups are willing to accept the locker room culture as the way it is, this may give more insight into why women are resistant to

speaking up on the matter – even though a majority of female sports reporters have been victims of sexual harassment at some point in their careers (Pedersen et al., 2009; Hardin & Shain, 2006; 2005b).

On the other hand, the results from this study support those of previous research in terms of a definitive difference between men and women on their perspective on sexual harassment (Pickerill et al., 2006; Dunn & Cody, 2000). Men's mean scores were significantly higher on each dependent variable than those of women, indicating a higher tolerance for behaviors and attitudes that allow for sexual harassment while also expressing the perception that they have more social capital. Considering that women are more often the victims of harassment, it is telling that men were the ones who are more receptive to attitudes and actions that actually constitute either quid pro quo or hostile environment sexual harassment, the latter of which is more common between female sports reporters and male professional athletes.

Specifically, the KW test revealed a difference between men and women in the levels of trust among coworkers and between groups with men exhibiting higher levels of trust. It is possible that these higher levels of trust come with being the dominant gender in both fields, whereas women struggle to reach higher levels of credibility and respect in the field of journalism (Hardin & Shain, 2006; Coventry, 2004). Moreover, it is noteworthy that even children experience dissonance when women and men cross gendered boundaries in their career choices and try to make sense of it by reframing the context (Wilbourn & Kee, 2010). The fact that women in both sport management and journalism in this particular sample report lower levels of group bonding and trust could



potentially indicate isolation and a lack of a support system as deterrents to reporting sexual harassment, though more research on this particular finding is necessary.

In addition to group trust, norms within organizations were tested. Norms of the journalism world did not yield any statistically significant differences between genders. This could be due to the fact that journalism is a more individualistic career choice and does not rely on a group of people to achieve goals (Hove, 2009; Zhong, 2008), though this cannot be determined from the survey responses. On the other hand, men and women scored significantly different on accepting locker room norms, with men scoring higher on those items. Based on the fact that studies demonstrate locker room culture as a way to develop masculinity (Curry, 1991), it is no surprise that men in this study would accept the norms at a higher level than women. These norms become problematic when considering discourse and behaviors among teammates. Indeed, locker rooms are considered grounds where sexism and homophobia in particular are engrained in members (Jimerson, 2001; Curry, 1991). Therefore, objectifying a woman may be seen as asserting masculinity, but it can also lead to embracing sexually harassing habits toward female sports reporters – and females in general – while in a workplace, which is federally prohibited. Since these norms are promoted and accepted, placing group success over the individual in many cases (Curry, 1991), it does follow that buying into these norms provide more social capital within the sport industry. Women who thus reject these norms will have less social capital in their field of work (Coleman, 1988).

The final component to social capital, information networks, was assessed to determine if there was information that provided relaxed standards about sexual harassment. The results showed that the null hypothesis could not be rejected for H7.

Men and women scored on average about the same on this subscale, relatively neutral about the role that coaches should take and the stereotypes developed by the media about a woman reporter's credibility based on her looks. When considering that these two groups are both extremely small (138 students in journalism, and 67 in the sport management program), it is possible that they have the same information networks, as demonstrated by the fact that a large majority of both groups had taken an ethics or issue-based class, though more demographic information would need to be collected to determine how much overlap exists. Many people in the two programs take classes with the same people, interact with them each week, and have the same professors that talk about these particular issues. In this case, it cannot be concluded that men and women in this sample have different levels of social capital based in networks of information.

Again, adherence to traditional gender roles was separated into its own subscale to ascertain if individual perceptions about a woman's right to sport varied by gender. Traditionally, journalism and sport management are considered male-dominated fields that women are breaking into. Consequently, it was not surprising to find that women in this sample (which made up 54.3 percent of the group) had a more liberal viewpoint on gender roles than the men in this study. Since the idea that women are not interested in sports prevails in mainstream society, it may also be the reason why athletes and sport managers cast suspicion on female sport reporter's motives and resisted opening locker rooms to them (Disch & Kane, 1996). Likewise, even though Title IX provided girls and women with more opportunity to play sports, increasing participation rates drastically, there are still few women in managerial positions and coaching positions at higher levels (Acosta & Carpenter, 2010; C.K. Harrison, Lapchick, & Janson, 2009). In addition,

women have few options to become a professional athlete in America, and if they do, they find their leagues relatively ignored by the media in comparison with the major male leagues – the NFL, NBA, MLB, and NHL (Edelman & Harrison, 2008). Despite these social movements, results suggest evidence of traditionally sexist beliefs about a woman in sports prevailing 40 years after Title IX's inception, as demonstrated in popular sport magazine such as *Sports Illustrated* op-ed pieces today (Pearlman, 2010).

The current study also found significant positive relationships between various subscales. Group trust became a common theme with how people responded on other items, including adherence to locker room norms, information networks, and traditional perceptions of gender roles. In each of these cases, when an individual reported higher levels of trust among group members, he or she was also more likely to accept behaviors and norms that would allow for sexual harassment to be minimized, including beliefs about a woman's role in sport and information networks. This is important because it shows a relationship in which the more one bonds with a group of people, the more likely norms will be internalized by that individual. Therefore, changing an organization's work environment takes more than simply getting a new leader. It takes truly gaining trust of a group and working on norms that everyone can buy into at some point (Slack & Hinings, 1992)

In addition to trust, there was a positive correlation between locker room norms and information networks, as well as locker room norms and adherence to traditional gender roles. Unexpectedly, the information network and locker room norms subscales had the strongest relationship of any two subscales in the study. People who agreed with statements that female reporters needed better role models also agreed with statements

pertaining to locker rooms as an athlete's domain and that jokes made in the locker rooms were not a big deal. When interpreting this, it appears that there is more of an onus on women to adapt to the climate that would create sexual harassment – that is, preparation of what to expect in a locker room so that no one is surprised. This aligns with female sport writers blaming other females for their inability to move up the ladder within sport journalism (Hardin & Shain, 2006). Based on results in this present study, it seems that instead of creating change in the norms of the locker room, it appears that the more one buys into locker room culture, the more likely it is that they believe women sports reporters should learn to accept the culture. This creates a problem in that women within these fields often lack power as they are more likely to be marginalized in their jobs (Hardin & Whiteside, 2009; Coventry, 2004).

As expected, those who scored higher on accepting traditional attitudes about a woman's role also scored higher on adherence to locker room norms. This aligns with much of the research that shows that locker rooms are grounds where men assert masculinity by demeaning women in various forms (Pringle & Hickey, 2010). Therefore, behaviors that constitute sexual harassment may not be viewed as such because of the group norms within the sport locker room. Creating this form of social capital may bring people closer together but also reinforces stereotypes about women to individuals within the group.

### **Limitations**

As in all research, there are several limitations that should be noted with the results from this study. First, the sample was a convenience sample and so representativeness of the population of journalism and sport management students at this

university cannot be implied. Additionally, the sample comprised 81 total participants of a possible 205 (approximately 40 percent of the total population), itself a small group of people. Therefore, results cannot be generalized to the population of students at this university within the major nor students at the university or any other university in the country or world. Instead, findings are specific to this sample. Furthermore, the size of the sample limited the ability to run an exploratory factor analysis to ensure internal validity. This would have helped determine clustering of specific items on the survey to see how it aligned with the development of the subscales.

In addition to the sample size, the problem of social desirability always comes into play with survey research. Though it was not specifically stated what the researcher was looking for, participants were aware of the study examining perceptions of sexual harassment. Consequently, it is possible that despite every effort to encourage individuals to be honest, some may have answered in a way that they felt the researcher would want to see. Every effort to maintain anonymity cannot ensure absolute elimination of this phenomenon (Lee & Woodliffe, 2010).

Another limitation is the geographic location in which this survey was set. It is likely that regional differences exist in terms of gender roles and expectations. If this were to occur in the southern region of the country, it is possible that one would find different results between men and women when it comes to females going into locker rooms and engaging in conversations with men who may not be clothed. Similarly, differences exist in the western regions of this country. Again, due to the nature of the sample, these responses do not represent the totality of journalism and sport management

students across the country. They can only be taken as results for this particular sample at one specific university.

Finally, since there was no survey based on social capital and perceptions of sexual harassment, this survey instrument was developed for this study. It is in many ways a pilot study. This particular researcher was interested in norms specifically and therefore had many more items relating to that component of social capital. Future research may require adapting elements in this survey that better reflect social capital. More items relating to trust and information networks, for example, would be beneficial in the future, though discerning between these two components can be challenging and would require deliberate thought in developing questions that are distinctly one or the other.

### **Implications for Future Research**

The current study attempted to outline how social capital can play a role in a relaxed standard about taking action when sexual harassment occurs. A next step would be to extend the parameters and reach out to universities across the country. This would give a better understanding of how social capital and gender expectations play out in various regions instead of one specifically in which many of the students attending come from the same geographic location as the university.

Another avenue of research would be to include a comparison group of students outside of media and sport-related fields so that comparisons can be made between the general public and people directly or indirectly impacted by this occurrence within the course of a career. It is possible that the general perception of sexual harassment is different from the ones of sport managers, athletes, and journalism students. Having that

group could provide a better understanding of why the public reacts so negatively to the victim's allegations and how that compares with their own social capital. In other words, it is meaningful to examine what influences within society make a difference in forming negative opinions of female victims. An alternative to this approach is comparing attitudes of students versus those actually in the field to see if there are differences in social capital in terms of perceptions of sexual harassment. Perhaps students have a more idealistic approach to the impact of reporting sexual harassment than those in the field, many of whom have voiced having to accept it as part of the job (Hardin & Shain, 2006; 2005a; Brennan, 1990).

In addition to extending parameters, incorporating a focus group and thus a mixed-methods approach to this topic would be beneficial in that it could allow for more elaboration on specific survey items. When answering a survey, respondents choose an option between strongly agree to strongly disagree without providing an explanation. The focus group would then allow for participants to give a voice to their reasoning and could reveal certain themes from their answers. A focus group could also allow for discussion on the topics of the reporter-athlete relationship and exactly what amount of privacy is expected within a locker room, both of which are essential to understanding perspectives on sexual harassment.

A final option to this research is using surveys developed within social capital theory to discover if there are influences outside of sport that make a difference in perceiving sexual harassment as a problem (e.g. friends, family, and various forms of media). It cannot be assumed that sport and the social capital surrounding one's involvement with sport are the primary drivers in an individual's life. There are

influences prior to getting involved with sports that also shape people – society, family, community members, classmates, teachers to name a few. If somehow a longitudinal study could be conducted to see how social capital evolves across an athlete's and reporter's lifespan, this could also shed some light on the power of networks.



### **Conclusion**

Overall, it does appear that there is a link between more social capital – in this case, negative social capital similar to that developed within groups that lead to deviant behaviors (Aaron & Dallaire, 2010; Clopton & Finch, 2010; Craine et al., 2009; Bernburg et al., 2006; Quigley, 2003; Bjerregaard, 2002) – and acceptance of sexual harassment. Those who accept sexual harassment on higher levels benefit from being part of an organization that has more status in society and can cash in on using its networks of people to make sure that sexual harassment cases go their way. They have connections to others and are part of a group that also places value on masculinity and teamwork. Not all of these traits are inherently bad, but when coupled with negative sanctions for those who try to speak out, there results a culture of acquiescence to what can be deemed criminal activity. Ingrained within sports and sport journalism are concepts that place value on masculine traits and devalue women for being too emotional and sensitive (Hardin & Whiteside, 2009; Hardin & Shain, 2006; Jimerson, 2001). As is the case for women throughout the workforce, breaking gender barriers is not an easy path. There are major obstacles in the form of a lack of social capital on the one end and more social capital from men on the other end.

The current study demonstrates positive relationships between various aspects of social capital for sport managers and journalists and a more accepting opinion of traditional gender roles. Based on the results, it appears that the differences between men and women in terms of tolerance for sexual harassment is not simply because of gender, but rather several influences within their networks and in fact the norms that guide behaviors. Change, therefore, needs to come from a multitude of sources, including

within each organization. An understanding also needs to occur between media and sport outlets as to what specifically the reporter-athlete relationship constitutes. Is it a co-worker relationship? If that is the case, then decisions need to be made on expectations of behavior for both groups. Sexual harassment sensitivity trainings are also critical to understanding what behaviors and environments are prohibited by law. Likewise, sport managers must be made aware that their athletes' actions off the field still have powerful implications for the way in which people perceive sexually harassing behaviors as appropriate. In order to curb the incidents of sexual harassment, sport managers and media outlets must come together to develop an agreed upon standard of expectations when at work that guides interactions between reporters and athletes. These findings, in fact, support information networks playing a large role in developing attitudes about the locker room culture and gender role expectations. As a result, sport managers have the power to potentially influence organizational culture by being a source of positive change.

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## Tables

Table 1

*Demographic breakdown of study participants*

<b>Major</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>Males</b>	<b>Females</b>	<b>Gender Unknown</b>	<b>Graduate (Male)</b>	<b>Seniors (Male)</b>	<b>Juniors (Male)</b>	<b>Law class</b>	<b>Issues class</b>
<b>J</b>	41	17	23	1	-	22(9)	18(8)	21	37
<b>SM</b>	40	19	21	-	11(5)	13(9)	16(6)	24	32

Note: J=journalism, SM=sport management

Table 2

*MANOVA results of differences on variables by gender and major*

<b>Indep. variable</b>	<b>Df</b>	<b>Pillai Approx</b>	<b>F num</b>	<b>Df den</b>	<b>Df</b>	<b>p</b>
<b>Gender</b>	1	0.21	3.89	5	73	.003763**
<b>Major</b>	1	0.09	1.50	5	73	0.202025

Significance level:  $p < .01^{**}$

Table 3

*ANOVA significance levels for differences on subscales*

<b>Indep. Variable</b>	<b>Trust</b>	<b>Journalism Norms</b>	<b>Locker Room Norms</b>	<b>Information networks</b>	<b>Adherence to Traditional Gender Roles</b>
<b>Gender</b>	0.057	0.234	0.014*	0.651	0.017*

Significance level:  $p < .05^*$ 

Table 4

*Kruskal-Wallis rank sum tests for differences by gender*

<b>Subscale</b>	<b>M (men)</b>	<b>M (women)</b>	<b>KW chi-squared</b>	<b>Df</b>	<b>p-value</b>
<b>Trust</b>	<b>3.33</b>	<b>3.21</b>	<b>4.05</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0.04406*</b>
<b>Jour Norms</b>	<b>4.00</b>	<b>4.18</b>	<b>2.89</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0.08917</b>
<b>Locker Room Norms</b>	<b>4.09</b>	<b>3.68</b>	<b>4.98</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0.02566*</b>
<b>Information Networks</b>	<b>4.15</b>	<b>4.23</b>	<b>0.10</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0.7562</b>
<b>Adherence to Traditional Gender Role</b>	<b>4.03</b>	<b>3.72</b>	<b>5.42</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0.01987*</b>

Table 5

*Correlations between subscales using Kendall's  $\tau$* 

<b>Subscale</b>	<b>Journalism Norms</b>	<b>Locker Room Norms</b>	<b>Information Networks</b>	<b>Adherence to Traditional Gender Roles</b>
<b>Trust</b>	-0.0847	0.3986	0.2534	0.2122
<b>Journalism Norms</b>	X	0.1339	0.1336	0.0726
<b>Locker Room Norms</b>	X	X	0.418	0.2982
<b>Information Networks</b>	X	X	X	0.2981

Table 6

*Kendal's  $\tau$  p-values for subscale correlations*

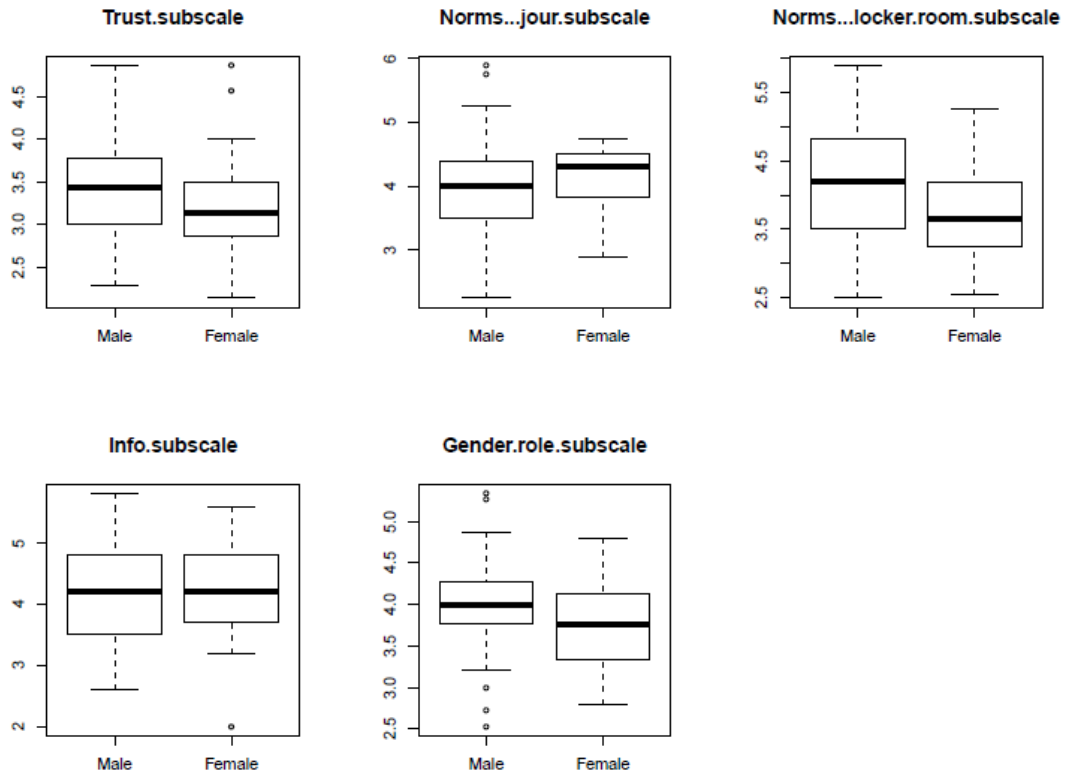
<b>Subscale</b>	<b>Journalism Norms</b>	<b>Locker Room Norms</b>	<b>Information Networks</b>	<b>Adherence to Traditional Gender Roles</b>
<b>Trust</b>	0.2922	4.0166e-07****	1.619e-03**	0.0073**
<b>Journalism Norms</b>	X	0.089	0.097	0.36
<b>Locker Room Norms</b>	X	X	1.1398e-07****	0.0001****
<b>Information Networks</b>	X	X	X	0.0002**

Significance level: p&lt;.00001\*\*\*\*, p&lt;.001\*\*\*, p&lt;.01\*\*, p&lt;.05\*

Appendices

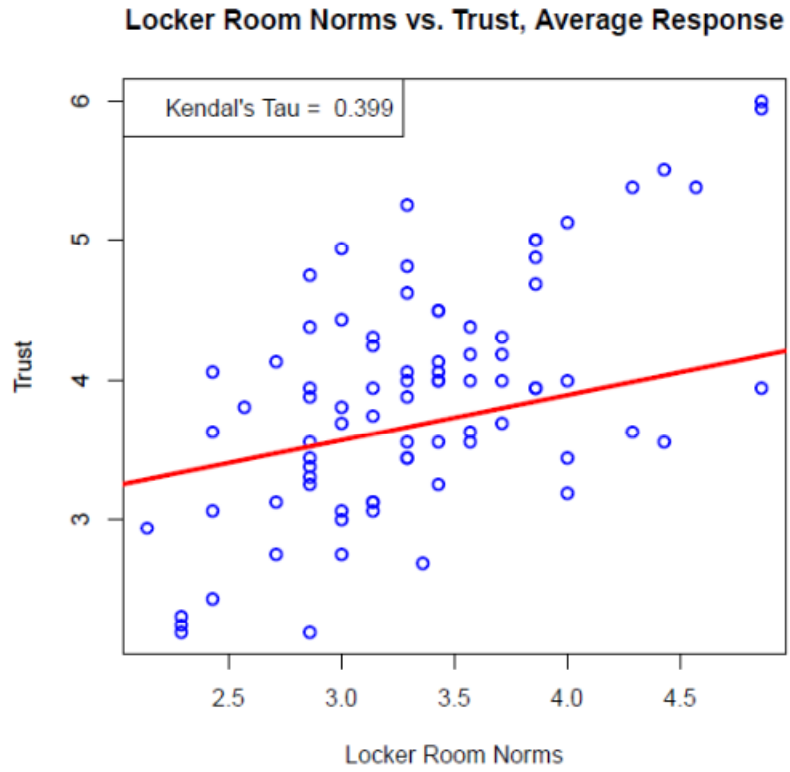
Appendix A

*Gender differences in subscale means*

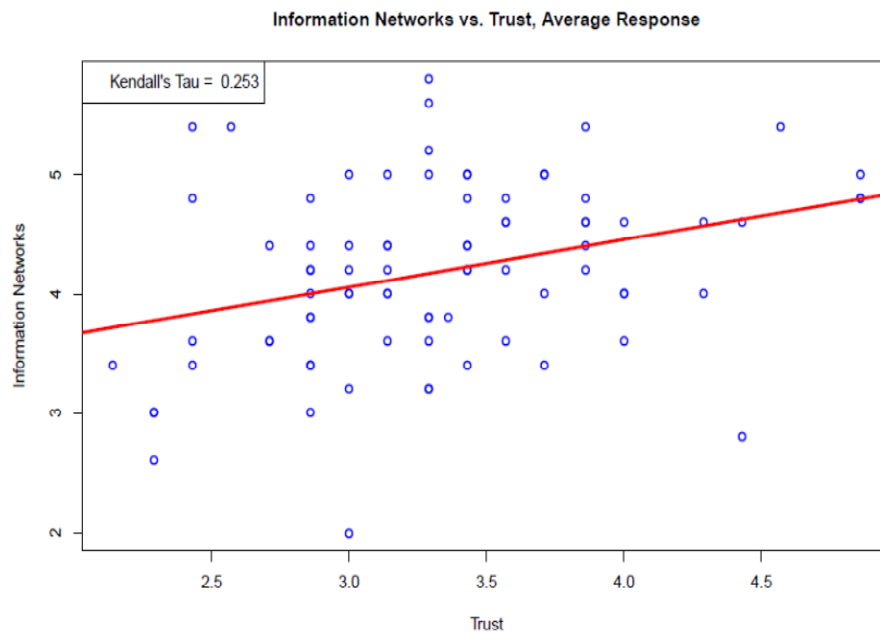




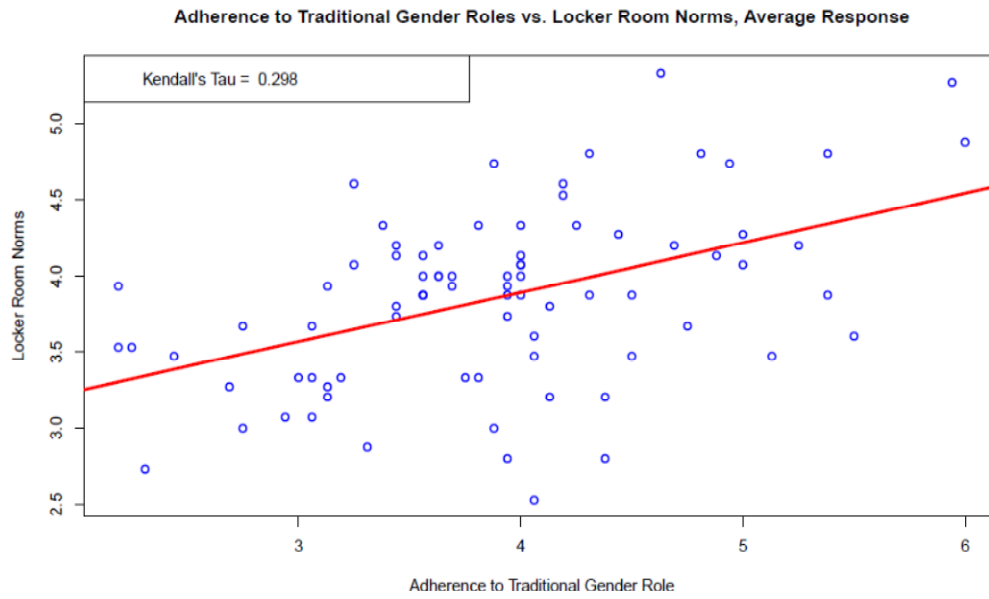
Appendix B



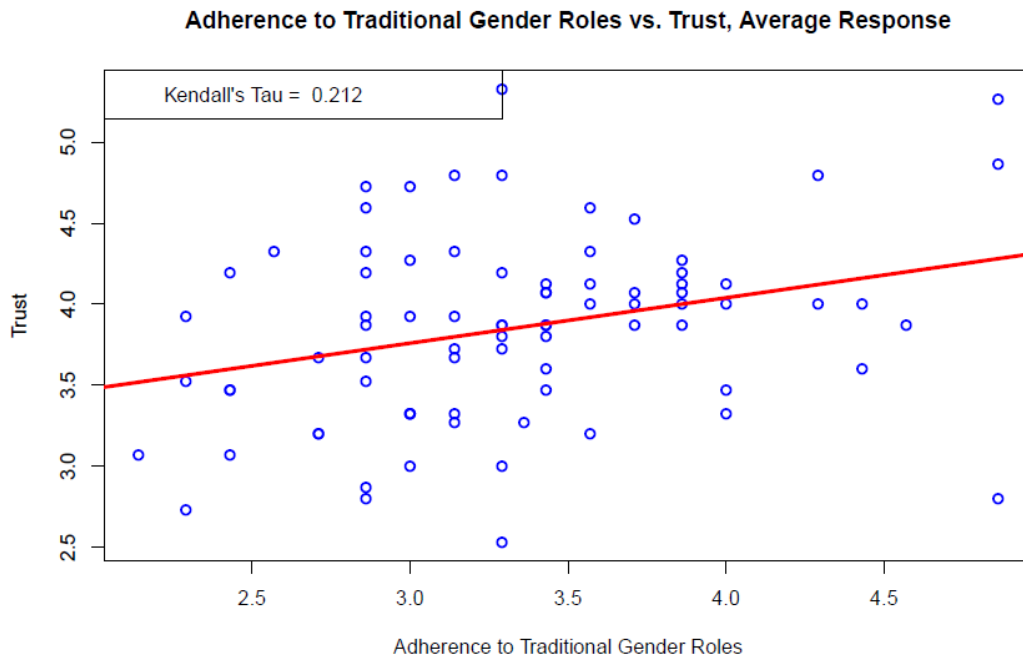
Appendix C



Appendix D

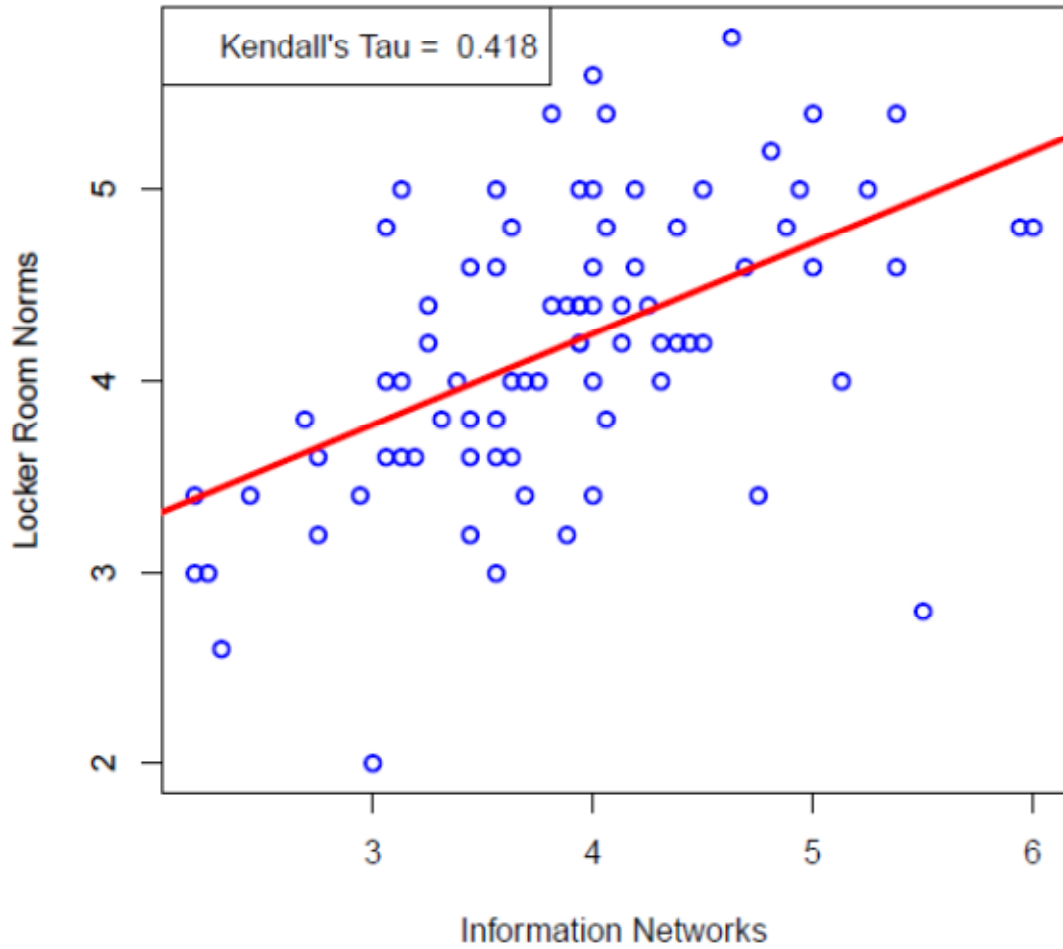


Appendix E



Appendix F

**Information Networks vs. Locker Room Norms**



Appendix G (Note: Due to margin variation, scaling of survey is different from original)

Your Major:  Sport Mgt  Journalism Year in School:  Junior  Senior  Graduate student Gender:  Female  Male

I have taken the following courses (check all that apply):  JOUR3020: Law of Libel and Communications  EKIN 3335: Sport Law  EKIN3315: Issues in Sport  JOUR3002: Journalism Ethics  EKIN 3300(W): Sport in Society

*This survey is designed to capture your attitudes about the interactions between journalists and athletes. In the statements that mention “locker room” you should treat this as a space occupied by a male athletic team in a professional venue unless otherwise specified.*

Please note:	1 = strongly disagree		4 = neutral			7 = strongly agree	
1. <b>All reporters should have full access to athletes within locker rooms after sporting events.</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2. <i>If there were more female sports reporters, there would be fewer instances of athletes making sexual comments directed at women in the locker room.</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3. <b>There is nothing wrong with a female reporter accepting a date request from a male athlete.</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4. As a sports manager, I care more about what my athletes do on the field or court than in the locker room.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5. <b>Locker rooms provide sports journalists with a scoop that they could not otherwise gain.</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6. <u>Allowing athletes 15-20 minutes after a game to shower will reduce how genuine their answers are to reporters’ questions.</u>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7. <b>Female reporters should never be in male athletes’ locker rooms.</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8. <u>Athletes have every right after games to full privacy in the locker room.</u>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
9. <b>Female sports reporters have less credibility than male sports reporters.</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
10. Locker rooms are the athletes’ domain.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
11. <b>There is nothing wrong with a male reporter accepting a date request from a female athlete.</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
12. <b>Journalists should give the highest priority to protecting their sources, regardless of the personal costs.</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
13. Male athletes often make jokes that do not align with their personal beliefs.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
14. Reporters do not have a legitimate place in a locker room.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
15. <b>Males in general are more interested in sports than are females.</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
16. <u>Athletes should respect journalists as their co-workers in the sporting profession.</u>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
17. Women should expect to see naked bodies if they go into locker rooms.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
18. <b>When entering locker rooms, female reporters are entering the domain of an athlete.</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
19. Female sports reporters should not be offended by what they see or hear in a locker room.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
20. <b>Sexual harassment is a serious problem for female sports reporters.</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
21. Crude jokes and sexual comments by athletes in the locker room are inappropriate no matter if female or male sports reporters are present.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
22. <b>It is more realistic for a male sports reporter to become well-known than a female sports reporter.</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

	1 = strongly disagree, 4 = neutral, 7 = strongly agree						
23. It is reasonable to hold athletes to a relaxed standard about sexual comments when they are in the locker room.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
24. <u>Athletes should not have to worry about what they say or do while in the locker room.</u>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
25. Male sports journalists should not be offended by seeing naked athletes in a locker room.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
26. <u>No reporters should be in the locker room until all athletes are fully dressed.</u>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
27. <i>Females need better role models as sports reporters so that they can be prepared for what to expect in a locker room.</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
28. <b>Making a comment about a woman reporter's appearance does not mean she is being sexually harassed.</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
29. It is acceptable for athletes to make crude jokes in the locker room, even in the presence of reporters.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
30. Expectations about athletes' sexual comments while in a locker room are different than in other public spaces.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
31. <b>Female sports journalists do not know as much about sports as male sports journalists.</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
32. Professionalism from athletes is required on the field, but not in the locker room.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
33. <u>Female reporters when in a locker room have the right to not have sexual comments directed toward them by male athletes.</u>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
34. <b>Female reporters need to be careful about their choice of clothing when talking to male athletes.</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
35. <b>If a female reporter wears revealing or tight clothing, she needs to be prepared to hear sexual comments from male athletes.</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
36. <i>Female sports reporters often have jobs because of the way they look.</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
37. Athletes who make sexually suggestive comments to female reporters should be reprimanded by their team.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
38. <u>Female journalists ought to be supported when reporting an instance to their employers when a male athlete made sexual advances.</u>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
39. <i>As a journalist, I would not report sexual harassment for fear of losing access to my sources.</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
40. <i>Female sports journalists should report a male athlete who made crude comments directed at her while she was in the locker room.</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
41. <b>Male sports reporters should not be in a women's sports locker room.</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
42. <i>Coaches should suspend players who make sexual comments to female reporters.</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
43. Athletes should report teammates who make sexual jokes in front of or to female reporters.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
44. There is nothing wrong with male athletes making sexual jokes or comments among their teammates while they are in the locker room.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
45. <i>Male athletes making sexually charged jokes and comments are doing the same thing that men in America do with their friends.</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
46. <b>It is the reporter's responsibility to get the story first, no matter what unpleasantness he or she might have to endure.</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
47. <b>Male journalists should expect to see naked bodies when entering a female sports locker room.</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

48. <b>Female athletes should be able to make crude jokes or comments in a locker room, even in the presence of male reporters.</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
49. There is nothing wrong with male athletes making sexual jokes or comments toward a female sports reporter while in the locker room.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
50. <b>Sexual harassment is not an issue for male sports reporters.</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
51. <b>When considering the reporter-athlete relationship, the athlete holds more power than the reporter.</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Subscale coding:

**Bold = Gender role adherence subscale**

*Italicized = Information networks subscale*

Normal = Locker room norms subscale

***Bold italicized = Journalism norms subscale***

Underlined = trust subscale