

**Women's sports media, Australian media policy and
the ABC: an examination of discourses of sport
and the relevance of national identity, 1981 to 2018.**

Michael Patrick Ward

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Statement of originality

This is to certify that to the best of my knowledge, the content of this thesis is my own work. This thesis has not been submitted for any degree or other purposes. I certify that the intellectual content of this thesis is the product of my own work and that all the assistance received in preparing this thesis and sources have been acknowledged.

Michael Ward

28 June 2023

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Terms and abbreviations

AAP	Australian Associated Press
ABCa	Australian Broadcasting Commission (1932 - 1983)
ABC	Australian Broadcasting Corporation (1983 - present)
ABC Act	<i>Australian Broadcasting Corporation Act 1983</i>
ABA	Australian Broadcasting Authority
ABT	Australian Broadcasting Tribunal
ACB	Australian Cricket Board
AFLW	Australian Football League Women
ASC	Australian Sports Commission
AWCC	Australian Women's Cricket Council
BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
DBCDE	Department of Broadband, Communications & Digital Economy
DCA	Department of Communications and the Arts
Dix	Report of <i>The ABC in Review: National Broadcasting in the 1980s</i>
DITRDC	Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Communications
DoC	Department of Communications
DOTAC	Department of Transport and Communication
FACTS	Federation of Australian Commercial Television Stations
FTA	Free-to-air
Mansfield	<i>The Challenge of a Better ABC: The Review of the role and functions of the ABC</i> Report
NSO	National Sporting Organisations
OSW	Office of the Status of Women
PSB	Public service broadcasting
PSM	Public service media
SBS	Special Broadcasting Service
STV	Subscription television
WCA	Women's Cricket Australia

Keywords

ABC, discourse, ideology, markets, media policy, neoliberalism, political economy of communications, public service media, public service broadcasting, women's cricket, women's sports media.

Abstract

This research investigates the development of discourses of women's sport in Australian media policy, including public service media policy, over almost forty years from 1981 to 2018. The research also explores how ideological shifts changed public service media policy discourses, reframing the ABC's women's sports policy role.

Ideology theory and the political economy of communications (PEC) frame an examination of policy discourses surrounding Australian women's sports and public service media (PSM). Changing discourses of media policy are investigated using a mixed methods approach, including discourse analysis, qualitative interviews with key actors in the ABC, and Australian sports policy and document analysis. Discourse analysis is the primary approach, drawing on the theoretical framework to examine discursive strategies deployed in policy documentation.

Findings from an examination of women's sports media policy discourses included an analysis of sport's national identity role, in which the construction of Australian women's sport was marginal to male sport or largely erased for much of its history. Key moments in women's sports media policy were examined via document analysis, including a 1985 report that articulated the historical struggle for recognition and representation of women in sports and sports media. A 2006 report was an equally significant policy moment, after which sports media policy discourses asserted a market rhetoric.

Examination of a second strand of media policy, Australian PSM reports in 1981 and 2018, investigates how discourses about women's sports developed in ABC policy. The research identifies 1981 as a key policy moment that gave early signals of a shift

that saw PSM no longer a central component of media policy interventions. The research shows how a 2018 PSM policy report adopted discourses of efficiency, commodification and market competition to articulate and organise the ABC's policy role and activity. Women's sports media and PSM policy are examined through an analysis of the ABC's women's sports media policy role, particularly its historical commitment to women's cricket.

This research reveals that national identity formation remains a significant part of sports media and public service media policy discourses. However, these are framed within neoliberal discourses of commodification and marketisation that have transformed the articulation of women's sports media policy in keeping with an increased marketisation of sports media.

A further finding is that sports media are no longer a defining component of PSM policy as market-driven changes and a redefinition of the ABC's sports media role are transforming understanding of long-held definitions of public service media principles.

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Chapter One

Introduction

In January 2014, “[a] day after Prime Minister Tony Abbott¹ attacked the ABC for being unpatriotic,” the Australian Government announced an ‘efficiency’ review of Australia’s public service media (PSM) organisations (ABC, 2014a; Coorey, 2014) that presaged a series of funding cuts. Angered by ABC reporting of “leaks by United States national security defector Edward Snowden, and ... allegations of the mistreatment of asylum seekers by the Australian Navy”, the Prime Minister accused “the ABC of taking ‘everyone's side, but Australia's [and not having]... affection for the home team” (Ireland, 2014, n.p.). Abbott’s comments drew on a history of powerful discourses of sport and sports media that frame meanings of, and identification with, the nation.

In November 2014, the ABC announced the “end of coverage of the women’s national soccer league”, signalling the end for almost all women’s sport on ABC television (AAP, 2014).² Although ceasing televised women’s sport and ending local sports coverage was rationalised as a response to cuts to ABC funding and in terms of apparently declining audiences and the increased availability of sport on commercial services, especially subscription television (ABC, 2022; Parkin, 2014)³ the decision removed an entire programming genre. Yet, at one time, public service media policy

¹ Tony Abbott (2013-2015) was the first of three Prime Ministers who led a conservative Australian Government from 2013 to 2022, the others being Malcolm Turnbull (2015-2018) and Scott Morrison (2018-2022).

² While ABC television continued to broadcast women’s sports such as golf and football, by 2022 total sports broadcasts were 71 hours (ABC, 2022), down from 567 hours in 2014 (ABC, 2014b).

³ The 2014-18 budget reductions were the most significant in the organisation's history and saw ABC funding reduced by \$1 billion in a decade (Brevini & Ward, 2021).

discourse identified sport as critical to its “contribut[ion] to a continuing sense of national identity” and linked women’s sports media to “address[ing] fluid and changing minorities and majorities within the community” (ABC, 1984, p. 6). However, a discursive transformation of ABC women’s sports media policy, accompanied by a reshaping of discourses of national identity formation, had been developing for several years (Australian Senate, 2011).

Research questions

This research project examines the changing discourses of Australian women’s sports and public service media policy and the continuing relevance of policy discourses that frame constructions of national identity in those policies. It investigates the development of discourses of these two strands of Australian media policy using discourse analysis, content analysis and the political economy of communications. The thesis presents evidence of the results of an examination of how discourses of women’s sports developed in Australian media policy, including public service media policy, specifically the ABC. It also presents an analysis of the historical context of discourses about Australian sport, women’s sports and sports media in Australia, focusing on cricket and the ABC. The research project has answered the following questions in charting the major ideological shifts that have transformed discourses of women’s sports in media policy over almost forty years:

How have discourses of women’s sports developed in Australian media policy?

How have discourses of women’s sports developed in PSM policy, specifically the ABC?

Is national identity still relevant in the policy discourses under consideration?

Sub questions

How has national identity in women's sports and PSM policy been assimilated into a discourse of neoliberalism?

What has been the impact of a discourse of increased marketisation and/or commodification of women's sports media policy?

What does increased marketisation of sports media mean for the PSM role?

In carrying out the research about women's sports media and PSM policy discourses from 1981 to 2018, it became clear that evidence of an increasing discourse of commodification and marketisation of sports media, including women's sports, required a closer examination of neoliberal policy formations than envisaged initially in the research. Therefore, an important element of the research is the examination of an increasing recourse to neoliberal discourses. Given the importance of understanding the impact of neoliberalism, the research also examines the use of related discourses of 'markets' and 'efficiency' in women's sports media and public service media policy.

The research also includes an examination of discourses of 'nation' and 'national identity' in sports media and public service media policy, and whether the historical centrality of such discourses has been assimilated or subsumed by a discourse of neoliberalism. Finally, the research considers the impact of such transformations on the ABC's women's sports media role and public service media principles.

Significance

The research contributes to several aspects of scholarship about media policy and policy discourse. Research about the two policy strands of women's sports and public service media policy has proceeded principally as two different sets of inquiry. For example, there is a long history of academic research about PSM in specific national contexts (for example, Barnett & Docherty, 1986; Brevini, 2013; Cunningham, 1993, 2015; Curran & Seaton, 2018; Debrett, 2010; Jacka, 1991; Moe, 2011; O'Regan; 1993; Tracey, 1998). While there are significant exceptions, as noted below and in chapters Three and Four (for example, McKay & Rowe, 1987; Rowe & Brown, 1994; Williams et al., 1985; Rowe, 2004), there has been less focused research on Australian women's sports media policy.

Analysis of two sets of public policy documents provides important data about media policy. The documents examined provide insights into the discourses at work at the intersection of media policy, PSM policy and women's sports media policy. The contribution is significant, given a lack of scholarship at the intersection of discourse, ideology, shifting definitions of Australian national identity, women's sport, and the role of public service media such as the ABC.

Scholars have researched and documented sports media in various combinations of national, geographical, and delivery contexts (for example, Hutchins, 2005; Hutchins & Rowe, 2010; Rowe, 2004; Rowe et al., 1998). However, with the exceptions noted below, few studies have focussed on Australian media policy discourses, with an absence of examination of the evolution of policy discourses in the Australian sports and public service media contexts. While there is significant literature on Australian

women's sports (e.g., Cashman & Weaver, 1991), there is little scholarship from a media discipline perspective about Australian women's sports media policy. This includes research about policy discourses and the role of the ABC in media coverage of women's sport.

This thesis also contributes to scholarship about Australian media policy and the discursive construction of national identity in PSM policy, including how culture "makes sense of itself and infers meanings onto its institutions and practices" (Turner, 1986, p. 2). The research contributes to the analysis of shifting discursive frameworks in Australian media policy, definitions of national identity and the policy role of the ABC.

Except for Scherer and Rowe's (2014) consideration of sports media, citizenship and public service broadcasting and Goldsmith's (2015) examination of the role of sport in Australian television history, there is little analysis of the public service media role in Australian sports media.⁴ While research has analysed the significance of sport in nation-building in the Australian context (Cashman, 1984; Hutchins, 2005; Rowe, 2014), with few exceptions (Goldsmith, 2015) there has been limited description and analysis of the history and role of the ABC in delivering sports programming.

There is also little research about the discourses that frame Australian public service media policy, including the formation of national identity. Given the importance of sport and sports media in narratives of nation-building and national identity, especially concerning cricket (Hutchins, 2005; Malcolm, 2013; Rowe, 2014; Scherer & Rowe,

⁴ Andrewes' (2000) article about radio broadcasting, cricket and pre-war Australia is also an exception.

2014; Velija, 2015), there is an opportunity to build on research to investigate how PSM policy discourses have been deployed and their impact on the ABC's sports media role. This focus on PSM policy discourses is a significant contribution to research about Australian women's sport media and gendered, albeit shifting, definitions of national identity (Velija, 2015).

There has also been little examination of recent policy documentation about either Australian women's sports media or PSM policy. The content and discourse analysis carried out in this research represents the first longitudinal charting of women's sports media policy in Australia. This contributes to addressing a significant research gap, especially noting the policy shifts of the past forty years, a period characterised by an increasingly neoliberal ideological dominance across all policy areas (Redden, Phelan & Baker, 2020).

For public broadcasters such as the ABC, delivering sport to local, and eventually national, audiences (Scherer & Rowe, 2014, Whannel, 1992) made PSMs "primary definer(s) of national identity" (Whannel, 1992, p. 18). This research considers the context of developing discourses of women's sports media and public service media policy, including the ABC's role in developing women's sports media in Australia. The research also examines the intersection of women's sports media and PSM policy by reviewing the role of the ABC's women's sports contribution to the development of women's sports media, focusing on women's cricket. This consists of an analysis of the historical development of Australian women's cricket and women's cricket broadcasts by the ABC. Women's cricket coverage was an important element of the ABC sports media policy role, with the ABC having a long history of such broadcasts

(Rowe, 2014). In 1958, women's international cricket was broadcast by the ABC, as the touring England team's match against NSW and possibly an Australia-England test match became the first international women's team sports broadcast on television in Australia⁵ (ABCa, 1958). The first televised broadcasts of international cricket in Australia were of women's cricket "a year before the first men's test matches in 1958/59" (Ward, 2017, p. 93).

Sport and sports media

Given the place of sport and sports media in this research, it is important to begin with a definition, especially noting the increasing significance of media in the experience of, and discursive formations about, sport. Sporting contests remained "the private experience of those who chose to attend the event" until electronic media live broadcasts were deployed in the 1920s and 1930s (Barnett, 1990, p. 1). Prior to television and the commodification of sport as a televisual form, sport was primarily experienced directly as a live event (radio broadcasts excepted) (Barnett, 1990). However, for most people, sport is now experienced as an electronic product on television and increasingly online (Rowe, 2004).

The last century has transformed the sporting experience as events "have been available to not just the spectators who choose to witness the event in person, but to many millions more who can view the spectacle" (Barnett, 1990, p. 1). Barnett (1990) identified how two completely different activities- "the screening of television programmes and the spectating of sports events- have become inextricably

⁵ Although Cashman and Weaver (1993) cite the first women's cricket television broadcasts as being by the ABC in the 1980s, subsequent research has identified the first broadcast as 1958 (Ward, 2017).

interweaved” (pp. 1-2). The extension of the popular press in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries meant that communities had a near ‘live’ experience of the event (Williams, 1974, 2003). While press reports and cinema newsreel screenings of sporting events provided contemporaneous information and summaries of recent action, the deployment of electronic media and the potential for live broadcasts meant that those not at the event could experience it while it was happening (Barnett, 1990). Over time the extension of media coverage and the availability of reception equipment meant that the electronic media audience was far greater than the live audience (Barnett, 1990; Rowe, 2004). Sport is delivered in various formats (live and recorded events, news, information/current affairs/discussion and analysis, and documentary) and increasingly as digital multi-platform content via mobile, web and connected television (Hutchins & Rowe, 2012; Hutchins et al., 2019). Consequently, there has been a transformation in the way sports events are organised, produced, and consumed (Hutchins & Rowe, 2012).

This research engages with sports media, that is, “sport as media” (Rowe & Hutchins, 2013, p. 4) because it is an important cultural site where meanings such as national identities are played out (Antunovic & Whiteside, 2018; Whannel, 1992). Women’s sports media and PSM policy are interrogated in the context of changes in articulations of Australian media policy over almost forty years. Australian media policy, including broadcast and communications policies, has been linked to an ideological program of nation-building and national identity since 1932, and framed in PSM legislation since 1983 (ABC Act, 1983). Policy discourses are examined as ideological processes that

frame sport as fundamental to the concept of nation and national identity (Hutchins & Rowe, 2012).

Theoretical framework, methodology and methods

The discourses in women's sports media and PSM policy reports are examined employing a theoretical framework encompassing ideology theory and political economy of communication lenses. Ideology is a critical theoretical frame for this project as it examines the ideological positions in changing discourses in policy documents about Australian public service media and women's sports media. A political economy of communications (PEC) approach is employed because it is holistic, provides for a "focus on the interplay between the symbolic and economic dimensions of public communication", is historical and is "centrally concerned with balance between capitalist enterprise and public intervention" (Murdock and Golding, 2005, p. 60).

The research adopts a mixed methods approach to investigate the research questions, "combin[ing] elements of qualitative and quantitative research approaches" (Johnson et al., 2007, p. 123). Discourse analysis is the primary approach as it "offers an important potential for interpreting and understanding texts and their wider relation to social contexts" (Carvalho, 2000, p. 5). The research examines two sets of public policy documents— two public service media policy reports from 1981 and 2018, and two women's sports media policy reports from 1985 and 2006. Based on the theoretical framework, the research examines discursive strategies deployed in policy documentation. Concepts such as 'nation' and 'national identity' are examined as

ideological formations that are “special forms of social identities [that] are produced and reproduced, as well as transformed and dismantled, *discursively*”. (Wodak et al., 2009, pp. 3-4)

The research project includes a content analysis of Australian media policy documents. Following the identification and selection of key policy documents for this research, a content analysis of policy documents is applied to identify key terms and the “frequency and prominence of particular textual properties” (Schroder, 2002, p. 102). Semi-structured, individual interviews are used to obtain perspectives on the PSB’s engagement with women’s sport. The interviews bring specific “technical knowledge, process knowledge and explanatory knowledge”. (Van Audenhove & Donders, 2019, p. 183)

Chapter outline

The structure and framework of this research are outlined in the following paragraphs. Chapter Two analyses scholarship about public service broadcasting (PSB) and public service media (PSM),⁶ including their role, significance and relationship with Australian media policies. The chapter begins by examining PSB and its evolution to public service media. It also examines scholarship about PSM and media policy, including a consideration of Australian media policy scholarship, before concluding with an analysis of the literature about the relationship between neoliberal ideology and media policy.

⁶ The thesis uses the term Public Service Media (PSM) unless there is a specific reason to note PSB.

Chapter Three analyses scholarship about sport, national identity and media, building on the consideration of scholarship about PSM, national identity and media policy in Chapter Two. The chapter examines sports discourses in the Australian context, considering key literature about national identity. The chapter considers scholarship about national identity in the context of the development of sport in Australia, focusing initially on men's cricket before examining relevant literature on women's cricket.

Chapter Four provides historical context in Australian women's sports media policy in Chapters Seven, Eight and Nine by examining literature about Australian sport, sports media and women's sports media, including an analysis of women's cricket. The chapter includes an analysis of public service broadcasting and sports media. It also presents an analysis of the ABC's role in women's sports media.

Chapter Five describes the project's theoretical framework, including its foundation in ideology theory and the political economy of communications (PEC). These theoretical positions provide a framework for examining the historical and contemporary implications of discourses in policy documents about Australian public service media and women's sports media policies.

Chapter Six describes the project's methodology and methods of analysis. Having determined the multi-layered theoretical framework of the thesis, the project's methodology, research design and mixed methods approach is described in the chapter. This includes a detailed explanation of the adoption of a discourse analysis approach for the examination of media policy documents. The chapter also describes

the use of content analysis and the triangulation of the analyses with qualitative interviews to address the research questions.

Chapter Seven is the first of three chapters presenting the findings of analyses of the discourses in public service media and women's sports media policy. It presents an examination of discourses of media policy in two key Australian public service media policy documents, *The ABC in review: National broadcasting in the 1980s* (Dix, 1981) and the 2018 *National broadcasters efficiency review* Report (Tonagh & Bean, 2018).⁷ The chapter also provides context for the two main reports, including a quantitative content analysis of nine PSM reports from 1981 and 2018. Examining discourses of women's sports media policy in ABC reports builds on the examination of scholarship about PSM in Chapter Two and sport, national identity and sports media literature reviewed in Chapter Three. The examination of these discourses includes analysing the relevance of national identity policy roles and the impact of an increasingly neoliberal discourse in media policy on the ABC's women's sports media role.

Chapter Eight presents the findings of an analysis of the discourses of women's sports media policy documents from 1985 to 1997. It begins by presenting data relating to the first of the primary documents selected, the *Women, sport and the media* report (ASC & OSW, 1985). The chapter includes a comparative content analysis of the selected nine women's sports media policy reports, providing a longitudinal analysis from 1985 to 2017, before presenting a content and discourse analysis of the 1985 Report.

⁷The *National broadcasters efficiency review* Report (Tonagh & Bean, 2018) has a publication date of December 2018 on its front page. However, while the Report was submitted to the Government at that time, it was not publicly released until 23 June 2020 (Samios, 2020).

Chapter Nine presents the last section of findings on media policy reports, focussing on the examination of the *About time! Women In sport and recreation in Australia* Report (Australian Senate, 2006). It includes the findings of a content analysis and a discourse analysis. Following a detailed examination of the 2006 Report, the chapter summarises more recent reports on women's sports media, extending the analysis of the ideological framing of media policy in Australian women's sports media.

The final chapter summarises the main findings and the significance of the research, its limitations, and opportunities for further research. It identifies ideological shifts in discourses of women's sports media policy and argues that these discourses have reframed women's sports and public service media policy, particularly impacting the ABC's women's sports role with implications for how the ABC observes public service media principles.

Conclusion

This thesis presents the results of an investigation of how discourses of women's sports have developed in Australian media policy. The case of women's sports media is employed to chart changes in media policy over the past forty years, including consideration of women's sports discourses and PSM policy, specifically the ABC and its sports media policy role. The examination considers the relevance of national identity in these policy discourses, the increasing influence of neoliberalism, and its impact on women's sports media and public service media policy in Australia.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

Introduction

This chapter analyses scholarship about public service broadcasting (PSB) and public service media (PSM)⁸ in the context of examining evolving discourses in Australian media policy. The review of scholarship includes consideration of national identity as an enduring but changing part of public service media policy discourse and the impact of neoliberal ideologies on media policy discourse. The chapter begins with an examination of public service broadcasting, including its evolution to public service media. It then examines scholarship about PSM, national identity and media policy, including consideration of Australian media policy scholarship. It concludes by analysing literature about the relationship between neoliberal ideology, media policy and PSM policy.

From Public Service Broadcasting (PSB) to Public Service Media (PSM)

Public service media are complex epistemologically in that it has a history across a range of disciplines such as media studies, communication studies, cultural studies, political economy of communications, and other fields, including media economics, economics, business and finance disciplines (for example, Armstrong, 2005; Brown, 1996; Moe & Syvertsen, 2009).

⁸ The thesis uses the term Public Service Media (PSM) unless there is a specific reason to note PSB, such as when describing the operations, policy and role of PSBs prior to the introduction of digital technology.

Substantial scholarship has identified the PSB transformation to PSM through strategic, administrative and policy decisions to adopt and take up digital, online and mobile services internationally (for example, Brevini, 2013; Jakubowicz, 2011, Moe, 2011; Murdock, 2005), including in the Australian media context (Burns, 2004; Cunningham, 2013, 2015; Debrett, 2010). Public service broadcasting (PSB) was a 20th-century media policy instrument, “a set of political interventions... [to provide] programs that are valuable to society” (Syvertsen in Jakubowicz, 2011, p. 210). While the specific form of public service broadcasting has varied according to national, political, social and historical arrangements (Jacka, 1991; Moe, 2011), in countries such as Australia it has been a central component of national media policy (Jakubowicz, 2011).

PSB’s historical role, national context and the ‘Reithian’ model

PSB was established in a “specific political, technological and social context” that included the technical scarcity of spectrum for transmission (Moe, 2011, p. 53), a sense of broadcasting’s social purpose (Tracey, 1998), independence from external controls (Tracy, 1998) and a need to ensure its wide accessibility to the community (Debrett, 2010). It was considered important in contributing to ‘cultural citizenship’ through access to comprehensive (popular) content as well as content aligned to the needs of specific groups (complementary programming), including sporting programs (Scherer & Rowe, 2014).

These initial contexts established a model from which PSB and then PSM evolved; an evolution that occurred in different ways in different national and historical circumstances (Debrett, 2010; Moe & Syvertsen, 2009). Specific economic and political

arrangements framed the PSB tradition as “[h]istorical, political and cultural legacies that characterize the ethos of each PSB... impinged on and influenced their online expansion” (Brevini, 2013, p. 16). For example, the United States has a limited public service media role in a commercially dominant media market (Baker, 2002). This is because, despite attempts to establish public service broadcasting from the 1920s, the US adopted “a commercial system paid for by commercial advertising as the ‘American plan’... asserting there was no conflict between... noneconomic values and commercialism”. (Baker, 2002, pp. 247-248)

While the characteristics of public service broadcasting are unique in each national context, many countries share similar approaches and philosophies (Flew, 2018; Jakubowicz, 2011). For example, the Australian public service broadcasting form is considered derivative of the UK ‘Reithian’ model, derived from the ideas of the BBC’s first Director-General, John Reith (Inglis, 1983). Reith articulated a public broadcasting vision with a commitment to a concept of quality programming and the creation of “a more intelligent and enlightened electorate... [to] bind together the whole of society” (Tracey, 1998, p. 100). It included independence from political and commercial interests (Tracey, 1998). Reith was invoked as the source of such ideas and their ensuing model (Tracey, 1998). These aspects of the Reithian model were articulated in establishing the BBC with a Charter commitment to “inform, educate and entertain”. (Tracey, 1998)

There was an explicit linkage of ‘worthy’ national events to the Reithian ideal of enlightenment and education (Whannel, 1992). The Reithian commitment to ‘elite’ programming is evident in the BBC’s sports program selection before World War II,

with an emphasis on cricket, tennis and horse racing at Ascot (Haynes, 2016), to the exclusion of more popular sports such as football (Whannel, 1992). However, not all elements of the Reithian vision endured, with Reith's cultural vision described as archaic by the 1950s (Tracey, 1998). A broadcasting commitment that engaged "with the relationship between elitism and populism" (Tracey, 1998, p. 71) evolved into meeting the needs of various audiences through complementarity and comprehensiveness in programming. This approach can still be traced to "a Reithian view of broadcasting... 'to vary output so that listeners might be 'surprised into' [experiencing content] he had not previously known about or enjoyed'" (Scannell & Cardiff, 1982, p. 187). It evolved in the UK and Australia into complementary broadcasting services rather than the mixed programming of pre-war radio (Moran, 1992a; Scannell & Cardiff, 1982).

Some research has contested the significance of the Reithian model for Australia (Craik, 1991) based on a contestation between 'worthy' programming and more popular forms. Craik (1991) argued that Australian broadcasting policy and programming output were shaped by "commercial and popular imperatives" (p. 31) rather than an adherence to a Reithian high culture ambition. While it is important to note the challenge to the 'Reithian' model, components of the model endured, notwithstanding a critique of high versus popular cultural forms discussed below.

These concepts and their articulation in 'charters' still underpin the Reithian public service broadcasting model; in Australia, for example, in the ABC and SBS legislation. Explicit in the model is the notion of independence from specific interests and controls, whether governmental or private, i.e., an accountability to the community

(Tracey, 1998). While public service broadcasters are established under legislation or similar arrangements (e.g., the BBC Royal Charter) with administrative obligations such as parliamentary reporting, their legislative frameworks guarantee independence from the direction of such authorities (Syvertsen, 2003) (see, for example, s 3, BBC Charter, 2016; s 8 (1) (b) ABC Act, 1983; s 10 (1), SBS Act 1991; [Canadian] Broadcasting Act, Part III, s. 46 (5)). Public service media independence operates in political and economic terms, including freedom from commercial imperatives.⁹ This independence provides the potential for programming not dependent on advertising revenue or maximising audience ratings (Debrett, 2010). However, as discussed in examining ABC policy reports in Chapter Seven, independence can become problematic in the absence of adequate funding.

Public service media principles and values

While there may be “no single, universal and conclusive definition of what exactly PSM is or what the organizations delivering public media services should do” (Donders & Van den Bulck, 2016, p. 301), substantial scholarship has identified key concepts that can be ascribed to public service media organisations (Barnett & Docherty, 1986). Drawing on principles initially published in 1985 by the Broadcasting Research Unit (1985),¹⁰ Born and Prosser (2001) identified twelve criteria, arguing there is “consensus

⁹ SBS raises a proportion of its revenue from broadcasting and on-demand advertising.

¹⁰ The “Broadcasting Research Unit defined PSB with the following characteristics...:

- Universality (geographic) – broadcast programmes should be available to the whole population.
- Universality (of appeal) – broadcast programmes should cater to all interests and tastes.
- Universality (of payment) – one main instrument of broadcasting should be directly funded by the corpus of users.
- Minorities, especially disadvantaged minorities, should receive particular provision.
- Broadcasters should recognise their special relationship to the sense of national identity and community.
- Broadcasting should be distanced from all vested interests, and in particular from those of the government of the day.

on certain core normative criteria for PSB... Citizenship: enhancing, developing and serving social, political and cultural citizenship... Universality, and... Quality of services and of output” (p. 671). These principles or criteria are deployed by PSM organisations “to produce programs that are valuable to society”. (Syvertsen, 2003, p. 156)

Donders and Van den Bulck (2016) identify “five core values found in literature on public service broadcasting (PSB) and on the shift from PSB to PSM” (p. 301).¹¹ These include universality of access for “all citizens, regardless of their geographical location, their ability/willingness to pay, their gender, ethnical background... quality and distinctiveness” (Donders and Van den Bulck, 2016, p. 301). Other values such as “creativity and innovation”, link “creative services ... and ... innovation in service and technology (Cunningham, 2009: 85)” and “[a]ccountability to citizens and legislators” as part of a PSM commitment to “transparency and responsiveness to society”. (Donders and Van den Bulck, 2016, p. 302)

The final value is “identity construction and diversity”, extending traditional PSB concepts relating to national identity formation to encompass “growing cultural and ethnic fragmentation occurring within national boundaries... catering to minority interests, and... celebrating the diversity of cultures on a global scale”. (Donders and Van den Bulck, 2016, p. 302)

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- Broadcasting should be structured so as to encourage competition in good programming rather than competition for numbers.
 - The public guidelines for broadcasting should be designed to liberate rather than restrict the programme makers” (Thomass, 2020, p. 33).

¹¹ The values are also derived from PSB mission statements and European Broadcasting Union (EBU) PSM values list (Donders and Van den Bulck, 2016, p. 301).

Syvertsen (2003) defines public broadcasting as a form of governance with the insertion of “a set of political interventions into the media market to ensure that broadcasters produce programs that are valuable to society”. (p. 156)

The principles, values and obligations of public service media can also be applied to define and understand public broadcasting as adhering to an ethos or characteristic spirit (Brevini, 2013). Brevini (2013) identifies four normative criteria for PSM or “PSB 2.0¹²: citizenship, universality, quality and trust” (p. 32). Like other scholarship cited, universality is a key PSM concept, encompassing access and availability (universality of service) as well as “different interests and tastes of society (Tracey, 1998)” (Brevini, 2013, p. 43). The final and potentially most important component is ‘trust’ as an active constituent, not an absence of deception, but the demonstration of “impartiality, transparency and accountability”. (Brevini, 2013, p. 51)

As examined in detail regarding the ABC in later chapters, PSM organisations implement principles or values through the programming, broadcasting or online delivery of different genres, such as news, drama, entertainment and factual content. Sports media have been a key component of the various genres and programming that “bring[s] communities and/or the nation together” (Smith, 2017, p. 203). The PSM sports media role has been charted, for example, in general terms (Rowe, 2004; Scherer & Rowe, 2014) and specifically concerning the BBC (Whannel, 1992) and the ABC (Goldsmith; 2015; Inglis, 1983).

¹² PSB 2.0: public service broadcasting operating a digital media system.

Despite some agreement about its principles, public service media are a “contested and changing concept” (Moe, 2011, p. 53). Its articulation has changed in an evolving engagement with different technologies and changing political, economic, cultural and social arrangements (Brevini, 2013; Moe, 2011). While public service media initially referred to radio broadcasting, then television, then multi-platform content provision, each techno-social shift has provided opportunities for an evolution in its role **and** ignited political debate about the ongoing need, or otherwise, for PSM (Moe, 2011).

Notwithstanding a significant contribution to Australia’s media environment, and despite media systems historically consisting of both public and private sectors, the Australian PSM role in an evolving media system has been contested, as commercial media solutions are the increasingly preferred model to achieve not just economic outcomes, but political, social and cultural goals (Cunningham, 2013). The contested place of PSM in a multi-sector media system has been recognised in significant scholarship (for example, Barnett, 2006; Debrett, 2010; Donders, 2011; Inglis, 1983, 2006; Jacka, 1991; Moe, 2011).

Debrett (2009) noted that a quarter of a century of debate about the role and place of public service media had generally been framed “in anticipation of its demise” (p. 807). Although she takes a more positive tone, Debrett (2009), after Tracey (1998), identifies four elements for the cause of this pessimism. These are the combination of internal organisational and strategic failures, the impact of commercial markets, ideological transformation in the form of market-driven philosophy and digital transformation. In an environment where public media has been constructed as problematic commercial,

market-driven solutions are considered the optimum mechanism for achieving policy outcomes within a media system (Brevini, 2013; Padovani & Tracey, 2003).

This framing of PSM as the ‘problem’ is discussed further in Chapter Seven in the context of analysis of neoliberal discourses, specifically articulations of efficiency, commodification and markets in public service media reports (for example, Tonagh & Bean, 2018). The so-called PSM problem relates to discourses of the ideologically framed ‘market’. As Baker (2002) has noted in the context of US communications policy, but equally applicable in terms of other jurisdictions and more widely to media policy development in Australia, there is “a virtually unquestioned market orientation [that is] conspicuous in the framing of public media, media regulation”. (p. 3)

While acknowledging challenges to PSM, scholars have also identified resistance and success in contending with the audience fragmentation caused by technological change and declines in public funding (for example, Barnett, 2006; Debrett, 2009; Jacka, 2006). This resistance has been achieved by engaging “with new ways of delivering the public service remit” (Debrett, 2009, p. 807). These critical observations, also found in other research (Cunningham, 2015; Donders, Pauwels & Loisen, 2012; Flew, 2018), point to one of PSM’s most significant characteristics: an ability to evolve.

Media systems

It is necessary to define the term ‘media system’ before further analysing scholarship about PSM. A media system is a specific and historical set of political, economic, social, cultural and industrial arrangements (Hesmondhalgh, 2019) that exist and operate in a specific national context, for example, Australia. The system includes legislative and regulatory settings, and financial and revenue sources. It is framed by ideological

relationships to the market and/or community and a consequential framing of the members of a community as citizens or, increasingly, as media systems are structured as media markets, as consumers (Brevini, 2013). Curran et al. (2009) describe three models of “different systems... public service... a ‘dual’ model... and the market model” (p. 5). A media system is also characterised by production and distribution arrangements in which the deployment of technological and organisational arrangements is the outcome of an ideological struggle (Curran & Seaton, 2018).

Media systems comprise a complex policy environment of legislation, regulatory arrangements and “industry subsidy structures... [that] take effect in particular political, economic, demographic and geographic contexts” (O’Regan, 1993, p. xix). In the Australian media system, television “consist[s] of distribution and broadcasting strategies, institutional structures, and the different activities involved in creating, regulating, screening, criticising and otherwise producing and watching television in Australia”. (O’Regan, 1993, p. xix)

This research positions public and commercial media organisations in the same media system and policy framework. There are numerous components of that system, such as relationships between content suppliers and audiences and between rights holders and media organisations, for example, in sports media markets (for example, Rowe, 2011; Whannel, 1992). This theorisation contrasts with Tracey’s (1998) articulation of public and commercial broadcasting, which are posed as distinctly different and separate systems, albeit both relating to programming and money. The distinction between public and commercial, where public broadcasters operate to “acquire money to make programs [and]... a commercial system make[s] programs to acquire money”

(Tracey, 1998, p. 18), is important in framing the PSM principle of programming quality and the relationship to audiences and community.

A combination of policy, economic arrangements¹³ and technological limitations developed broadcast media as national institutions (Chalaby, 2005, in Jenner, 2018). National media systems were “[t]oo expensive to be taken on by an individual or private company” (Turner, 2009, p. 53 in Jenner, 2018, p. 203). As commercial services were established, public policy was instituted to ensure “benefits... connected to the public good, [for] the citizenry of a single nation-state, who were promised more or less universal access” (Turner, 2009, p. 53 in Jenner, 2018, p. 203). Nonetheless, public and private sector media operate in the same technical and financial television broadcasting and audiovisual streaming systems (O’Regan, 1993; Debrett, 2009). For example, in Australian sports media markets, commercial and public free-to-air television broadcasters cooperated (as oligopolistic purchasers) and competed for sports rights (Rowe, 2004, 2014; Hutchins & Rowe, 2012).

Media policy

Before analysing literature about Australian media policy and national identity, it is important to define the policy process and ‘media policy’. As noted above, it is also important to acknowledge that countries have significantly different historical and contemporary experiences of public service media. Thus, while the definitions stated

¹³ The organisation of transnational content supply by global territories defined and controlled by a small number of distribution entities (principally from the US in the field of audiovisual content), meant national media systems were dependent on global supply arrangement (Jenner, 2018, p. 200).

below draw on scholarship from other countries, particularly the United Kingdom, they focus on an explanation of Australian media policy.

Media policy can be summarised as the (usually) articulated and organised summary and means by which public entities such as governments and agencies achieve “economic, political and socio-cultural objectives” (Freedman, 2008, p. 10), including “the ways public authorities shape or try to shape, the structures and practices of the media” (Garnham, 1979 cited in Freedman, 2008, p. 10). Central to these and related definitions of legislative, regulatory and administrative arrangements is the concept of public intervention authorised by legislative and regulatory instruments and monitored and managed by public agencies (McQuail in Freedman, 2008). The activities and objectives are invariably described in discourses that evoke the operation of markets, including addressing concepts of media ownership (for example, to address concerns about concentration of ownership and/or a lack of diversity in media outlets and platforms) or specific inabilities of the market (market failure), such as a lack of socially desirable content delivery (e.g., children’s programs) (Cunningham, 2014).

Policies developed and implemented by public entities and encapsulated in public processes and documentation (parliaments, legislation, regulatory agencies, guidelines, rules and reports) are a key component of public media policy and will be investigated further below. However, the definitions above do not consider the means and activities of media market players in the policy process and their influence on outcomes and policy settings.

While media policy might initially be defined as being concerned with what “we now call legacy—mass media: print, broadcasting and, to some extent, cinema”, it

encompasses other policy areas such as communications and telecommunications (Puppis and van den Bulck, 2019, p. 4). This is partly because “digitization, convergence, and globalization of communications technologies blur traditional technological and regulatory distinctions” (Price, Puppis and Verhulst, 2013 in Puppis and Van den Bulck, 2019, p. 4). More precisely, the term ‘media policy’ addresses the political and economic relationships that frame national and global arrangements of traditional and digital media. As Puppis and Van den Bulck (2019) note, media policy is structured by paradigms that provide:

‘An overarching set of ideas that specify how the problems are to be perceived, which goals might be attained through policy and what sorts of techniques can be used to reach those goals.[...] they structure the way in which policymakers see the world and their role within’ (Hall, 1992, pp. 91–92). (p. 5)

The policy frameworks, including approaches, goals and perceptions of the world, are articulated in policy discourses in documents and statements (Fairclough & Fairclough, 2012). Media policies are not only the summation of the formal statements of government, agencies or political parties. Policy is an ongoing struggle with the engagement of political and economic forces (Fairclough, 2003). It can be understood as a series of discursive events that include various forms of published texts (discussion papers, green papers, reports, submissions, media coverage, public meetings, etc.). In addition, there are ‘unseen’ events, such as meetings involving various actors (ministers, public servants, reviewers, lobbyists). These can be analysed as “social events or practices” about which “people see, represent, interpret and conceptualise”

(Fairclough, 2013, p. 178). Because they are “material-semiotic” (Fairclough, 2013, p. 178), these practices can be analysed regarding their material and discursive arrangements and elements. Policy documents are examples of political discourse (van Dijk, 1997; Fairclough and Fairclough, 2012). A discussion of the use of a discourse analytical approach is presented in Chapter Six.

This section describes the Australian media policy framework, primarily focusing on public service media policy. Although the ideological concept of ‘Australia’ existed in sporting terms from the mid to late nineteenth century (see Chapter Three), the constitutional establishment of the Australian nation-state in 1901 occurred with an act of the British Parliament (Commonwealth of Australia Constitution Act, 1900). The Constitution Act set out responsibilities and authorities for the new Commonwealth of Australia and the former colonies, which became states (Commonwealth of Australia Constitution Act, 1977). Section 51(v) of the Constitution “gives the Commonwealth powers over ‘postal, telegraphic, telephonic and other like services’” (Cunningham, 2014, p. 77). Consequently, beginning with the Wireless Telegraphy Act in 1905, the Australian Parliament enacted various communications legislation (Inglis, 1983, p. 7). An Australian High Court decision in 1935 established that section 51 (v) of the Australian Constitution means “[t]he federal Parliament is capable of making laws for radio and television broadcasting, and telecommunications” (Kildea & Williams, 2013, p. 8), confirming the authority of the Commonwealth to regulate media, broadcasting and communications.

Australian media policy established a mixed system of public and private media organisations (O’Regan, 1993). In 1932, a single piece of legislation, The Australian

Broadcasting Commission (ABC) Act, established the public service broadcaster, the ABC, and provided overall policy governance for the public and commercial (radio) broadcasting sector (Dix, 1981; Inglis, 1983). Although amended to the Australian Broadcasting Act in 1942; and again in 1953 for television, the same governance arrangements for the ABC existed until 1983 (Inglis, 1983; 2006). The corporatisation of the ABC in 1983 occurred with the passage of new legislation in 1983, the Australian Broadcasting Corporation Act (1983) (Inglis, 2006). Australia's second public service media organisation, the Special Broadcasting Service, was established in 1978 under the 1942 legislation before receiving its own legislative structure, the Special Broadcasting Act, in 1991 (Ang et al., 2008).

The ABC's legislated independence has meant that it has not been subject to the same regulatory arrangements as commercial broadcasters (Davis, 1988). Nonetheless, while the ABC has independence and autonomy in programming matters, it operates within wider policy governance, with media and communications policy coordinated through a 'central' public service agency.

The following sections examine literature about the role of media, primarily broadcast media and national identity, before considering public service media and national identity.

Media and national identity

Drawing on Curran's (2002) analysis of a cumulative process of national media development in the UK from the early nineteenth century, it is possible to understand the evolution of similar processes in the Australian context. According to Curran (2002), media forms constructed a national identity, initially through the press and

music halls in the Victorian era. This media development evolved with cinema and radio as “national media became dominant within the British media system during the 1920s and 1930s” (Curran, 2002, p. 28). The formation of national identity in the British media from the Victorian era was framed in terms of the importance and success of empire, colonialism and white racial superiority (Curran, 2002).

A symbolic relationship forged between the individual and “an ‘imagined political community’” (Anderson, 1983, p. 15 in Curran, 2002, p. 26) can be understood as an ideologically constructed ‘nation’. As most members of a nation “never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion’ (Anderson 1983:15)”, media forms play a crucial role in the construction of a shared, imagined national identity (Curran, 2002, p. 26).

Given the impersonal, large-scale nature of modern nation-states (Anderson, 1991, in Van den Bulck, 2001), individual understanding of collective identities, such as national identification, derives from state institutions “such as the educational system, museums and the media” (Van den Bulck, 2001, p. 54). As noted elsewhere (see Chapter Five), these institutions operate not coercively but as processes of consensus and consent (Gramsci, 1971), whereby “large groups of people ... take part in ‘national’ life via - among other things - programmes for the whole nation” (Van den Bulck, 2001, p. 54). Investigating the PSM ‘national identity’ policy role involves recognising “how ... media [are] used by the authorities as an instrument in building a nation out of dispersed groups of individuals” (Van den Bulck, 2001, p. 54). The individual is constructed as part of the nation, an imaginary subject with an apparent

or alleged unity based on history, language, race, ethnicity, religion and gender (Curran, 2002).

The ideological power and significance of national identity formation drew on its multiplicity of meanings by “signif[y]ing] different things to different people” (Curran, 2002, p. 28). Curran (2002) notes the complexity of achieving a ‘common’ national culture in a “society... stratified by powerful class, gender, Celtic and other sub-cultures” and where “sectional cultures and identities [were]... challenged by the brute force of oligopoly” (p. 29). An increasingly national media consumption through a small number of publicly controlled (by legislation) and private (ownership oligopoly) media outlets “created a framework of shared national experience... strengthened a sense of national identity... that made the nation seem both knowable as a community and also a familiar object of affection” (Curran, 2002, pp. 29-30). Common themes and stereotypes adhered to concepts that downplayed class and other differences “to emphasize the interdependence of social groups” (Curran, 2002, p. 30). The common thread across media platforms was that of presenting not just a shared technical experience (watching the same television or radio schedule, reading the same newspapers) but a shared reception experience (Curran, 2002, p. 30). Rowe (2004) has noted in older sports journalism¹⁴ a “pastoral, anti-metropolitan view of a ‘real England... [that] provides a pre-television ‘word picture’ of a sports event” (p. 139) that works almost as a work of fiction as it contributes to an identification with the

¹⁴ Cardus, 1926 in Rowe, 2004, p. 139.

idea of the nation. The role of sports media in the ideological formations of the nation is examined in detail in Chapters Three and Four.

PSM and national identity

As discussed further in Chapter Three, national identity is an important component of this research's examination of the changes in women's sports media and PSM policy discourses. I am drawing on articulations of national identity as the ideological construction of "a set of common understandings and aspirations, sentiments and ideas, that bind the population together" (Van den Bulck, 2001, p. 55). Public service media are examined as part of media policy arrangements of national identity formation that are "a co-production [in which] ... the public has to collaborate" (Curran & Seaton, 2018, p. 419). Such collaboration means that, in media policy terms, the ABC is part of an ongoing, ideological process of building a historical "sense of exceptionalism, of a unique inheritance and worldview" (Curran & Seaton, 2018, p. 416).

Public service media has been part of a "modernist process of nation-building" (Van den Bulck, 2001, p. 55). The project has been about constructing a uniformity, a common culture that "nation-states must have... a set of common understandings and aspirations, sentiments and ideas, that bind the population together" (Van den Bulck, 2001, p. 55). The PSM role in national identity formation is:

A typical modernist project of a cultural elite ... to create and maintain a national culture by offering a uniform, high culture as a vehicle to 'educate' its citizens to become citizens of the community which the broadcasting service claims to represent. (Van den Bulck, 2001, p. 55)

Analysing public service media and national identity, Van den Bulck (2001) notes the contemporary significance of “the question of cultural identity [which] has become central in both everyday discourse and social theory” (p. 53). This is partly due to the significance of identity to theoretical debates (Jenkins, 1996, in Van den Bulck, 2001) and its contribution to the dislocation of “the central structures and processes of modern societies and undermining the frameworks which gave individuals stable anchorage in the social world. (Hall, 1992: 274)” (Van den Bulck, 2001, p. 53). Van den Bulck (2001) identifies a post-modernist “boundary-transgression-and-shifting... [that] is in sharp contrast to the modern identification with its stable boundaries and categories” and the unifying practices and elements of the nation-building exercise (p. 54). This change in the framing of identity is making “the idea and practice of national identity... a site of instability resulting from “globalization and postmodern fragmentation” (Van den Bulck, 2001, 2001, p. 53). The thesis considers the transformation of discourses of national identity in the context of the examination of discourses in women’s sports media and public service media policy reports examined in Chapters Seven, Eight and Nine.

The idea of the nation also carries with it a historical “sense of exceptionalism, of a unique inheritance and worldview... a concept of destiny [often] forged through conflict with an outside force” (Curran & Seaton, 2018, p. 416). The BBC’s unique role “in metabolising the nation’s sense of itself... also represented ‘Britishness’ abroad” (Curran & Seaton, 2018, p. 419). This occurred because the PSM role imparts an obligation to be “for the nation” that requires it “endlessly to try to sort out what

the nation is” through an ongoing programming mix of news, current affairs, drama and documentary (Curran & Seaton, 2018, p. 420).

Notwithstanding criticism of bias or particular perspectives on contentious issues, the ongoing engagement in national, regional and local issues “is enmeshed in ways of doing things and values elsewhere in other British institutions” (Curran & Seaton, 2018, p. 420). National identity formation is a set of presentations and representations through programming policies and decisions (Curran & Seaton, 2018). The policy discourses deployed in reports about the ABC’s role in women’s sports media, including national identity formation are examined in Chapter Seven.

The following section considers scholarship about Australian PSM, Australian media policy and national identity.

As noted earlier in this chapter, it is important to acknowledge that countries have significantly different historical and contemporary experiences of public service media. The specificity of national broadcasting arrangements is influenced by factors such as geography, location and population (O’Regan, 1993). In the Australian context, in addition to the critical influence of British colonialism, public service media was shaped by Australia’s large landmass, small population and a public policy commitment from 1932 to public service and commercial broadcasting and from 1956 to a national and local television service (Cunningham, 1992; O’Regan, 1993, p. 2). From 1956, national policy assigned the public service broadcaster, the ABC, the role of providing a national television service while commercial services were limited, until the 1980s, by a ‘two-station rule’ to supplying local services (Herd, 2012; Ward, 2017, p. 15). The development of Australian public service media policy is examined below.

Various scholarly contributions have analysed policy development to understand the PSM role, including in the formation of national identity. Debrett's analysis of PSB/PSM considers four national instances of public service media and six media organisations,¹⁵ beginning with and framed by the BBC. This is due to the BBC being the "classic model on which many other PSBs have been based" and its influence, especially, as noted above, concerning the 'Reithian model' (Debrett, 2010, p. 8).

In the context of the BBC and UK PSB development, Debrett (2010) notes that "broadcasting policy in Britain has been informed by numerous committees of inquiry" (p. 34). The observation can equally be made of Australia. For example, in 1981, the *Committee of Review of the Australian Broadcasting Commission* (Dix) Report noted that "more than 20 inquiries... had examined aspects of the ABC operations or structure in the last 10 years... [with] 56 reports touching on some or all of the ABC's activities... since creation of the Commission in 1932" (Dix, 1981, 1.7).¹⁶ These policy reviews of the broadcasting system generally and public service broadcasting/media specifically provide critical primary data sources about the ideological formation of policy. The most relevant of these reviews to this research date from the 1980s to the present (Dix, 1981; DBCDE, 2008; DOTAC, 1988; Green, 1976; Lewis, 2014; Mansfield, 1997; Tonagh & Bean, 2018).

As examined earlier in this chapter, the relationship between PSB and the nation was established in policy formations developed around the BBC (Debrett, 2010, p. 34).

¹⁵ UK: BBC and Channel 4; Australia: ABC and SBS, New Zealand, TV New Zealand, and the United States: PBS.

¹⁶ The *Committee of Review of the Australian Broadcasting Commission* (Dix) Report had no page numbers, but consecutively numbered chapters, sections and paragraphs.

These included a commitment to the principles and values discussed, including a national service that reached all people (universality), broadcasting “as a trustee for national interest”, and a contribution to national culture (quality) (Debrett 2010, p. 34). The BBC’s initial role was framed in terms of both public interest - broadcasting should serve the nation, not just be a commercial activity- and an educative role that “could help consolidate the nation” (Debrett, 2010, p. 34). The post-World War II BBC policy argument for a more popular ‘taste’ in music was based on an ideology of contributing to a developing pluralism and diversity in national culture (Debrett, 2010). The indication of an evolving and changing representation of national identity is discussed in the next section.

Hawkins (2010) argues that “cultural diversity and social inclusion go to the heart of contemporary public media practices in Australia” (p. 287), seeking to understand how PSM manages this change in the framing of national identity in the context of a traditionally homogenising approach to constructions of identity. Analysing the 2009 Australian PSM Review report, *ABC and SBS: Towards a Digital Future*, through the lens of cultural diversity, the ABC’s historically more traditional PSB approach is contrasted with SBS’s “pluralist inflection of the generic PSB remit” (Hawkins, 2010, p. 288). While Hawkins (2010) does not provide detail of this remit, the ABC is located within a model that derives “from the colonial homeland, Britain” designed to “foster... national culture and interests and, for producing informed democratic subjects” (pp. 288-289). Hawkins does not analyse the ideological underpinnings of the ABC’s role. However, it is significant for this research that the historical context of nation forming contextualises the recent PSM role regarding cultural diversity (Hawkins, 2010).

Australian television and national identity

The policy settings that frame Australian media institutional and market arrangements are regularly identified as meeting cultural policy objectives relating to nation-building and national identity (for example, Cunningham, 1992; Davis, 1988; Jacka, 1991; O'Regan, 1993). 'Culture' is understood as "the social production of meaning and understanding, whether in the inter-personal and practical organisation of daily routines or in broader institutional and ideological structures" (Tulloch, 1993, n.p.). 'Cultural identity' conveys a notion of 'national identity', "a sense of Australianness, of our nationalism as a distinct form of social organisation" (Tulloch, 1993, n.p.). He (1993) notes the use of definitions of culture and cultural identity in invoking public policy for "a domestic film industry 'in promoting our cultural identity'" (n.p.). Tulloch (1993) also notes an important consideration for media and cultural studies research when using the term 'Australian'; that is an "understanding of 'Australian'... [as] not as an essentially unified category... [and as] anthropological rather than aesthetic" (n.p.). This understanding is important, especially in the context of research about ideology and national identity, because the term 'Australian' can be used as a "kind of cultural nationalism which assumes that 'Australia' is a unified entity with certain essential features that distinguish it from 'Britain', the 'USA' or any other national entities" (Tulloch, 1993, n.p.). Scholarship has engaged with confronting the concept of national identity as "an essential unity of national cultures, ... on the meanings attached to social difference ... the construction and mobilisation of these distinctions to maintain or challenge existing power differentials, such as those of gender, class age, race and ethnicity" (Tulloch, 1993, n.p.). In examining ideological issues that relate to

national identity, it is important to note that this research, while focusing on the meanings that attach and gain acceptance to concepts of nation, is engaging with the way such concepts of identity are given an “essential unity”. (Tulloch, 1993, n.p.)

An ideological significance is attached to terms such as “local, regional, national and international to deal with the geographical dimension to cultural formations” (O’Regan, 1993, p. xxi). The ‘local’ is important in terms of both content (e.g., news and current affairs or sport for local audiences)¹⁷ and economic importance. Commercial broadcasters raise media advertising revenue by delivering ‘local’ advertisements to local audiences (1993, p. xxi). Ideologically, the concept of national identity is located within geographical as well as legal and political frames. As O’Regan (1993) put it, “Australian television is shaped by domestic geography and demography; it has a cultural geography” (p. xxi). ‘National’ in television refers to programs delivered to audiences living in each state and territory of Australia, “each integral to each other, with their interaction shaping Australia’s television culture” (O’Regan, 1993, p. xxii). O’Regan (1993) overlays this cultural geography with an intersectional analysis, e.g., Indigenous, ethnic, and LGBTQ+ communities, that interconnect with ‘mainstream’ audiences and the geographic levels of Australian television.

As media policy and broadcast organisational processes of content commissioning and scheduling/curation interact to deliver a flow of television, “viewers regularly negotiate a mixed program schedule of local and imported programming” (O’Regan, 1993, p.

¹⁷ O’Regan used the example of “State versions of... the ABC’s current affairs program the 7.30 Report” (1993, p. xxi). By the early 2000s the ABC had replaced ‘local’ versions of the program with a national program, except on Friday evenings, and eventually removed this version as well.

xxiii). In this interaction, community members engage with ideological concepts of ‘national identity’ that are framed at the intersection of local, national, and international programming (O’Regan, 1993). For example, English language content has “broader cultural identity as a predominantly Anglophone and Western European culture” (O’Regan, 1993, p. xxiv). As is argued in detail later in the thesis, sports programs like cricket and football exist at a range of cultural and ideological levels, given their relationship to the history of the establishment of the Australian colonies and the emergence of the constitutional entity, Australia, as well as the sports’ English and /or other European origins and history (Cashman, 1984; 2007; Hutchins, 2005; Rowe, 2004; Scherer & Rowe, 2014; Wagg, 2018). Further, the ideological connections are maintained through sporting contests involving Australia and, in cricket for example, England and former British colonies such as New Zealand, India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, South Africa and the West Indies. These issues are examined in detail in Chapter Three.

Australian media policy and national identity

While there has been a consistent articulation of ‘national identity’ in Australian public policy statements (see summary below), a relatively small amount of scholarship has focussed on the historical significance of this aspect of public service media policy. Before Debrett’s (2010) relatively recent analysis of PSM, which included consideration of national identity, the most significant research focus on Australian television and media policy occurred in the 1980s and 1990s (see, for example, Bertrand & Collins, 1981; Cunningham, 1992; Jacka, 1988, 1991; Moran (ed.), 1992; O’Regan, 1987, 1993, 1996; Turner, 1986; Turner (ed.), 1993).

While Bertrand & Collins, (1981) *Government and Film in Australia* is principally about cinema rather than television, they devote a chapter to the role and activity of the Vincent Inquiry. This Senate inquiry, the first in Australia following the start of television in 1956, was established with terms of reference that expressed concern about “whether Australian national sentiment and culture are being endangered by the virtual monopoly of foreign films and entertainment screened by Australian theatres and television stations” (Senate Committee Terms of Reference cited in Bertrand & Collins, 1981, p. 128). Equally, Turner (1986), while focusing on Australian film as an example of national identity, provides an important analysis of the ideological formation of the nation in Australian screen content relevant to this research. Specifically, Turner (1986) draws attention to the centrality of the mediated use of “available myths and discourses of national character and identity” (p. 107). He also notes that representations of the nation do not occur naturally or in an unmediated form but through ideological processes of a struggle for dominant meaning (Turner, 1986).

Constructions of the nation occur through various ideological processes of which media “constitute the primary processes through which discourses of nationalism are deployed and disseminated” (Turner, 1995, p. 145). Since the 1980s and 1990, broadcast media’s policy role in national identity construction has been articulated in legislation. It is noteworthy in the context of this analysis of policy development in media and the ideological formation of national identity that legislative statements before 1983 did not specifically mention ‘national identity’ (see, for example, ABC Act,

1932). The 1983 legislation, following the Dix Report's¹⁸ (1981) recommended change, establishing the ABC as a corporation was the first to do so (Debrett, 2010). These issues will be examined more closely in Chapter Seven.

The 1983 policy articulations and legislative changes were the culmination of policy developments over the previous two decades (Debrett, 2010). For example, Debrett (2010) summarises this aspect of the ABC role as the need to reflect “Australian culture and identity”, noting the 1963 Vincent Committee as the original attempt to establish an ABC policy role as “‘primarily complementary to the commercial stations’ and... [to set] quality benchmarks in taste and broadcasting” (p. 82).¹⁹ However, the enduring policy expectation has been to “cater to both minority and majority audiences... providing a counterbalance to commercial television” (Debrett, 2010, pp. 82-83). For Moran (1992b), the shift in the ABC’s role to be both “adequate and comprehensive” meant that its programming mix comprised “Australian and overseas material” from a range of genres, including light entertainment (including music, comedy, variety), current affairs, documentary, arts, science, and travel (pp. 121-122).

Surprisingly, a programming area of significance to the ABC, sport, was omitted from the list of content genres contributing to what constituted either a “complementary” service (Vincent, 1963 in Debrett, 2010, p. 82) or ‘adequate and comprehensive’ programming (Debrett, pp. 82-83). Similarly, in Debrett’s (2010) extensive citing of ABC programming to meet its charter obligations, including news, current affairs,

¹⁸ The report of the 1981 *Committee of Review of the Australian Broadcasting Commission* (Dix Report).

¹⁹ Moran (1992b) notes the ABC Chairman also advocated this position in a statement to the Committee.

drama, arts, science and children's and educational content (pp. 83-88), there is no mention of sport. The only reference in the Australian context is to SBS sports content, focusing on international sports such as soccer and cycling, "attracting and building a new and appreciative audience" (Debrett, 2010, p. 117). As previous research has shown, during the period from the 1960s, when the Vincent Committee and subsequent reviews articulated this programming approach for the ABC, sport was the second most significant genre for ABC television in terms of broadcast (Ward, 2017). Neither Debrett (2010) nor Moran (1992b) delve more deeply into the issues of programming comprehensiveness or complementarity, or how a mix or balance achieves the policy/legislative objective of national identity formation.

While taking their lead from the public policy framing of media policy, for example, the Australian Government's 2012 Convergence Review remit "to examine the current policy framework and regulatory objectives" (Goldsmith & Thomas, 2012, p. 2), more recent policy analysis approaches have tended to privilege media technologies (see, for example Flew et al., 2019). This analysis of Australian media policy has sought to 'relocate' media policy within a wider context, ostensibly to take account of the impact of digital media technologies, 'platformisation', and the rise of social media (see, for example, Flew, 2011; Potter, & Lotz, 2022). Much of the revised approach to media policy analysis has adopted the discourse of an alleged, re-regulatory turn through the operation of competitions policy and explicit or implicit endorsement of marketisation (for example, Flew & Wilding, 2021; Flew et al., 2019). While these specific arguments are not engaged in this research, the general approach of a competitions policy approach, including commodification of media, downgrading of the role and place of

PSM, and the marketisation of media policy, is examined in detail as part of the discourse analysis of PSM policy texts in chapter Seven.

A general absence of scholarship about television and national identity has historically endured. For example, in a themed section of *Media International Australia* (2006) noted as a “landmark collection of papers on Australian television history” (Goggin, 2006, p. 2), the editors stated that, with few exceptions, “while there was an emerging wealth of commentary and scholarship available about Australian film, it was hard to find anything of substance about Australian TV” (Jacka & Turnbull, 2006, p. 66). *Media International Australia* (MIA) has been an important exception to that observation, including a historical focus on PSM policy (see, for example, MIA editions, 1983 and May and November 1997). Nonetheless, the 2006 focus on Australian television history did not include an analysis of media policy in shaping Australian television nor, despite articles on news, religion, advertising satire and comedy, did it have an analysis of men's or women's sport on Australian television (Goggin, 2006, pp. 65-198).

Moran (2006), in placing Australian television in an international context, noted the ideological arrangements of the “distinct political economy of this system [that] was historically composed of both a public service and a commercial undertaking” that shaped the specific national itineration of “technical infrastructure, advertising, programming, personalities and onscreen figures, labour, ownership and regulation” (p. 174). He also noted that Australian broadcasting policy formulated television “for purposes of promoting social stability, encouraging progress and binding the nation together” (Moran, 2006, p. 174). Notwithstanding, scholarship on Australian broadcasting and the ideological construction of national identity has been rare.

There is a similar absence of media discipline scholarship about Australian women's sports media. For example, a 2016 research focus on 'Gendered Labour and the Media' that "re-examine[d] the media, and media histories, through the lens of gendered labour" (Wilken, 2006, p. 3), includes analysis of women working at the BBC in the pre-World War 2 period (Murphy, 2016), gendered discrimination and the ABC in the 1950s and 1960s (Andrews, 2016), women and the *Sydney Morning Herald* from the 1960s to the 1980s (McDonald, 2016), women's press photography and newspaper representation (Darian-Smith, 2016), and masculinity, work and class in television drama (Barnett, 2016). Collectively and individually, these articles represent important scholarship about women in Australian television and media history. However, the absence of any consideration of women's sports broadcasting is important to note. This is perhaps best exemplified by the final article in the section. Waterhouse-Watson's (2016) focus is on elite male sport (AFL) and its "national hero status... [with a] case study [of] a footballer ultimately fired after being charged with sexual assault" (p. 68). The article, although about male sport, provides analytical insight into gendered national identity in Australian sports media discourse.

Neoliberalism

Given the significance of neoliberal ideologies and their impact on Australian public policy (see, for example, Connell, 2010), it is important to examine scholarship about neoliberalism and related ideological concepts such as 'market', 'efficiency' and 'commodification'. Further, as will be discussed in later chapters, this research has identified an important relationship between neoliberalist ideologies and the changes

in the discursive formations of national identity in Australian women's sports media and PSM policy.

Neoliberal ideology has assumed centrality in media policy (see, for example, McChesney, 2001; Thompson, 2011) and consequently for this research, it is important to provide a clear definition of neoliberalism and an explanation of its use in this thesis, especially relating to discourses of neoliberal ideology and their role in establishing and reaffirming neoliberalism(s). The terms 'neoliberal' and 'neoliberalism' are widely used in critiques of the political economies of modern capitalist nation-states. Harvey (2007) defines neoliberalism as "a theory of political economic practices that proposes that human well-being can best be advanced by liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms and skills" (p. 2). Within a neoliberal ideology, the state's role is to ensure individual freedom through the maintenance of public policy that guarantees a framework focused on "private property rights, free markets, and free trade" in areas such as fiscal and monetary policy, as well as the maintenance of a 'strong' state through judicial, legal and policing arrangements (Harvey, 2007, p. 2).

Markets are assigned the capacity to "permit mutually advantageous exchanges and ensure the efficient allocation of resources" (Stilwell, 2002, p. 147, cited in Cunningham, Flew, & Swift, 2015, pp. 12–13). Markets operate not just as relationships between purchasers and providers but are framed by wider political and ideological arrangements. It is important to understand that markets are interactions of entities buying and selling goods or services, the places where they occur, and/or the "abstract assemblage of such persons whose transactions involve a single commodity" (Meehan & Torre, 2014, p. 62). While this research engages with each of

these definitions, it is primarily the third of these, the abstraction of markets, that is in focus, specifically media markets for sports commodities. These ‘abstractions’ mean that markets occupy other spaces - as political as well as economic entities. Ideologically framed discourses assign ‘markets’ great influence, power and prestige in modern capitalist economies. In neoliberal public policy, markets are the preeminent means for achieving economic, political, social and cultural outcomes with abilities, forces and characteristics greater than individuals and other institutions (Meehan & Torre, 2014, p. 62). The outcomes may include, in the context of this research, the presence or lack of gender diverse sports media markets.

Neoliberalism has transformed from early iterations that maintained certain areas of public ownership and control to extend into ‘outsourcing’ or privatisation to construct markets where previously public policy has operated (Harvey, 2007). The transformation of neoliberal ideology on a national and global scale can be examined through increasingly pervasive discourses (Phelan 2007). It is also important to recognise that neoliberalism is not a single ideology and that it has been criticised for an alleged vagueness in which it is difficult to identify whether it is “primarily an analytical or rhetorical concept” (Flew, 2018, p. 169). However, neoliberalism can be understood as a complex, ongoing process operating through global institutional and capital flows and through the “mediating role of cultural institutions” (Phelan, 2007, p. 30). Neoliberalism has become dominant as it presents a normalising and naturalising explanation and political underpinning for not just economic relations but for framing an “apparent impossibility of mobilizing any alternative to the core policy assumptions of the neoliberal political programme at the political level” (Gilbert, 2011,

p. 92). Within neoliberal discourse, “the only mode of agency offered to most citizens is as “consumers” of both public and private services”. (Gilbert, 2011, p. 92)

The concluding section of the literature review examines neoliberalism and media policy, including an analysis of commodification and marketisation as important tenets of neoliberalism. It also examines classical literature on neoliberalism and its historical evolution before considering literature on discourses of neoliberalism framed as:

The neo-liberalization of media policy ... designed to transform the existing balance of power ... to assist the expansion of private accumulation and to undermine the legitimacy and existence of non-profit and public service media provision. (Freedman, 2008, p. 224)

The political power of private sector media organisations has been significantly increased by the policy changes that have enhanced their economic position (Murdock & Golding, 2005). In Australia in recent years, not only has media policy facilitated a range of deregulatory measures, such as the removal or significant reduction of media diversity laws (foreign and cross-media ownership) facilitating media mergers and acquisitions, it has also resulted in reductions in the charges imposed for the use of publicly owned broadcast spectrum, removal or reduction of content regulations and direct public subsidies of private sector media organisations (Brevini & Ward, 2021). The marketisation of the media sector is consistent with policies or processes that “reduce the scope of the public sector and enlarge the corporate sector” through the privatisation of public agencies and the introduction of “private operators into markets that were previously closed to competition”. (Murdock & Golding, 2005, p. 69. Marketisation also includes the process of moving from policy objectives about

“public interest towards opening up markets, ensuring free and fair competition” (Lowe, 2004 in Murdock & Golding, 2005, p. 69). This process “alter[s] the way public institutions operate and see themselves... into behaving like private enterprises” (Murdock & Golding, 2005, p. 71). It has led to a refocusing of PSM principles to market-oriented policy objectives with ‘revenue’ potential, or at least reduced expenditure implications and a shift in the measures for achieving organisational objectives. The evolution of the discourses that have framed these policy shifts is examined in the context of public service media policy discourses and the implications for women’s sports media at the ABC in Chapter Seven and for women’s sports media policy in Chapters Eight and Nine.

Neoliberalism, discourse and identity

Neoliberal ideologies operate through both positive discourses, such as, for example, endorsement of individual freedom, markets, efficiency and other terms, and discursively by its “negative constitution as a disavowal of its Keynesian/quasi-socialist Other” (Phelan, 2007, p. 32). Phelan (2007), drawing on “critical discourse analysis (Chouliaraki & Fairclough 1999; Fairclough, 2003) and post-structuralist discourse theory (Laclau & Mouffe, 1985/ 2001)” (p. 31), provides a valuable understanding of discourses of neoliberalism and approaches to examining such discourses in operation. Working from this approach, it is possible to examine the role and operation of discourse in neoliberal ideology, specifically in media policy texts.

Such is the power of market discourses policy discourses that frame neoliberal ideology can critique market interventions as “rationalistic, statist fallacies” (Phelan, 2007, p. 34). In neoliberal discourse, “[t]he market is equivalenced as the sphere of economic

freedom, while the state is signified as the embodiment of illusory, and ultimately coercive, political freedom” (Phelan, 2007, p. 34). The neoliberal political identity is framed rhetorically as the “common man/woman (as opposed to a more accurate identification with the powerful elites that have most to gain from the expansion of market freedoms)” (Phelan, 2007, p. 34). Equally significant is neoliberalism’s framing as beyond or even an “end of ideology” (Phelan, 2007, p. 34). In such a discursive frame, historical analysis of women’s sports media exclusion as gender oppression is redundant.

Public policy discourses engage with media discourses about ‘the economy’ (Phelan, 2007), including discourses as noted concerning neoliberalism, where the role of the state is to ensure a policy framework that sustains markets and capital arrangements in support of individual ‘freedom’ (Harvey, 2007). Neoliberal policy discourses have had an impact on women’s sports and sports media policy. While this impact will be examined further in subsequent chapters, especially Chapters Eight and Nine, it is relevant to note that sports media policy has been significantly shaped by an increasing corporatisation of community-based sporting organisations, including through policies such as de-mutualisation or mergers, with a significant impact on sports such as women’s cricket (Stronach & Adair, 2009; Velija et al., 2014). As discussed in Chapters Seven, Eight and Nine, sports media policy is increasingly framed as an operation of the market where achieving media coverage is categorised as an individual success or failure. Neoliberal ideology encapsulated in discourses of marketisation and commodification has transformed the articulation of women’s sports media policy, with implications for the role of public service media and PSM principles.

Conclusion

This chapter has focused on an analysis of scholarship about public service media, Australian media policy and national identity and the impact of neoliberalism. Media policy has been important in constructing discourses of national identity, where “organized sport has been viewed by governments... as an important sphere in the forging of ‘national character’” (Boyle & Haynes, 2009, p. 145). It examines scholarship about sport, sports media and changing discourses of women’s sport in media policy and literature about national identity. The chapter examines scholarship on how discourses of women’s sport have developed, including the relevance of national identity in the policies under consideration.

Chapter Three: Sport and national identity

Introduction

This chapter analyses scholarship about sport, national identity and media and the relationship to changing discourses of women's sport in media policy, building on the review of literature about public service media in Chapter Two. It extends the examination of sport to the Australian context, considering key literature about discourses of sport and national identity, including an examination of Australian sport's historical background of "white settler societies... [and] English sports and amateur ethos" (McKay & Miller, 1991, p. 87). The chapter considers scholarship about national identity in the context of developing discourses of sport in Australia, focusing initially on men's cricket before examining relevant literature on women's cricket.

A range of literature has identified sport's powerful ideological resonance and its deployment as part of processes of nation forming (Rowe, 2004; Whannel, 1992), including its constitution as "a cultural apparatus that can be speedily and regularly mobilized in the symbolic reconstruction of the nation". (Rowe, 1995, p. 136)

The deployment is ideologically powerful in giving the appearance of being depoliticised in erasing difference to present through institutions such as public service broadcasters, "an imaginary coherence of national identity" (Whannel, 1992, p. 20). As Emeritus Professor David Rowe noted in an interview for this research, there is significant scholarship "about the idea that national identity is... predominantly masculine in nature [of which] sport has been an important agent" (2022). It is important, therefore, to analyse the ideological framing of a national identity of white,

male British dominance and power in sport, first in colonial 'Australia' and then in the revised form of the nation-state, Australia (Wagg, 2018).

Before examining the literature on women's sports media and national identity, it is necessary to begin with an analysis of (male) sport. This is because sport's powerful position as a signifier of national identity has been historically gendered as male (Messner, 1988). Understanding why women's sport challenges male dominance and why this is an arena of social and political struggle requires an exploration of "the historical and ideological meaning of organized sports for the politics of gender relations" (Messner, 1988, p. 199). Gender is socially constructed within the institution of sport as gendered relations of sport have operated "as a primary institutional means for bolstering... [an] ideology of male superiority in the 20th century" (Messner, 1988, p. 198). This social construction is a critical component of the ideological processes at work that "present that division [between the sexes] as being of biological, natural, or divine essence". (Reynaud, 1981, p. 9, in Messner, 1988, p. 199)

Messner (1988) characterised most scholarship about sport as either conceptualising it as "an ideal... of freedom divorced from material and historical constraints or... as a cultural mechanism through which dominant classes control the unwitting masses" (p. 198). Each approach is problematic (Messner, 1988). Classical Marxist criticised "idealists and functionalists for failing to understand how sport tends to reflect capitalist relations" (Messner, 1988, p. 198). However, this approach can adopt a "deterministic... framework" that denies agency to participants, such as players, sports media workers and consumers (Messner, 1988). A neo-Marxist approach with a more reflexive framework that challenges economism with a more autonomous cultural

positioning provides an opportunity for critical analysis that recognises, “the importance of historically formed structural conditions, class inequalities, and unequal power relations... [allowing for] resistance to dominant ideologies and change” (Messner, 1988, p. 198). In arguing for a “reflexive historical framework” to understand sports ideologies, Messner notes the situating of gender “as a critically important process rather than as a simple effect of class dynamics”. (1988, p. 199)

A historical marginalisation of “sport as an arena of ideological battles over gender” occurred as a result of feminist theoretical approaches being marginalised “within sociology and... sport sociology in particular” (Messner, 1988, p. 199). It is important in analysing sport and sports media to recognise that sex roles are:

The product of gender relations which are historically and socially conditioned... [in] a paradigm [that] also minimizes the extent to which gender relations are based on power. Not only do men as a group exert power over women as a group, but the historically derived definitions of masculinity and femininity reproduce those power relations. (Kimmel, 1986, pp. 520-521, in Messner, 1988, p. 199)

Boyle and Haynes (2009) argue that “the marginalization of women’s sport is perhaps the clearest manifestation of patriarchal ideologies in sport” (p. 143), as sport provides an “understanding of how patriarchy is reinforced in capitalist societies” (p. 122). They further contend that “no analysis of media sport would be complete without an understanding of how patriarchal structures are constructed through media institutions and their coverage of sport”. (Boyle and Haynes, 2009, p. 123)

As noted elsewhere in this research (see Mauro below), the development of organised sport in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries has been linked to a cultural integration of “an expanding capitalist order” where both working and non-working hours became more structured and “leisure time expanded” (Messner, 1988, pp. 199-200). Boyle and Haynes’ (2009) study, which drew on previous research (e.g., Riordan and Kruger, 1999) to trace the beginnings of modern sport as a nationally based “private fiefdom” (p. 7) that emerged from nineteenth century industrialisation and urbanisation, is consistent with Messner’s work noted above. Rowe (2004) identifies the United Kingdom as the site of the emergence of the “social institution and cultural form of sport” (p. 23). The emergence of women’s sport in that historical frame, specifically women's cricket in this period, is analysed later in this chapter.

The expansion of a capitalist order of structured work and non-work posed a crisis for masculinity in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, ended after World War II (Messner, 1988). The early twentieth-century use of sport to assert masculine authority was a response in the United States to the economic and social precarity of the male worker as ‘breadwinner’ and “the rise of female-dominated public schools, urbanization, and the closing of the frontier” (Messner, 1988, p. 200). Sport provided “a separate cultural sphere of life where ‘true manliness’ could be instilled in boys by men” (Messner, 1988, p. 200). However, capitalism’s further development in the post-World War II period “from industrial production and physical labor to a more service-oriented economy and increasing levels of structural unemployment” undermined male power (Messner, 1988, p. 201). This different set of social relations that

constrained the further development of women's sport and sports media are examined in detail later in this chapter.

Sport played an important cultural role in representing “the male body as a symbol of strength, virility, and power... as actual inequalities between the sexes are contested in all arenas of public life” (Messner, 1988, p. 201). As discussed in detail below, media representations of sport, especially television, have “increasingly played [an] important ideological role” (Messner, 1988, p. 202) in this symbolic representation. Messner (1988) argues that sport's²⁰ “primary ideological salience lies in its ability, in the face of women's challenges to male dominance, to symbolically link men of diverse ages and socioeconomic backgrounds” in mythological presentations of physical strength, “patriotism, militarism, violence, and meritocracy” (p. 202). Messner uses the term “mythological” to contrast apparently ‘real’ economic and political situations, the historical circumstances of male disempowerment, with the idea of historically constructed stories of power and strength through myths invoking symbolically meaningful concepts.

The period from the late nineteenth century to the early 1930s has been identified as a “first wave of athletic feminism” where, despite the limitations noted above, it “provid[ed] an initial challenge to men's creation of sport as an uncontested arena of ideological legitimation for male dominance” (Messner, 1988, p. 201). This first wave of athletic feminism also “laid the groundwork” for the “challenge[s] to predominant cultural images of women” that would occur in the 1970s” (Messner, 1988, p. 201).

²⁰ Messner (1988) is specifically noting American football's “mythology and symbolism” (p. 201), but his example is relevant to sports media more generally.

The challenges included competitiveness in women's sports that was considered to conflict with "the conventional ethos of femininity... leading to a virulent opposition to women's growing athleticism (Messner, 1988, p. 200). Messner's analysis is based on the US experience. However, there is evidence of similar social and economic developments in Australia influencing the construction of male dominance of sport (see, for example, McLachlan, 2019; Stell, 1991). Again, this analysis is consistent with historical evidence of the rise of women's sport, especially cricket, in Australia in the 1930s discussed later in the chapter.

While there are historical differences in US and Australian political, economic, and social circumstances (colonial histories and industrial scale, for example), there are similarities in their development as modern industrial capitalist societies. There are also similarities in that women's sport adopted strategies that while "responsible for [ensuring their] continued survival... marginalized and thus easily 'ghettoized' women's sport" (Messner, 1988, p. 200). This marginalisation ensured that "the image of the female athlete did not become a major threat to the ideology of male athleticism, virility, strength and power". (Messner, 1988, p. 200)

Sport in the 'modern' sense, can therefore, be analysed as framed as a dominant ideology that naturalises competition and winning within a corporatised and institutional structure that "celebrates hypermasculinity (Burstyn, 1999), prioritizes toughness and marginalizes those who do not meet these expectations" (Antunovic & Hardin, 2015, p. 662). Scholarship has "examined how women's increased participation corresponded with the cultural shift that occurred during the "second wave" women's movement" (Antunovic & Hardin, 2015, p. 662). Notwithstanding the

increased participation of women in sport and the extension and expansion of women's sport, an "idealized masculinity" still dominates as "the invocation of sport must be understood as an invocation of the masculine". (Dworkin & Wachs, 2009, p. 95 in Antunovic & Hardin, 2015, p. 663)

As women's sport is "a challenge to the ideological basis of male domination" (Messner, 1988, p. 197), so does women's sports media potentially pose such a challenge. This observation points to a further issue for this research - that understanding women's sport and women's sports media in terms of national identity requires analysis of men's sport and men's sports media.

The following section analyses scholarship that has addressed the relationship between sport and national identity. Drawing on this sports history and other scholarship, it is possible to identify and analyse the ideological processes at work in sport. The focus is on Australian sport and national identity, beginning with examining the relationship between sport and nation during the Australian colonial period. A relationship between ideas of nation and masculinity is linked to imperial attributes before their transformation into a post-colonial national identity. The ideological positioning of race and gender – the narrative of white male dominance– is discussed before examining the development of Australian women's sport through the lens of women's cricket later in this Chapter.

Sport and national identity

Scholars have considered how women's sports media plays a role in the ideological processes of national identity formation, including national and international sports history, sociological analysis of sports, and analyses from cultural and media studies

perspectives (for example, Antunovic & Hardin, 2015; Antunovic & Whiteside, 2018; Boyle & Haynes, 2009; Bruce, 2008; Bruce & Antunovic, 2018; Byerly, 2018; Caple, 2013; Messner, 1988; Rowe, 2004). Before discussing women's sports media, it is necessary to analyse the research on sport and national identity, much of which has focused on male sport and national identity. Of specific relevance to this research is scholarship that has considered the relationship between sport and national identity (for example, Mandle, 1973, Stoddart & Sandiford, 1998; Wagg, 2018).

Boyle & Haynes (2009) argue that “few other cultural forms lend themselves as easily as sport to being used as an indicator of certain national characteristics and, by extension, of being representative of a national identity” (p. 144). The contributing components to these representations include sport's “visibility and focus on symbols, winning, competition, partisan fans... the necessity of collective struggle... ritual and ceremony” (Boyle & Haynes, 2009, p. 144). Media products such as “newspapers, magazines and books... visual and online media, help define the social and political position of sport in society... [and] act as the interface between sporting, political and ideological discourses of identity and meaning” (Boyle & Haynes, 2009, p. 145). Such sports media discourses enable “countries... [to] act out their preferred myths through self – and other – stereotypes, and celebrate those qualities which, in their own eyes, make them more modern, more advanced, in short superior” (Boyle & Haynes, 2009, p. 147). Drawing on the analysis, an examination of the discourse of women's sports media policy provides analogous opportunities for understanding the deployment of ideological formations of nation and identity.

National identity can be examined at the intersection of constructions of meaning about race, ethnicity, gender and sexuality, where sometimes issues such as race are “subsumed within the larger framework of national identity” (Boyle & Haynes, 2009, p. 107). Analysis of media sport that may, for example, draw on ideological constructions of the ‘nation’ also needs to consider the institutional economic and political issues that influence media organisations (Boyle & Haynes, 2009): that is because “the mobilization of particular discourses of identity is partly determined by a range of factors such as the audience being targeted, the specific media institution and how it is funded, as well as current political and social attitudes” (Boyle & Haynes, 2009, p. 148). A focus on a national team or an individual from a nation to the exclusion of other nations and individuals, or the ‘demonising’ of sportspeople from other countries, may also be influenced by a media outlet’s desire to deliver content that it believes appeals to its ‘national’ audience (Boyle & Haynes, 2009).

Historical linkages between sport, national identity formation and the media developed from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries as sports newspaper coverage of these events was linked to their promotion as media outlets including through commercial advertising promotion with “narration of sporting ‘national heroes’ and the representation of the countries’ landscapes” (Mauro, 2020, p. 933) that took on an increasingly symbolic, national role. Mauro (2020) links “the appeal of sporting news among the working classes in the United Kingdom and the United States” (p. 933) to the growth of popular print media and its relationship with professionalised sport. Sports media were also part of a process of “de-politicization [and] popularization” (Curran & Seaton, 2018, p. 94). In the UK, for example, by the 1930s the popular press

such as “Beaverbrook’s *Daily Express* devoted 52 per cent of its editorial space to human interest and sport, compared to just 18 per cent to public affairs, a very similar mix to Rothermere’s *Daily Mail*”. (Curran & Seaton, 2018, p. 49)

The enduring significance of sports media can be gauged from evidence that “[i]n Italy, 49 of the first 50 most watched TV broadcasts are sports events” (Mauro, 2020, p. 934). Similarly, in Australia in 2019, six of the ten most-watched programs were sports events, and 19 of 20 multichannel broadcasts were sports events (OzTAM, n.d.).²¹ Given this level of audience, “the growth of sports broadcasting”, and print and later digital coverage, Mauro argues that “the representational process instigated by mass media and magnified by digital and social media” regarding sports is especially important in their contribution “to the construction and maintenance of the idea of the nation” (2020, p. 934). While there has been a range of scholarship about the connections between “sport, national identity and nationalism” less attention has been paid to “the role of mass media in constructing and deepening such connections”. (Mauro, 2020, p. 934)

The modern nation-state’s national identity project has been linked to the exclusion of those “who are not perceived, at certain times, in certain historical conjunctures, to belong to the ‘nation form’ (Balibar, 1991)” (Mauro, 2020, p. 935). The “representation and selection of certain rituals, images, stories which constitute a specific, ‘primordial’ narrative of a nation [are]... preserved and celebrated over time” (Mauro, 2020, p.

²¹ OzTAM data includes multiple versions of ‘reality’ programs as different events in the ratings data. For example, the program *Married at First Sight-finals* is listed as two separate broadcast events, as is *The Block*. If these final episodes (split only by titles and advertisements in their broadcast) are treated as single events, 7 of the top 10 broadcasts involve sports events.

935). This sense of being ‘primordial’, of having an existence that stretches into the historical past, is critical to nation-building where “national traditions can also be created and invented (Hobsbawn [sic], 1983)”. (Mauro, 2020, p. 935)

Sports media’s ideological constructions are not monolithically impervious to disruption but are subject to “unpredictable fractures” (Rowe et al., 1998, p. 120). Further, Mauro cites scholarship about sports media’s ability to provide “a space in which counter-narratives may emerge” (Marjoribanks, 2012, pp. 76-77, in Mauro, 2020, p. 935). Sports media are also potentially more open to “provid[ing] a context for marginalised groups to express forms of resistance to dominant projections of the idea of the nation” (Mauro, 2020, p. 935). The historical context of women’s sports media counter-narrative that disrupted sports media’s dominant position is discussed later in this chapter.

Australian sport, cricket and national identity

The following sections further examine issues of sport and national identity in the contexts of the development of sport in Australia and Australian sports media. The Chapter then considers literature about the ideological formations of Australian men's and women’s cricket and Australian sports media.

In academic and related literature there is an extraordinarily long and significant list of scholarship on the history of men’s cricket. A very brief list includes, in relation to England (Bateman & Hill, 2011; Williams, 1999), Australia (Cashman, 1994, 1996; Haigh, 1997; Harte, 2003; Mandle, 1973; Sandiford, 1994), India (Guha, 2002; Majumdar, 2004) and West Indies (Beckles, 1998a, 1998b; James, 1963 [1986]), as well as focussing on global or imperial issues (Stoddart and Sandiford, 1998; Malcolm, 2013;

Wagg, 2018). While some of this scholarship has examined women's cricket (e.g., Wagg, 2018), most has focussed exclusively on men's cricket. Others, such as Stoddart and Sandiford's (1998) study of cricket "and cultural imperialism" across the former British Empire, *The Imperial Game*, has made limited references to women's cricket, noting, for example, that in Australia, "there has been constant criticism of women who dared trespass into male territory" (p. 35). Harte's (2003) *A History of Australian Cricket*, while not an academic text, is one of the few detailed cricket histories to analyse the political economy of the sport in Australia. This section draws on key elements of the literature to examine the ideological construction of the concept of the Australian nation, focussing especially on the pivotal ideological role of cricket.

The process by which sports contributed to national identity formation in countries such as Australia in the nineteenth century is observable in the ideological constructions of the British Empire and the formations of 'Australian' colonial identities (Mandle, 1973). Just as the land consisted of the already occupying owners, Indigenous people, the non-Indigenous colony was not a homogeneous ethnic group (Adair, 1998). The Anglo-Celtic groups that dominated emigration to the colonies in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries brought different cultural attributes, including those relating to sport (Adair, 1998). The "numerical superior" English brought the codification of many sports that "combined with experience in organizing rules, clubs, and competitions" (Adair, 1998, p. 43) to establish a dominant cultural and ideological position of sports such as horse racing, cricket and boxing.

W.F. Mandle has been attributed with beginning Australian academic sports history with his work in the 1970s (Adair 2009). Mandle's importance for this research is that

his work in sport and national identity brought “the subject of sport firmly into new discussions of Australian history” (Adair, 2009, p. 406). Australian sports history identified nineteenth-century “efforts to establish race tracks, cricket fields and rugby pitches [as] part of the colonial drive to recreate, even if in the imagination, some of the cultural trappings of a distant ‘homeland’” (Adair, 2009, p. 409). Sport's importance was its ability to connect the colony and those living in it to the ‘core’ of the British Empire (Cashman, 1995; Daly, 1982, in Adair, 2009; Van Duinen, 2015). From these initial efforts, sporting contests involved teams travelling to and from the colonies and England (Adair, 2009). Building from this sports history scholarship, it is possible to identify and analyse the ideological processes at work in sport and sports media.

For Mandle, cricket was the sport that provided the base for developing “a colonial nationalism that went beyond culture into politics” (Adair, 2009, p. 409). Mandle’s argument, expressed most clearly in *Cricket and Australian Nationalism* (1973), was that sport was both symbolic and practical in its contribution to national identity: symbolic in the establishment and success of an ‘Australian’ cricket team from 1877, and practical in the “effective administrative co-operation at the national level” (Adair, 2009, p. 410) in organising a series of international matches that became known as ‘Ashes’ test cricket and in building an inter-colonial competition from 1892.

Subsequent to Mandle’s work, more than for any other sport, Australian sports literature has consistently linked cricket to Australian identity through a range of critical scholarship (see, for example, Cashman, 1984; 2007; Hutchins, 2005; Rowe, 2014; Scherer & Rowe, 2014; Wagg, 2018). As noted in previous research, “cricket occupies a unique cultural and historical space in Australia and to at least the 1970s, was the

only truly national sport, with national and international matches from the late 19th century” (Ward, 2017, p. 81). International cricket matches involving a team identified as ‘Australian’ began almost a quarter of a century before the formal, constitutional establishment of the nation-state of Australia (Hutchins, 2005). The contesting team, named Australian, consisted of players from the New South Wales, Victorian and later the South Australian and Tasmanian colonies (Cashman, 2007), and played against visiting English teams and toured England (Barker & Rosewater, 1969). Between 1877 and 1901, 56 international ‘test’ matches²² were played by ‘Australia’ (Barker & Rosewater, 1969).

A key component of the symbolic and practical construction of national identity through sport, especially cricket, was the success of the ‘Australians’, who had won the first match in Melbourne in March 1877 (Barker & Rosewater, 1969, p. 1) and ,even more importantly, defeated an English team in London in 1882 (Barker & Rosewater, 1969, p. 14). The attachment of a symbol of ‘ashes’ to the contest endures to the present day (Frindall, 2010). A contemporaneous news report stated, after an 1882 test match in London had been won unexpectedly by the Australian team, that “English cricket had died at The Oval on 29 August 1882... [and] the body will be cremated and the ashes taken to Australia” (*Sporting Times*, 2 September 1882, in Hilton, 2006, p. 49).²³ From this media report, ‘The Ashes’ cricket series began, for which Australian

²² “Beginning in March 1877 with a match between Australia and England, ‘test’ cricket is the international, long form cricket format, played over several days, varying in its history, from 3 days to timeless matches, the longest of which was eleven days in duration” (Ward, 2018, p. 79).

²³ In the subsequent series in Australia (1882/83), a 5cm wooden bail from the wicket was burnt and the ashes placed in an urn which was taken to England. This urn has remained at Lords Cricket Ground, London since being presented to the MCC in 1927 (Hilton, 2006, pp. 124-125).

and English male cricketers continue to play on a regular basis (Frindall, 2010) and, as discussed below, women's cricket series from 1934. The awareness and significance attached to the sporting contest derived from the attention gained from media coverage, with "a two to threefold increase in space allocation within local and regional [newspaper] titles between 1880 and 1914" (Russell, 2012, p. 1041) for cricket matches.

Cricket and empire, a first sporting globalisation

According to Sandiford (1998), cricket's multiple "forms and fortunes... spread to various segments of the old British empire" (p. 1). The sport was framed as an ideological struggle as the colonies embarked on a "quest for identity in the face of the colonisers' search for authority" (Sandiford, 1998, p. 1). Cricket has consistently been characterised as an exemplar of nineteenth century or Victorian era British national identity, especially in its ability to instil in its constituent members (individuals and colonies) a "strength of character and a positive image sadly lacking in foreigners... associat[ing] cricket with gentility and 'civilization'" (Sandiford, 1998, p. 1). However, there was an ongoing ideological tension as cricket was a "prism through which the changing relationship between a colony and its mother country was viewed' and, for Australians, an important vehicle for the expression of nationalist sentiment". (Russell, 2012, p. 1038)

Sandiford (1998) noted that the characteristics ascribed to Australian cricket were that, notwithstanding having a "white population about one-tenth the size of England... [they] gave as well as they got" (p. 2). This description provides an insight into the role of cricket as an imperial and race-based identifier in the British Empire (Sandiford, 1998). Cricket was "a vital element of Anglo-Saxon culture... the most significant and

the most visible, apart from dress and language” (Sandiford, 1998, p. 2). These descriptions provide a sense of a conscious ascribing of ideological values to cricket, including the concept of racial superiority (Wagg, 2018). The ideological positioning of race meant that Australian cricket consistently excluded Indigenous players, notwithstanding evidence of outstanding ability (Gemmell, 2018). For example, Johnny Mullagh, or Unaarrimin, a Jardwadjali man from what is now western Victoria, was the outstanding player of an Indigenous team’s visit to England in 1868 (BBC, 2020), a tour that pre-dated the Ashes, white male tours.²⁴ However, he was not included in Victorian teams during the 1870s when he might have also been selected for the first test match in 1877, despite later top-scoring for Victoria against a touring English side in 1879 (Gemmell, 2018). Equally egregious omissions and treatment occurred during the twentieth century to Indigenous cricketers such as Jack Marsh in 1903 and Eddie Gilbert in the 1930s (Gemmell, 2018; Maynard, 2012).

This literature on Australian national identity constructions is consistent with more recent examinations of discourses of Australian history that present “dominant conceptions of Australian culture and identity as foundational... settler-colonialism, the frontier bushman myth, the martial nationalism of Australian and New Zealand Army Corps (ANZAC), and [more recently] multiculturalism” (Bromfield et al., 2021, p. 151). While analysis of the processes that have characterised ideological struggles in Australia since 1788 should not be reduced to just these four concepts, these

²⁴ While the Indigenous team tour of England in 1868 is rightly acknowledged in many publications, there is no explanation of why there was not another Indigenous cricket tour of England until 2018. A reason for no further tours was that in 1869, the Victorian colonial administration “enacted laws that gave the colony sweeping controls over the lives of indigenous people, including rules that restricted travel. It prevented any chance of a second overseas tour” (Mao, 2018, n.p.).

discourses frame and reframe processes of racializing colonialism, male dominance and an “ongoing exclusion/conditional inclusion of Indigenous peoples into Australian national identity, reproduce[ing] white material and discursive possessiveness” (Bromfield et al., 2021, p. 151). Narratives of “settler-colonialism, masculinity, and whiteness [within] ...harsh environment and life on the frontier inspired a particular imaginary of Australian nationalism”. (Bromfield et al., 2021, p. 151)

Establishing and maintaining a white, Anglo ideology has been an ongoing part of Australian colonial and post-colonial discourses (Farquharson & Marjoribanks, 2006). The Australian nation has been constructed as white through structural arrangements such as the “White Australia Policy, legislative and administrative processes, and everyday social and cultural practices” (Farquharson & Marjoribanks, 2006, p. 26). Extending from this ideology of race was one of gendered superiority. Australia’s nineteenth century ideology framed a ‘muscular Christianity’ in “which young, white, middle-class men could learn the values of ‘cooperation, loyalty, courage, obedience to the rules, dedication and persistence’ (Booth and Tatz, 2000: 49)” (Farquharson & Marjoribanks, 2006, p. 27). If sport was a component of this ideological construction, cricket was at the core of the sport frame (Farquharson & Marjoribanks, 2006).

Cricket, national identity and empire

As noted above, there is a long developmental history of cricket’s invocation in various discourses to define Australian identity (Wagg, 2018). The myths and imaginaries of cricket were formed around defining lines of class, ethnicity and gender (Wagg, 2018). For example, discussing the most contentious period in Australia-England

international cricket, the 1932-33 'Bodyline' series, Wagg (2018) argues that it did not undermine the position of cricket's role as a signifier of an Australian identity that was part of the British Empire. On the contrary, the "shared Britishness between the two sets of players [Australia and England] ... was not shaken by Bodyline –...[as] most Australian cricketers had regarded Bodyline as a betrayal of Britishness" (Wagg, 2018, p. 159). While certain individuals had not played the game in the correct 'British' spirit of fair play and sportsmanship, the underpinning ideological identification with imperial ('white, male') values was not shaken (Sissons & Stoddart, 1984).

McKay and Miller (1991) have noted a "hegemonic [English] amateur ideology" (p. 87) profoundly influenced the administration and operation of Australian sport until the 1970s. Cricket's internal class conflict, and out of a distinction between largely upper-class 'amateurs' and working-class 'professionals', was formally maintained in English cricket until the 1960s (Wagg, 2018). The structure included separate facilities at grounds for amateurs and professionals, including different gates into the ground, and permitted no working-class professional to captain an England team until 1953 (Wagg, 2018). In Australia, the class distinction was maintained through an arrangement where no professional players were employed, and players received only a compensatory payment for playing matches (Wagg, 2018). A mythology was maintained of a classless society, replicated and represented on a cricket field where there was apparently no class distinction (Wagg, 2018). The concept of the 'Ashes',²⁵

²⁵ Test matches between Australia and England have been called "The Ashes" since 1903, following use in the England captain, Pelham Warner's book, *How we recovered the Ashes*, (Lynch, 2009).

discussed above, was “rooted in established national social class mythology”. (Wagg, 2018, p. 168)

With that social ‘classlessness’, the components of the ideological construction of cricket included an endorsement of an alleged Australian economic classlessness. This was summarised by the legendary Australian cricketer, Sir Donald Bradman, in his autobiography when responding to criticism of his position as a stockbroker:

It is wrong for people to think of our large companies in terms of wealthy industrialists when they are, in the main, owned by thousands of shareholders and are a vital necessity to the well-being and democratic progress of our country. (Wagg, 2018, p. 160)

In addition to ensuring cricket’s class ideology, the sport spoke to a dominant understanding of the nation’s ethnic heritage. Prime Minister, Sir Robert Menzies, was cricket’s “unofficial patron” during the period of “Australia’s Anglophile cricket identity” (Wagg, 2018, p. 22) of sportsmanship and fair play. Wagg (2018) identifies Prime Minister John Howard²⁶ as the closest to Menzies in “associat[ing] himself closely with the Australian cricket team, regarding it as a flagship for national identity” (p. 26). Howard invoked cricket’s largely unstated ‘whiteness’ to confront multiculturalism and maintain an ideology of “Australia [as a]... predominantly... white, British-descended ethnicity” (Wagg, 2018, p. 26).²⁷ The attachment to

²⁶ Prime Minister of Australia, 1996-2007.

²⁷ Howard and Menzies are just two examples of Australian prime ministers’ involvement and invocation of cricket and nation. Other prime ministers noteworthy for their involvement in cricket include Australia’s first Prime Minister, Edmund Barton, John Curtin, as well as Bob Hawke and Tony Abbott, both of whom played cricket for, among others, Oxford University (Hutchins, 2001; Wade, 2019).

'Britishness' extended to an "admiration of the British monarchy" (Wagg, 2018, p. 165) where Australian Test teams are 'presented' to the reigning monarch during matches at the Lord's ground in London and through the distribution of imperial honours such as knighthoods (until the institution of Australian awards and the removal of knighthoods in Australia).

However, the ideological processes that worked to organise sports, such as cricket, as identifiers of a particular type of national identity were not monolithic. As Bateman (2009) noted, other narratives challenged the dominant ideological framework with writers such as James (1963/1986) arguing that cricket could challenge ideologies of whiteness and empire through narratives of colonial and post-colonial resistance.

During the 1960s and 1970s, cricket's "social class mythologies ... intertwined with a range of new factors" (Wagg, 2018, p. 166) as economic and political relationship changes influenced social changes. These factors included the United Kingdom's entry into the European Economic Community and the tightening of UK immigration restricting free Commonwealth access, accompanied by a "greater commodification of culture [and]... the abolition of the distinction between amateurs and professionals in English cricket". (Wagg, 2018, p. 166)

Cricket's 1970s manifestation was "characterised by masculine aggression, professional competitiveness and an often angry sense of having striven to be where they were" (Wagg, 2018, p. 169). A "growing abrasiveness of the Australian [men's] team" (Wagg, 2018, p. 170) during the 1970s accompanied cricket's commodification as part of a "media sports cultural complex" (Rowe, 2004, p. 4). The 'Ashes' series became defined by the increasing commercialisation of the sport and aggression in on-field

competitiveness (Wagg, 2018). Rowe (2022) has noted that “media sport, certainly commercial, but also to some degree in the public service tradition, has celebrated masculinity. It has tended to do [so] because that's what sport essentially did”.

Women’s cricket and national identity

This section examines scholarship about the relationship between sport and national identity construction in Australia, focusing on Australian women’s cricket. An analysis of Australian women’s cricket history is presented, contrasting the relationship to Australian men’s cricket development and ideological constructions of national identity in the men’s game. The history of Australian women’s cricket is placed in the context of the ideological formations noted earlier in the chapter (Messner, 1988; Antunovic & Hardin, 2015), precisely the significance of the relationship between colonialism, capitalism, gender and race in shaping the ideological frames of Australian sport.

The use of the term ‘Ashes’ for the women’s cricket series between Australia and England began in 1934 (Velija, 2012). However, the women’s series played for a ‘mythical’ Ashes trophy until 1998 because of concerns not to upset men’s cricket (Velija, 2012). In 1998 the women's test match series formally adopted the term ‘Ashes’ with “the ashes of a signed miniature bat, a copy of the WCA constitution and a rule book sealed in a wooden cricket ball” (Bollen, 2020, p. 114). A trophy containing the Ashes has been awarded to each winner of subsequent series between the two countries.

In the “first... historical study of women’s cricket in Britain from its origins in the eighteenth century to the present day”, Nicholson (2019) states that “women’s sport,

and indeed women's leisure more generally, has long suffered from neglect by the academy" (p. 3). Citing Hong (2001), Nicholson (2019) argues that academic literature focuses on "women's political struggles and their economic independence" (p. 3). As Nicholson (2019) notes, while the "volume of literature on cricket, both academic and popular, is unequalled across any other sport", women's cricket history has received "scant attention". (p. 8)

Nicholson's argument contrasting women's cricket histories with men's is important and relevant. However, while her argument regarding women's cricket histories may be correct, there is extensive literature about women's sport from feminist sports, sociological and feminist media studies perspectives (see, for example, Antunovic & Whiteside, 2018; Bruce, 2008; Harvey, 2020; Messner, 1988). The position of women's sport as an academic concern will be discussed below. It is noteworthy that there is evidence that, within the first wave of feminism, the British suffrage movement recognised the ideologically powerful position of male sport (McKie, 2020). During the UK suffragettes' campaign for the right to vote, between April 1913 and March 1914, four cricket pavilions, as well as "golf clubs, racecourses, rugby grandstands, and football grounds" (McKie, 2020, p. 505), were targeted, destroyed or damaged. Including the tragic and famous example of Emily Wilding Davison throwing herself under the King's horse in the 1914 English Epsom Derby, suffragettes "sought to disrupt or destroy sporting sites considered symbolic of male power" as part of a campaign that identified the importance of "justice before sport". (McKie, 2020, pp. 505-506)

Nicholson provides a critical introduction to historical approaches to women's sport and the relationship between women's sport and sport in general, drawing attention to a lack of women's cricket histories that provide "a lens through which to examine key processes of social change" (Nicholson, 2019, p. 2). This issue appears to apply in the Australian context also. A single example of Australian women's cricket history, Cashman and Weaver's *Wicket Women*, was published almost thirty years ago (1991). In 2020 a collection of stories about Australian women's cricket, *Clearing Boundaries: The Rise of Australian Women's Cricket*, was published. This is a useful addition to the literature, and while it notes that "it is "not a complete chronicle" (Bollen, 2020, p. 8), it updates the history of Australian women's cricket.

Others have argued that women's cricket, while developing in terms of prominence, with improved economic opportunities for players, remains in an "unequal power relation[ship] to men's cricket" (Velija, 2015, p. 47). This is because of the pre-existing political and economic arrangements where "men's cricket and male cricketers were firmly established" (Velija, 2015, p. 47) and the wider historical and social expectations about gender relations. While Velija's (2015) analysis is in the context of the development of Australian and English women's cricket, she also notes the similar situation of pre-existing, male-dominated social relations and men's cricket in India, South Africa and the West Indies.

In each of these national instances, as for Australia (see below), cricket's 'national identity' formation role was connected to colonialism, the dominant positioning of the British Empire and white supremacy (Velija, 2015). However, cricket also played a role in confronting white social, political and economic domination (Velija, 2015). For

example, in the West Indies, “cricket became a form of resistance... [as] it came to be viewed as being a sport that ‘challenges, undermines and finally refashions imperial cultural practices towards being an expression of political autonomy by the colonized’ (Mustafa, 2013: 330)” (Velija, 2015, p. 76). Similarly in India, men’s cricket signified national success as it “encapsulate[d] the story of post-colonial India” (Majumdar, 2004 in Velija, 2015, p. 63) and in South Africa, particularly in the post-Apartheid era, the reformation of cricket governance to “replace the previous ‘whites-only’” organisation was an essential part of a process of re-joining the international community (Velija, 2015, p. 74).²⁸ In contrast to the history of cricket in these national examples, which is analogous to the history of cricket in Pakistan and Sri Lanka (Velija, 2015), Australian men’s cricket history, as discussed previously in this chapter, had a different historical trajectory concerning national identity and race.

Notwithstanding the national instances of cricket’s invocation as challenging imperial and colonial ideologies, it is a “nationalism [that] is gendered” (Velija, 2015, p. 63). As discussed above, the pre-existing status of men’s cricket has framed the position of women’s cricket. However, that pre-existing male domination with a continuing “disproportionate national importance of men’s cricket [that] creates gendered images” forms a part of a “symbolic marginalisation of women [that] validates and reinforces these images” (Gupta, 2013, p. 100). Writing about Indian women’s cricket, Gupta (2013) refers to a “gendered nationalism” (p. 99), where women have not been

²⁸ Perhaps the most significant historical moment in terms of gendered identity for men’s cricket in South Africa and England and a confrontation with the apartheid ideology was the 1970 ‘D’Olivera Affair’ when the South African Government banned an English cricket team for the inclusion of a person of colour (Merrett & Nauright, 1998, p. 71). More recently, issues of racism, including institutional racism, and racial abuse in English cricket have been raised by Azeem Rafiq (Hylton & Long, 2022).

afforded the same access to participate in sports such as cricket, which, as noted previously, are such strong ideological identifiers of the nation, and “are particularly effective in communicating the male identity of a country, because they represent the nation symbolically while isolating the national sport as a male preserve, linked to the maintenance of gender identities” (Gupta, 2013, p. 109). While acknowledging that political, social and economic arrangements differ between India and Australia, this research analyses a similarly gendered nationalism in Australian women’s cricket.

Australian women’s cricket

In contrast to the media interest in and strong expressions of support for the beginning of Australian men’s cricket (Cashman, 1998), women’s initial inter-colonial matches of the nineteenth century received a very different reception (Cashman & Weaver, 1991). Much of the attention was critical and dismissive: “We have had a lady's cricket match in Sydney, but it is to be hoped we never have another” (Sydney Mail, 17 April 1886, in Cashman & Weaver, 1991, p. 2). A report of a women’s match had a sub-heading, “Sweet Girl Cricketers” (*Town and Country Journal*, 13 March 1886, in Cashman & Weaver, 1991, p. 3). Cashman & Weaver (1991) attributed the failure to take women’s cricket seriously, and its subsequent struggles to “Australia[s] imported sporting ideologies including notions of the appropriate participation of men and women in sport” (p. 10), which was linked primarily to nineteenth century “new definitions of femininity”. (Cashman & Weaver, 1991, p. 12)

Nonetheless, despite the strong social norms that militated against women’s sports during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, women’s cricket clubs and

organised competitions formed in Sydney and Melbourne (Bollen, 2020). According to Stell:

The first reference to a women's cricket match in Australia was a game between the women of the gold mining towns of Sofala and Hill End, New South Wales, in 1855. The batswomen earned a sovereign for each run scored. (1991, p. 14)

With the increasing significance of men's cricket from the 1870s, there was also more interest in women's cricket. Reporting on a match at Bendigo, Victoria, in 1874, the *Bendigo Evening News* cited it as spurring other women's teams to form and begin playing in the Victorian and New South Wales colonies (Stell, 1991). Cricket was played by a "wide cross-section of women" (Stell, 1991, p. 15), with a women's cricket association formed in Victoria in 1905, playing interstate matches until World War One (Joy, 1950). By 1910 a three-match cricket series was held between women's teams from New South Wales and Victoria (Bollen, 2020). Despite the various attempts at organising competitions, the pre-World War One era demonstrated only moderate success in establishing women's cricket in Australia.

While cricket was the first sport to have an interstate women's competition (Stell, 1991, p. 50), the women's cricket associations that had been formed were "disbanded during the First World War as women spent their time in wartime occupations" (Stell, 1991, p. 51). Re-established during the 1920s, Australian women's cricket paralleled developments in England as "women moved into the administration and control of their own sports" (Stell, 1991, p. 229). By the 1920s, the situation had transformed as the Victorian Ladies Cricket Association "led the way through organised competition"

(Bollen, 2020, p. 18). The transformation was powered by teams of women mobilised to work in factories during World War One (Bollen, 2020). While there was another period of decline in the 1920s, a range of factory-based teams “create[d] an ‘industrial cricket’ movement”. (Bollen, 2020, p. 18)

Post-First World War Australia saw increased women’s employment in new industries with “the ‘steady exodus from kitchen to factory’” (*Home Magazine*, 1926 in Stell, 1991, p. 217). More structured industrial arrangements meant that women theoretically had ‘leisure’ [non-structured work time] time available (Stell, 1991). The establishment of Australia’s national capital in Canberra in the 1920s, and the recruitment of “large groups of single women... to work in the Commonwealth public service”, saw the further development of sports such as cricket as part of ensuring women’s “welfare” (Stell, 1991 p. 73). In addition, numerous companies and industry sectors established sporting competitions and “sponsored their employees... purchas[ing] all sporting materials, and provid[ing] other assistance to players” (Stell, 1991, p. 217). While these economic and related social changes helped the development of women’s sports such as cricket, it focussed on corporate economic goals, with support “usually terminated as soon as the sport began to intrude on working hours or profit” (Stell, 1991, p. 217). This meant, for example, that women could lose their employment once selected as a member of a cricket tour (Stell, 1991).

In the US, organised women’s sport, such as the National Amateur Athletic Foundation, “opposed women’s participation in the 1928 Olympic Games” and adopted an “anti-competitive ‘feminine philosophy of sport’” (Messner, 1988, p. 200). In Australia, there is evidence of a more determined approach to establishing women’s

sport. For example, during the 1920s, a revitalisation of women's cricket led to the establishment of several state-based organisations and a national association in 1931 (Cashman and Weaver, 1991). An Australian Women's Cricket Council (AWCC) was formed (Joy, 1950) to support their costs and the first international women's cricket tour by an English team to Australia (Stell, 1991). In that year, an interstate program of matches was held and, in 1934, Australian women played their first international competition series against a touring England team (Cashman and Weaver, 1991). The 'test' series occurred due to an Australian initiative inviting England to tour (Cashman and Weaver, 1991). After two series of matches in the 1930s (Joy, 1950), Australian women's test cricket resumed in 1949 with an England tour, which was the first broadcast in Australia (ABCa, 1950; Cashman & Weaver, 1991). The 1949 tour began a regular series of matches with England and New Zealand until the early 1960s (Stell, 1991).

The development of women's cricket in the 1970s has been linked to the wider political and social changes occurring as "[t]he rise of the feminist movement... saw women take to sporting fields in greater numbers" (Bollen, 2020, p. 59). The momentum for change and "greater equality between the sexes" (Bollen, 2020, p. 59) resulted in an increased number of national and international women's cricket events, including the first cricket World Cup in 1973 (Bollen, 2020; Nicholson, 2019), an innovation that the men's game copied two years later. In 1973, the Australian Women's Cricket Championship trophy was renamed the Ruth Preddy Cup (Bollen, 2020). In addition to being a cricketer and cricket administrator, Preddy had been the sports editor of *The Australian Women's Weekly* (Bollen, 2020). Manager of the Australian team during the

first test series in 1934-35, Preddy wrote full-page stories about the series for each edition (Fenwick, 2021).

Women's cricket: A brief political economy

The Australian Women's Cricket Council had a limited capacity to assist in the first international cricket series in 1934/35, given that "its finances stood at five shillings"²⁹ (Stell, 1991, p. 52). In addition, although organisational work was voluntary, there were numerous costs of holding a sporting series, including "advertisements in the local press" (Cashman & Weaver, 1991, p. 90), ground hire and staff, meals and contributions to accommodation. The English players who participated had to raise funds to sail to Australia and play in the three-match test series (Hawes, 1987). They also had to meet personal costs estimated at £80 each, although they did receive support from the hosts regarding accommodation and similar support (Heyhoe-Flint & Rheinberg, 1976).

It was acknowledged that "the financing of such tours was not easy... the custom was for each tourist personally to pay her own travelling expenses, the hostess country bearing all costs of the visitors and retaining the profits or suffering the losses" (Heyhoe-Flint & Rheinberg, 1976, p. 49). The combined time for the journey by sea (six weeks to Australia and New Zealand and return to England) and three months of cricket matches meant being able to live without an income for six months. As a consequence, "most players arrived back [from cricket tours] hard up" (Heyhoe-Flint & Rheinberg, 1976, p. 49). Women in Australia, including the players selected for the

²⁹ According to Heyhoe-Flint & Rheinberg (1976) the Australian Women's Cricket Council had "4/7d" [indicating a very small level of funds – 4 shillings and sixpence] (1976, p. 39)

1937 cricket tour of England, even had to pay for the mandatory examinations that sporting associations introduced to address the argument that “sport was dangerous for women” (Stell, 1991, p. 172).³⁰ Women needed considerable income or financial resources to afford the cost of travel, accommodation and other expenses associated with international sport.

Large attendances during the 1934/35 tour, which, including Sydney (12,197 people, £524 3s 6d income) and Melbourne (13,000 people, £485 5s 6d income), led to a positive financial outcome for the Australian organisers (Cashman & Weaver, 1991). This meant that the Australian Women’s Cricket Council’s finances had “swelled... to £422” by 1937 (Cashman & Weaver, 1991, p. 99). The “handsome profit from the [1934-35] tour” (Stell, 1991, p. 53) was used to support women’s cricket and contribute to the 1937 English tour.

While, by the 1960s women’s cricket international touring teams from Australia or England could have access to sponsorship from the national “Associations fundraising activities [and]... private donations from individuals, firms and industry” (Hawes, 1987, p. 176) and some public funding, individual players still had to make considerable contributions to be able to participate. For example, English players on the 1968/69 tour of Australia “needed to find some £200 as well as cash for personal expenses” (Hawes, 1987, p. 176). Given that average weekly earnings in the UK in 1968 were £15

³⁰ Stell (1991) notes that the fascist dictatorships in Italy and Germany were the most active in banning women from some sports, for example “Mussolini, with backing of the Vatican, prohibited running and football” (p. 172). However, even in liberal-democratic countries such as the UK and France, notwithstanding a lack of medical or scientific evidence, arguments were made that women’s health could be impaired by participation in athletics or sports (Stell, 1991). This meant that “from the middle of the 1930s most women participating in competitive sport in Australia were theoretically to be medically examined”. (Stell, 1991, p. 173)

(Office for National Statistics, 2022), players had to be able to contribute almost half a year's salary, as well as be able to exist without an income for the three to four months of the tour. By the 1970s, Australian women cricketers still had to do much fundraising and other organising, such as childcare, to play international matches. For example, Dawn Rae of Victoria received “great support from her mother - who minded her two children - and... her club, Olympic, which raised an enormous amount towards the airfare of \$800 -900” (Cashman & Weaver, 1991, p. 116). This financial situation was to continue for Australian women cricketers until the 2000s. For example, as recently as the 1985 Australia - England series and despite “[t]he Australian government contribut[ing] \$25,000 to the tour... players were still some \$200 out of pocket for their uniforms”. (Bollen, 2020, p. 75)

In contrast, in England and Australia, the leading male cricket countries, had been financially sustained from the nineteenth century through establishing regional associations (county in England and colonial in Australia), gambling and sponsorship and profits from tours (Harte, 2003). A comparison with Australian male test cricketers illustrates the difficulties faced in developing women’s cricket and the highly inequitable situation for women cricketers. Financial payments for Australian male cricketers were arguably less than adequate from at least the 1960s, with “the increasing number of tours and a decline in the real dollar value (inflation-adjusted) of payments to players meant that the tendency was for players to retire at a younger age to concentrate on their other professional careers” (Abbott, 2014, p. 115). Abbott (2014) noted that, “[t]his state of affairs was not unusual in Australian sport in the 1960s and 1970s in that most sportsmen were amateurs or semi-professionals, rather than full-

time professional sportsmen” (p. 116). Nonetheless, Australian male cricketers, while nominally ‘amateurs’, had in effect been semi-professionals since the late nineteenth century (Abbott, 2014). At the time of the first international women's cricket tours in 1934-35 and 1937, when players contributed several hundred pounds each to participate, their male counterparts were being paid considerable amounts to play (Abbott, 2014; Cashman & Weaver, 1993). For the 1937 tour of England, the host country assisted the touring team by ensuring they were “billeted privately and enjoyed the hospitality of individuals, clubs and schools” (Cashman & Weaver, 1993, p. 95). In contrast, just a year later, the Ashes men’s cricket team had all travel and accommodation costs paid by the Australian Cricket Board, as the male “players were paid... £750 for the 1938 tour of England (seven months)” (Abbott, 2014, p. 116).³¹

The economic circumstances for Australian women’s cricketers improved significantly from 2010 and especially after 2017 (Hickey et al., 2016; Toffoletti & Palmer, 2019). As former ABC sports journalist Debbie Spillane noted in an interview for this research:

Women's cricket has been one of the key players in forcing everybody to lift their game in women's sports... because they were one of the first to put their players on a salary they could live on. (2022)

The relationship between media coverage, match attendance and income can be gauged from the first women’s cricket series in 1934/35. The financial success of the 1934 tour could be attributed to the “extensive material in all major dailies – match

³¹ Abbott notes that the 1938 men’s team received £750 plus their accommodation, travel, meal etc. when annual average male earnings in Australia were £243 (2014, p. 119).

reports, background articles and a large number of photographs. *The Sydney Morning Herald*, for instance, had a collage of illustrations from the first day of the Sydney Test' (Cashman & Weaver, 1993, pp. 91-93). The media coverage included stories in *The Courier-Mail* in Queensland, the recently established *Australian Women's Weekly*, and "the leading sporting weekly of the country, *The Referee*" (Cashman & Weaver, 1991, p. 93). Coverage could be sexist, such as "the dress of the women cricketers, not surprisingly featured rather more prominently than it did in the reports of men's cricket" (Cashman & Weaver, 1991, p. 94) or contain homophobic inferences, such as the description of English captain, Betty Archdale as being of "mannish appearance... sturdy, tweed-clad, with hair, cropped as close as a boy's" (Cashman & Weaver, 1991, p. 94). Nonetheless, generally positive media coverage continued through to the 1937 tour of England as "Pat Jarratt of the *Melbourne Herald* was given carte blanche to send back as much material as she wanted" (Cashman & Weaver, 1991, p. 95). This support contrasted with the situation noted by women's sports media reports in the 1980s and 1990s, to be examined in Chapter Eight.

Sponsorship and support continued in the 1930s for women's sports tours with, for example, former Australian men's cricketer Bert Oldfield's Sydney sports store "sponsor[ing] their own women's cricket team, Oldfield's, in the local Sydney competition" (Stell, 1991, p. 220). However, from that time, there was an increasing lack of support for individuals and sponsorship for sport, offset only partially by individual product sponsors, usually for equipment such as golf balls or milk or chocolate (Stell, 1991). In the absence of significant corporate sponsorship, as noted above, most costs were met through fundraising by women's sports associations and

by payments by players themselves, meaning that often only players able to afford the cost of an overseas trip of several months could play (Hawes, 1987; Joy, 1950; Stell, 1991).

The lack of sponsorship for women's sport continued until recently, with few exceptions, e.g., netballer Anne Sargeant's Dunlop shoe sponsorship in the 1980s (Stell, 1991). The problem was that "[a]dvertisers refused sponsorship to women who did not have television coverage and television refused airtime to women with sponsors" (Stell, 1991, pp. 226-227). While the ABC was an exception to the general lack of media coverage, its output did not influence a significant shift in available sponsorship. Nonetheless, there is evidence of a potential link between ABC broadcasts and sponsorship. The slight increase in sponsorship for women's sports noted by Stell (1991), such as for netball and women's surfing in 1988 and 1990), does not reference increased ABC broadcasting of women's sports during that period. However, evidence indicates that the public service broadcaster may have contributed to the first sponsorship arrangements. This can be derived from the fact that the ABC's first broadcast of a women's World Cup final in 1988 (ABC, 1989) was also the first women's cricket competition to receive corporate support when oil company Esso provided sponsorship (Stell, 1991). Further evidence of the relationship between media coverage and financial aid can be discerned from the fact, that following media coverage of the Australian women's hockey team's 1988 Olympic gold medal success and the ABC's role as "host broadcaster of the World Cup of Women's Hockey" (ABC, 2006, p. 2), the Australian telco, Telecom, provided "\$500,000 sponsorship" (Stell, 1991, p. 228).

Conclusion

In examining the relationship between the construction of the nation, identity and sport, it is apparent that “while the nation is unquestionably one of the most powerful symbolic” elements of sport, national identity operates in tandem with the “articulation of many modes of identity” (Rowe, 2000, p. 358). Rowe (2000) notes that, “[t]hese include identification with more specific, ‘place-based’ identities such as local communities as well as gendered notions of the sports nation” (p. 358). This is not a matter of a sum of identities forming part of a more comprehensive identity, as that “deployments of sports mythologies always entail a series of exclusions and co-optations” (Rowe, 2000, p. 358). Sport’s ideological power applicability in nation-building derives from its ability to be deployed “to develop a strong sense of ‘collective consciousness’ of being one people” (Rowe, 2004, p. 22).

This chapter has examined the power of sport to frame identities of gender and nation through an analysis of the ideological framing of Australian sport. This review of relevant literature has traced significant academic scholarship about ideological formations of national identity, (male) sport, sports media and women’s sport. It has focused on Australian sport, specifically the development of cricket. In doing so, it has highlighted both the challenges and potential of women’s sport to present different ideological constructions of the idea of the nation.

The following chapter provides a context for the examination of discourses of media policy by considering Australian women’s sport and media, focusing on the role of the ABC.

Chapter Four: Sports media, PSM and ABC Women's sport

I don't see myself as someone who champion[ed] women's sport. It was only later I started realising, we're on a parallel path, we're all battling that... women athletes and women's sports commentators are all battling that attitude that men are naturally more inclined to sport, that it's something that suits men better than women. (Debbie Spillane, Australian sports journalist, 2022)

This chapter provides historical context about Australian sport, sports media and women's sport and media, including a historical focus on the ABC's role in Australian women's sports media, such as women's cricket, before presenting the research project's theoretical framework in Chapter Five and the research methods to be deployed in Chapter Six.

The historical context of the ABC's role in Australian sports media is important to public service media examined in Chapter Two and the review of literature about sport, national identity and sports media considered in Chapter Three. The analysis of the ABC sports media role is triangulated with observations and statements made by people interviewed for this research project.

Australian women's sports and media

The (re)emergence of women-controlled sporting associations in the 1920s was accompanied by increased coverage of women's sports by the (print) media, with women working in sports journalism roles (Stell, 1991). Their coverage of women's sports "heightened the public awareness of women's sports... provoked interest and

drew record numbers of spectators... and it provided women with their own sporting heroes and role models” (Stell, 1991, p. 229). The coverage in print media such as the *Sydney Morning Herald* and the *Melbourne Herald*, women’s magazines such as the *Australian Women’s Weekly*, and ABC radio from 1932 continued until World War II (Cashman & Weaver, 1993).

However, the war’s impact saw a reduction in the number and size of newspapers that meant “[s]upplements and women’s sections [including sport] were suspended” (Stell, 1991, p. 232). At the end of the war, women’s sport was again deferred as it had been during and after World War One, with a proposed English women’s cricket tour of Australia not held until a decade later (Stell, 1991). In contrast, according to the leading male cricketer, Sir Donald Bradman, there was support for men’s cricket to continue in the early years of the war and for international cricket to resume as the Australian Board of Control “agreed to send a team to New Zealand as the end of the 1946 summer”. (Bradman, 1988, p. 125)

Australian women’s sports media coverage did not improve after World War II as “the emphasis was now on motherhood, homemaking and domesticity, not sporting teams and international tours” (Stell, 1991, p. 232). Unlike the experience of the 1920s described in Chapter Three, with women gaining positions to provide media coverage of women’s sports, after World War II, “women disappeared from the sporting pages” (Stell, 1991, p. 232). While there was some coverage in ‘women’s sections’ of print media and radio, with few exceptions, it “relegated the reporting [of women’s sport] to fashion, gossip and socialising” (Stell, 1991, p. 232). Bowen (2022) identifies the print and radio coverage change as beginning in the 1930s. The structural shift

identified is the same: “talks about women’s sport were fewer after 1935, while those offering shopping advice and tips on home decoration increased” (Bowen, 2022, p. 139). Bowen (2022) also highlights a difference between commercial radio and the ABC, as “talks dealing with subjects other than traditionally feminine subjects declined on many commercial stations in the later 1930s; [while] the ABC was being urged to cover a more varied agenda”. (p. 139)

The removal of regular columns or radio programs by women’s sports journalists meant that there was little or no opportunity for addressing structural issues such as “injustices [that] occurred in selection or funding or grounds or equipment allocation [with] insufficient women’s voices with media clout to lobby for improvements (Stell, 1991, p. 233). The situation was worsened with the introduction of television, with Stell (1991) arguing that the trivialisation that had been a part of newsreel coverage of women’s sport transferred to the new medium. Coverage focused on “engagement, wedding and motherhood plans of sportswomen [and]... [a]s men took over the commentary of women’s sport it became increasingly sexist” (Stell, 1991, p. 233). As noted, the sporadic and minimal coverage reduced funding and sponsorship opportunities (Stell, 1991).

An increase (albeit small) in women’s sports coverage that occurred from the 1970s has been linked to “the impact of feminism... the beginning of anti-discrimination legislation [as]... individual women, after a 40-year absence, began to knock again on the doors of serious sports journalism” (Stell, 1991, p. 233). Nonetheless, by 1980 only three women sports journalists worked in print media, none “worked in [Australian] radio or television... and by 1988 [only] eight worked in radio and ten in television

(Stell, 1991, p. 234). Among the first, beginning on commercial radio before moving to the ABC, was Debbie Spillane, who “rebelled against the notion that she should give... the ‘woman’s point of view’ on sport” (Stell, 1991, p. 234). In an interview for this research, Debbie Spillane confirmed that this was her approach. Spillane’s comments about women’s sports coverage by the ABC are examined further below.

The issues confronting women’s sports media were related not just to opportunities for women journalists. A lack of training and inadequate production facilities for media coverage were also identified (Stell, 1991). The Nine television network’s 1983 engagement of Australian actor Kate Fitzpatrick for a single opportunity to be part of men’s cricket broadcasts became symbolic of the failure to provide adequate training and preparation, as “Fitzpatrick didn’t have a practice call or even a trial run [e.g., on lesser matches such as interstate cricket]. She was thrown in at the deep end of test cricket and floundered”. (Stell, 1991, p. 234)

Stell (1991) argued that in the cultural order of “Australian sport, white males have always placed themselves at the top [and]... determine the order of those who follow: second are racehorses, third Aboriginal males, fourth white women and fifth and last black males” (p. 236). Although published in 1991, Stell’s otherwise comprehensive analysis of women’s sports/media fails to mention LGBTQI+ athletes or sports people, perhaps subconsciously placing them in the above hierarchy in an omission that reflects attempts at sports media erasure and discrimination.

Women’s cricket’s erasure is even observable at an intersectional level. In critiquing Australian sport’s racist history and presence, Gemmell (2007) states that while “Aborigines were also the first from Australian shores to tour England when they

visited for 47 contests in 1868... only Jason Gillespie has worn the baggy green [played test cricket for Australia]” (p. 35). In doing so, Gemmell excludes from history the presence of Australian test cricket’s first Indigenous player, Faith Thomas, who played for Australia in 1958, almost forty years before Jason Gillespie’s first test match (Hutchins, 2005). Nonetheless, Gemmell (2007) has pointed out how Australian sport is constructed as a specific ideology of what Toffoletti (2017) terms the representation of “Australian national identity—namely, White men to the exclusion of women, indigenous, and migrant populations”. (p. 237)

A stronger narrative of women’s sports media has increasingly been adopted in recent years, as more women’s sports have been broadcast, streamed, and featured in other media, including news coverage (McLachlan, 2019). This output, in turn, provides increased community interest and support. The changes that have resulted in a significant increase in the presence of women’s sports media, news media coverage and appreciation and engagement with women’s sport via social media have occurred due to “shifts in cultural narratives”. (Antunovic & Whiteside, 2018, pp. 111-112)

PSB and the sports media economy

The Australian sports media rights economy, valued at \$1.2 billion³² annually (Letts, 2018), is part of a global sports media rights sector that has grown over a decade from \$23 billion (Evens et al., 2013. p. 36) to almost \$50 billion in 2018 (Sharma, 2018), with multi-platform rights income representing the most significant component of sports revenues (Goldsmith, 2013, p. 53), making it the “most valuable form of content in

³² Australian dollars.

the global marketplace” (Hutchins, Meese & Podkalicka, 2015, p. 66). However, in many cases, broadcasters do not pay rights fees for women’s sports but require associations to pay the broadcaster (Rowe, 2004, p. 98)., even though in the case of team sports such as cricket, football, hockey and netball, the Australian women’s team was often the world champion or at a much higher level in international competition than the equivalent Australian male team (McLachlan, 2019). For example, the Australian women's cricket team has achieved “remarkable ongoing success with win/loss ratios over the past ten years of 80% in test matches, 88% in ODIs and 100% in Twenty20 matches”. (Stronach & Adair, 2009, pp. 925-926)

Australian national identity and Australian sports media

A range of literature has charted the history, activities and development of electronic sports media in Australia. Other studies have considered the role of sport in Australian life, including analysis of the development of a global media sports environment (Hutchins & Rowe, 2013; Rowe, 2011) and the evolution of digital and increasingly online and mobile sports media (Hutchins & Rowe, 2012; Hutchins & Rowe, 2013). Other important works, such as Malcolm’s (2013) account of the globalisation of cricket and Velija’s (2015) history of the emergence of women’s cricket as a global entity, do not address sport in relation to media.

Notwithstanding “the high profile of sport in Australian culture... there are few scholars for whom sport is a serious focus of research” (Adair, 2009, pp. 405-406), at least from a sports history perspective. The contribution of sports historians is analysed below. Unlike sports history, however, there has been significant research about the relationship between the media and Australian sports, including critical

moments such as the commodification of sport through the commercialisation of sports media in the 1970s (for example, Adair, 2009; Rowe, 2004; Scherer & Rowe, 2014).

The political economy of sports media changed significantly after World War II due to factors such as the “development of national and international sporting competitions, the ‘maturation’ of media advertising and the emergence of broadcast media for which there was no or limited direct payment by the consumer” (Rowe, 2004, p. 69). Evidence of that change was visible in Australia from the 1950s (Miller et al., 2001; Rowe, 2004; Stewart, 2002). The “transformation from entrepreneurial capitalism to corporate capitalism” (Messner, 1988, p. 201) in post-World War II ‘western’ economies that constructed a ‘docile consumer’ has been proposed as an explanation of the mass spectatorship that has characterised sports viewing over the past 40 years. In Australia, the ABC’s development of a radio and then a television audience for sports such as cricket meant that the number of people who could participate in these national events reached levels unachievable before broadcasting (Andrewes, 2000). For example, by 1975, men’s test cricket audiences for ABC television broadcasts averaged over 1.5 million daily viewers (Ward, 2017). The **daily** television audience was greater than the record cumulative attendance at a test series of 970,000, set over thirty days and five matches in 1936-37 during the Bradman era (Ward, 2017).

Research on broadcasting includes an analysis of the development of radio sports in Australia from the 1920s, with men’s test cricket broadcast from 1924 on Sydney radio 2BL and commercial and PSB radio sport in the 1930s (Andrewes, 2000; Cashman,

1984, p. 92). PSB's extensive radio sports engagement, which began with the newly established Australian Broadcasting Commission's (ABC) delivery of the first sports broadcast to a national audience in December 1932 (Inglis, 1983, p. 36), has been charted in Inglis's comprehensive, two-volume history of the ABC (1983, 2006). Other historians have also described ABC radio sports history and its role in introducing broadcast rights fees (ABC, 1936/37, p. 38) (Andrewes, 2000, Stewart, 2002). Previous research has identified how the ABC argued that "exclusive rights deals could not be enforced, allowing other parties to broadcast events for which the ABC had already paid an exclusive fee". (Ward, 2017, p. 26)

The most comprehensive analyses of the emergence of Australian sports media and its economic and cultural impact are the work of Rowe and Hutchins, individually, in combination and with other scholars (see, in addition to their work cited elsewhere here, for example, Hutchins, 2005; Hutchins & Rowe, 2009; Hutchins, & Rowe, 2012, 2013; Rowe, 2011, 2016). For this project, a significant element of the research is the identification of a 'media sports cultural complex' (Rowe, 2004, p. 37), the relationship between sports and media organisations in producing meaning. Rowe (2004) argues "that the media are both the driving economic and cultural force in sport because they provide (or attract) most of the capital... and disseminate the images and information, which then generate more capital and more sport" (p. 68). Chapters Seven, Eight and Nine of this research discuss the relationship between these cultural and economic forces that shape sports media and the discourses used to frame media policy ideologically. The issues of sports media and national identity are considered in the context of public service media in the next section.

Sports media and public service media

As noted above, less research has focussed on Australia's public broadcasters' sports content, its significance in developing women's sports media, or its contribution to PSM charter roles and principles such as national identity (for exceptions, see Goldsmith, 2015; Scherer & Rowe, 2014). The general absence is significant given the importance that public service broadcasters placed on sport, with broadcasters such as the BBC "'position[ing] sport as an integral part of a particular view of national culture that the BBC was bound to promote, protect and reflect back to the "nation"' (Boyle, 2006: 60)". (Ramon & Rojas-Torrijos, 2022, p. 921)

As noted in Chapter Two, the ABC consciously invoked the BBC's Reithian model. Sports broadcasting was essential to the model, including at "national occasions... The Boat Race, the Grand National, the Cup Final and the Derby" (Whannel, 1992, p. 15). For most members of the community and the audience listening to the BBC in England and the ABC in Australia, the experience of these national events was through radio broadcasting (Andrewes, 2000). Public service broadcasting became so integral to the national experience that it became difficult to separate the event from the broadcaster (Cashman, 1984; Inglis, 1983).

The ABC and sport

The ABC played a significant role in Australian women's sports media history. As briefly discussed in the context of the PSM scholarship in Chapter Two and stated by Emeritus Professor David Rowe in an interview for this research:

The ABC, like its counterparts in other parts of the world, has been very important in priming women's sport, getting it to a certain level and either losing enthusiasm for it, or it has just been taken away by larger forces.

(Rowe, 2022)

This section provides a brief account of the ABC's sports media role. While that history has been extensive, the research charts a significant change in the ABC's perception of its role. As will be examined further in Chapters Seven and Eight, “[t]here is this sense that women's sport has now got to a stage it can look after itself. It doesn't need public service subvention”. (Rowe, 2022)

In the most comprehensive account of the ABC, Inglis's two-volume history (1983, 2006), there is little attention given to television sport, except to (wrongly) record that by the 1980s, it “was on its last legs” (2006, p. 72). Inglis (1983) gives prominence to the ABC's approach, evident in radio, which saw it deliver national broadcasts of test cricket as part of a mixed programming policy to meet broadcasting objectives. As former ABC Managing Director Russell Balding noted in an interview for this research:

The ABC was the front runner in bringing sport to the Australian public, obviously initially through radio and the innovative ways they did that and in respect to the Ashes series [and] ... the innovation when television was introduced into Australia, the ABC was at the forefront of that, and bringing cricket initially to the Australian public. (2022)

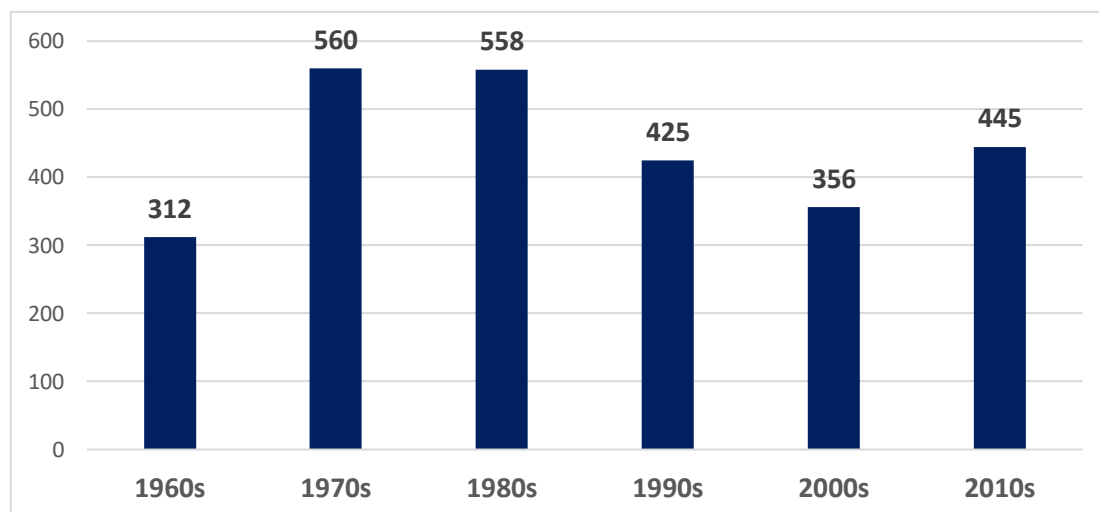
As previous research identified, the ABC reported that a “‘keen national interest in sport’ had inspired the provision of daily cricket broadcasts to the nation (Inglis, 1983, p. 36)” (Ward, 2017, p. 6). The importance of this nation-building role saw the ABC

broadcast sport to an increasingly national audience through a developing radio network (Ward, 2017, p. 6). Balding stated in the interview:

Part of the role... is to be a comprehensive national broadcaster, to reach all Australians. So, irrespective of where you lived, you had equal access to that content... that was one of the crucial roles at the ABC to ensure not only their relevance, but to reach all Australians. (2022)

Figure 4.1 is based on previous research analysing sixty-three years of ABC annual reports (Ward, 2017, p. 71). It shows that broadcasts of ABC television's national sports hours increased from the 1970s to the 1980s. While annual sports output was highest in the 1970s and 1980s, it remained at significant levels, with the annual average in the 2010s higher than in the 1960s. Inglis's (2006) description of ABC television sport's apparent decline ignored achievements in bringing women's sport to television screens (Ward, 2017). The ABC's role in women's sports media is discussed below.

Figure 4.1: ABC TV average annual national sports hours (1960s–2010s)



Source: Author's research based on Australian Broadcasting Commission and Australian Broadcasting Corporation annual reports (1960-2017).

Televising sport was one way in which the ABC met its charter obligation to contribute to a sense of national identity and adhere to public service broadcasting principles (ABCa, 1976; Goldsmith, 2015, Rowe, 2014; Smith, 2017; Ward, 2017). The 1956 Melbourne Olympic Games, which included women's events, was broadcast on three television services, the ABC and two commercials, within weeks of the beginning of television in Australia (Stewart, 2005). From the beginning of television in the mid-20th century, Australian women's sports broadcasting was delivered almost entirely by the ABC (Goldsmith, 2015, p. 74; Ward, 2017, p. 95), based on the ABC's articulation of its public service broadcasting (PSB) role (Ward, 2017, p. 93).

From the beginning of Australian television in 1956 until the 1980s, the ABC dominated Australian television sport, with top-tier³³ sports a core component of the ABC's television services that knitted together, over time, a national network (ABCa, 1955; Goldsmith, 2015; Ward, 2017). Communities were provided with broadcasts of local sports competitions and, as the network was built, national audiences received coverage of events occurring around the country. The ABC built a national audience for televised sport with a stated policy commitment and technical, programming, production and audience development activities (Ward, 2017).

Paradoxically, from the 1980s, this success made it almost impossible for the ABC to continue broadcasting major national and international sports as "the ABC lost its role" (Balding, 2022). As he stated for this research:

³³ Sports are categorised by agencies such as the Australian Sports Commission as first tier, second tier etc., primarily according to their ability to attract large audiences and generate high levels of sports media rights (ASC, 2017, p. 39).

The turning factor is when the sport started to become a commercial commodity. And therefore, the owners of those sports could put a fee for its rights... the ABC came to a point in time, it could no longer compete with the commercial networks. (Balding, 2022)

In an increasingly commercial and global sports media environment, public service broadcasting of top-tier, male-dominated sports diminished as it could not afford the rights fees that grew exponentially during the 1970s (Inglis, 2006; Goldsmith, 2015; Scherer & Rowe, 2014). A single illustrative example is the international men's cricket television rights, which in 1976 cost the ABC \$72,000 (Ward, 2017). The Nine Network paid \$1 million per annum only three years later to secure test cricket rights (Ward, 2017). Commercial television could offset these costs, as increased audiences delivered more significant advertising revenue (Herd, 2012; Scherer & Rowe, 2014; Whannel, 1992, 2009). The changes ended the ABC's dominance of television broadcasts of men's cricket as it was replaced by commercial television.

Former ABC Managing Director Russell Balding added another reason for the ABC's decision to move out of sports media. Balding noted the ABC's historical concern about commercial references in broadcasts, which was especially a problem when referring to sports events and sponsorship signage at events. Balding used the example of the Hopman Cup tennis tournament as a case study example, noting that "obviously [the ABC] couldn't mention that commercial sponsor on television, [and]... on television, you had signage around the perimeter of the tennis court" (2022). He cited concerns within the ABC and among its supporters with "people saying... you're broadcasting a commercial logo... promoting that commercial product" (Balding,

2022). In response, Balding argues that the coverage was not a commercial promotion, and that the ABC was not “advocating, go and buy that product” (2022). However, he believes that the criticism of ABC sport coverage and commercial signage at events “gave the non-sporting people the opportunity [to argue for the ABC] not to pursue sport because of its commercial aspect” (2022).

After 2010, the ABC television programming interest in sport declined significantly with a changed “view of the centrality of sport within the ABC’s comprehensive/complementary broadcasting role” (Ward, 2017, p. 97). Although the ABC continued to broadcast national sports such as football until 2020, the decision to outsource significant elements of its television production in 2011 and 2013 saw a reduction in local and sports broadcasting (Australian Senate, 2011; Australian Senate, 2013). As also discussed in Chapter Seven, one of the most significant decisions announced by ABC Managing Director Mark Scott in response to cuts to the ABC budget in November 2014 was a major reduction in sport, including local sports and women’s sport such as women’s football (Odong, 2014; Scott, 2014).

Interviewed for this research project, former ABC Managing Director Mark Scott (2022) places the ABC’s changing role concerning television sport within an overall concept of the ABC’s role of ensuring “Australians ... felt that the ABC spoke to them, told their stories and engaged with them. So, you needed to do both, and so I would always emphasize wide appeal and specialist interest”. This approach to the PSM policy role means that the ABC is different. For example, the BBC “with its licence fee, with every family writing the cheque, had to demonstrate a value

proposition to everyone” (Scott, 2022). For Scott, this meant that the ABC would not compete for high-cost sporting programs. As he summarised:

When it came to programming... I was happy for there to be entire and important areas of programming that we walked away from ... the most obvious one was the big sporting franchises. I grew up watching Olympic Games, Commonwealth Games, cricket, rugby league, and rugby union, all on the ABC. (Scott, 2022)

Scott (2022) links the commercialisation of television sport to the introduction of colour, which motivated “people like Kerry Packer, Rupert Murdoch and others” to pursue sports content as part of commercial free-to-air and subscription services. With a dominating commercial presence in sports media, there was no longer a rationale for the ABC to play its historical role, and it would have come “at an enormous opportunity cost to what we would be able to do” (Scott, 2022).

Finally, in addition to the massive increase in sports rights fees that made it more difficult for PSBs to compete for sports (see, for example, Scherer & Rowe, 2014; Whannel, 1992), a second pivotal policy moment had an impact on the ABC’s approach to how it implemented PSM policy principles. The “migration from spectrum scarcity and therefore programming scarcity firstly broaden[ed] out through multichannel and then through digital streaming” (Scott, 2022). There were significant consequences for women’s sports media, as Scott (2022) links this technological change to both increased opportunities for viewing on various platforms, including free-to-air, subscription and streaming services and increased production costs for sports media to meet expectations formed by “cameras everywhere, in vibrant colour,

increasing special effects, super slow-mo to what we are seeing today. High-cost wizardry in production values... setting a whole new benchmark in production values". The overall outcome was that the ABC almost completely ceased delivering audiovisual sports content after the mid-2010s.

ABC and women's cricket

In terms of cricket, in Australia, as in the UK, "[a]lmost all coverage on national radio and television has been of men's international or county cricket" (Williams, 2011, p. 56). However, the ABC played a significant role in broadcasting women's cricket on radio and television from the late 1940s (ABCa, 1950). While there is no record of the ABC broadcasting the first women's cricket tour of Australia in 1934, there is evidence of ABC radio coverage of the 1949-50 English women's cricket tour, when matches in the test series were broadcast on radio (ABCa, 1950). In February 1958, as noted in Chapter One, in a forgotten moment in Australian television history, international cricket was first broadcast in Australia during the English team's 1957-58 tour. The touring England team's match against NSW, and possibly an Australia v England test match were broadcast (ABCa, 1958, p. 27). Australia's first international cricket on television was women's cricket. The broadcasts were five years before "international women's cricket appeared on BBC television" in 1963 (Nicholson, 2019, p. 177).

Previous research identified that ABC radio was responsible for one of the first broadcasts of women's sport in the world; women's cricket test matches in 1949 (ABC, 1950) and the first television broadcast of women's international cricket in the world (ABCa, 1958, p. 27 in Ward, 2017, p. 15). There is evidence that the ABC played a role in developing women's sports media, replicating its role during its overall dominance

of television sport (Ward, 2017). For example, Table 4.2 contains original research drawn from policy documents and provides examples of the ABC's pioneering role in bringing women's sport to television for the first time.

After the 1957/58 series, the next international women's cricket played in Australia was in 1968/69. There is no record of an ABC broadcast of that series. Like men's cricket, the women's game struggled to retain a following in the 1960s. While the men's game benefitted from strategies that culminated in increasing commercialisation from the 1970s, women's cricket did not receive the financial support or audience development that helped resuscitate the men's game.

It was almost 30 years before the next television coverage of women's cricket in 1984/85, again by the ABC (Cashman & Weaver, 1991). In 1988, the ABC televised the Women's World Cup Final in Melbourne (Cashman & Weaver, 1991). The ABC also televised the following series played in Australia in 1991/92³⁴ and in 2014 producing a radio broadcast and live-stream video of the series of six matches (Farrell, 2014). The ABC broadcast or live-streamed coverage of seven series over thirty years from 1984, including against England and New Zealand, until television coverage was taken over by Fox Sports in 2016 (Jolley, 2016) and Nine Network in 2017

³⁴ The ABC continued to broadcast test cricket for a number of years to ensure people living in regional and remote communities not covered by commercial television were able to receive cricket broadcasts.

(cricket.com.au, 2017). Table 4.2 details the original research for this project about international women’s cricket broadcast on television in Australia from 1949 to 2018.³⁵

Table 4.2: Women’s cricket series broadcast arrangements

Year	Series / Tournament	Broadcaster /online delivery
1949/50	England tour	ABC Radio
1957/58	England tour	ABC Television
1968/69	England tour	No broadcast
1984/85	England tour	ABC Television
1988	Women’s World Cup Final	ABC Television
1991/92	England Test match	ABC Television
2002/03	England tour	No live coverage
2008	England ODI*	ABC Television
2009/10	New Zealand T20	9 Network
2010/11	England ODI	ABC Television
2012/13	New Zealand ODI/T20	ABC Television
2013	Women’s Cricket World Cup (India)	Subscription TV (STV)
2013/14	England Tests/ODI	ABC live streamed
2015/16	T20s v India	STV, 9 Network
2017	ICC Women’s World Cup	9 Network
2017/18	Test, ODIs and T20s v England	9 Network, Streamed
2018/19	New Zealand ODI/T20	7 Network, STV

Sources: Author’s research based on: ABCa, 1950; ABCa, 1958; cricinfo, 2022; Cricket.com.au, 2017; Cricket.com.au, 2018; Cricket Victoria, 2013; Farrell, 2014; Galloway, 2017; Intili, 2017).

* ODI: One-Day International.

In 2013 international women’s cricket broadcasts moved from the ABC to the commercial broadcaster, the Nine Network, which held international men’s cricket television rights from 1981 until 2018 (AAP, 2018; Ward, 2017). Although the controlling authorities of women’s cricket, Women's Cricket Australia (WCA), and of men’s cricket, the Australian Cricket Board (ACB), amalgamated in 2003 (Stronach & Adair, 2009), it took over a decade before women’s cricket was included in the Nine network’s television schedule. Even in 2016, the televising of women’s cricket was still

³⁵ The table also includes the first broadcast on radio in 1949. Subsequent radio broadcasts are not listed in the table. ABC radio broadcast women’s cricket from 1957/58.

such an exceptional event that six days of broadcasts could be called a “revolution” (Hogan, 2016), in a year when the Nine Network broadcast thirty-eight days of men’s international cricket (Cricinfo, 2022).

The lack of international matches was a significant issue in developing a television audience for women’s cricket. After the five test matches played in 1984/85, the first series in Australia in 15 years, only six test matches were played in five series in the next thirty years.

During the early 2000s, with an increasing number of women’s cricket tours of Australia (although still small by comparison with men’s), the ABC broadcast live coverage or highlights of matches. In 2006, the ABC noted that women’s cricket, including live coverage or edited highlights, was one of fifteen women’s sports broadcast on ABC Television (ABC, 2006, p. 5). Women’s sport remained a significant component of ABC sports broadcasts; for example, by 2006, women’s sport comprised forty per cent of ABC television sports broadcasts³⁶ (Australian Senate, 2006, p. 99).

Reflections on ABC Sport

It was a point of pride to work for the ABC because... it was committed to showing a match of the week for women's sport... it went where no one else was going. (Interviewee 1)

³⁶ The Senate’s *About time! Women in sport and recreation in Australia* Report, examined in detail in Chapter Eight, noted that “none of the commercial free-to-air networks provided data on their sporting coverage to the committee” (Senate, 2006, p. 99).

Interviews conducted with four people who worked on ABC sports programming from the 1980s to the present provide important reflections and insights into the ABC's women's sports media role. One of the interviewees worked as a sports journalist and commentator, one as a sports program host and commentator, while the remaining two held producing and sports department leadership roles.

Debbie Spillane joined the ABC in the sports department in 1984. During her career she worked at the 1984 Los Angeles Olympics, was a reporter for ABC Rugby League coverage and was "the first woman to do cricket commentary on ABC radio" (ABC, n.d.).

In an interview for this research, Spillane (2022), who came from a non-media background, attributed her interest in sports journalism to her family's interest in sport. Spillane (2022) noted that in the early 1970s, there were no sports journalism positions available for women "so I applied for cadetships". "The only woman to make the final" in a 'competition' for a sports journalist on Sydney commercial radio station, 2GB, she was offered a part-time role with a short segment on a Saturday morning sports show (Spillane, 2022). She noted that:

2GB managers said, "It'd be good if we had the women's point of view on sport. And I can remember saying, 'So who is it that gives the man's point of sport?'" Soon after the ABC advertised a position in radio sport... Wendy McCarthy, who ... said sport doesn't have a woman on air, or doesn't have a woman broadcaster ... [and it was] time for some affirmative action" (Spillane, 2022).

Although Spillane got the ABC position:

Male broadcasters at the ABC [would] just say to me directly, ‘Oh, there were so many better candidates that applied, but they were all men, and you know, you got it because you were the best of the women’. And ‘this is a stupid affirmative action thing’. And... so I was sort of treated as... a charity case kind of thing that shouldn't have been there. (Spillane, 2022)

Spillane’s sports media career traversed public service and commercial media over the following decades.

Spillane (2022) believes that the women’s version of sports with an established sports presence, such as football and cricket, had a greater chance of coverage in print media because “you have three pages of rugby league [that’s not]... news based... we have this many pages. So... the thing is, if you're women's cricket, it becomes easy to then start giving some coverage”. The situation is different for electronic media coverage:

TV and radio coverage is harder because women's sport has come through just at the time as the media is fractured, and, you know, there's just not as much money around... because there's so many platforms... it's so fragmented now that I think the big money deals are harder to get. And so, it's not so much the exposure anymore. I guess it's the money. (Spillane, 2022)

With sports programming moving from PSB to commercial media from the 1970s and 1980s, a smaller group of sports, especially women’s, were generally available for viewing. This has occurred as many sports move to subscription television broadcaster, Fox Sports and its streaming service, Kayo (Rowe et al., 2023). Spillane (2022) noted that “when I was at ABC sport... they had sport on Saturday afternoon... they had

basketball and netball, and other things as well ... like Hockey Championships”. This general access to sport has reduced with fewer choices freely available (Spillane, 2022).

Gerry O’Leary (2022) began her sports media career at the ABC in 1983 “as secretary to the head of the film department [before training to be]... a director’s assistant, and... then went into sport... mainly on the NRL”. Having worked in the ABC’s Sports department for almost twenty years, including as Head of Sport for ABC Television, she later worked for commercial media, including Fox Sports and production company, NEP Australia. O’Leary’s time at the ABC coincided with what others have described, and the data presented above indicate, was a significant period for ABC Television sport. As she stated in an interview for this research:

The thing I loved about sport at the ABC in those days was we had major events, you know. We had the Test cricket, you know, we had World Cup events, we did the World Cup rowing, we had the Commonwealth Games... Barcelona and the Atlanta Paralympic Games [and] the Rugby World Cup... in 1993. (O’Leary, 2022)

O’Leary also spoke of the importance of the ABC’s commitment to live broadcasts of national events such as “Anzac Day marches [which] would be live, Australia Day out of Canberra... that traditional morning [with] the announcement of the Australia Day awards” (2022). She also believes the ABC was essential in providing sports media across Australia. During her time at the ABC, it continued to broadcast international men’s cricket to regional communities:

ABC... broadcast into the regional space... as a television network, that was extremely important, especially with Test cricket. Yeah, because Test

cricket was never going to go into those regional spaces on Channel Nine.

(O'Leary, 2022)

The Nine Network had won the exclusive Australian rights to test cricket broadcasts at the expense of the ABC's shared rights arrangements that had persisted from the start of television until 1981 (Ward, 2017). However, Nine only had television services in three capital cities at the time and could not broadcast to regional Australia. As noted in my previous research, the ABC delivered "simultaneous broadcasts of test cricket to areas of Australia the Nine Network could not reach, including Western Australia, the Northern Territory, ACT, Tasmania and regional areas of other states" (Ward, 2017, p. 54). According to O'Leary, the significance of ABC's commitment to sports broadcasting was not just about men's sport, but also in the increasing levels of women's sport broadcasts. The ABC:

Put [women's sport] ... on the map. That had been that consistent staple diet on the ABC for many, many years... certainly, it was the only network that was broadcasting women's sport at the time. (O'Leary, 2022)

Stephanie Brantz (2022) began her sports media career in 2000 on SBS working on men's football and general sports programs, including "*On the Ball* with Les Murray and Johnny Warren... *The World Game*, [and as] co-host of *Toyota World Sport*". Having also worked for commercial FTA network Nine, where she "presented sport for Nightline [and as a]... boundary rider at the 2006-07 Ashes series" and for Fox Sports (Brantz, 2022), Brantz began with the ABC in 2010. Her work at the ABC has encompassed women's and men's sports, including rugby and cricket. She described the ABC's engagement with women's sport as significant because of a strong

recognition that “part of their charter at the time was women's sport. So, we did the W League [women’s football] and subsequently the WNBL [basketball]”. (Brantz, 2022)

In addition to sports programs, Brantz has also played a leading role in the ABC's “major events... like Gallipoli [Anzac Day] commemorations... [from] the Western Front in France... [and the] Queen's Jubilee visit in Perth” (Brantz, 2022). In speaking about the ABC’s role and national identity, Brantz (2022) echoed Gerry O’Leary’s comment, describing the “ABC at the time [as] very green and gold”. She described her hosting of the ABC’s annual broadcast of the national citizenship ceremony from Canberra as her “favourite event... the flag raising and citizenship ceremony... looking back at Parliament House, [speaking to] new citizens... as to why they've chosen to come to Australia, why they wanted to be citizens” (Brantz, 2022). Brantz stated that:

With the ABC, I felt like we had a responsibility to make those sports and particularly women's sports available to all Australians... that was part of how I felt it fit in. It had a number of programs at the time that viewers felt a strong loyalty to. And I felt like it was very much a part of Australians’ lives. (Brantz, 2022)

One of the interviewees for this research noted that after 2005 there was a significant change in the ABC’s approach to sports media, including women’s sports media. They stated that:

When I started there, it was a point of pride to work for the ABC because while it wasn't the flashiest broadcast, it was committed to certainly showing a match of the week for women's sport... it went where no one

else was going, you know, there was no real impact in women's sports broadcasting at the time. So, I felt that was really important that it picked up things like the women's Asian Cup. (Interviewee 1, 2022)

The interviewee did not identify a specific rationale for the change in attitude they perceived in ABC leadership at the time (in the 2010s). They did note, however:

That [commitment to sports media] changed somewhat with the budget cuts. And that was one part of the budget cuts...[It] meant that the ABC had a lot less sport, and the local sports disappeared, which was a huge shame. (Interviewee 1, 2022)

For O'Leary, the ABC was important not just because of what it broadcast, but in its media delivery model:

The ABC was very good about the inclusion of women and the diversity of the workforce. There was a great understanding of that. And women certainly had opportunities. I put my hand up to direct the Rugby League, and I was lucky enough to get that job. (O'Leary, 2022).

However, she recognised that from the 1990s, the increasing cost of sports rights combined with reductions in ABC funding was reducing the PSM's ability to deliver sport, "ABC lost the rights to the rugby league in 1996. And that was a huge loss for the sporting department... we became less competitive with the dollars and the rights fees" (2022). However, she also noted that during the 2000s and 2010s, the ABC moved away from women's sports events. While this was also partly due to funding issues, she felt a change in policy occurred that "was so sad ... because [the ABC] had

that niche with women's sport, but they never carried it through. Because there was no champion for it'. (O'Leary, 2022)

While the ABC occasionally broadcasts some women's sports, O'Leary feels that the lack of a continuing commitment undermines the ability to program, develop, produce and promote the content:

The ABC is not really known for being a sports network now. So ... when it gets the rights to a league game, or, you know, something that can't get a guernsey on another channel, it feels like it's not working very well... [not] well produced ... they don't know how to make a sports promo". (O'Leary, 2022)

In an interview for this research, Emeritus Professor David Rowe (2022) said that there are "at least two different causes of this stepping away" from ABC's sports broadcasting. There is a "sense that it's not core business for the ABC. We leave that to the commercials; that's business. And, of course, being outbid by commercials, especially pay television" (Rowe, 2022). Rowe (2022) also links the ABC's shift away from sports media to a long-standing "snobbishness around sport, the body, about the mind" where sport is not seen as "central to the remit". The pattern in several countries has been that "as something becomes commercially viable, it's regarded as being no longer part of the remit of public service. It's like a nursery or something that's there for market failure". (Rowe, 2022)

Rowe also noted that the shift of women's sports media from Australian PSMs to commercial free-to-air and even more so to subscription television and streaming services replicates "the same pattern [as men's sport that]... got taken by free-to-air

commercial television, pay television and now streaming services” (2022). Rowe (2022) also links the pattern to the PSM “market testing” many women’s sports by providing broadcasting outlets over many years to develop an audience, “these sports that had been nurtured by the ABC, netball in particular”. Rowe links the ABC’s history of broadcasting with the inclusion of netball as the only women’s sport in the Australian anti-siphoning list in 1997.³⁷

Conclusion

This chapter has examined Australian sports media in focusing on women’s sports media, including an analysis of women’s cricket. This has included analysing the ABC’s role in Australian women’s sports media. The chapter provides a context for examining the discourses of women’s sports media policy presented in Chapters Seven, Eight and Nine.

The following chapter presents the research project’s theoretical framework, beginning with an examination of ideology theory before discussing the use of a political economy of communications approach.

³⁷ Rowe included an anecdote about the process of including a women’s sport in the government’s first anti-siphoning list of sports: “a public servant told me that when they were drawing up the anti-siphoning list for the first time, someone said, “Hell, we don't have a woman's sport”. And then “Which is a women’s sport?” Netball!

Chapter Five: Theoretical framework

Introduction

This chapter describes the project's theoretical framework. Two theoretical traditions underpin this research: ideology theory and a political economy of communications (PEC). These theoretical approaches provide a framework for examining the historical and contemporary operation of discourses in policy documents about Australian public service media and women's sports media. As noted in the introductory chapter, understanding ideology is critical for this project, which locates an examination of discourses of political, cultural, social and economic concepts such as national identity within an ideological framework. Theories of ideology are deployed in investigating the discourses in public service media and women's sports media policy documents.

The chapter begins by examining the history of the development of the concept of ideology before analysing a political economy of communications approach, including political economy and women's sports media. This section begins with an analysis of the development of ideology as a political and theoretical concept, discussing the term's first use before traversing its trajectory within elements of Marxism and more recent theoretical developments.

Different definitions of ideology permeate its trajectory, from Destutt de Tracy to more contemporary usage (Eagleton, 1994). The first section analyses the initial development and use of ideology before traversing its trajectory within elements of Marxism. The work of the Frankfurt School and Antonio Gramsci is examined before considering later analyses of Marxist concepts of ideology. Gramsci's re-working of

Marxist theories of ideology provides an analytical framework for understanding the operation of ideology and a critical theoretical approach to answering questions such as those posed above.

Following an examination of Gramsci's work, including the concepts of ideology, consent, and the role of the state, the chapter traces more recent theoretical developments concerning ideology, focusing on the 'rediscovery' of Gramsci's work. In analysing ideology, the chapter is moving towards the objective of definitions of these terms that are more encompassing than a classically Marxist view and reside within Gramscian and post-Marxist perspectives.

A genealogy of ideology

Ideology's significance as a theoretical and political position is its 'materiality', observable in an "ensemble of apparatuses, intellectuals, rituals and forms of praxis" (Rehmann, 2007, p. 211). The adoption of the term 'ideology' in the 18th century³⁸ as "an analytical science that aimed... to dissect ideas into elementary component parts" signals an interest in a more precise, rigorous investigation of ideas and "the perceptions upon which they are founded" (Rehmann, 2007, p. 211). Ideology was posed as a "non-partisan and universalistic foundational science" fundamental in

³⁸ According to Rehmann, Destutt de Tracye "introduced [ideology] in 1796 ... as a neologism (analogous to ontology) to signal an analytical science that aimed, following the model of the exact natural science (in particular, physiology), to dissect ideas into elementary component parts and – derived from the Greek sense of eidos as visual image – to investigate the perceptions upon which they were founded (*Mémoire sur la faculté de penser*, 1798, 324)" (2007, p. 211). Hall (2007) places the identification of the idea "in its modern meanings" among a group of thinkers assigned "by the Convention of 1795 with the founding of a new centre of revolutionary thought" (p. 9).

forming social rules and arrangements, moral and philosophical understanding, and language and communication structures (Rehmann, 2007, p. 211).

However, the use of the term presented a dilemma of incompatibility, as it was located as both “the relation between history and thought” in the specific ideas and actions of the French Revolution and assigned a value as “ideas which would be true whatever historical conjuncture they were located in” (Hall, 2007, p. 10). Notwithstanding these difficulties, the concept of ideology was established both in association with the formation and organisation of ‘ideas’ with theoretical and practical contestation for its historical materiality and political context, and “the promise of a critique of idealism, as a way of explaining how ideas arise” (Hall, 2012, p. 10). The apparent ambiguity of ideology continued in Marxist development and usage as to whether “ideology is primarily an *epistemological* affair, concerned with what Adorno termed a “socially necessary illusion’ or is ... a *sociological* matter ... the way certain ideas intersect with power”. (Eagleton, 1994, p. 7)

Marxism and ideology

While there have been different usages of the term ideology in Marxism (Fuchs, 2017), its development as the way in which the dominant class’s ideas and interests are adopted across the class structure “informed critical social theory throughout the twentieth century” (Stoddart, 2007, p. 195). This view of ideology is a “historical-materialist perspective...[with] material reality... the foundation of social consciousness... set[ting] the boundaries on the ideas that may emerge as important, or even acceptable” (Stoddart, 2007, p. 195). Although “the concept of ‘ideology’ did not originate in Marxism and is still in no way confined to it” (Williams, 1994, p. 175),

it is a critically important component of Marxist thinking (Eagleton, 1994). A discussion of ideology encompasses an engagement with changing Marxist perspectives of the concept as “a system of beliefs, characteristic of a particular class or group... a system of illusory beliefs... which can be contrasted with true or scientific knowledge... [and] the general process of the production of meanings and ideas” (Williams, 1994, p. 175). This analysis of ideology also engages with post-Marxist ideas that identify the superstructure as not historically fixed by an economically determined ideology. It has been used (theoretically and in political practice) to demonstrate that the reproduction of dominant interests works “to naturalize, idealize, and legitimate the existing society and its institutions and values”. (Durham & Kellner, 2006, p. xv)

Marx’s philosophy and his “ideas on language and consciousness, ideology and its critique, and political struggle and domination” have been linked to his opportunity to study in German due to “Hegel’s effort to get ‘philosophy to speak German’, not Latin”, as well as a commitment to understanding “the secular language of the ruling class, including bourgeois morality, bourgeois ‘theory’, and the ideas of leading German intellectuals” (Jessop, 2017, p. 30). Marx and Engel’s engagement with language, political economy, and ideology is discernible in the textual linkages of lives in a “material mode of production [that] underpin[s] a definite mode of life” (Jessop, 2017, p. 31). These lives and the arrangements of the modes of production, the material conditions of life and its engagement with the world (including the natural world), are organised and coordinated through language (Jessop, 2017). As language is the “medium in and through which interests are articulated and, hence, a crucial medium of political struggle” (Jessop, 2017, p. 31), so it is a foundational component by which

“the ideas of the ruling class are in every epoch the ruling ideas [and through which] the class that is the ruling *material* force of society, is at the same time its ruling *intellectual* force”. (Marx & Engels 1976, p. 59, italics in original in Jessop, 2017, p. 31)

For classical Marxism, ideology was framed by and within economic relations as a “process through which the dominant ideas within a given society reflect the interests of a ruling economic class” (Stoddart, 2007, p. 192). The dominance of economic arrangements set the framework that means the “working class take for granted their exploitation” and inequality (Stoddart, 2007, p. 195). The material reality of the economic situation is that human labour is appropriated (with other resources) to capitalist production, which sets the fundamentals of social and, therefore, political and economic life (Stoddart, 2007, p. 195). These material arrangements, including the control of economic power by a capitalist class, mean a working class, although having an ideological perspective, is not unified and finds it difficult to identify and organise as a politically coherent bloc.

A classical Marxist understanding of ideology is as a masking of reality, “a source of error about the real material conditions of existence”, a process in which people are misled (Sholle, 1988, p. 19). Another perspective “viewed [ideology] as incorporated in the practical conduct of social life”, imbuing discourse with ideology (Sholle, 1988, p. 19), while the prevailing classical view saw ideology as distortion. There is an enduring persistence in the definition of ideology as “a screen or blockage which intervenes between us and the real world” (Eagleton, 1994, p. 11) that, if removed, could provide an understanding of uninterrupted reality. Such views, which are ideologically developed and framed, fail to acknowledge that “there is no way of

viewing reality except from a particular perspective” (Eagleton, 1994, p. 11). For Eagleton (1994), this does not mean that all thought and perception are ideological but that the “‘ideological’ is not synonymous with ‘cultural’: it denotes... the points at which our cultural practices are interwoven with political power” (p. 11). This definition focuses on how the meaning of social, cultural, economic and political arrangements is developed, shared and understood. Equally importantly, it draws attention to questions of the arrangements of power that underpin, organise and frame the production of meaning.

Ideology has been deployed in Marxism in different, albeit overlapping, ways. The first use was critical, exemplified by Lukacs and the Frankfurt School: ideology as consciousness³⁹ (Rehmann, 2007, p. 212). Secondly, ideology was used in Marxist-Leninism as a “class-specific conception of the world” (Rehmann, 2007, p. 212). Its third use was as an understanding, as for Gramsci, Althusser and others, “as the ensemble of apparatuses and forms of praxis that organise the relation of individuals to the self and the world” (Rehmann, 2007, p. 212). Rehmann has suggested that the different aspects of ideology as theory evolved from the language of *The German Ideology*’s criticism of Feuerbach’s “critique of religion... [with] a paradigm shift towards an analysis of the contradictions of class-societies”. (2007, p. 29)

The common thread of these perspectives is of meaning produced in texts presenting “ideological interpretations of reality” (Sholle, 1988, p. 19), interpretations that

³⁹ This includes, e.g., the conception of religion as “inverted consciousness” (Rehmann, 2007, p. 212).

“function to protect the class interests already structured into the economic relations of capital”. (Grossberg, 1984, p. 394 in Sholle, 1988, p. 19)

A change is discernible in Marx’s theorising of ideology over time; from the ‘false consciousness’ and “illusions and chimeras” of his early writing (Eagleton, 1994, p. 12) to a more comprehensive analysis. In the first, fully comprehensive description of the base-superstructure model, *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*, it is argued that not only are “the various legal, political and cultural forms of thought of a society... determined by its social relations of production” but that “as these social relations change, so our forms of social thought change with them” (Eagleton, 1994, p. 23).⁴⁰ “The ‘social being’ of humanity... determines its consciousness” (Eagleton, 1994, p. 23). By 1867, in Marx’s *Capital*, the concept of ideology is of “deceptive appearances” bred spontaneously from a capitalist system that has made objects of people through the commodification of their labour (Marx, 1867, in Eagleton, 1994, p. 23).

The concept of ideology in Marxism is always related to its application and relevance to practice (Sholle, 1988). Meanings sent, decoded and received in texts are founded in ideas/ideologies that are based in the material conditions of their production and reception (Hall, 1982; Sholle, 1988). Within Marxism, ideology “refers to a general problem in the way that knowledge and information are produced” (Sholle, 1988, p. 17). This problem relates to the production of meaning for and in the interest of institutionalised interests, especially in maintaining existing economic relations (Sholle,

⁴⁰ This is situated within the Marxist concept of “base: superstructure” where the base is the set of economic relations and activity that (in traditional Marxism) defines social and political relations.

1988). Institutional interests and relationships focus attention on issues of power and ideology; how authority and domination are achieved.

By the early 20th century, Marxism's failure in its prediction of the overthrow of capitalism (Sholle, 1988; Stoddart, 2007) led to a recognition of ideology, including by the Frankfurt School, as a way of explaining why there had not been a "transform[ation of] the capitalist mode of production" (Stoddart, 2007, p. 197). This recognition of ideology was accompanied by a reassessment of the Marxist conception of the relationship between the economic base and the superstructure (Stoddart, 2007, pp. 197-198).

The Frankfurt School articulated the ideological framing of technological change and the rise of 'mass culture' (Benjamin, 1968, in Stoddart, 2007, p. 198) and its representation as a "superficial democratization" (Horkheimer & Adorno, 2002 in Stoddart, 2007, p. 198). A 'culture industry', characterised by "standardisation and mass production" (Horkheimer & Adorno, 2012, p. 54), presented the world, economically, politically and culturally, as normal and unchangeable (Stoddart, 2007, p. 198). The ideological processes by which the cultural industry operated presented all "people as essentially the same, regardless of class position". (Stoddart, 2007, p. 198)

These processes underpin an ideological view of technology and capital as perennially progressing, "incorporat[ing] the working classes into an ever-increasing standard of living" (Stoddart, 2007, p. 198). Providing new theories about the importance of cultural production, communications technologies "and the growth of scientific rationality as important sites of domination, where dominant classes exercise power through ideology" (Stoddart, 2007, p. 199), the Frankfurt School reframed Marxist

ideas about ideological processes and the relationships between economic arrangements and superstructure (Stoddart, 2007). Nonetheless, their concept of ideological power, especially relating to culture, is positioned as “flow[ing] in a relatively unidirectional manner from the capitalist class to mass audiences” (Stoddart, 2007, p. 199). Subsequent theoretical developments focus on the scope of those receiving cultural products to interpret them in various ways, opening space for “agency, critique or resistance”. (Stoddart, 2007, p. 199)

A major shift in ideology theory emerged within Marxist thinking in the 1970s as an alternative to economism, including a focus on the work of the Italian Marxist, Antonio Gramsci, whose contribution is discussed below (Rehmann, 2007). While ideology theory is not uniquely distinctive, having similarities with other approaches, such as ‘ideology-critique’ – its difference is in an approach that analyses social, economic and political arrangements in terms of “the reproduction of domination versus emancipation” (Rehmann, 2007, p. 211), rather than establishing true/false differences.

Gramsci and ideology

This section extends the discussion of ideology by examining the work of Antonio Gramsci. Gramsci’s importance, theoretically and politically, is as a ‘fulcrum’ or pivot, providing a historical and theoretical connection to preceding and evolving Marxist usage and analysis of ideology. Examining Gramsci’s work and that of others who have based their scholarship on Gramscian ideas is to engage in a political and historiographical process of analytical (re)construction. This research project is an

endorsement of an approach in which the value of history in its specific national and material formations is foregrounded.

Through Gramsci's 'rediscovery' in the latter decades of the 20th century, his writing links specific theoretical reconsiderations of ideology and the construction of meaning and political, economic and cultural power. Gramsci's work represented a "radical reinterpretation of Marxist ideology theory" (Stoddart, 2007, p. 193). Analysing Gramsci, it is possible to comprehend a further development of the concept of ideology, especially noting the relationship of the economic (class relationships) and 'superstructural' relationships (e.g., gender, sexuality, race) to the dominance of certain ideologies and the context for the deployment of political, social and cultural power. He argued that "[i]deology' itself must be analysed historically, in the terms of the philosophy of praxis, as a superstructure" (Gramsci, 1971, p. 376). As a political activist from a Marxist perspective, Gramsci developed a more sophisticated engagement with ideology, including his rejection of economism⁴¹ (Martin, 2013, p. 23). Drawing on the original 'ideologues' in rejecting both 'economism' and 'ideologism', Gramsci articulates ideology as an analytical tool to embrace a definition that "demands a scientific attitude" (Rehmann, 2007, p. 218)⁴². Ideology is formed 'spontaneously' in the sense that it is not coerced, takes on a 'naturalness'. Gramsci (1971) described "consent [as]... 'historically' caused by the prestige (and consequent confidence) which

⁴¹ The idea that economic factors are the primary determinants of political arrangements, including their historical formation (Showstack Sassoon, 1982, p. 13), such that social political and cultural circumstances are subject to and defined by economic conditions.

⁴² "Gramsci goes back to the original meaning coined by the 'ideologues', for whom ideology signifies the analytical procedure of tracing ideas back to 'sensation'" (Rehmann, 2007, p. 218).

the dominant group enjoys because of its position and function in the world of production”. (p. 12)

Gramsci’s understanding of ideology developed from the concept of a scientific idea and a Marxist understanding of the role and power of dominant ideologies in reproducing institutions (Gramsci, 1971; Hall, 1986b). He identified ideology as a “system of ideas”, noting its derivation from “eighteenth-century French materialism” (Gramsci, 1971, p. 375). Gramsci’s interest was in “the specific reality of the ideological”, an existence as a material force, rejecting ideas of ideology as consciousness, illusion or appearance (Rehmann, 2007).

Gramsci’s development of the concept of ideology was part of a theoretical and political analysis that is situated within a Marxist engagement with the history of political and economic struggle (Hall, 1986b). While “working within the broad parameters of historical materialism, as outlined by the tradition of Marxist scholarship... Gramsci was never a Marxist in either a doctrinal, orthodox, or “religious” sense” (Hall, 1986b, p. 6). His work derived from and ‘modernises’ Marxist ideas to “explain the complex social phenomena which we encounter in the modern world” (Hall, 1986b, p. 6). Gramsci “extensively revised, renovated, and sophisticated many aspects of [the Marxist] theoretical framework to make it more relevant to contemporary social relations in the twentieth century”. (Hall, 1986b, p. 5)

The question of how ideologies fix and hold positions can be traced in specific historical and political circumstances, using approaches based on Gramscian ideas. As noted in Chapter Six, Marxist concepts of ideology and power, including Gramsci’s concepts came under strong challenge from theorists such as Foucault. Given the

focus of this research, the questions turn initially to how ideology is represented in changing discourses of women's sports and public service media policy, and the transformation of discourses of national identity and the impact on PSM values such as a "contribution to a sense of national identity" (ABC Act, 1983, S. 6) and women's sports media policies.

Ideology and media

As this research focuses on the ideological positions embedded in discourses of media policy, it draws on a diverse historical framework of scholarship. This section considers the "profound differences in theoretical perspective and in political calculation[that] differentiate" a shift in 20th-century media research from the behavioural/empirical paradigm that dominated from the 1940s to the 1960s/70s to a critical paradigm (Hall, 1982, p. 56). The paradigmatic change underpins different ideological and methodological approaches, with a shift to an analysis of "societies or social formations in general" (Hall, 1982, p. 56). A range of cultural and media scholarship reconsidered the relationship between ideology, culture and the role of media, critiquing media and political and social arrangements (Curran et al., 1977). Marxist approaches to ideology were subject to "a re-examination of the dialectal relationship between sub-structure and super-structure in the Marxist model" (Curran et al., 1977, p. 311) as a more complex account of the relationship between the economic, political and cultural was sought through an investigation of the media's ideological role (Curran et al., 1977). This shift recognised that the significance of media institutions is not just that they "produc[e] knowledge... [but] the way that knowledge and information are produced". (Sholle, 1988, p. 17)

Two traditions dominated media studies during the mid-20th century. The first, predominantly based in the United States, “focus[ed] on the effects of the media on individuals” (Curran et al., 1977, p. 311). An approach characterised by empirical methods excluded economic, political and social contexts and the relationships that organised media institutions, arrangements and products as it focused on the media’s impact on individuals (Curran et al., 1977). This tradition assumed the media had powerful effects on the “modern societies [that] had become ‘mass societies’” (Hall, 1982, p. 57). The difference between the American ‘effects’ approach and the Frankfurt School, discussed above, was that “media effects were not direct, but mediated by other social processes” (Hall, 1982, p. 58). The Frankfurt School’s ‘European’ approach was “historically and philosophically sweeping, speculative” and critical, while the US “empirical, behavioural and scientific approach” (Hall, 1982, p. 58) contained a self-serving positivism.⁴³ Further, the effects approach has an ‘optimistic’ view vis a vis the Frankfurt School’s ‘pessimistic’ view of the impact and effects of the media was a perspective based on distinctly different “theoretical and methodological approaches”. (Hall, 1982, p. 58)

Neoliberal, empirical media analysis has continued to see media as effecting or causing impacts in the framework of media as market formations (Guardino, 2020). Such approaches downplay and even ignore wider political and historical forces at play. The second tradition in media analysis discussed above was “orthodox Marxist thinking... [that] stressed a form of economic determinism and took for granted the ideological

⁴³ This research draws on political economy’s rejection of “positivist claims that knowledge could be value-free... argu[ing] instead for a critical-normative perspective” (Hardy, 2014, p. 7).

content of the media” (Curran et al., 1977, p. 311). Ideological formations were presented as the outcome of economic arrangements, structures and relationships, resulting in a downplaying of “culture as simply the reflection of the base, the economic infrastructure of society”. (Curran et al., 1977, p. 311)

Ideology after Gramsci: Beyond a structuralist approach

For Marxists, a structuralist approach meant social analysis could be undertaken using “the model of language” (Hall, 1982, p. 67). Meaning is produced and reproduced, conveyed and received in social practice; that is, constructed through material processes in ways that are recognisable and understood. If meaning is produced and not essential, it is open to recognition and different interpretations and ‘mis’-understandings. The mechanisms by which meaning is developed and understood are through legitimation processes that are ideological. Processes of consent and consensus can be understood as achieved through the assertion by “a dominant discourse [of]... itself as *the* account... sustain[ing] a limit, ban or prescriptions over alternative or competing definitions” (Hall, 1982, p. 67). The issues that arise here are questions about how a dominant ideology comes to assert itself, how institutions such as the media operate “in maintaining a preferred or delimited range of meanings”, and how this is “practically accomplished”. (Hall, 1982, pp. 67-68)

Hall locates the accomplishment of what had been analysed as technical media production processes of:

Selection and exclusion [of content], the editing of accounts together, the building of an account into a ‘story’, the use of particular narrative types of exposition, the way the verbal and visual discourses of, say, television

were articulated together to make a certain kind of sense. (Hall, 1982, pp. 67-68)

Far from being merely technical, these are social practices established and maintained through specific institutional approaches to producing content. Media practices are linked to the making of symbolic products with preferred meanings (Hall, 1982), achieved through structural linguistics' processes of "selection and combination [that are] two of the essential mechanisms of the general production of meaning or sense". (Hall, 1982, p. 68)⁴⁴

This theoretical approach places human action and ideas within the contexts and situations in which they occur, and are not due to "a natural meaning to everything or a universal consensus on what things mean" (Hall, 1982, p. 69). This understanding becomes more important in the context of conflicting political, economic or social perspectives or at times when generally held views are under challenge, as "ideological power... [is] the power to signify events in a particular way" (Hall, 1982, p. 69). There is an ongoing struggle to assert meaning:

For it is the means by which collective social understandings are created—and, thus the means by which consent for particular outcomes can be effectively mobilized. Ideology, according to this perspective, has not only become a 'material force' to use an old expression—real because it is 'real' in its effects. It has also become a site of struggle (between competing

⁴⁴ Hall specifically notes the work of Saussure and Jacobson.

definitions) and a stake—a prize to be won—in the conduct of particular struggle. (Hall, 1982, p. 69-70)⁴⁵

Given this analysis, the definition of ideology has moved beyond the reflection of ideas or the outcome of “simple deterministic logic” (Hall, 1982, p. 70). It “depend[s] on the balance of forces in a particular historical conjuncture: on the ‘politics of signification’” (Hall, 1982, p. 70). The importance of classification and framing in a system that organises how particular meanings become privileged and preferred to other potential meanings occurs through the structure of language. The outcomes of the development and operation of language systems are not accidental, with “no natural coincidence between a word and its referent: everything depended on the conventions of linguistic use, and on the way, language intervened in Nature in order to make sense of it” (Hall, 1982, p. 70). This approach sets up a further refinement by defining ideology as:

Structure... sets of rules which determine an organization and the functioning of images and concepts... a system of coding reality and not a determined set of coded messages... in this way, ideology becomes autonomous in relation to the consciousness or intention of its agents.

(Veron 1971, p. 68 in Hall, 1982, p. 71)

Ideology has developed as a more complex concept and process, not simply the product of a ruling force, with no capacity for resistance, it involves “division, contradictions and tensions” (Hardy, 2014, p. 50). Nonetheless, it has proved

⁴⁵ Hall (1982) notes two different epistemologies for this view: “A Kantian or neo-Kantian position would say that, therefore, nothing exists except that which exists in and for language or discourse. Another reading is that, though the world does exist outside language, we can only make sense of it through its appropriation in discourse” (pp. 70-71).

problematic for those who have sought to understand the elements of ideological processes and develop the concept of ideology over a long period, especially in its initial Marxist construction as fixed historically (Hall, 1986a; Martin, 2013; Stoddart, 2007). This use of ideology initiated an ongoing interrogation and debate within Marxist thinking about its meaning and application to economic, political and social analysis. The ‘traditional’ Marxist base-superstructure model, discussed earlier, presented a narrow, functionalist economism and was increasingly “rejected as insufficient and reductionist” (Hardy, 2014, p. 50). Theoretical analysis and political praxis articulate concepts of ideological formations relating to other (‘superstructural’) relationships of power and domination, including race and gender (Hall, 1992; Stoddart, 2007).

The question of how ideological positions gain and hold support can be traced in specific historical and political circumstances, using approaches such as those based on Gramscian ideas. Given the particular focus of this research, the questions turn to the role of the media generally and, more specifically, PSM and its adhering values such as universal access and its “contribution to a sense of national identity” (ABC, 1983, s. 6), as opposed to political economy of communications to be discussed below.

Political Economy of Communications

This section discusses the project’s use of a political economy of communications approach to examine the changing discourses of Australian women’s sports and public service media policy, and the continuing relevance of policy discourses that frame constructions of national identity in PSM and women’s sports media documents from the 1980s to the early 21st century. The research adopts an approach that analyses

“how the economic organisation of media industries impinges on the production and circulation of meaning and the ways in which people’s options for consumption and use are structured by their position within the general economic foundation” (Murdock and Golding, 2005, p. 61). For example, regarding this latter position, the ‘structuring of options’, this research project is focused on how ideological formations of national identity are articulated in women’s sports media policy. The articulations in media policy are located in a media system that first excluded and then framed women’s sports media in specific ways. This ‘gendered nationalism’, in which sport is framed within a pre-established history of male sport’s identification with the nation (Velija, 2015) was discussed in Chapters Three and Four.

Murdock and Golding (2005) provide detail of the characteristics of a political economy of communications approach that is critical in that it offers a critique based on analysis and a “theoretically informed understanding... of the social order in which communications and cultural phenomena are being studied” (p. 61). In doing so, it “necessarily engages with empirical research... addressing issues of pragmatic and policy concern” (Murdock and Golding 2005, p. 61). The importance of a political economy of communication’s approach is that it is holistic and recognises the need for a “focus on the interplay between the symbolic and economic dimensions of public communication” (Murdock and Golding, 2005, p. 60). Finally, a PEC approach is historically and “centrally concerned with balance between capitalist enterprise and public intervention”. (Murdock and Golding, 2005, p. 60)

In analysing “the structural interdependencies of economic, political, and social power from a normative” perspective, political economy seeks to understand the

interrelationships and impact of the sources of operation of power and to formulate “a prognosis for political action”. (Hope et al., 2013, p. 1)

Political economy of communications (PEC) emerged as “a distinctive research field... in the wake of decolonization, cold war, the non-aligned movement, and international new left activism” (Hope et al., 2013, p. 1). PEC focuses on the analysis and understanding of the organisation of media industries in producing meaning (Hardy, 2014, p. 7). It frames an understanding of the importance of phenomena other than classical economics, focusing on the significance, for example, of the production and distribution of meaning (Hardy, 2014). In addition to providing a framework for analysing media industries, PEC is “concerned with how communication arrangements relate to goals of social justice and emancipation” (Hardy, 2014, p. 3). It is distinctive compared to other “mainstream approaches... [for its] concerns with the manner in which power relations are sustained and challenged” (Hardy, 2014, pp. 3-4). In this research it is used as part of the examination of the evolving discourses of PSM and women’s sports media policy, moving beyond simplistic arguments regarding market forces in analysing the ideological formations in the discourses of PSM and women’s sports media policy, including the investigation of increasingly neoliberal discourses.

Critical and classical political economy are linked in an understanding “that the economic sphere is not separated off from related social and political phenomena” (Hardy, 2014, p. 4). However, the arrangements and operation of power relations that organise the “production, distribution and consumption of resources” (Mosco, 2009, p. 24) are at the core of PEC research. Political economy’s utility is its “attention to fundamental forces and processes at work in the marketplace”, from production and

distribution to consumption (Mosco, 2009, p. 24). This focus is on how “social relations [are] organized around power”. (Mosco, 2009, p. 24)

In applying a PEC theoretical approach to “questions about control over media, the impact of commercialisation, public and private media ownership, inequalities and power relations affecting communications” (Hardy, 2014, p. 3), this research investigates how these issues have been at play in women’s sports media policy discourses.

PEC examines how media ownership, financial, industrial and operational activity interact with public policies to provide opportunities (and block them) for men’s and women’s sports media. The presence of women’s sport on PSM, especially ABC broadcasts, helped develop an audience for women’s sport (Ward, 2017, pp. 93-102). Women’s sport, such as cricket, AFLW and football, have now achieved commercial broadcast opportunities (McLachlan, 2019).

The significance of media – its influence and power – is that it has “established a decisive and fundamental leadership in the cultural sphere” (Hall, 1977, p. 340). There are clear examples of sports media power and influence, as media platforms have become the primary way communities experience sport, far exceeding live match attendance (Rowe, 2011; Scherer & Rowe, 2014). A new economics of sports has emerged where media revenues organise the timing, arrangements, structure and even the rules of sport; a phenomenon identified as a “media sports content economy” (Hutchins & Rowe, 2012, p. 9). These changes to how sport is produced, consumed and experienced have profound cultural significance (Rowe, 2011). The (re)creation, production and distribution of meaning, including through media policy discourses,

requires more than economic analysis to understand the components and complexities of the questions at stake in market failures to deliver a diverse sports media output, specifically women's sport.

PEC provides an approach to understanding how economic arrangements, activities, structures and outcomes are connected to and influenced by (and influencing of) social and political phenomena (Hardy, 2014, p. 3). In addition to providing a framework to analyse relationships of power between players, considering issues such as class, gender, race and ethnicity and their interactions and intersections (Wasko et al., 2014), a political economy approach can provide a historical context for evaluating media systems and policies, including their discursive representation as markets. This research uses historical analysis of policy discourses of the ABC and women's sports media from the 1980s to develop an understanding of the ideological framing of Australian PSM and women's sports media policy.

A political economy of communications differs from a strictly economic approach - in its engagement not just with the efficiency and effectiveness of markets and economic arrangements, but with "questions of justice, equity and the common good" (Murdock and Golding, 2005, p. 61). However, while research has analysed the political economy of media sport (e.g., Evens et al., 2013), less attention has been given to analyses of women's sports media policy.

A PEC approach analyses sports media in industrial terms, drawing on the "notion of industrialisation of culture and culture as industry, from the Frankfurt School theorists" (Hardy, 2014, p. 10). This is an examination of both specific production and the process through which the idea of sport has been changed by its evolution from a

predominantly live performance before a group of spectators into an audiovisual media genre produced principally for an electronic media audience. This research also draws on PEC's relationship with cultural theory and politics and its contribution to "radical traditions that examine and contest forms of discrimination and oppression based on gender, race, sexuality, disability, age and geocultural relations" (Hardy, 2014, p. 9). PEC's ability and history of analysing media problems provides an important theoretical framework for the research.

The theoretical approach employed in this research can provide a framework for examining a wide set of issues rather than setting artificial boundaries such as "the economy" that excludes relationships between economic, cultural, political and social phenomena (Wasko et al., 2014, p. 2). Further, a political economy of communications approach is both historical, in its sense of understanding the evolution of current activity and relationships and in understanding the relations between culture and communications on the one hand, and "a society grounded in social justice and democratic practice" (Wasko et al., 2014, p. 2) on the other.

Political economy and women's sports media

This research engages with a political economy of communications that examines media from "the perspective that they are gendered and inequitable across production and consumption and that capitalist ideology 'is used to stabilise ... unequal social relations (Lee 2011: 83)'" (Harvey, 2020, p. 146). As discussed in Chapters Three and Four, this research acknowledges that women's sports media has been an important site of gender power relations, where "feminist analyses of sports media have been at the forefront of detecting and interrogating gender hierarchies and gendered

expressions of power” (Antunovic & Whiteside, 2018, p. 112). While there is an extensive history of analysing the presence of women’s sport (for example, Bruce, 2008; Cooky, Messner & Musto, 2015), there is a need to provide a contemporary analysis of the discourses in Australian women’s sports media policy.

A PEC approach frames the production and consumption of meaning within historical and national contexts. Its usefulness for this research is its ability to be deployed in analysing “the structural interdependencies of economic, political, and social power from a normative perspective” (Hope et al., 2013, p. 1). Further, PEC enables analysis of “the role of power in the production, distribution and exchange of mediated communication” (Mosco, 1998, in Wasko, 2013, p. 5). Therefore, the approach is helpful because it underlines the interplay of political and economic factors, such as neoliberalist media policies that frame a marketisation of media, sport and sports media. PEC’s “holistic approach and its ambition to explain ‘social totality’... has always recognized the crucial importance of the state’s action in the formation of media systems” (Brevini, 2013, p. 20). Thus, PEC is used in this research to understand the context of the major ideological shifts that have transformed discourses of women’s sport in media policy. It contributes to the examination of the discourses that frame ideological formations in media policies, the role of the ABC, increased media marketisation, and an increasingly dominant, neoliberal approach to women’s sports media policy.

Ideological formations are fundamental to an examination of the discourses in women’s sports media and public service media policy. In particular, I draw on Gramsci’s concept of ideology, as discussed earlier in this chapter. The research

eschews both liberal traditions of media as a 'reflection' of political and economic forces and more radical media approaches that advance dominant ideology theses as defining the media relationship between state and civil society (Curran, 2002). While the dominant ideology thesis, "a coherent bloc of ideas which effectively secures the power of a governing group," has been a significant part of various strands of Marxist thinking, it has also been "greeted with scepticism in some quarters" (Eagleton, 1994, p. 8). This research takes a more nuanced approach to analysing ideology as expressed and deployed in media policies than advanced by classical Marxism (Curran, 2002). However, in recognising "the media as a battlefield", it does not conceive it as "an open forum of debate" (Curran, 2002, p. 114). This is because the "unequal access to the media and unequal resources" (Curran, 2002, p. 114) held by different political and economic participants highlights questions of power and an ideological relationship to media.

Specifically, ideology here is concerned with Gramscian concepts in analysing how women's sports media and public service media policy discourses, are "site[s] of contest between opposed social forces, in a context where there were both tensions within the power structure and sometimes organized opposition" (Curran, 2002, p. 112). It provides a framework for an approach that examines these media policies as part of the "wider cultural and ideological influences" (Curran, 2002, p. 113) that shape media policy and systems.

Conclusion

A long history of scholarship has considered the concept of ideology, analysing "why those who lack economic power consent to hierarchies of social and political power

that privilege some while exploiting others” (Stoddart, 2007, p. 192). Various theoretical fields have developed ideas about power, exploitation and consent in the context of the relationship “between the social production of knowledge... the perpetuation of inequitable power relations... [and the] circulation of culture” (Stoddart, 2007, p. 192).

This chapter has discussed the importance of the theoretical concept, ideology, and the usefulness of a political economy of communications approach to form a theoretical framework for this research project in answering the research questions. The following chapter presents the research project’s methodology and methods of analysis.

Chapter Six: Methodology and methods

This chapter outlines the methodology, research design, and analytical methods. Specifically, it provides further understanding of the key method of analysis employed in the research strategy – discourse analysis. Following an exploration of the rationale for and use of discourse analysis, the chapter describes the research project’s use of content analysis of policy documents, including the mechanism used for identifying and selecting the documents examined in this research. Finally, the chapter describes the rationale and process for conducting interviews to triangulate the data gathered and presented from the content and discourse analyses.

Research questions

Using the theoretical framework described in Chapter Five, the research examines the articulated ideological shifts in the discourse of women’s sports media and public service media policy reports to address the following questions:

How have discourses of women's sports developed in Australian media policy?

How have discourses of women's sports developed in PSM policy, specifically the ABC?

Is national identity still relevant in the policy discourses under consideration?

Sub questions

How has national identity in women’s sports and PSM policy been assimilated into a discourse of neoliberalism?

What has been the impact of a discourse of increased marketisation and/or commodification of women’s sports media policy?

What does increased marketisation of sports media mean for the PSM role?

Research strategy

This research project employs a multi-layered approach that benefits from a triangulation of different qualitative and quantitative methods. A combination of content analysis, discourse analysis, and qualitative interviews is used to form a mixed-methods approach to address the research questions. The methods are described below, beginning with the rationale for discourse analysis in this research.

Discourse

A key component of the methodology is the use of discourse analysis to examine policy articulations of ideological concepts such as national identity and neoliberalism. Given a certain “terminological flexibility” (Wodak et al., 2009, p. 7), discourse has several attributed meanings. Howarth & Stavrakakis (2000) define ‘discourse as “systems of meaningful practices that form the identities of subjects and objects” (pp. 3-4). Further, these practices are located in social relations and practices that are political, always about power and, therefore, arrange or exclude “certain possibilities and a consequent structuring of the relations between different social agents”. (Howarth & Stavrakakis, 2000, p. 4)

As “socially constructed frameworks of meanings” (Sarantakos, 2012, p. 331), discourses are products of “versions of the world [and] of society” (Potter, 1997, p. 146 in Sarantakos, 2012, p. 332) that evidence and mediate “social, political and economic processes and outcomes” (Sarantakos, 2012, p. 332). In addition to being defined as the “social use of language in social contexts,” definitions of discourse

include “language associated with a particular social field or practice” (Fairclough & Fairclough, 2012, p. 81). It also means “signification as a social process” (Fairclough & Fairclough, 2012, p. 81). The latter two definitions, particularly the final definition, are the uses to which they are put in this research.

The significance of Michel Foucault’s theoretical contribution to discourse theory is noted, including his “extension of the concept of discourse to a much wider range of objects and social practices” (Phelan & Dahlberg, 2011, p. 11). Nonetheless, the research draws a clear epistemological distinction between the work of Foucault and influences such as Nietzsche (Dahlgren, 2011; Markula-Denison & Pringle, 2007) on the one hand and a neo-Marxist approach to ideology theory and constructions of power. The theoretical framework, methodological approach and discourse analysis methods, as described in Chapters 5 and 6, steer clear of a poststructuralist approach, charting a methodological approach that carefully links the invocation of ideology theory and the political economy of communications with the discourse method described.

Elements of the epistemological background of discourse represent a further disruption and challenge to the Marxist theories of ideology and the class-centred focus of economism discussed in Chapter Five (Stoddart, 2007). However, “theories of discourse rarely act as a total negation of the notion of ideology” (Stoddart, 2007, p. 193). Analytically, while ideology and discourse can be considered separately, they operate historically and materially together. We can “understand ideology as an effect of discourse... [when] mobilized to reinforce systems of social power” (Stoddart, 2007, p. 193). Stoddart summarises a shift in the theoretical shaping of the concepts as a

“movement from ideology towards discourse... [an] expansion away from class as the most salient political subject position, towards a greater focus on gender and racialization”. (Stoddart, 2007, p. 194)

Discursive strategies work to normalise or rationalise specific ideas so that “ideologies are commonly felt to be both naturalising and universalising” (Eagleton, 1994, p. 8). Understanding that “[i]deologies are sets of discursive strategies for displacing, recasting or spuriously accounting for realities which prove embarrassing to a ruling power” (Eagleton, 1994, p. 8) is useful because it points to an opportunity to analyse such discourses to identify the ideologies being articulated and deployed.

Discourse analysis studies different modes of “communication, text, language, talk, conversation... [in] the social world in everyday practices... as a social product” (Sarantakos, 2012, p. 331). It provides an approach for analysing statements regarding what is constructed as “appropriate or not appropriate, allowed or not allowed, acceptable or not acceptable, valued or not valued” (Sarantakos, 2012, p. 332). The approach enables an analysis of texts and the contexts in which they were constructed and exist, including the “features of the context, such as processes of production and reception, as well as the social and cultural situations” (van Dijk, 1985, p. 6). Drawing on van Dijk’s (1985) example of using discourse analysis in analysing news media texts, this research analyses policy documents analogously, investigating the processes that relate to the construction of media policy, what is included as relevant and “policy-worthy”, the stages of the process, and the contextualising framing of engagement with policy.

As Hardy et al. (2004) note, “[w]here other qualitative methodologies work to understand or interpret social reality as it exists, discourse analysis tries to uncover the way that reality is produced” (p. 19), explicitly enabling an analysis of ideological constructions of meaning in the context of policy development and arrangements of power. Discourse analysis involves an approach which studies created meaning rather than uncovering essentials (Hardy et al., 2004). A key element of the approach is that “interrelated bodies of text- called discourses-... bring new ideas, objects and practices into the world” (Hardy et al. 2004, p. 20), where the materiality of discourses is identifiable “in the practices that they invoke”. (Hardy et al. 2004, p. 20)

The next level of importance in using a discourse analysis approach is engagement with issues of power relations, analysing “how accounts are associated with power” through investigation of the organisation and structure of discourse and its impact (Sarantakos, 2012, p. 333). Discourse analysis also enables tracing construction changes or variations, providing “insight into the guiding principles and parameters” (Sarantakos, 2012, p. 333) of texts such as policy documents.

While discourse analytical approaches derive from various theoretical positions (Howarth, 2010), they are based on a critical engagement with “Marxist, social constructivist, and interpretative models of social science research” (Howarth & Stavrakakis, 2000, p. 5). Its assumptions are about the ‘meaningfulness’ of objects and actions that occurs through discourse as “their meaning is conferred by historically specific systems of rules” (Howarth & Stavrakakis, 2000, p. 2).

This research project engages with questions of apparent “essentialism: the idea that a society, the human subject, or the objects that we encounter in social life, have fixed

essences that exhaust what these entities are” (Howarth, 2010, p. 311) through the use of a theoretical framework and methods of analysis based on approaches that stress “the primacy of politics and power in its formation” (Howarth, 2010, p. 311). However, it eschews poststructuralist theoretical approaches, arguing for a theoretical approach based on ideology theory and PEC approaches.

The project is not seeking to provide a closed-off analysis of policy statements as existing with apparent coherent and consistent logic. The policy statements demonstrate ideological inconsistencies and even incoherencies that can be examined discursively as a meaningful “object or... symbolic order that is, situated in a field of significant differences and similarities” (Howarth, 2010, p. 313). The discourses in specific policy texts present “particular systems of meaningful or articulatory practice” (Howarth, 2010, p. 313). For example, the ‘evolution’ of neoliberal discourses in Australian media policy is demonstrable in the public service media policy documents examined in Chapter Seven and in an increased focus on commodification and markets as part of discourses of women’s sports media policy in the policy texts examined in Chapters Eight and Nine.

The research proceeds from a theoretical framework that places the discursive strategies and practices deployed in policy documentation in the context of social relations. Examining the cultural and political components of discursive formations of national identity provides insights into “national self-perceptions... different political or ideological camps or even within one or the same political group” (Wodak et al., 2009, p. 6). Such discursive practices can be identified as forming “nationalist attitudes

and ethnic stereotypes [and]... even determine political decision-making” (Wodak et al., 2009, p. 1).

As noted in Chapter Three and drawing on Wodak et al. (2009), this research understands ‘nation’ and ‘national identity’ as complex social and political constructions made and remade through discursive practices. Further, while the term ‘national identity’ is used in this research, similar to its use in policy documentation (e.g., ABC Act, s 6), there is “no such thing as one national identity [but]... different identities... discursively constructed according to audience, setting, topic and substantive content” (Wodak et al., 2009, p. 5). The articulated identities may or may not differ significantly according to these situations and draw on similar, historically assumed ideas. Wodak et al. (2009) identify core components of national identity constructions through discourse, involving assertions of commonality of a historical past, cultural attributes, and a sense of geographical territory.

Discourse analysis and media policy

As examined in previous chapters, national media policy arrangements develop within historically evolving ideologies through discourses that are “socially constructed frameworks of meanings which serve as rules, norms or conventions” (Sarantakos, 2012, p. 332). Examining media policy within media studies involves drawing on a long interdisciplinary history and grappling with concepts such as ‘media’, ‘policy’ and ‘ideology’ (Curran, Gurevitch & Woollacott, 1977). Further, while taking account of the complexities of the development of ideology examined in Chapter Five, this research embraces a Marxist theoretical tradition concerning the ongoing significance of the concept of ideology in analysing media and social practices.

The research comprehends media representation and its encapsulation in policy discourses as “constitutive, rather than merely reflective, of social practice” (Phelan & Dahlberg, 2011, p. 5). If “media are ... specific machineries that produce, reproduce and transform social phenomena” (Phelan & Dahlberg, 2011, p. 6), media policy operates within social relations in similar ways. Noting the definition presented by Phelan & Dahlberg (2011), this research engages in a critical analysis of media policy that derives from a “terrain intersecting, most obviously, the fields of media studies, communication studies, cultural studies, critical political theory, and media sociology”. (p. 5)

This research uses discourse analysis as an “inter-disciplinary approach to language in use... to advance our understanding of how discourse figures in social processes, social structures and social change” (Flowerdew & Richardson, p. 1). It examines policy discourse in the language and structures that frame ideas, practices and ideologies expressed in Australian media policy documents.

Specifically, it uses discourse analysis to examine how ideological processes of the deployment of political and economic power in media policy “are enacted, reproduced, legitimated and resisted by text ... in the social and political context” (van Dijk, 2015, p. 466). It is acknowledged that discourse analysis is not a single method but an “analytical practice” encompassing different humanities and social science methods and approaches (van Dijk, 2015, p. 466). Discourse analysis has a range of epistemological paths, backgrounds and dimensions as a methodological approach (Wodak, 2009) while generally being able to be defined as “extend[ing] forms of critique familiar in critical social science”. (Fairclough & Fairclough, 2012, p. 12)

Discourse analysis provides an ability to understand social processes and relations symbolically by examining a “conceptual framework built around the primacy of political concepts and logics” (Howarth & Stavrakakis, 2000, p. 5). It is used for social explanation to contribute to the examination and understanding of ideological formations in socio-political relations (Howarth & Stavrakakis, 2000). A discourse analytical approach is employed because of its “critiques of positivist, behaviouralist and essentialist paradigms” and, especially, its applicability in developing “plausible and empirically justifiable explanations of the social and political world”. (Howarth & Stavrakakis, 2000, p. 1)

This project examines how discourses of women’s sports developed in Australian media policy, including their development in PSM policy, especially the ABC. Using discourse analytical frameworks, an inquiry examines “different strands of discourse [to]...organise a field of meaning so as to fix the identities of objects and practices” so that social relations can be investigated to understand the “contested discourses that constitute social reality” (Howarth & Stavrakakis, 2000, p. 3). The research investigates major ideological shifts that have transformed discourses of women’s sports in media policy, including national identity as an enduring but changing part of Australian media policy discourse.

Discourse analytical approaches

Using a discourse analytical approach involves drawing on ideas that recognise that there is no separation between “socially constructed meanings and interpretations [and]... objective political behaviour and action” (Howarth & Stavrakakis, 2000, p. 6). This means that, as discourses are analysed as “relational systems of meaning and

practice that constitute the identities of subjects and objects”, it is important to focus on “the creation, disruption and transformation of the structures that organise social life” (Howarth & Stavrakakis, 2000, p. 6). This approach challenges notions of objectivity, including the ability to carry out research at an ‘objective distance’ to the object of study (Howarth & Stavrakakis, 2000). It also involves a rejection of political analyses that assume rational behaviour between actors of equal power, with “given interests and preferences, or which focus on the rational (or irrational) functioning of social systems”. (Howarth & Stavrakakis, 2000, p. 6)

As the term ‘articulate’ is used in presenting and analysing the research findings, it is important to define how it is used in the context of the theoretical framework and discourse analysis used in this project. Hall (1985) has drawn attention to the importance of “think [ing] about the articulation between different contradictions; about the different specificities and temporal durations through which they operate, about the different modalities through which they function” (p. 92). I use the term ‘articulation’ in the general sense of expressing an idea or concept coherently in a spoken or written form. Articulation also has the connotation of making a connection between different parts, so I am also alluding to the concept defined by Hall (1985) as “a connection or link which is not necessarily given in all cases, as law or a fact of life, but which requires particular conditions of existence to appear at all, which has to be positively sustained by specific processes” (p. 110). Hall (1985) describes ideology as the “work of fixing meaning through establishing, by selection and combination, a chain of equivalences... to think about complex kinds of determinacy without reductionism to a simple unity” (p. 93). Because discourse is not essential, its meaning

is fixed by its context and frame. Articulation is a linguistic or semiotic fixing essential to constructing meaning and ideology.

Discourse and ideology

Howarth & Stavrakakis (2000) conceive of ideological positions as political discourse and confront Hall's approach as a "retention of the ontological separation between different types of social practice, whether understood as ideological, sociological, economic or political" (p. 4). They propose the primacy of discourse, "affirm[ing] the discursive character of all social practices and objects and reject the idea that ideological practices simply constitute one area or 'region' of social relations" (Howarth & Stavrakakis, 2000, p. 4). However, this research does apply a theoretical distinction in its application of discourse analysis, believing it useful to use ideology theory as part of the analytical approach for this project. While not entirely consistent with their view that "identifying distinctions between political, economic and ideological practices are pragmatic and analytical", it can still be viewed as "internal to the category of discourse" (Howarth & Stavrakakis, 2000, p. 4). This approach, allowing an analysis that focuses on media policy discourses while highlighting ideological processes at play, is consistent with a discourse analysis that avoids essentialism and empiricism through the specific examination of each case in articulating the "concepts in each particular enactment of concrete research". (Howarth & Stavrakakis, 2000, p. 5)

Various methodological tools are available for a discourse analytical approach to media policy documents, presenting apparent logical coherence or otherwise and "socially constructed identities" within the texts (Howarth & Stavrakakis, 2000, p. 7). While

‘weighted’ in the text, the approach is not free to apply a generalised analysis, requiring that discourse analysis be “always located in a particular historical and political context” (Howarth & Stavrakakis, 2000, p. 7). While identity is signified through articulatory practice, it is both contingent and partially fixed, allowing for and explaining social change and discontinuities in its formations (Howarth & Stavrakakis, 2000). In investigating media policy texts, the research also analyses how discourses of marketisation and commodification have transformed the articulation of women’s sports media policy and assimilated discourses of national identity into a neoliberal media policy discourse.

The context of policy reports is always interpretative, with examination of identified circumstances and the gathering of evidence to reach a conclusion. Reports are organised discursively to present an authoritative account. Recognisable narrative structures, such as introductions, covering letters, lists of terms of reference, chapters on data, submissions, hearings, and other evidence, are accompanied by findings and recommendations. The end matter will likely include lists of submitters, further data or related evidence. The structure organises not just the data but discursively asserts significance with the recognisable attributes of authority.

Reports as texts provide articulation by making statements and discursively constructing the relationships between what is accepted and what is excluded. Each report, operating within frames of other relevant discourses, achieves a discursive unity by articulating specific elements that, while distinct and even different, can be given a specific framework and cohesion. Evidence demonstrates that policy is not the result of rational goal setting but of the discursive arrangement of ideological positions, some

of which are discarded, rejected or merely silenced, while others are presented and framed as appropriate and necessary or 'best practice'.

This project's use of discourse analysis also invokes policy analysis to interrogate a "political question" (Fairclough & Fairclough, 2012, p. 12). Discourse analysis involves asking questions about who poses and frames political questions (e.g., about women's sports media and PSM policy) and how such questions are constructed as a call to action, what form of action and how various actors engage (or do not).

The research examines how discourses that frame ideologies of national identity, initially organised in sporting discourses, have been adapted and adopted into sports media discourses. This occurs through an examination of two threads of media policy: PSM policy and women's sports media policy. The context includes the activities of parliamentary politics and executive government, such as policy documents, government policy actions and ministerial statements, and media reporting of such actions. This research examines the policy context as "a constitutive feature of contemporary politics" (Phelan, 2007, p. 32). A discourse analysis of policy texts can also trace the deployment of ideological positions through discursive acts (e.g., policy statements, media reports) as "intertextual effects in terms of the workings of 'genre chains' [Fairclough, 2003] which give a neoliberalized coherence to discourse practices across space and time" (Phelan, 2007, p. 32). Such textual discourses and contexts articulate ideological perspectives in a process of 'interdiscursivity' (Fairclough, 2003) in a "dialectical interplay between ways of (inter)acting (genres), ways of representing (discourses), and ways of identifying (styles)". (Phelan, 2007, p. 31)

This research uses an analytical approach that recognises two types of neoliberal discourse: “‘transparent’ and... ‘euphemised’... modes of rhetorical and political identification with neoliberalism” (Phelan, 2007, p. 32). ‘Transparent’ discourses are direct and overt articulations such as the “theoretically literate, neoliberal identity in the works of Hayek and Friedman... [in a] confrontational and self-consciously ideological politics” (Phelan, 2007, p. 33). ‘Euphemised’ discourses consist of less overt, hedging statements that “disavow... sharp ideological distinctions” while adhering to such positions (Phelan, 2007, p. 33). Neoliberal discourses construct ideas such as ‘nation’ through a “mode of signification” in which “a classless national collective [is] read[ied]... for the prescribed disciplinary challenge” (Phelan, 2007, p. 37). At the same time, antithetically, “invocations of a collective subject (the ‘social’, the ‘public good’, etc.) are regarded with suspicion” (Phelan, 2007, p. 34). Transparent and euphemistic discourses of neoliberalism operating to endorse certain ideological positions and silence, oppose or devalue others are identified and examined in the media policy texts that are the subject of this research.

Significantly, a discourse analysis approach interrogates the process of meaning generation that “is always situated in a given social, cultural and historic setting” (Carvalho, 2020, p. 18). Relating policy texts to their historical, political and economic contexts provides an opportunity to analyse the ideological constructions and arrangements that inform and shape media policy (Carvalho, 2020). Policy documents, like media texts, can be analysed “from ideological standpoints”, opening the potential for analysis of how social actors are able (or not) to “advance their ideological

standings” and how “new ideological readings of issues” are delivered, or dominant positions are (or are not) confronted (Carvalho, 2007, p. 225).

Document Analysis

The empirical basis for the research is a series of identified Australian public policy documents. A discourse analysis approach “offers an important potential for interpreting and understanding texts and their wider relation to social contexts” (Carvalho, 2000, p. 5). While there are no standard methods for analysing texts using discourse analysis, a defining perspective is that texts can be analysed, deconstructed and reconstructed to provide “important indications about issues like... politically dominant ideologies” (Carvalho, 2000, p. 3). Policy documents are ‘significant critical discourse moments’ in which ideological positions are framed as “specific happenings which may lead to a challenge to the 'established' discursive positions” (Carvalho, 2000, p. 5). The texts of policy documents are thematically organised according to “topics that compose [them] and the hierarchical relationship between them” (Carvalho, 2000, p. 6). The structures are organised according to the high-level meanings that “link lower level propositions to high level macro-propositions” or topics (van Dijk, 1988b in Carvalho, 2000, p. 6).

The project uses grey literature, academic research and interviews to investigate the discourses in ABC and women’s sport media policy documents over almost four decades. Policy documents are defined as “documents that influence in some way the public policy-making process” (Van Audenhove and Donders, 2019, p. 55).

The discourses in policy documents are examined as a category that can be described as “semiotic ways of acting and interacting” (Fairclough, 2013, p. 179). Policy reports

are examples of political discourse, which is “argumentation for or against particular ways of acting... that can ground decision[s]... about making choices about how to act in response to circumstances and goals” (Fairclough & Fairclough, 2012, p. 1). Political discourse consists of “narratives, descriptions and explanations” that frame arguments for action through actors, processes and events (Fairclough & Fairclough, 2012, p. 13). A policy report is the agreed, authorised set of statements or arguments for a position (including recommendations for action) resulting from a set of processes in a specific political context. A political discourse analysis approach analyses “the reproduction and contestation of power through political discourse”. (Fairclough & Fairclough, 2012, p. 17)

Policy documents articulate the ideological processes that frame constructions, such as those of national identity, and provide insight into debates about media policy (Freedman, 2008). Analysing these documents provides insight into the deployment of power in a process that “is ultimately dominated by those with the most extensive financial, ideological and political resources” (Freedman, 2008, p. 22).

The documents included for examination are identified by their established research significance. A substantial amount of Australian media studies, media policy, and media history research has recognised the importance of PSM-related reports such as the Dix Inquiry in 1981; the Department of Transport and Communications Review of national broadcasting policy (DOTAC) inquiry into public service broadcasting in 1988; the 1997 Mansfield Report, *The Challenge of a Better ABC: The review of the role and functions of the ABC*; the 2008 Department of Broadband, Communications and Digital Economy (DBCDE) ‘digital future’ review of the ABC and SBS; and the 2018 *National*

broadcasters efficiency review [Tonagh & Bean, 2018] (for example, Brown, 2001; Cunningham, 2013; Debrett, 2010; Inglis, 1983, 2006; Jacka, 1991; O'Regan, 1993).

Policy documents relating to women's sports media policy, including the 1985 *Women, sport and the media* Report; the 1992 *Half way to equal* Report; the 1997 *An illusory image* Report; the 2006 *About time* Report; and the 2009 *Reporting of sports news & emergence of digital media* Report are also identified by their research significance as noted below and their ability to provide insight into the ideological construction of sports media policy. Further, public documents are identified, gathered and analysed based on their articulation of policy approaches to women's sports in public service television programming.

A longitudinal analysis of policy documents enables the evolution of policy perspectives and outcomes to be tracked over time. These documents were organised in a historical timeframe to focus on the discourses in policy statements. Key criteria were identified based on a review of theoretical literature analysed in previous chapters.

Documents were selected using six criteria based on the research questions:

- relate to the period from 1980-2018
- are part of the policy process relating to media policy about the PSM, ABC or women's sports media
- are from Australian Parliamentary (Senate or House of Representatives), or federal government agency (e.g., Department of Communications)⁴⁶ policy processes

⁴⁶ The title of the agency with responsibility for media policy including PSM policy has included Department of Transport and Communications, (DOTAC), Department of Broadband, Communications and Digital Economy (DBCDE), Department of Communications, Department of

- are part of an official, public policy process, e.g., a review or inquiry that has terms of references, public submissions and hearings, and produced a report (i.e., for example, not Senate Committee budget estimate hearings)
- terms of reference relate to media policy such as legislative, principles, role and activities of Australian media, including effectiveness and efficiency in meeting legislative roles (however, not a limited review of specific aspects of ABC activity, such as a 1995 inquiry into ABC Management and Operation (Australian Senate, 1995)⁴⁷
- are publicly available.

Based on these criteria, an initial set of documents was identified as meeting these criteria (see Table 6.1 below).

Table 6.1 PSB/PSM and women’s sports media, sports reports

Doc #	Year	Short-form title	Document Name
1.1	1981	Dix Review (Vol 1 & Vol 2)	The ABC in Review: National Broadcasting in the 1980s: Report (Dix, 1981).
1.2	1988	Review of national broadcasting policy (DOTAC)	Department of Transport and Communications Review of national broadcasting policy: Discussion papers (DOTAC, 1988).
1.3	1997	Mansfield Review	The Challenge of a Better ABC: The review of the role and functions of the ABC (Mansfield, 1997).
1.4	1999	Productivity Commission Broadcasting Report	Productivity Commission. (2000).
1.5	2008	ABC submission: Towards a digital future	ABC submission to the Department of Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy Discussion Paper “ABC and SBS: Towards a digital future.”
1.6	2008	ABC & SBS: Towards a digital future	ABC and SBS: Towards a digital future. Discussion paper (DBCDE, 2008).
1.7	2008	Digital Future	ABC and SBS: Towards a digital future. Final. DBCDE.
1.8	2011	ABC submission: programming decisions	ABC submission: Senate References Committee on Environment and Communications Inquiry into recent ABC programming decisions.

Communications and the Arts (DCA) and, currently, Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Communications (DITRDC).

⁴⁷ The 1995 Australian Senate Committee report on ABC management and operations related to a number of specific issues including program sponsorship.

1.9	2011	ABC programming decisions – Sept 2011	Senate References Committee on Environment and Communications Inquiry into recent ABC programming decisions.
1.10	2013	ABC submission ABC & Regional Diversity	ABC Submission to Senate Committee: The ABC's commitment to reflecting and representing regional diversity
1.11	2013	ABC & Regional Diversity	Australian Senate. (2013) Inquiry into the ABC's commitment to reflecting and representing regional diversity.
1.12	2014	National Commission of Audi	2014 National Commission of Audit: Towards Responsible Government. Australian Government, 2014
1.13	2014	DCA	ABC and SBS efficiency study. Department of Communications and the Arts (DoCA). (DCA, 2014)
1.14	2018	ABC submission CNI	ABC. (2018a). Submission: Inquiry into the Competitive Neutrality of the National Broadcasters.
1.15	2018	CNI	Inquiry into the Competitive Neutrality of the National Broadcasters —report by the Expert Panel (Kerr et al., 2018)
1.16	2018	Tonagh & Bean	National Broadcasters Efficiency Review Tonagh & Bean, 2018).
1.17	2020	Media Reform Green Paper	Media Reform Green Paper: Modernising television regulation in Australia (Commonwealth, 2020)
Doc #	Year	Short title -women's sports media reviews	Document Name
2.1	1985	Women, sport and the media	Australian Sports Commission and Office of the Status of Women. Women, sport and the media: a report to the federal government from the Working Group on Women in Sport.
2.2	1992	Half Way to Equal	House of Representatives Standing Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs. Half way to equal: Report the inquiry into equal opportunity and equal status for women in Australia.
2.3	1992	Invisible games	Sport and Recreation Ministers' Council (Australia) & Stoddart & Australian Sports Commission. Women and Sport Unit. Invisible games: a report on the media coverage of women's sport.
2.4	1997	An illusory image	Phillips & Australian Sports Commission Women and Sport Unit. An illusory image: a report on the media coverage and portrayal of women's sport in Australia.
2.5	2004	ABC submission: Anti-Siphoning Bill 2004	ABC. Senate Environment, Communications, Information Technology and the Arts Committee into provisions of the Broadcasting Services Amendment (Anti-Siphoning) Bill 2004.
2.6	2004	Senate Inquiry: Anti-Siphoning Bill 2004	Senate Environment, Communications, Information Technology and the Arts Committee into the provisions of the Broadcasting Services Amendment (Anti-Siphoning) Bill 2004.
2.7	2006	ABC submission Senate Inquiry into Women's Sport	ABC submission Senate Inquiry into Women in Sport and Recreation in Australia, 2006
2.8	2006	About time	Senate Environment, Communications, Information Technology and the Arts References Committee. About time: Women in sport and recreation in Australia.
2.9	2009	ABC submission: inquiry into reporting of sports news	ABC Submission Senate inquiry into the reporting of sports news and the emergence of digital media.
2.10	2009	Reporting of Sports News & Emergence of Digital Media	Senate Committee on Environment, Communications and the Arts. The Reporting of Sports News and the Emergence of Digital Media.
2.11	2009	Crawford Report: the future of sport in Australia	Crawford, Department of Health and Ageing, Commonwealth of Australia The future of sport in Australia.
2.12	2010, 2014	Towards a level playing field	Australian Sports Commission (Lumby et al.). (revised, 2014). Towards a level playing field: sport and gender in Australian media.
2.13	2013	Future of Australian sport	CSIRO future of Australian sport
2.14	2014	Women in sport broadcasting analysis	Repucom for Australian Sports Commission, Women in sport broadcasting analysis—final report.
2.15	2017	Intergenerational Review of Australian Sport	ASC (Australian Sports Commission and The Boston Consulting Group). 2017. Intergenerational Review of Australian Sport.
2.16	2017	Women In Sport	Accenture, Women In Sport report

From this list, documents associated with the following public inquiries were selected.

Table 6.2 PSB/PSM reports

Doc #	Year	Short-form title	Document Name
1.1	1981	Dix Review	The ABC in Review: National Broadcasting in the 1980s: Report.
1.2	1988	Review of national broadcasting policy	Department of Transport and Communications (DOTAC) Review of national broadcasting policy: Discussion papers.
1.3	1997	Mansfield Review	The Challenge of a Better ABC: The review of the role and functions of the ABC.
1.5	2008	ABC submission: Towards a digital future	ABC submission to the Department of Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy Discussion Paper "ABC and SBS: Towards a digital future."
1.6	2008	ABC & SBS: Towards a digital future	ABC and SBS: Towards a digital future. Discussion paper.
1.7	2009	ABC & SBS: Towards a digital future	ABC and SBS: Towards a digital future. Final.
1.14	2018	ABC/SBS Efficiency Review	National Broadcasters Efficiency Review
1.15	2018	CNI	Inquiry into the Competitive Neutrality of the National Broadcasters. —report by the Expert Panel

Note: Document numbering is not consecutive due to the longer list from which the documents were selected.

While the Dix Report is over forty years old, it is searchable as a hard copy and as a converted electronic document (PDF). The versions used in this research are an original hard copy published in 1981 and a PDF version of that document obtained from the Analysis and Policy Observatory (APO). The 1988 DOTAC and 1997 Mansfield reports are only available in hardcopy versions. The other PSM reports are available as electronic (PDF) documents).

Paralleling the examination of the public inquiries into PSB/PSM, the research examines women's sports media policy reports. Based on the above criteria, documents associated with the following public inquiries were selected. Documents analysed were selected from fourteen Australian women's sports media and general sports media policy reports published between 1985 and 2017 (see Tables 6.3, 6.4 and 6.5).

Table 6.3 Reports on sport, women’s sports or sports media

Doc #	Year	Short title (Sports media reviews)	Document Name
2.1	1985	Women, sport and the media	Australian Sports Commission and Office of the Status of Women. Women, sport and the media: a report to the federal government from the Working Group on Women in Sport.
2.2	1992	Half Way to Equal	House of Representatives Standing Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs. Half way to equal: Report the inquiry into equal opportunity and equal status for women in Australia.
2.3	1992	Invisible games	Sport and Recreation Ministers' Council (Australia) & Stoddart & Australian Sports Commission. Women and Sport Unit. Invisible games: a report on the media coverage of women's sport, 1992.
2.4	1997	An illusory image	Phillips & Australian Sports Commission Women and Sport Unit. An illusory image: a report on the media coverage and portrayal of women's sport in Australia.
2.8	2006	About time	About time: Women in sport and recreation in Australia. Australian Senate Environment, Communications, Information Technology and the Arts References Committee.
2.10	2009	Sports News Reporting & Emergence of Digital Media	Senate Committee on Environment, Communications and the Arts. The Reporting of Sports News and the Emergence of Digital Media. Commonwealth of Australia.
2.11	2009	Crawford Report on the future of sport	Crawford, The future of sport in Australia, Canberra: Department of Health and Ageing, Commonwealth of Australia
2.12	2010, 2014	Towards a level playing field	Australian Sports Commission (Lumby et al.). (revised, 2014). Towards a level playing field: sport and gender in Australian media
2.13	2013	Future of Australian sport	CSIRO future of Australian sport
2.14	2014	ASC	Women in sport broadcasting analysis–final report. Repucom for Australian Sports Commission
2.15	2017	Intergenerational Review of Australian Sport	ASC (Australian Sports Commission and The Boston Consulting Group). 2017. Intergenerational Review of Australian Sport.
2.16	2017	Accenture	Women In Sport report: An Accenture Point of View on the State of Play in Australia.

Note: Document numbering is not consecutive due to the longer list from which the documents were selected.

There has not been a similar level of scholarship about women’s sports media policy as Australian media policy (see Chapters Three and Four). Nonetheless, there has been significant research on Australian sports media policy (for example, Caple et al., 2011; English et al., 2019; Goldsmith, 2015; Hutchins & Rowe, 2010; Hutchins & Rowe, 2012; Rowe, 2011, 2014; Scherer & Rowe, 2014) that has informed the selection of policy documents for this research.

A detailed examination of the women’s sports media reports reveals that they consist of two relevant sub-categories: i) those that focus on women’s sports media or sports media with a discussion of women’s sports media, and ii) reports that focus on sport with sections about media coverage, including reference to women’s sports.

Table 6.4 Reports focussed on sports news and sports policy

Doc #	Year	Short title (Sports media reviews)	Document Name
2.10	2009	Reporting of Sports News & Emergence of Digital Media	Senate Committee on Environment, Communications and the Arts. <i>The Reporting of Sports News and the Emergence of Digital Media.</i>
2.11	2009	Crawford Report: the future of sport in Australia	Crawford. <i>The future of sport in Australia.</i> Department of Health and Ageing.
2.13	2013	The future of Australian sport	The future of Australian sport. CSIRO.
2.15	2017	Intergenerational Review of Australian Sport	ASC (Australian Sports Commission and The Boston Consulting Group). <i>Intergenerational Review of Australian Sport.</i>

Note: Document numbering is not consecutive due to the longer list from which the documents were selected (see Appendix A).

Several reports focusing on sport with sections about media coverage (see 2.11, 2.13 and 2.15 in Table 6.4) were also considered. However, except for the 2009 Senate *Reporting of sports news & emergence of digital media* document, the reports do not engage in significant dialogue about women, sport and media.

For example, the 357-page Crawford Report (Crawford, 2009) includes only a single paragraph on women’s sports media.

From the sports media documents in Tables 6.3 and 6.4, the list was refined to focus on reports that provided a significant analysis of women’s sports media policy. These documents are listed below in Table 6.5.

Table 6.5 Reports on women’s sports or sports media

Doc #	Year	Short title	Document Name
2.1	1985	Women, sport and the media	Australian Sports Commission and Office of the Status of Women. Women, sport and the media: a report to the federal government from the Working Group on Women in Sport.
2.2	1992	Half Way to Equal	House of Representatives Standing Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs. Half way to equal: Report the inquiry into equal opportunity and equal status for women in Australia.
2.3	1992	Invisible Games	Sport and Recreation Ministers' Council (Australia) & Stoddart & Australian Sports Commission. Women and Sport Unit. <i>Invisible games: a report on the media coverage of women's sport.</i>
2.4	1997	An Illusory Image	Phillips & Australian Sports Commission Women and Sport Unit. An illusory image: a report on the media coverage and portrayal of women's sport in Australia.
2.8	2006	About time	<i>About time: Women in sport and recreation in Australia.</i> Australian Senate Environment, Communications, Information Technology and the Arts References Committee Report.
2.12	2010, 2014	Towards a level playing field	Australian Sports Commission (Lumby et al.). (revised, 2014). Towards a level playing field: sport and gender in Australian media.
2.14	2014	Women in sport broadcasting analysis	Repucom for Australian Sports Commission Women in sport broadcasting analysis—final report.
2.16	2017	Women In Sport	Accenture. <i>Women In Sport</i> report.

Note: Document numbering is not consecutive due to the longer list from which the documents were selected

While focussing on two key Australian women’s sports media policy documents, the 1985 Australian Sports Commission and Office of the Status of Women (OSW) report, *Women, sport and the media* (ASC & OSW, 1985) and the 2006 *About time: Women in sport and recreation in Australia* report (Australian Senate, 2006), Chapters Eight and Nine also provide a contextual analysis of seven other women’s sports media policy reports for the content and discourse analysis of the two primary documents (Table 6.5). The selected documents provide evidence of the prevailing political and economic circumstances and contexts in which media policy was debated, argued and validated. Including a more recent Australian Parliamentary report on women’s sports media in the examination would have been valuable to the research. However, there have been no recent parliamentary or Australian government agency inquiries like these two reports, noting, as discussed below, the 2009 Senate Inquiry into sports media issues did not address women’s sports media.

The Australian Sports Commission commissioned three reports between 2010 and 2017, the 2010 and 2014 versions of *Towards a level playing field: sport and gender in Australian media* Report (ASC, 2010; 2014) and a 2014 Report, *Women in sport broadcasting analysis—final report* (Paterson et al., 2014) that updated data on women’s sports media. While these more recent reports provide valuable data on women’s sports media, they do not engage in the comprehensive and historical analysis of policy issues – gender, representation, sport and media policy- in the manner of the 1985 ASC & OSW Report or the 2006 Senate Report.

The final document examined was a report by a consulting company, Accenture, commissioned by Cricket Australia and Rugby Australia. The Accenture report (document 2.16 in Tables 6.3, 6.4 and 6.5), *Women In Sport Report: An Accenture Point of View on the State of Play in Australia* (Dinsdale et al., 2017) is not a ‘public’ policy document in the same way as the other reports listed above. The Accenture Report was not commissioned by or for a public policy process. The report, however, provides an insight into women’s sports media and is examined in Chapter Nine.

The historical timeframe of this research traces the shift from public policy processes led by public agencies such as the Office of the Status of Women and Australian Sports Commission (1985), and the Australian Parliament itself (House of Representatives, 1992; Senate, 2006, 2009). While earlier reports drew on the research and expertise of external parties, especially the academic sector, the core operation and function of the policy processes existed within public structures.

Content analysis

A quantitative content analysis of media policy documents is used to identify “a systematic description of a large set of media discourses through numbers that express the frequency and prominence of particular textual properties” (Schroder, 2002, p. 102). While enabling analysis of a more extensive range of data, for example, a longitudinal view of media policy texts, the approach necessarily reduces the text’s complexity to the selected categories (Schroder, 2002).

Content analysis has been used extensively in media studies, including research on women’s sports media, to identify the media’s lack of women’s sports coverage (Bruce, 2008; Cooky, Messner & Musto, 2015). These analyses, including measurement of newspaper column inches (Schroder, 2002) or broadcast minutes (Antunovic & Whiteside, 2018), were of specific texts (for example, a newspaper or broadcast program). Content analysis can also be used to analyse particular media content over time, for example, a comparison of different editions or episodes (for example, Cooky et al., 2015). Bruce’s work in New Zealand examined media output over 30 years using a content analysis of media texts. Her research also conducted a content analysis that examined the specific context of media texts (e.g., sports coverage in news bulletin) (Bruce, 2008). She noted that “much of this content analysis research has been conducted from an explicit or implicit liberal feminist position which believes that once discrimination has been highlighted, then it is logical that steps can be taken to end that discrimination” (2008, p. 58). Other research on sport has used content analysis to examine levels of women’s representation during Australian television broadcasts of major events such as the Olympics (Toohey, 1997; Xu et al., 2019).

This research project includes a content analysis of Australian media policy documents based on the initial categorisation of two strands in Table 6.2: Australian public service media (PSM) reviews and inquiries from 1981 to 2018 and Table 6.5, women’s sports media policy inquiries from 1985 to 2017. Content analysis in this project is employed to identify the frequency, prominence and use of key terms, including national identity, women, and sport, in women’s sports media and PSM policy documentation.

Quantitative data sets were collected for each report and then compared to the data sets from other reports. Analysing data on the identified themes in each report made it possible to develop a long-term comparison of the similarities and differences in women’s sports media and public service media policy documents over time. These were analysed regarding the research questions to create a list of terms. An initial categorisation of themes and codes is shown in Table 6.6.

Table 6.6 PSB/PSM reports: Key terms, themes and codes

	Themes	Coded terms
Ideology	Identity	Nation
		National
		National identity
		Australia
		Australian /Australian identity
		Britain/British/ British identity
		Men('s)
		Women('s)
	Women's sports/Sport	Women's sports
		Sport
		Men's sport
		Women's sport
		Cricket
		Women's cricket
	Policy/Regulation	Public Service Broadcasters (PSB)
		Public Service Media (PSM)
		National broadcasting

During the course of the research, search terms and related coding evolved as analysing the texts led to insights that influenced a revision of the coded elements. As will be discussed in Chapter Seven, terms were identified as important in framing the discourses of the Australian PSM policy role, especially in the 1988 DOTAC and 2018 Tonagh & Bean Reports. The terms “markets/ing/marketplace’ ‘efficient/cy/ies’ were added. The revised list of terms is in Table 6.7.

Table 6.7 Key terms, themes and codes (PSM reports)

	Themes	Coded terms
Ideology	Identity	Nation
		National
		National identity
		Australia
		Australian /Australian Identity
		Britain/British/ British identity
		Men('s)
		Women('s)
	Women's sports/Sport	Women's sports
		Sport
		Men's sport
		Women's sport
		Cricket
		Women's cricket
	Policy/Regulation	Public Service Broadcasters (PSB)
		Public Service Media (PSM)
		National broadcasting
		Markets/ing/place
		Efficiency/efficiencies

Similarly, terms were modified for the content analysis of women’s sports media policy reports based on an initial examination of the texts. For example, the terms ‘British’,

national broadcasting, 'public service broadcasting' and 'public service media' were removed as they were never used in the texts. It also became clear that terms such as 'public service broadcasting' and 'national broadcasting' were never used in women's sports media reports (as distinct from references directly to the ABC or SBS). The terms "markets/ing/marketplace" and "efficient/cy/ies" were added to key terms, themes, and codes for women's sports media policy reports. The modified list of terms analysed in these reports is in Table 6.8.

Table 6.8 Key terms, themes and codes (Women's sports media reports)

	Themes	Coded terms
Ideology	Identity	Nation
		National
		National identity
		Australia
		Australian /Australian identity
		Men('s)
		Women('s)
	Women's sports/Sport	Women's sports
		Sport
		Men's sport
		Women's sport
		Cricket
		Markets/ing/place
		Efficiency/efficiencies

Data were gathered and analysed according to themes using a system of coding. The themes were based on the research questions and framing and those identified subsequently in examining the documents. The themes are also based on recurrent, general patterns that have formed the coding base. Using these themes/terms, a word

search was conducted in relevant grey literature. Following the identification of the terms, usage was examined to identify the context.

The raw data, including all uses of the identified terms, was gathered in the content analysis of each policy report, and then ‘processed’ to analyse the content more accurately. Processing was done to remove instances in the reports where the coded term was used in ways unrelated to the research questions. Terms were removed when used in the texts as part of a table of contents, a chapter or section heading, or in references or footnotes. The terms were also used when there was repetition, for example, when terms of reference, legislation, or recommendations were repeated in the text. This approach enabled the content analysis to focus on the use of the terms in the context of their substantive use. The processed data is presented as part of the findings in Chapters Seven, Eight, and Nine.

While a content analysis can provide some insights for an examination of documents, it cannot give a full picture of the complexity of the issues. The method’s shortcomings mean that it cannot demonstrate the subtlety and complexity of the various aspects of the issues – for example, the use of the term ‘efficiency’ in 1981 compared with 2018.

Interviews

The research used an ‘expert interview’ approach for participants in interviews for the project. The interviews aimed to test and validate research findings drawing on the expertise and experience of people who had worked in women’s sports media or public service media. The interview process also sought the views of academic and others

who had researched or examined PSM and sports media. The interviews provided an opportunity to triangulate data from other analyses in the research. A particular outcome of the interviews was the perspective on ABC policy and statements that provide important insights into the development of women's sports media on ABC television, demonstrating different and changing discourses about PSM and women's sports media policy over time.

The method employed open-ended questions to obtain data drawing on the "interviewee[s]... 'power', 'authority' or 'status'" (Van Audenhove & Donders, 2019, p. 180). The process sought specific "technical knowledge, process knowledge and explanatory knowledge" from the interviewees (Van Audenhove & Donders, 2019, p. 183). Selection for expert interviews involved the identification of characteristics that connote expertise. It involves acknowledging criteria such as "position and expert knowledge" that Van Audenhove & Donders (2019) place "at the core of the definition of expert interviews" (p. 181). They identify three criteria for such expertise: "expert knowledge... responsibility or power... specific position" (Van Audenhove & Donders, 2019, p. 181). Using these criteria, four groups were selected for expert interviews. Their distinctiveness is based on having different (for each category) areas of expert knowledge and having held (or holding) power and positions within these categories.

Qualitative interviews were conducted to provide a range of particular, position-based perspectives on the issues being examined. Topics focused on women's sports media, the relationship to media policy, and public service media. The questions were based on identified themes, with interviewees allowed to provide extended responses,

including narratives about specific incidents, activities or events they felt relevant or significant to the questions.

The semi-structured interviews were conducted, as noted, with experts from four groups. The first category included sports media producers, researchers, broadcasters and journalists. That is, people 'on the ground' who had researched, produced and provided commentary and stories about women's sports for broadcast. The second category was executive producers and heads of television sports departments. The third group contained ABC policy leaders, including managing directors and senior executives. The fourth group comprised scholars and researchers involved in Australian media policy scholarship.

The criteria for selection for recruitment for the first group was that the individual was or is a media professional who has worked on ABC women's sports as a journalist, researcher, commentator, producer or executive producer. The second category consisted of people who had made decisions about ABC television sports programming, such as executive producers, commissioning and development executives and heads of television sports departments. The criteria for selecting this group were that the individual worked (or works) in media departments that made programming decisions. Their roles placed them as a link between those who formulated and articulated ABC strategy (see third category below) and the 'production' teams that implemented policy.

The third category consisted of ABC leaders who worked (or work) as policy and strategy leaders. The criteria for selection were that the individual was responsible for the development, articulation, and implementation of ABC policy. The executives

approached included current and former managing directors, divisional directors and strategy executives.

The fourth category consisted of Australian media scholars and researchers, especially those who have focussed on PSM or sports media. While several of the interviewees identified in category three have been associated with PSM reviews such as the 2008 review (DBCDE, 2008) and 2018 efficiency review (Tonagh & Bean, 2018), none have experience in working on or analysing prior PSM reviews (Dix, 1981; DOTAC, 1988; Mansfield, 1997). To address this gap, an approach was made based on their experience and expertise in research on PSM or sports media policy and research.

Following approval by the University of Sydney Human Research Ethics Committee (Project 2021/686) in December 2021, emails were sent to twenty potential participants providing information and requesting their participation in an interview for the research project. During the process of seeking their involvement, participants were provided with information about the project and a consent form for their endorsement (see Appendix B and Appendix C for copies of the participant documents). Participant consent was sought and received for the interview to be audio recorded in each instance. Approved questions are listed in Appendix D. Participants were asked if they agreed to have attributed quotes and comments (name, position) included in the research, subject to having an opportunity to review any material based on their interview included in the research outputs. Each participant agreed to their attributed input being included in the research. Transcripts of the interview were prepared, and a copy was sent to each participant for their review and feedback.

Invitations were initially sent to potential interviewees in March 2022, with responses received over subsequent weeks. Following acceptance, two interviews were initially held in May 2022. Due to the researcher's illness, further interviews had to be rescheduled for late 2022. In total, eight interviews were completed following the issuing of the invitations. Five other interviewees accepted but could not meet for interviews due to their schedules or for other reasons. One person approached in the initial invitations declined, and six did not respond to requests.

As noted, the interview process also sought the view of academic and other researchers who had worked in PSM and sports media.

Despite several attempts to interview identified experts in the field, only one interview was completed, with Emeritus Professor David Rowe in July 2022. Several factors had an impact on attempts to interview others, including Covid 19. On two occasions, travel restrictions prevented attempts to meet with a person who requested a face-to-face interview only. On another occasion, this researcher succumbed to Covid and could not undertake the scheduled interviews. In one case, after an initial agreement to an interview, a senior academic who had published work on the ABC from the 1980s had to withdraw due to accepting a senior public position.

The interviews were conducted from May 2022 to early 2023. They were recorded, with comments relevant to the research noted during each interview. Once the interviews had been completed, they were transcribed, and an initial open coding of the transcripts was undertaken. The transcripts were analysed in terms of identified themes and codes of significance to this research and triangulated with the findings of the discourse analysis based on the themes and codes identified in Tables 6.7 and 6.8

for document content analysis. Selected sections of the interviews, having been sent to them for their agreement, are included in relevant chapters.

Conclusion

This chapter has provided detailed information about the methodology and the qualitative and quantitative methods employed in the project as part of a mixed-methods approach to address the research questions. The following three chapters draw on the methodology and the methods described in this chapter to present the research findings, beginning with an examination of the discourses in public service media policy documents in Chapter Seven.

Chapter Seven: Public service media policy reports

Introduction

Chapter Two examined scholarship about theoretical engagements with public service broadcasting (PSB) and public service media (PSM) before analysing scholarship about sport, national identity and media in Chapter Three. Chapter Four provided a historical context about Australian sport, sports media and women's sport media, including an analysis of women's cricket. It also provided a historical context with a description of the ABC's role in Australian women's sports media, including women's cricket broadcasts.⁴⁸ Drawing on that context and using the theoretical framework and methods of analysis described in Chapter Six, it examines two key Australian public service media policy documents – the report of the Committee of Review of the Australian Broadcasting Commission, *The ABC in review: National Broadcasting in the 1980s* [Dix Report] (Dix, 1981) and the 2018 *National broadcasters efficiency review* Report (Tonagh & Bean, 2018).⁴⁹ The chapter places the two reports (Dix, 1981, Tonagh & Bean, 2018) in the historical context of five other public service media reports. As noted in Chapter Six, documents were selected from Australian public service broadcasting and public service media policy reports published between 1981 and 2018

⁴⁸ As noted in Chapter Two the term public service media (PSM) is used unless there is a specific reason to note public service broadcasting (PSB). In this chapter given the historical situation of the ABC as a broadcaster until its move to digital multichannel and multi-platform output after 1995 (first ABC website), the term PSB is used until examining policy reports after that time.

⁴⁹ The *National broadcasters efficiency review* Report (Tonagh & Bean, 2018) has a publication date of December 2018 on its front page. While the report was submitted to the Government at that time, it was not publicly released until 23 June 2020 (Samios, 2020).

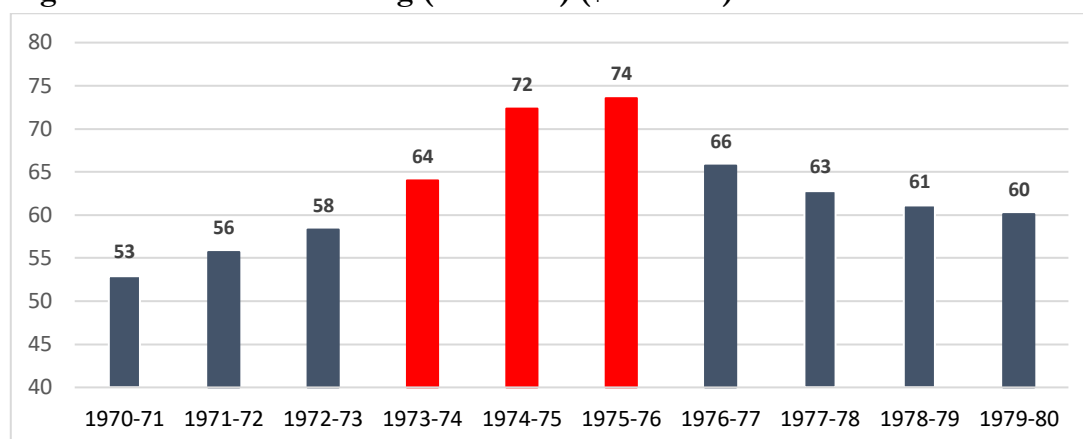
(see Appendix A). Chapter Six also addressed the selected documents' established research significance.

In addressing the relevant research questions, this examination focuses on how discourses on women's sports developed in general PSM policy and specifically, the ABC. The methods of analysis are used to examine how the deployment of ideological formations of national identity have been organised in Australian public service media policy texts. The research charts findings of a shift in the discourse of national identity in the policy documents with changing articulations of ideological positions about PSM principles and policy occurring through increasingly neoliberal ideological discourses.

The political context: Governments and the ABC

From the mid-1970s, following the election of the conservative Fraser government to the establishment of the Dix Inquiry in 1979, the ABC had been subjected to rounds of funding cuts, threats to independence and/or intervention (Davis, 1988). This approach was consistent with a longer-term campaign to limit the ABC, which included, for example, a campaign by Keith Murdoch in the 1940s to reduce the household radio licence fee paid for ABC services (Griffen-Foley, 2014). The reduction inspired by Murdoch's campaign to cut the ABC's funding "caus[ed] the ABC... serious financial difficulties" (Davis, 1988, p. 56). A decade later, the Menzies Government cut the ABC's budget by £125,000 (Davis, 1988). In 1970, Postmaster General Holmes announced a budget cut of \$500,000 per annum, "[w]ith half to come from television current affairs programs". (Davis, 1988, p. 57)

Figure 7.1: ABC 'real' funding (1970-1980) (\$ millions)



Source: Author's calculations based on Jolly, 2014.

After receiving substantial 'real' funding increases of 26 per cent during the Whitlam Labor Government (1972-75) (Inglis, 1983, p. 337), compared to the last budget of the McMahon Government (1972), the ABC budget was reduced from 1976 (Inglis, 1983, p. 389). Figure 7.1 shows a 19 per cent reduction in 'real' ABC funding between 1976 and 1979, which saw ABC funding fall almost to pre-Whitlam era levels.

1981 and 2018: Two public service broadcasting reports

The beginning point for examining the PSM policy texts is the 1981 publication of the Dix Report on the ABC. As noted in Chapter Two, this was a critical ideological moment of change for Australian media policy. The Dix inquiry, occurring at the emergence of neoliberal public policy approaches, recommended new legislation for the ABC, framed the corporatisation of the existing Australian Broadcasting Commission, articulated a policy role about national identity and revised its sports programming role (Dix, 1981; Davis, 1988; Inglis, 2006). Thirty-seven years later, the 2018 Tonagh & Bean Report was presented to a government strongly committed to

neoliberalism with commercial, market-driven solutions articulated as optimal for achieving media policy outcomes (Redden, Phelan & Baker, 2020).

The contexts for the two inquiries differed, at least in terms of public policy processes. The 1,000-plus page Dix Report was published in 1981 after months of “public hearings in all States, in major centres, in smaller country towns and in some quite remote places” (Dix, 1981, n.p.),⁵⁰ with over 800 witnesses, and receiving 2,275 submissions (Bear, 1981). In contrast, the 2018/2020 *National broadcasters efficiency review* (Tonagh & Bean, 2018) occurred in secret, with no public submissions, hearings, or other public consultations. Its report was publicly withheld for over eighteen months (Tonagh & Bean, 2018; Simons, 2020). The changed policy context meant that while the Dix Inquiry was a wide-ranging, consultative review of the ABC’s policy role and activities, the Tonagh & Bean Inquiry “examine[d] the efficiency” of the ABC and SBS (2018, p. 17). Finally, while the Dix Report directly addressed women’s sports media (1981), a policy silence on women’s sports media characterised the 2018 report (Tonagh & Bean, 2018).

Content analysis: Public service broadcasting reports 1981-2018

Before presenting findings on a content analysis of the Dix and Tonagh & Bean Reports (next document/chapter), the chapter presents the results of a comparative content analysis that was made of these two reports and five other relevant PSM policy documents listed in Table 7.1 (See Chapter Six and Appendix A for a complete list of policy documents examined as part of the selection process).

⁵⁰ As noted in Chapter Two, The Dix Report had no page numbers, but numbered chapters, sections and paragraphs.

Table 7.1 ABC policy reports 1981 - 2018

Doc #	Year	Short-form title	Document Name
1.1	1981	Dix Vol 1 and Vol 2	The ABC in Review: National Broadcasting in the 1980s (Dix, 1981).
1.2	1988	DOTAC	Department of Transport and Communications (DOTAC) Review of national broadcasting policy: Discussion papers (DOTAC, 1988).
1.3	1997	Mansfield	The Challenge of a Better ABC: The Review of the role and functions of the ABC (Mansfield, 1997).
1.6	2008	Digital Future	ABC and SBS: Towards a digital future Discussion paper (DBCDE, 2008).
1.13	2014	Lewis	ABC and SBS efficiency study. Department of Communications and the Arts (DCA) (Lewis, 2014)
1.14	2018	Tonagh &-Bean	National Broadcasters Efficiency Review (Tonagh & Bean, 2018)
1.15	2018	CNI	Inquiry into the Competitive Neutrality of the National Broadcasters. report by the Expert Panel (Kerr et al., 2018)

Note: Document numbering is not consecutive because it is based on a longer list from which the documents were selected (see Chapter Six).

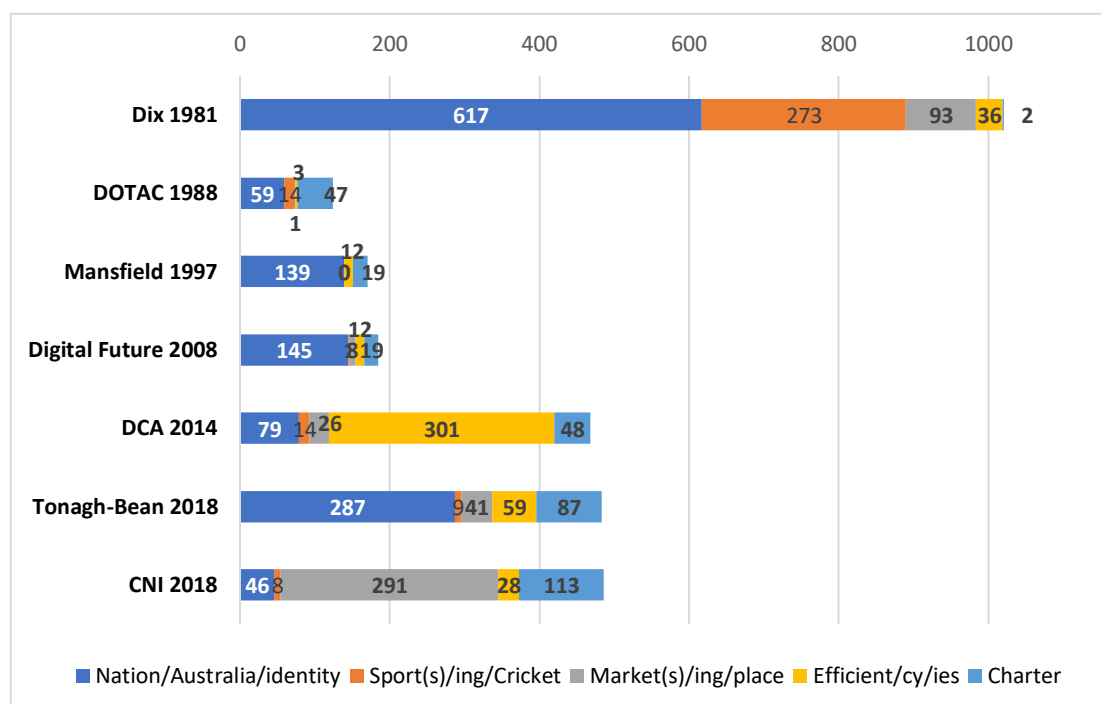
Key coded terms: Usage changes over time

The comparative content analysis identifies significant shifts in language and usage over time. In analysing the texts, several insights influenced a revision of the coded elements, with the list amended to include these terms. The high-level analysis shows substantial changes in the frequency of terms in the different reports. Figure 7.1 reflects this change (the original coding is described in Chapter Six), showing each report's processed data for coded terms. The processed data provides a clear picture for analysis of the shifts in public policy focus over the period.

Two significant findings are discernible. The first is the use of terms such as 'nation/Australia/identity', 'women', 'sport(s)/ing' and 'policy/ies' in the Dix Report before these terms either decline or disappear from future reporting. Figure 7.1 shows

that the terms ‘nation/Australia/ identity’, used over 600 times in the Dix report, were employed less frequently in subsequent reports except for the *Digital Future* (2008) and Tonagh & Bean reports (2018). The use of the term ‘charter’ (light blue in Figure 7.1) increased from just twice in the Dix Report to over 100 times by 2018 (Tonagh-Bean, 2018). The terms ‘sport(s)/ing’ and ‘women’ declined from over 350 times in the Dix Report to almost disappear in the 2018 Report. In the case of ‘women’, references disappeared from PSM policy documentation. Terms such as ‘women’s sport or ‘sportswomen’ were never used in any of the reports. It is also evident that there was an increased use of terms such as ‘markets’ and ‘efficiency’ after the Mansfield review; although the 2008 *Digital Futures* Report (DBCDE, 2008) is an exception.

Figure 7.1 Comparison of processed selected key terms (7 PSM reports 1981-2018)



Sources: Data analysed from Kerr et al. (CNI), 2018; DCA, 2014; Digital Futures, 2008; Dix, 1981; DOTAC, 1988; Mansfield, 1997; Tonagh-Bean, 2018.

The Dix Report

In June 1979, the conservative Government's⁵¹ Minister for Posts and Telecommunications, Tony Staley, announced the establishment of "[a]n independent review of the ABC" (Inglis, 1983, p. 425). The Fraser Government's rationale for the Dix Review was "an urgent need for change to the structures and practices of the ABC" (Davis, 1988, p. 3). Therefore, the terms of reference "focus[ed]... on internal shortcoming [and]... largely ignored the contributing role of government to the ABC's difficulties" (Davis, 1988, p. 3). The Inquiry provided its five-volume report to a new Minister, Ian Sinclair, in 1981.

The period in which the Dix review was commissioned, held and delivered was one in which "enemies of the Commission... claimed that the ABC should be sold, given away, closed down, or turned into a commercial operation" (Bear, 1981, p. 17). As for much of its history, the ABC was constructed as in "crisis" and/or under "threat" (Inglis, 1997, p. 5). There was a sense of "permanent trauma" (Davis, 1988, p. 3) as the halcyon days of increased funding and support for public service broadcasting during the Whitlam years were replaced by an ongoing problematising of the public service broadcasting role (Davis, 1988, p. 3). This situation endured even after the Report (Dix, 1981) "stresse[d] the importance of a national, publicly-controlled broadcasting sector, and documents the widespread public support which the ABC has built up in its fifty years" (Bear, 1981, p. 17).

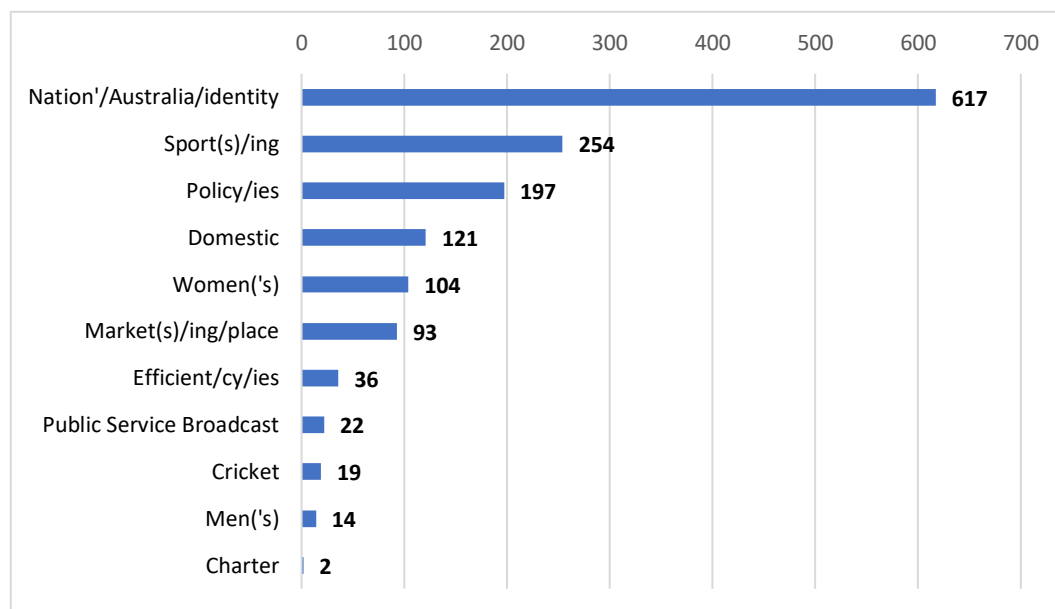
Dix Report content analysis

Key coded terms: nation/Australia/identity

The following section extends the content analysis discussed earlier in this chapter to present the findings of a content analysis of the Dix Report, Volumes 1 and 2. Figure 7.2 provides a graphical representation of the data.

The terms ‘nation/Australia/identity’ have been combined in the processing of the data and eliminated when used as a heading or as a proper noun. For example, the Dix Report often refers to its proposed public service broadcasting structure of a ‘National Broadcasting Organisation’ and a ‘National Broadcasting Consultative Council’ on almost forty occasions (Dix, 1981, Volume 2). When these uses are removed, as Figure 7.2 shows, the Report used the terms ‘nation/Australia/identity’ 617 times (Dix, 1981).

Figure 7.2: Dix Report: Number of times selected key terms used



Source: Data analysed from Dix, 1981.

On several occasions, references to the 'nation' are more operational, such as the national programming (e.g., national news) as part of a centralised and decentralised operational structure (Dix, vol 1 1981, para 25). On 427 occasions, the Report refers to 'Australian' or 'Australians'. Again, on several occasions, these references are functional (e.g., to the Australian Broadcasting Commission). Nonetheless, there are over 250 substantive references in the Report's approximately 1000 pages to the concepts of "Australian' or 'Australians' and over 350 to the ideas of 'nation' and 'national'. These include substantive statements about national identity formation in PSM and media policy.

Dix Report and Sport

The Dix Report includes 254 references to 'sport(s)/ing' and 19 references to 'cricket'. The 'sport(s)/ing' references recognised the significance of sports, sports media and the ABC to Australia's "reputation as a sporting nation" (Dix, 1981, Vol 2, 11.111). This resulted from the international reputation of Australian sportsmen and women and "Australians' high level of interest in sporting activity both as players and as spectators" (Dix, 1981, Vol 2, 11.111). According to the Report, the Australian image of itself as a sporting nation was at least partly derived from sports broadcasting (Dix, 1981). Noting that sports broadcasting hours on ABC television were only exceeded by drama and education, the Report found that the ABC contributed to this perception of Australia as a "sporting nation" (Dix, 1981, Vol 2, 11.111). The Report found that (as for most broadcasters) most of the work and output of the ABC sporting department involved "outside broadcasts of sporting events" (Dix, 1981, Volume 2,

10.83) for live broadcast and recording and news gathering for news bulletins (Dix, 1981, Volume 2, 10.86).

The ABC submitted that in 1980/81 it allocated 16.5 per cent of television department funding to sport, second only to News (17.5 per cent) and more than Drama (16.45 per cent) (Dix, 1981, Vol 2, 10.59). ‘Sporting’ broadcasts accounted for 5.6 per cent of the broadcast schedule from 6 pm -10 pm, compared to, for example, ‘Drama’, which made up 41.2 per cent and ‘News’, 17 per cent of hours broadcast in 1979-80 (Dix, 1981, Vol 2, para 11.19). In asking whether too much sport was broadcast on the ABC, the Report noted that most sport was broadcast during daytime hours; and during which period sport accounted for more television hours than any other genre (17.2 per cent) (Dix, 1981, Vol 2, 11.117).

Discourse analysis of the Dix Report

The following section examines the Dix Report using a discourse analysis approach described in Chapter Six. Policy documents present arguments through discourse, arguing a case for certain policy action based on evidence gathered from submissions, public consultations and research (Fairclough, 2013). The Dix Report is consistent with that definition in that it “draws upon a discourse that preselects a particular way of interpreting/problematising the crisis” (Fairclough, 2013, p. 191). A series of discursive approaches are used in the Report to persuade that the policy articulations are sound and applicable to addressing the crisis (Fairclough, 2013). The first strategy is to establish the Report as an authoritative power in media policy.

The Dix Report structure

The five-volume Dix Report is organised according to the conventions of public policy reports that identify a process of inquiry, consultation, evidence gathering and reporting as constituent parts of the investigation and then the reporting structure (Althaus et al., 2018). The introduction is followed by a section on the Government's Terms of Reference for the Review, the Committee membership, research team and consulting individuals and organisations (cross-referenced to their reports in Volumes 3 to 5) and a contents section (Dix, Vol 1, 1981). A table showing the extent of the Report's scope and level of detailed examination and findings is included in Appendix E.

The contents section describes the 'General Conclusions' and lists twenty rhetorical questions posed as if on behalf of the Australian community. The first is "Do we need an ABC?" followed by others such as "How important is the ABC's independence?" and "Should the ABC get more public money?" (Dix, Vol 1, 1981, n.p.). The section describes the committee's approach and establishes the framework for the remainder of the Report, which in Volume 1 summarises the conclusions and recommendations. From the beginning, in a refrain that will be echoed in later reports, the Dix inquiry stated that "[t]he possibility of greatly increased funding from any government now or in the immediate future, is faint". (Dix, Vol 1, 1981, n.p.)

In addition to providing navigation for understanding the Report, the structure establishes the Report's authoritative power. An authoritative discourse of the approach and findings are established through the Report's narrative composition and presentation. In establishing its authority as an expert, informed and knowledgeable

forum for assessing public service broadcasting policy, the Report also demonstrated another source of power and an assertion of an understanding of the ABC's relationship to the community. This was established with statements about how "the Australian community value[d] the ABC" and the important role it "play[ed] in the lives of many Australians", its valuing of the ABC, and the ABC's "significant part [in] the mainstream of national life" (Dix, Vol 1, 1981, 1). Further, the ABC was identified as "a symbol of Australia's identity in the eyes of both supporters and detractors" (Dix, 1981, Vol 1, Part 1, para 1). The Report seeks to re-establish a relationship with the Australian community as an important underpinning of its findings and recommendations.

These statements are critical in foregrounding the Report's problematising of the ABC's role. From an articulation of its knowledge of the ABC relationship with the community and of the Australian community's sense of the ABC, the Report states that the ABC is failing. The language of failure is uncompromising:

In the last decade, [the ABC's] record has faltered. ... The ABC has been led into changes that have ended nowhere, such as the experiment with access radio; on the other hand, it has remained aloof from different directions of noticeable change, such as multicultural broadcasting. It has stood on its dignity and independence when pressing priorities cried out for attention. (Dix, 1981, Vol 1, Part 1, para 4)

The discourse of failure frames much of the Report's findings and recommendations, including those related to sport that are discussed below.

The following section examines the Report's statements in the context of an articulation of the Public Service Broadcasting role and principles.

The Dix Report did not explicitly articulate a list of principles characteristic of public service broadcasting. However, at different points in the text, it used language that was evocative of what would later be described as PSB principles (as reviewed in Chapter Two). For example, a number of references to the 'nation' and 'national' were constructed as part of what can be identified as a public service broadcasting policy role. In strongly supporting the ABC's role as a comprehensive and complementary broadcasting service, it stated that "the National sector should seek to program for mass audiences as well as special interest groups". (Dix, 1981, Vol 2, 3.16)

This adoption of PSB principles was stated clearly in the recommendations of the Review. Having made an initial recommendation that "the ABC should provide a national service for all Australians", the second recommendation of the Dix Review goes to the rationale for that public broadcasting service (Dix, vol 2, 1981, section 2, summary of recommendations). That is, in framing national identity, the public service media role required that the ABC provide a comprehensive, innovative and balanced radio and television service of information, education and entertainment on a national and regional basis for Australians" (Dix, vol 2, 1981, section 2, summary of recommendations). The Report's expression of comprehensiveness and complementarity is linked to concepts of nation and identity. The deployment of these principles was to "contribute to the growth of national unity and the development of Australian identity" (Dix, vol 2, 1981, section 2, summary of recommendations). For example, the Report located the ABC's PSM role in framing the nation through the

broadcast of “programs of high quality with wide audience appeal and programs for diverse minority interests”. (Dix, vol 1 1981, para 21)

The following section explores the Report’s discursive strategies concerning concepts of nation and national identity. The terms ‘nation’, ‘Australia’ and ‘identity’ were used so frequently in the text that they become anchoring metaphors for defining the ABC’s role and relationship to the ideological concept of the nation-state. The usage in the text organised a historical sense of the ABC in statements noting that its predecessor, the Australian Broadcasting Company, had “welded together... twelve stations across the nation” (Dix, 1981, Vol 2, 4.22). The term was invoked as the legislative rationale for the Australian Broadcasting Commission Act, 1932 that established the ABC as a public service broadcaster, nationalising the previously private company “for the nation as a whole [to form] the strong publicly-owned broadcasting network” (Dix, 1981, Vol 2, 4.33). The Report presented a strong historical rationalisation for the ABC in an argument that encompassed national and international broadcasting relationships (especially with the BBC) that “reduce [a] national isolation and insecurity which was being sharpened by world political and economic developments in the 1930s” (1981, Vol 2, 4.33). Most significantly for the articulation of the ABC’s ideological role, the Report noted that the ABC had established a “national image [and was]... the only television service which can be turned on nation-wide to provide national perspectives and news, the coverage of significant events and the provision of comment”. (Dix, 1981, Vol 2, 11.17)

The Report also expressed how ABC policy contributed to ideas of nation and identity. For example, in quoting the ABC 1979/80 Annual Report, it noted that “Radio 3, the

regional network, sought to reinforce national identity by giving many different parts of the country a means of expression, not only to themselves but to the nation as a whole” (Dix, 1981, Vol 2, 8.10). This policy role was framed as central to the ABC by the Report for:

Providing regional communities with the opportunity to communicate with each other... broaden[ing] the base of interest and understanding between communities separated by hundreds and sometimes thousands of kilometres and adds another strand to the distinctive sound of ABC radio. (Dix, 1981, Vol 2, 8.10)

However, on numerous occasions, the Report also articulates what it believes Australians seek from a national broadcaster and what an Australian public service broadcaster’s ideological role might encompass. For example, it states that:

It is an important function of the ABC to assist Australians to interpret the world, to gain a knowledge of themselves as part of society, and to stimulate local artistic talent [placing]... ‘the ABC’ [as], for good reasons, part of Australian history and culture. (Dix, vol 1 1981, para 25)

In relation to perceptions of PSM, the Report reflected that “Australians feel strongly about the independence of the ABC. They want the organisation to be independent and to be seen to be independent of outside interference, political and otherwise”. (Dix, vol 1 1981, para 32)

Markets, marketing, and marketplace

The terms ‘markets/marketing/marketplace’ occur 93 times in the Report (Dix, 1981). However, the findings point to the use, not as an invocation of markets as an alternative policy setting to PSBs. The use represented a symbol of an evolving ideological shift from public policy to commercial activity as a definer of policy action, as will be discussed in relation to later reports (see below, Tonagh-Bean Report). While the market is invoked in terms of Australian media policy, it was a shared policy; for example:

The commercial and National sectors were permitted to share the new medium, television, in a protective atmosphere which allowed for leisurely development of their respective spheres of influence: dominance of the mass market for the commercials and a varied role for the ABC. (Dix, 1981, Vol 2, 3.17)

However, as discussed further below, the Report did find that the sports media market had become commercialised, and as broadcast rights became exclusive rather than shared rights, the ABC should leave the market to commercial broadcasters (Dix, 1981, Vol 2, 11.111). Previous research (Ward, 2017) has noted that the Dix Report addressed the “ABC’s inability to gain television rights to major sporting events” (Dix, 1981, Vol 2, 11.111). The Report found that, in 1980-81 the ABC spent \$1.67 million on sporting media rights,⁵² much less than commercial broadcasters (Dix, 1981, Vol 2,

⁵² Total ABC operating revenue in 1980-81 was \$184.1 million (Jolly, 2014, p. 60).

11.127). The ABC's call for a UK-style shared rights regulatory approach that would have mandated PSB access to certain 'key' sports events was strongly rejected.

Notwithstanding the ABC's long history of television broadcasts of test cricket from 1958 (Ward, 2017), Dix was unequivocal about the contentious public debate about the ABC's loss of cricket and other sports rights. It stated, "it is now time for the ABC to remove itself from the running [sports broadcasting] and divert at least some of this expenditure into other areas more appropriate for the national broadcaster" (Dix, 1981, Vol 2, 11.127). This was the first indication of a media policy shift towards market liberalisation and the end of a shared rights environment.

Sports broadcasting was to be constructed "in market terms, that is, once commercial broadcasters sought rights on an exclusive basis, the competitive environment should ensue" rather than in terms of its contribution to the construction of national identity (Ward, 2017, p. 76). The Report went further, arguing for a changed focus for PSB sports broadcasting (1981, Vol 2, 11.129). It argued that "sporting output [including] the amount of time devoted to sport, especially on television and on radio at weekends" (Dix, 1981, Vol 2, Recommendation 68) was excessive.

In an interview for this research, former ABC Managing Director Russell Balding (2022) stated, "I tend to disagree with Dix's finding. Because sport is very, very relevant to the Australian culture and its history". For Balding (2022), the significance of the ABC was in maintaining relevance to the Australian community, a relevance he located in a historical framing of the ABC role:

Historically, with the ABC, there were a number of [iconic broadcasting events] ... Anzac Day, broadcast from the beginning, from 1933... horse

racing and of course, within a few months of starting 90 years ago in June, the ABC is broadcasting the Ashes cricket.

Dix Report and the sporting nation

The Dix Report devoted considerable space to analysing the ABC's sports broadcasting role and activity, encompassing sixteen pages (Dix, 1981, Vol 2, 11.111-11.143), more than any other genre section except for News and Public Affairs (Dix, 1981, Vol 2). A motivation for addressing sport was the increasing commerciality of sports media, which was recognised as "very big business" (Dix, 1981, para. 11.124). The Report also included a significant statement about ABC women's sports broadcasting that is discussed below.

As noted previously in this chapter, there was an understanding that a perception of Australia as a "sporting nation... has been strongly reflected in the program output of Australian radio and television, both ABC and commercial" (Dix, 1981, Vol 2, 11.111). Its assertions about the ideological construction of Australia as a sporting nation were not further elaborated or referenced; with the Report seemingly confident the statement was self-evident. As discussed in previous chapters, the ideological formation of national identity was strongly linked to the concept of sports and sports media. In articulating its strong sense of its public service broadcasting role and sport the ABC placed special emphasis on cricket broadcasts. As previous research has noted, the ABC had broadcast cricket on the radio from 1932 and on television from 1956 in an unmatched and uninterrupted flow of test match broadcasts that acknowledged cricket's place in national identity formation that linked back "to an

emerging nationalism [and]... the development of national pride". (Lawrence & Rowe, 1986, p. 23)

A submission by the commercial television representative organisation FACTS that "the ABC should concentrate on amateur sports and leave the coverage of professional sports to commercial media" was endorsed (Dix, 1981, Vol 2, 11.135). In presenting its argument, the Report cited other sources and submissions that sought a new focus for ABC television sport, including from "the Australian Women's Cricket Council, (34) Australian Baseball Federation, (35) N.S.W. Department of Sport and Recreation (36)" (Dix, 1981, Vol 2, 11.135).

Noting the ABC's historical role in "popularis[ing] some sports (for example, soccer) which were once regarded as minority interests", the argument was that the ABC should take the opportunity presented by its inability to compete with commercial media for rights (Dix 1981, Vol 2, 11.129).

Support was expressed for an increased broadcast of women's sport as it pointed to future directions for sports media policy by recommending that the ABC investigate "the need to reflect the range of sporting activity at a local and regional level the potential for expanding the role of the Sporting Department to produce a much wider range of programs" (Dix, 1981, Vol 2, Recommendation 68). The opportunity for the broadcast of local and regional sports included "women's hockey (Tasmania); lawn bowls singles final (Queensland)" (Dix, 1981, Vol 2, 11.137).

While the ABC continued to broadcast major sporting events on both television and radio for several years, eventually the economics of sports media markets meant the end of ABC' tier one' sports events on ABC television (Scherer & Rowe, 2014).

Discussion

The examination of the Dix Report charts discursive shifts in a key text that frames a transformation of Australian PSB policy. While more recent PSB policy documents articulate a greater shift from the centrality of public service broadcasting in Australian media policy than that articulated in the Dix Report (Dix, 1981), the discursive strategies examined in the Dix Report are an indication of an emerging neoliberal discourse. The commodification of sports and sports media, particularly its analysis of the ABC's future role in televised cricket broadcasts after World Series Cricket, is the first instance of a public policy articulation of sports media in Australian media policy.

The Dix Report is also the first occasion in which a framework of public service broadcasting principles, such as universality of service and content provision, including the concepts of comprehensiveness and complementarity, independence and innovation, are presented as part of discourses of Australian media policy. The second significant policy articulation of the Dix Report was its historical framing of the ABC sports role, as it called for the ABC to remove itself from television sport due to the increasing commodification of sports media.

The next section of Chapter Seven examines the 2018 Tonagh-Bean Report in the context of the ABC policy reports published between 1981 and 2018.

Between the Dix Report in 1981 and the Tonagh-Bean Report in 2018, there were four major PSB and PSM policy reviews and reports. Two of these reports, the 1988 Department of Transport and Communication (DOTAC) report of the *Review of National Broadcasting Policy* and the 1997 Mansfield report of *The challenge of a better ABC: A review of the role and functions of the ABC* (DOTAC, 1988; Mansfield, 1997), had

significant implications for the ABC's sports media policy role. The following section briefly examines the 1988 and 1997 reports as context for the analysis of the 2018 Report. Following that context, the chapter provides the findings of analysis of the 2018 *National broadcasters efficiency review* Report (Tonagh & Bean, 2018). It provides the findings of a content and discourse analysis focussing on the discursive formations of national identity and its relationship with ABC women's sports media.

1988 Review of National Broadcasting Policy

By the mid-1980s, the relationship between the Labor Government and the ABC had deteriorated to be almost as bad as that of the previous administration (Davis, 1988, Inglis, 1983). Funding decreased, and in 1986, the government announced a plan to “merge the ABC with Special Broadcasting Service (SBS) as an economic measure” (Davis, 1988, p. 6).

Following a campaign that stopped the merger, the Hawke Government announced a review of national broadcasting policy (DOTAC, 1988) in a policy context where there was an “absence of agreement on the role of national broadcasting” (DOTAC, 1988, p. 1 in Ward, 2017, p. 84). Media policy was reframed such that the whole media system was comprehensive and complementary, while public service broadcasting was to be limited by the identification of Charter and non-Charter activities (Ward, 2017).

As part of its policy articulation, the DOTAC Report (1988) identified sports programming as potentially a ‘core’ or ‘non-core’ Charter activity. The rationale for deciding where sports programming might fit into ABC policy and schedules was not

its comprehensiveness or complementarity as part of PSB principles but in “commercial market terms” (Ward, 2017, p. 85), which essentially meant regional areas where commercial broadcasters could not technically or did not wish to deliver a service. The Report argued that “coverage of minority sports might well fall into the category of complementary programming... and thus be a Charter activity” (DOTAC, 1988, p. 24).

The ABC rejected the Report’s endorsement of a neoliberal market approach, including for sports programming, as it “continued to increase the broadcasting of women’s sport as part of a strategy to provide coverage of a ‘more diverse range of sports’”. (Ward, 2018, p. 85)

1997 Mansfield Review

During the Howard Government's eleven years in office, ABC funding was cut by 8 per cent in real terms, compared to the average funding of the previous Government. The⁵³ fiscal efficiency was located in a market discourse that restructured “relations between the economic, political and social domains [making them]... subject to the economic logic of the market” (Fairclough, 2003, p. 4). This transformation of the public sector through expenditure cuts and a reduced policy role and function was demonstrated in a \$31 million cut to the ABC's funding in May 1997, two months before announcing the Mansfield Review (Jolly, 2014).

⁵³ John Howard led the Australian Government from 1996 to 2007.

The Mansfield Report, commissioned by the conservative Howard government, repeated the 1988 report discourse, articulating a critique of ‘core’ PSB policy (1997). As part of its response to the Report, the ABC (1997) asserted that it had “pioneered coverage of some sports ignored by commercial stations”, noting that having developed an audience for sports content, “commercial stations not infrequently acquired the broadcast rights and took over coverage” (p. 12). The ABC (1997) articulated its role in providing coverage of women’s sport in the context of sport “as an important part of the social and cultural fabric of the nation”. (pp. 121–123)

2018 National broadcasters efficiency review (Tonagh-Bean Inquiry) Report

In August 2018, the Australian Government ordered a new inquiry into the ABC and SBS “to examine the efficiency of the operations of the ABC and SBS and provide recommendations on areas where greater efficiency could be achieved” (Tonagh & Bean, 2018, p. 11), with a report, the *National broadcasters efficiency review* (Tonagh & Bean, 2018) presented to the Government in December 2018.

In announcing the review, the Minister for Communications noted that the appointed reviewers who would “identify best public broadcasting practice [had]... significant broadcasting and media experience including [Peter Tonagh] as Chief Executive Officer of Foxtel... and [Richard Bean as] General Counsel at wireless broadband infrastructure owner and ISP, Unwired”. (Fifield, 2018, n.p.)

Content analysis

The following section presents the findings of a content analysis employed to examine the use of terms identified as key themes in this research. Figure 7.3 shows the results of a processed content analysis of the Tonagh-Bean Report.⁵⁴

The first finding of the analysis is that there continues to be a regular referencing of the ‘nation’, ‘Australian’, and ‘identity’ compared to previous PSM reports. For example, as shown in Figure 7.1 earlier in this chapter, the terms ‘nation’, ‘Australian’ and ‘identity’ are used between 60 and 145 times in the four reports⁵⁵ following the Dix Inquiry (DBCDE, 2008; DOTAC, 1988, Lewis, 2014; Mansfield, 1997), compared to the 617 occasions in the Dix Report (Dix, 1981). The terms occur over 287 times in the Tonagh-Bean Report.

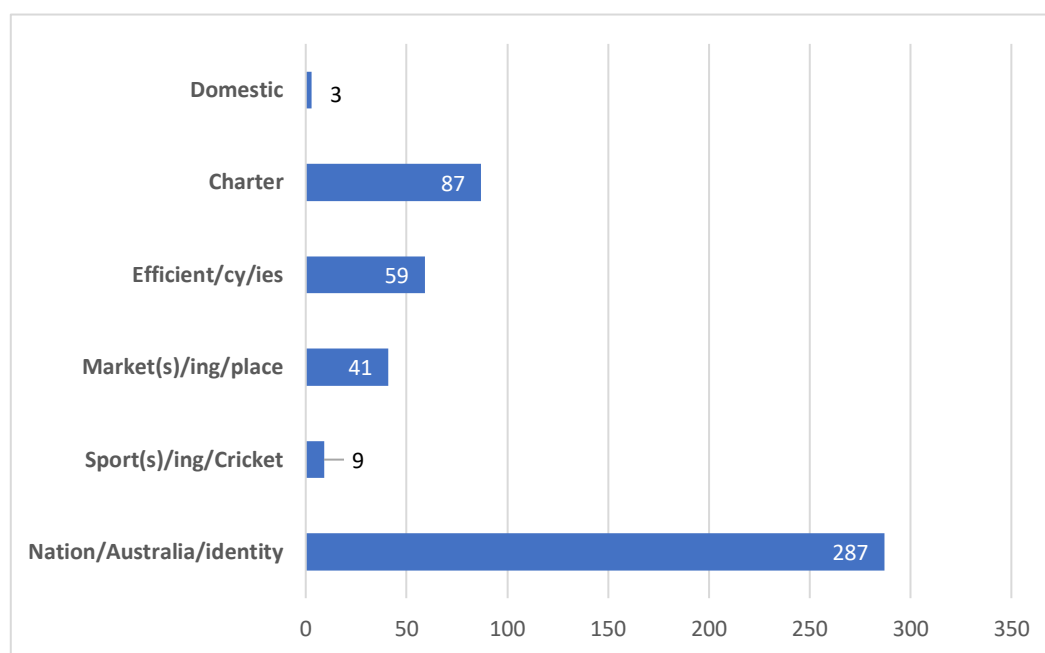
In the figure, the terms ‘nation’, ‘Australia’ and ‘identity’ are combined, noting their common usage. The references to ‘nation’, ‘Australian’ and ‘identity’ are used more than any other coded terms. While the phrase ‘national broadcaster[s]’ is used on many occasions, it is used as a general descriptor (instead of, for example, PSB or PSM) to describe the activities of the ABC and SBS or to indicate new policy directions. As Figure 7.3 also shows, the terms ‘Sports/ing /cricket’ were rarely used (nine times) in the report.

This policy omission is discussed below.

⁵⁴ See Appendix for detailed tables of raw and processed data of coded terms.

⁵⁵ The 2008 PSB document is the discussion paper released in 2008.

Figure 7.3: National broadcasters efficiency review Report: Selected key terms



Source: Tonagh & Bean, 2018

The use of the term ‘charter’ eighty-seven times, contrasts with its use on only two occasions in the Dix Report. The use of the term in the Tonagh & Bean Report is discussed further below.

The National broadcasters efficiency review Report: discourse analysis

As noted about other reports in this research, this report is organised according to the conventions of public policy reports. It begins with a letter to the Minister for Communications, noting that “[i]n accordance with our terms of reference, we examined the efficiency of the operations of the ABC and SBS and provide recommendations on areas where greater efficiencies can be achieved” (Tonagh & Bean, 2018, p. 3). It then presents an executive summary, the governmental direction that provides its terms of reference and the inquiry scope. At this point in the text, it

presents its policy rationale, data, analysis, research, and arguments. The table below provides a high-level description of the relationship between the Report’s macrostructure and themes.

Table 7.2: National broadcasters efficiency review Report organisational structure and themes

Chapter heading	Main Code/theme	page #
The importance of the national broadcasters to Australian society	Nation/Australia/identity	18-29
Challenges and responses	Policy	30-34
Take a longer-term perspective	Market(s)/ing/place	35-47
Focus on the core	Policy, Efficient/cy/ies	48-84
Modernise work practices	Efficient/cy/ies	85-93
Increase collaboration and shared outsourcing	Efficient/cy/ies	94-105
Invest in enablers and cultural change	Efficient/cy/ies	106-111

Source: Tonagh & Bean, 2018.

Again, as observed regarding other policy reports examined in this research, the text structure is not simply a means of navigating the Report; it also establishes its authority in a discourse articulated through adherence to the conventions and structures of public policy reporting. There are assertions and repetition of credentials, noting, for example, that “[t]he recommendations in this review are based on industry data, experience and informed assumptions having regard to specific data”. (Tonagh & Bean, 2018, p. 12)

Core and non-core business

The Report echoes the 1988 (DOTAC) and 1997 (Mansfield) PSM reviews in calling for a “focusing on the core” business, expressing concern that public service media “have significantly expanded the range of content and services they offer Australian

audiences” (Tonagh & Bean, 2018, p. 48). Channelling PSM content decisions into narrower directions was central to the articulation of the ABC’s perceived failure to adhere to a media policy reframed in market terms. In an interview for this research, former ABC Managing Director Mark Scott did not necessarily view the changing policy framework as problematic. Scott (2022) summarised his view as:

Policy creates a context. But then, in the reality of the budgetary pressures and prioritisation and decision-making- there’s a myriad of other decisions that finally shape the output- in an attempt to deliver a service within that policy framework.

Scott (2022) framed PSM decision-making within a classical policy and strategy framework of competing interests and limited resources where the “challenge is that you have to execute your strategy in light of a way of continuing to garner the support that was necessary to continue to fund the policy”. The policy role is a “constant balancing act, in which the overarching policy parameter is to speak to Australians and tell Australian stories, reflect the nation back to the nation”. (Scott, 2022)

Charter, core business and content

Tonagh & Bean (2018) noted that it was not its role to “undertake a detailed assessment of what content is core to meeting the charter obligations of the national broadcasters” (p. 56). Nonetheless, language deployed in the Report was used to reframe the legislated Charter, limiting the PSM policy role in statements such as “it is equally clear to the review team that some of the content delivered by both broadcasters lies further from the core of their charter obligations” (Tonagh & Bean, 2018, p. 57). The Report’s stated intention was to “protect expenditure on core

content... [and] clearly define a small set of content areas”. (Tonagh & Bean, 2018, p. 63)

Former ABC Managing Director Mark Scott (2022) expressed the view that the challenge of “wide appeal and specialist interest” was an ongoing one for public service broadcasters in addressing ABC Charter and PSM policy principles, elaborating with the perspective that:

There’s enormous discretion within that framework... across a myriad of different kinds of platforms, across numbers of different geographies, ... the policy framework was always pretty high level. And then under that [there] was significant discretion, and the discretion came to what you could afford [regarding] conflicting interests you were trying to balance, and a range of what was happening in the media market around you.

However, over time due to “the massive commercialisation of sports” and the availability of sport on “streaming services like Kayo”, Scott (2022) believes the argument diminished for sport, including women’s sport on the ABC.

Nation and national identity

While the Tonagh & Bean Report (2018) began with a statement that the “terms of reference for the review (page 16) recognise that the ABC and SBS play an important role in shaping Australia’s sense of identity” (p. 12), it does not revisit the issue of how PSM policy has articulated that role. In fact, as noted previously, most references to ‘national’ are practical, such as to the ‘national broadcasters’, ‘national ratings’ or

‘national audiences’. The terms are used to describe the activities and role of the PSMs through statements such as:

[T]he ABC and SBS are vital public news and cultural institutions that strengthen Australia’s media diversity, contribute to the cultural and social fabric of the nation [and]... [p]rotecting the role of our national broadcasters in Australian society is critical. (Tonagh & Bean, 2018, p. 11)

However, there is no articulation of the relationship between the PSM policy role encapsulated in such a statement and how core and non-core content concepts function as part of such a role. This is a significant omission because it masks the ideological framing and any linking of PSM policy to the nation-forming role. This is clearly demonstrated when the Report states that the ABC’s legislated role is “to provide innovative and comprehensive services which contribute to a sense of national identity, inform, educate, entertain and reflect Australian cultural diversity” (Tonagh & Bean, 2018, p. 11). It fails to examine or define how the ABC will provide comprehensive (popular) content **and** content that meets the needs of specific groups (complementary), including sporting programs. As noted previously, it was the complementary role that the Dix Report (1981) identified as the framework for women’s sports media.

Former ABC Managing Director Mark Scott (2022) spoke about the PSM’s role in national identity formation in terms of a:

Breakdown of the shared experiences in the digital era. If you go back in Australian television history, when there were about three, four or five

channels, and everyone was really into sitting around, there were these big shared moments [like]... *Seven Little Australians* or *Seachange* on the ABC.

For Scott, the ABC had been able to provide these shared experiences through its broadcast services. The impact of time-shifted viewing and streaming on multiple platforms reduced the sense of shared community media experience, except:

Live sports remain the galvanising mass experience in a way that nothing else does... a pseudo-event –this is a construct. And although some would construct an argument that whilst we attribute great meaning to it, it is the meaning we attribute to it rather than the event itself. (Scott, 2022)

In those ‘constructed’ moments, notions of nation and identity are formed and reformed. In reframing its media policy role to accommodate the discourse of ‘core’ and ‘efficiency’ and reduced funding, the ABC revised its view of sports media, including women’s sports, as central to its role of ‘contributing to a sense of national identity’. (ABC Act, 1983)

Efficiency, PSM and women’s sports media

Sport was only addressed in the Tonagh & Bean Report (2018) in the context of core content relevant to Charter obligations, and then only a limited discussion focused entirely on SBS with sport as “an example often cited in media commentary as being ‘off-charter’”. (p. 58)

A policy discourse of the need for outsourcing and reduced production levels accompanied the reductions in funding from 2014 ABC budget cuts that resulted in the loss of “ten per cent of the workforce – and changes to the way the ABC operates,

including content and programming” (Scott, 2014, n.p.). Reductions in internal ABC television production personnel and broadcast facilities, especially outside broadcast units (Australian Senate, 2011; 2013) prior to the Tonagh & Bean Report had greatly reduced the ABC’s ability to provide sports programs, including women’s sports. In the five years prior to the 2014 funding cuts, over 700 hours of local and national sports were broadcast on ABC television each year (ABC, 2011; 2012a; 2013a; 2014b; 2015a; 2015b). In the years following the cuts, annual television sports output has dropped to less than 100 hours annually and by 2022 to 71 hours (ABC, 2016; 2017; 2018b; 2019; 2021; 2022).⁵⁶

The ‘efficiencies’ imposed on the ABC as part of the ongoing reductions to its budget and rationalised in the 2018 Report resulted in cuts across platforms and genres but especially had an impact on women’s sports on ABC television (AAP, 2014; Parkin, 2014; Wake & Ward, 2020). Despite the cessation of local sports coverage and the cancellation of women’s football broadcasts - one of the first and significant impacts of funding cuts to the ABC (Odong, 2014; Scott, 2014)- the 2018 report was silent on women’s sports media. This is partly because Australian media policy discourse had reframed women’s sports media as a commercial, albeit subsidised, subscription service. There is perhaps no better example of the policy shift than in the previous Government’s decision to allocate \$40 million to the News Corporation-owned subscription television monopoly, Foxtel (Duke, 2021). This was part of a 2017 Broadcasting and Content Reform Package to “support television and online coverage

⁵⁶ The calculation of ABC television sports hours is based on data in ABC annual reports from 2011 to 2022, noting that in 2020 the ABC did not publish the data. Also, the calculation of the reduction is based on the year the announced funding cuts were introduced, 2015/16.

of sports that receive low or no broadcast exposure [including] women's sports" (DCA, 2019). Foxtel received this public funding while the ABC budget was cut, and sports, including women's sports production and broadcasts, were removed or reduced (Wake & Ward, 2020).

The 2018 Report and PSM policy silence

The 2018 Report was characterised by a discursive formation that (re)frames PSM policy as part of media market policy. Using key semantic terms such as core, efficiency and market, the Report articulated media policy in a limited and specific way. The removal of discussion of PSM principles and roles provided no rhetorical space for issues such as the inclusion of women's sports media as part of ABC Charter responsibilities. Certainly, no dialogue is present in the Report. The call for a 'core' content and platform focus closed off entire genres and forms of content, including women's sports media. To the extent sports media was discussed, it was an assumed male sports media.

The findings from the analysis show a continued downgrading of the media policy role of PSM in Australia, with a failure to examine, let alone endorse it as a form of governance: "to ensure... programs that are valuable to society" (Syvertsen, 2003, p. 156). The failure to examine concepts of 'identity' or policy objectives such as women's sports media is evidence of an intensification of neoliberal media policy rhetoric in documentation during the current period.

The 2018 Report positions the future of the ABC (and SBS) as market-oriented, driven by a discourse of neoliberal efficiency and competition (Tonagh & Bean, 2018). There is an erasure of the role of PSM in the evolving ideological process of nation and

identity formation, including the role of sports media/women's sports media. This discourse sits within the privileging of a deregulatory, anti-interventionist discourse of private sector activity, including commercial media operations.

Conclusion

Policy documents are sites of struggle where ideas are presented either for engagement or as assumed common sense (Freedman & Obar, 2016). In Tonagh and Bean's Report (2018), media policy is articulated in market terms of efficiency and core business, where the organisation of transactional arrangements will achieve policy goals such as nation-building and identity construction. Given that discourses of "social changes... are dialectically interconnected with other, non-semiotic elements or 'moments'" (Fairclough, 2103, p. 19), it is possible to trace the evolving discursive shift in Australian PSM policy. Evidence has been presented of an absence of a policy engagement with longstanding PSM values, ethos or principles. In their stead, concepts of efficiency, market and competition and the commodification of citizens as consumers are used to organise PSM's policy role and activity (Tonagh & Bean, 2018). The following chapter returns to an examination of women's sports media policy, beginning with 1985 *Women, sport and the media* Report (ASC & OSW, 1985).

Chapter Eight: Women's sports media policy reports 1985 to 1997

Introduction

Using the theoretical framework and analytical methods described in Chapters Five and Six and drawing on the scholarship about sport, national identity and media analysed in Chapter Three and the historical context of the role of the ABC in Chapter Four, this chapter examines the discourse of historically evolving ideologies that have framed the presentation of women's sports media policy. It examines how discourses of women's sport have developed in Australian media policy and the relevance of the discursive construction of national identity in women's sports media policy.

An examination is made of the ideology displayed in the policy discourse in the documents, the *Women, sport and the media* Report (ASC & OSW, 1985) and the *Women in sport and recreation in Australia women in sports media* Report (Australian Senate, 2006). The *Women, sport and the media* Report (ASC & OSW, 1985) is examined below, beginning with a comparative content analysis of nine policy reports about women's sports media. The 2006 and subsequent reports are examined in Chapter Nine.

Content analysis: reports of women's sports media 1985-2017

A content analysis of women's sports media reports is presented in Table 8.1, comparing data on the key terms identified in each report.

Table 8.1: Comparison of coded terms in nine reports (1985-2017)

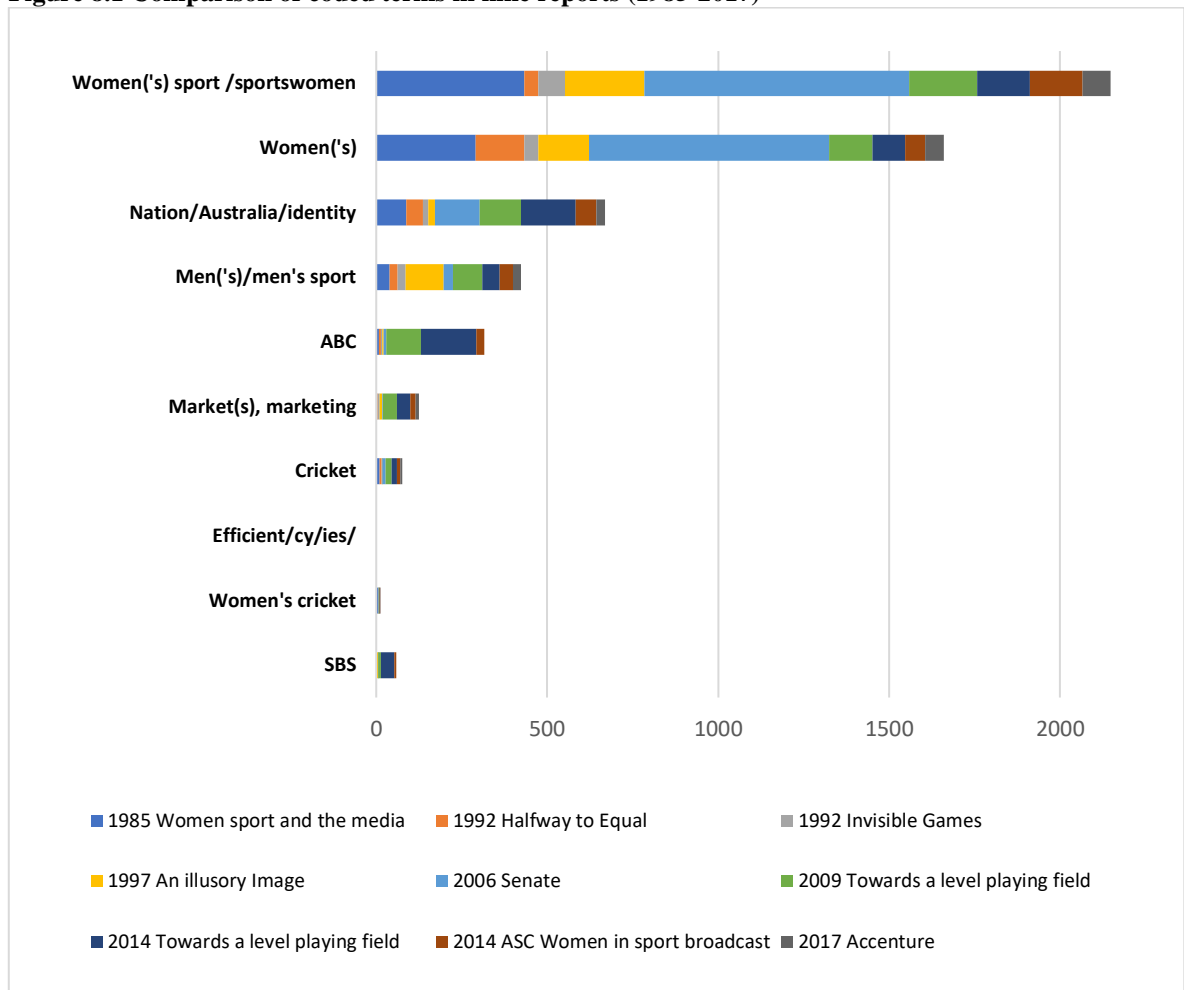
	1985 Women Sport and the Media	1992 Halfway to Equal	1992 Invisibl e Games	1997 An illusory Image	2006 Senate About time	2010 Toward s a level playing field	2014 Toward s a level playing field	2014 ASC Women in sport broadca st	2017 Accentu re
SBS	1	0	0	4	1	7	40	6	0
Women's cricket	5	0	0	1	1	2	1	2	0
Efficient/cy/ies	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
Cricket	9	6	2	1	10	16	17	9	7
Market(s), marketing	3	1	6	7	3	40	39	16	9
ABC	8	6	3	5	8	100	163	24	0
Men('s)/men's sport	40	23	23	49	26	87	50	40	22
Nation/Australia / identity	88	48	16	20	130	122	160	60	25
Women('s)	291	143	41	148	701	127	96	59	55
Women('s) sport/ sportswomen	434	40	37	80	775	198	155	154	82
Sport(s)/ing	315	157	25	232	700	648	706	528	98
Report length	65 pages	41 pages*	18 pages	35 pages	150 pages	126 pages	74 pages	153 pages	16 pages

Sources: Data from 1980 & 1985: ASC & OSW, 1985; 1992: Australian House of Representatives Standing Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs, 1992; 1994: Stoddart, 1994; 1996: Phillips, 1997; 2006: Australian Senate, 2006; 2010: Lumby et al. 2010; 2014: Australian Sports Commission, 2014; 2017: Australian Sports Commission, 2017; Dinsdale et al., 2017 (Accenture).

Note: Data for the 1992 House of Representatives, *Halfway to Equal* Report is for Chapter 6, Leisure and Sport, only.

Figure 8.1, below, also presents the data in graphic form, providing an indication of the shifts in descriptions over time, as discussed further below.

Figure 8.1 Comparison of coded terms in nine reports (1985-2017)



Sources: Data from 1980 & 1985: ASC & OSW, 1985; 1992: Australian House of Representatives Standing Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs, 1992; 1994: Stoddart, 1994; 1996: Phillips, 1997; 2006: Australian Senate, 2006; 2010: Lumby et al. 2010; 2014: Australian Sports Commission, 2014; 2017: Australian Sports Commission, 2017; Dinsdale et al., 2017 (Accenture).

The evidence from the comparative content analysis shows a significant shift in the use of terms such as ‘women’ and ‘sportswomen’ between 1985 and 2017. There is a reduced use of the term ‘women’, from 291 times in the 1985 report and 143 times in Chapter 6 of the 1992 report to 59 occurrences in the 2014 Australian Sports Commission (ASC) *Women in sport broadcasting* Report (Paterson et al., 2014) and 57 times in the 2017 *Accenture* Report (Dinsdale et al., 2017). Even allowing for the fact that the *Accenture* Report (Dinsdale et al., 2017) is much shorter at 16 pages than the

1985 Report (65 pages) and Chapter 6 of the 1992 Report (41 pages), this is a significant reduction.

Similarly, the term ‘sportswomen’ has reduced from 308 in 1985 and 206 in 1992 to 57 in 2017. The term ‘women’s sport’ declined from 126 times in the 1985 Report to 25 in 2017, although it did occur 95 times in the 2014 ASC report. There is no corresponding decrease in the use of the terms ‘sport/ing’, which have maintained a similar level of usage across the reports and over time; from 315 in 1985 and 386 in 1992 to 98 in 2017. There is an increased use of the general term ‘sports/ing’ in the 2006 (700), 2009 (648), 2010 (706), and 2014 (528) reports, compared to, for example, ‘women’s sport’.

The other significant, identifiable change in terminology is the increased use of ‘markets/ing’, from just three occasions in 1985 to nine times in the much shorter 2017 *Accenture* Report (Dinsdale et al., 2017). *The Towards a level playing field* Report (Lumby et al. & ASC, 2010) uses the terms ‘markets/ing’ 39 times in 126 pages; more than 13 times the usage in 1985.

The comparative content analysis identifies shifts in the language used over time. Clear examples of the shifting terminology were identified in the terms: ‘women’ and ‘women’s sports/sportswomen’. They were used in various contexts over 500 times in the 65-page 1985 *Women, sport and the media* Report, almost 2,500 times in the 365-page, *Halfway to equal* Report (1992), 241 times in the *An illusory image* Report (1997), and over 1,000 times in the 122 pages of the Senate’s *About Time!* Report (2006). Yet, by 2014 they occurred only 209 times in the Australian Sports Commission’s *Towards a level playing field* Report (Lumby et al. & ASC, 2014). In contrast, the term ‘sport’

experienced a significant increase in use across the reports, increasing from 386 times in 1992 to 700 instances in 2006 (Australian Senate, 2006), 706 and 528 times in the two reports released in 2014 (Lumby et al. & ASC, 2014; Paterson et al., 2014) and 98 times in a sixteen-page report in 2017 (Dinsdale et al., 2017).

Finally, there is another significant finding from the comparative content analysis of the texts. This relates to the use of the terms ‘Nation/Australia/ identity’, which showed a decline in usage after 1996, from 88 times in 1985 (65 pages) and 672 in the 1996 report (365 pages) to just 60 times in the 153 page, 2014 ASC report and 16 times in the sixteen-page, 2017 *Accenture* report (Dinsdale et al., 2017).

The content analysis data and findings provide insights into women’s sports media policy. Nonetheless, there are limitations in the things content analysis can demonstrate. For example, while it provides relevant data on the use of key terms, it is unable to provide insights into the ideological shifts that have potentially occurred over time in women’s sports media discourses. The following section focuses on the 1985 *Women, sport and the media* report examining the ideologies displayed in discourses about women’s sports media, nation and identity.

1985 *Women sport and the media* Report

The 1985 *Women, sport and the media* Report (ASC & OSW, 1985) occupies an important ideological point in media policy. Established by a recently elected centre-left Labor Government, a Working Group on Sport presented the first report on women’s sports media to an Australian Government.

The Inquiry received 118 written submissions and held public meetings in “every State and Territory” as well as “discussions with representatives of Australia’s major public and commercial media organisations, and the Australian Broadcasting Tribunal” (ASC & OSW, 1985, p. 11). The review conducted “extensive consultation within the community [drawing on] ... extensive academic analyses [and]... ensur[ed] that women in the community themselves had an opportunity to bring us their views”. (ASC & OSW, 1985, p. 9)

While research on women’s sports and sports media had been done (and was cited), this was important, because it was the first public policy report to articulate an agenda for action, stating “that the problems facing women in sport had long been known and ignored and that the process of change must be started immediately”. (ASC & OSW, 1985, pp. v-vi)⁵⁷

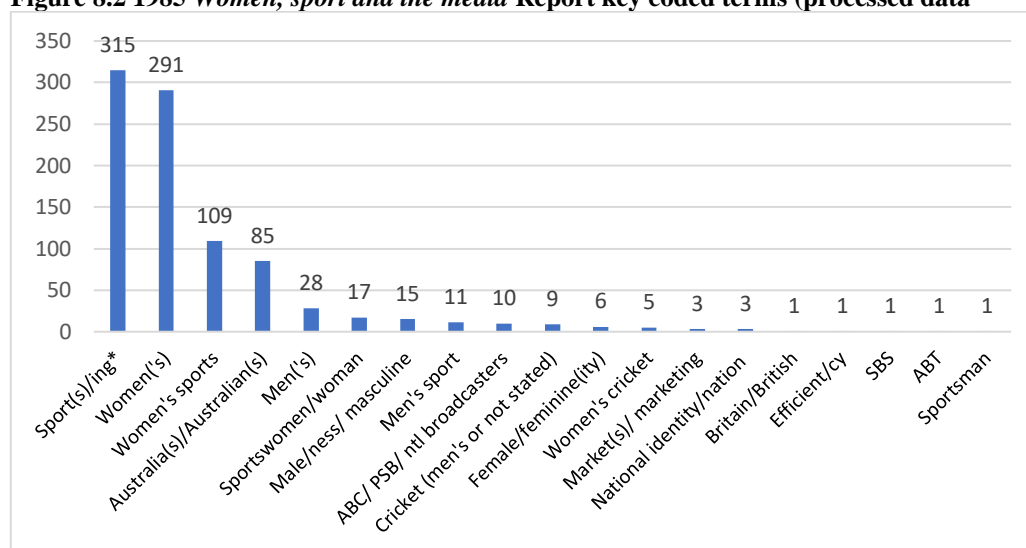
While the Report’s research significance has not been extensively noted, key scholarship on media, culture and sport has examined its contribution to documenting the media’s role as “central to the condition of women's sport (Australian Sports Commission, 1985)” (Rowe & Brown, 1994, p. 98). Further, the Report established a discursive framework for Australian women's sports media policy. Its further significance is that, after the mid-1990s, the policy discourse, as will be discussed below, changed considerably.

⁵⁷ Articulation is used here and in this chapter in the general sense of the expression of an idea and as noted in Chapter Six, where that expression is deployed for a specific purpose or discursive strategy as part of a process of fixing meaning ideologically (Hall, 1985).

A content analysis of the 1985 *Women, sport and the media* Report

Several themes are discernible from examining the text using the content and discourse analysis methods discussed in Chapter Six. The following section presents the findings of a content analysis of the 1985 *Women, sport and the media* Report (ASC & OSW, 1985). The usage is presented in Figure 8.2 below.

Figure 8.2 1985 *Women, sport and the media* Report key coded terms (processed data)



Source: ASC & OSW, 1985

The terms ‘sport(s)/ing’ appear more often than any other key term: 315 times. In addition to linking sport, women and Australia, it is used in other contexts, including highlighting the “structural barrier facing women in sport” and the need to “examine ways in which decision-making structures can be made more sensitive and responsive to the needs of women in sport” (ASC & OSW, 1985, p. 3). The final major usage of the term, invariably cross-referenced to the term ‘women’, is related to practical support, funding, or promotion for “events [and]... facilities for women’s sport” (ASC

& OSW, 1985, p. 4). A key usage is in the recommendation for “the employment of more women’s sports journalists and broadcasters... to general sports and [with more male journalists] to cover all aspects of women’s sports” (ASC & OSW, 1985, p. 6). Finally, the terms are linked to recommend “more equitable coverage of women’s sports in news and general information programs in all media outlets, especially the ABC and SBS and the provision of a comprehensive sports news and results service”. (ASC & OSW, 1985, p. 6)

The terms ‘women’s/sportswomen’ are used 308 times. With ‘women’ used 291 times and ‘women’s sports’ 126 times, these four terms are employed more regularly than any other term. The text includes the use of the terms ‘nation/Australia/identity’ eighty-eight times. Of these references, almost all are to ‘Australia(n)’, with just three references to ‘nation’ and ‘identity’.

The term ‘men’s sport’ occurs forty times in the report. When it refers to men’s sport, it is usually to seek more data or to highlight inequities in support or approaches to men's and women’s sport. For example, it recommended that the Federal Government requires any sporting organisation receiving public funding to “report annually on the distribution of [its] resources, access to facilities and provision of equipment... to women and men’s sport” (ASC & OSW, 1985, p. 7). Where the distribution was not equal, organisations should “provide an explanation” (ASC & OSW, 1985, p. 7). The Report also encouraged the promotion of women as “referees, umpires etc., in all sports, including men’s sports”. (ASC & OSW, 1985, p. 7)

While content analysis provides some assistance in examining the evolving shift in the framing of women’s sports media policy, it is necessary to extend the investigation to

the report's adoption of a discourse of emancipation and historical interrogation of the underlying ideological forces operating in Australian society (ASC & OSW, 1985).

A discourse analysis of the 1985 *Women, sport and the media* Report

The following section examines the 1985 *Women, sport and the media* Report [1985] using a discourse analysis approach as described in Chapter Six. The Report foregrounded its role as discursive, “stimulating debate and discussion about the fundamental issues and problems... [by being] widely distributed throughout the community” (ASC & OSW, 1985, p. v). It articulated its policy rationale and approach as making recommendations for government action (the committee included a backbench member of the governing political party, Senator Rosemary Crowley).

The discourse analysis begins with an examination of the text's macrostructure to consider how it has been thematically organised. Like other reports analysed in this research, the 1985 Report is organised according to the conventions of public policy reports. It begins with a covering letter, presenting the report to the Minister for Education and Minister Assisting the Prime Minister on the Status of Women, Senator Susan Ryan, and the Minister for Sport, Recreation and Tourism, John Brown. It acknowledges participants in the process before listing the membership, secretariat, terms of reference and a summary of recommendations before presenting the review's approach, recommendations and findings.

A series of discursive strategies are employed in the *Women, sport and the media* Report. The first strategy is to foreground the history of women's struggle as an overall signifier acting as “a kind of quasi-universalizing function in the construction of a logic of equivalence” (Phelan, 2007, p. 36), with other discursive strategies that are described

below. This first strategy, which links women’s sports media absence to wider struggles for women’s rights, is discernible in the Report’s organising structure. The table below provides a high-level description of the relationship between the Report's macrostructure and themes, including linking a historical background of Australian women’s sport (further analysed below) in its second chapter, ‘Women in sport: an overview’ to the following chapters, unified under a common theme: “Things must change”. (ASC & OSW, 1985)

Table 8.2: Chapter headings, *Women sport and the media Report*

<u>Ch</u>	<u>Chapter heading</u>	<u>Main Code/theme</u>	<u>page #</u>
1	Background, Introduction, Operation & methods, Major conclusions	Women/sport/Australia	9-12
2	Women in sport: an overview	Women/sport/Australia	13-22
3	Things must change: introduction, Status of women	Sport/women/ Australia	23-24
	Things must change: Government	Sport/women’s sport/women	25-31
	Things must change: The media	Women/sport/women’s sport	32-39
	Things must change: Sporting associations	Women/sport/women’s sport	40-49
	Things must change: Groups with special needs		50-57
4	A blueprint for the future		57-65
5	Appendices, Bibliography		66-126

Source: ASC & OSW 1985.

The table provides an insight into the Report’s structure, and the main themes and codes used in each chapter demonstrate the commitment to positioning its articulation of women, sport and media as an ideological site for significant policy action. This is evidenced in the Report’s chapter headings, using phrases such as “Things must change” and articulating a policy agenda with “A blueprint for the future”.

Analysis of the Report begins with a consideration of its macrostructure, in which the text is thematically organised according to "topics that compose it and the hierarchical relationship between them" (Carvalho, 2000, p. 6). The analysis draws on the organisation of high-level meanings that "link lower level propositions to high level macro-propositions" or topics (van Dijk, 1988b in Carvalho, 2000, p. 6).⁵⁸ This linkage can also be discerned in the 1985 Report and is further examined below.

The *Women, sport and the media* Report does not establish and assert its authority through the repetition of credentials or citing third-party industry or market data. The 1985 Report (ASC & OSW, 1985) begins with a statement that invokes the historical context and foregrounds the immediacy of the issues: "For those who think the problems faced by women in sport are in the past and not the present", as it quotes "an article in a Perth newspaper this year: ... women's sport is second rate. Howard Sattler, Sunday Times, 10 February 1985" (p. 9). The Report acknowledges its own policy framing process as it states, "[w]hen the members of the Working Group sat down for their first meeting... they knew there were some fundamental problems facing Australian women and sport" (ASC & OSW, 1985, p. 9). Having articulated a sense of crisis, the Report stated its authority: "appointed by the Federal Government to conduct this investigation [bears] testimony to a concern which the Government wished to address" (ASC & OSW, 1985, p. 9). There is also a need for change so that "artificial barriers of prejudice and discrimination... exist in governments, the media and some sports associations" could be confronted and overcome (ASC & OSW, 1985, p. v).

⁵⁸ See also the discussion in Chapter Six.

The second discursive strategy deployed in the 1985 Report is the articulation of an ideological stance underpinned by a historical analysis of the conditions of women's sports media. This historical account placed issues of structural discrimination on the policy record. The Report (ASC & OSW, 1985) gave voice to numerous accounts of discrimination and gendered mistreatment of sportswomen and female athletes, including anecdotes such as the female triathlete who received a bicycle for winning a major event. In contrast, the five male competitors won trips to Hawaii (p. 14). It included a story that a woman who had qualified as a "track and field coach in the ACT was told by the administrators... that it would be 'unnatural' for her to coach male athletes over 16" (ASC & OSW, 1985, p. 14). As it summarised, "the problems facing women in sport have been well known and well documented for a long time, [however] almost without exception, they have been ignored". (ASC & OSW, 1985, p. v)

The Report's discursive framework emphasised the historical conditions that shaped women's sports and their significance for the political and economic circumstances of women's sports media, with several pages devoted to the history of women's sport in Australia (ASC & OSW, 1985). The Report cites eighteen academic texts in its bibliography, including King's *The sexual politics of sport: An Australian perspective* (1979), Bryson's *Sport and the oppression of women* (1983), and Mitchell and Dyer's *Winning women* (1985) in articulating a history "which has seen women achieve so much and yet receive so little public recognition over such a long period of time" (ASC & OSW, 1985, p. 16). In providing such data, it asserts that "[t]he history of women's involvement in sport is long, illustrious and almost completely ignored [with]... an inverse ratio

between the achievements of women in sport and their recognition” (ASC & OSW, 1985, p. 15). This sporting history does not just record women’s sports milestones; it narrates a series of achievements from the late nineteenth century to the 1940s as it critiques an ongoing erasure of women’s sport in the media (ASC & OSW, 1985) as the discursive strategic base for its policy arguments.

The Report (1985) firmly articulates the “paradox” of ongoing, significant activity and achievement at national and international competitions as a conflicting situation where women’s sport experiences “moments of brilliant achievement and persistent neglect and discrimination (ASC & OSW, 1985, p. 20). The media industry rationalisation presented for why women’s sport was not in the media, including on television, was because “they are not usually considered newsworthy” (Mitchell & Dyer, 1985, p. 4 in ASC & OSW, 1985, p. 15). The reason for the ‘paradox’ was that women and girls had “violated codes of acceptability that patrol the borders between masculinity and femininity [sic]”. (ASC & OSW, 1985, p. 16)

Australian women’s cricket is highlighted in the Report for its “particularly important place in the wider story” of Australian women’s sport (ASC & OSW, 1985, p. 15), noting the history of women’s cricket in England from the 18th century and in Australia from 1887, with sixteen clubs in competition by 1905 (ASC & OSW, 1985).⁵⁹ As examined more closely in chapters Four and Five, the Report observed that the 1984–85 cricket season, the year in which it was published, was the fiftieth anniversary of the first international women’s cricket match. Nonetheless, “the [ABC] coverage... of the

⁵⁹ A more detailed description of the development of Australian women’s cricket is in Chapters Three and Four.

tests between the English and Australian women's cricket teams would have been the first [most Australians] knew that Australia even had an international women's team" or that it was the world champions (ASC & OSW, 1985, p. 13).

References were made to other women's sports (for example, hockey, water polo, water skiing, surf lifesaving and lawn bowls) in which Australian women individuals or teams were world champions (ASC & OSW, 1985). The Report framed the contemporary (1985) and historical conditions of Australian sportswomen whose achievements occurred "despite the pressures and prejudice which denied women equal access to the joys and benefits of the sporting experience" (ASC & OSW, 1985, p. 13).

The discursive strategy charts the history of an ideological framing in which, for much of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, certain women's sport was "acceptable" if they demonstrated Victorian values of improving or maintaining good health. It was also, to a large extent, limited to upper and middle-class women and sporting pursuits in sports such as tennis, golf and cricket and only when "serious competition was... avoided" (King, 1979 in ASC & OSW, 1985, p. 18). The framing in the Report is consistent with the issues analysed in chapter Four, where "competitive sport 'reinforce[d] what is stereotypically masculine and has been the antithesis of what is stereotypically feminine" (Marsh & Jackson, unpublished, in ASC & OSW, 1985, p. 17).⁶⁰ The Report recognised the historical positioning of the components of sporting

⁶⁰ Marsh, H & Jackson, S (1984). *Multidimensional self-concepts, Masculinity and Femininity [sic] as a function of women's involvement in Athletics*. Department of Education, University of Sydney (unpublished).

success as “competitiveness, drive, determination, aggressiveness and tough-mindedness- [which] are typically labelled as masculine”. (ASC & OSW, 1985, p. 17)

This positioning, including media decisions about what is acceptable and newsworthy, is framed by an ideology of male “preoccupations of the role and function of women” (ASC & OSW, 1985, p. 17). Women who move beyond the ideologically established boundaries “are punished by considered oddities, usually seen as male rather than as women” (ASC & OSW, 1985, p. 17). The sanctions are underpinned and maintained by “assertions of authority [that] have created a series of apparently unassailable myths which rapidly became major obstacles in the pursuit of equality and opportunity which still exist today” (ASC & OSW, 1985, p. 19). While the report lists and rejects a selection of ‘biological myths’ used to discriminate against women and women’s sport, it does not directly articulate the ideological formation of such myths. Thus, by not addressing the underlying ideological issues, the report does not confront the framework that privileges male sport, leaving the ideological space open for future reports to follow suit.

The third discursive strategy extends the analysis, arguing that women’s sport is “sanctioned” by allowing it a limited space that enables further discriminatory treatment, such as poor or no media coverage (ASC & OSW, 1985). The articulation of the history of women as constructed as “outsiders” invokes a cycle where a lack of media attention is part of an ideological “process of institutionalised discrimination [that] is sanctioned and reinforced” and repeated (ASC & OSW, 1985, p. 17). The process further reinforces gendered identities and ensures few positive media role models for girls and women. The Report articulates and draws on research to place the

history of Australian women's sport and sports media within an ideology that included “customs which decreed that women’s role in society was first and foremost as wives and mothers; anything else was of secondary importance”. (King, 1979 in ASC & OSW, 1985, p. 18)

The Report frames an understanding of sport as “ritual support for male dominance” (Bryson, 1983, in ASC & OSW, 1985, p. 17). Masculinity is defined by the “highly valued and visible skills” portrayed in male sports/media, and male aggression is framed as “positively sanctioned use of aggression/force/violence” (Bryson, 1983, in ASC & OSW, 1985, p. 17). Women’s sport is permitted to exist in this ideological realm so long as it “doesn’t attempt to claim... those characteristics traditionally seen as the officially sanctioned preserve of men” (ASC & OSW, 1985, p. 17). This discursive strategy links the representation of women’s sport to comprehensive social and political change about “the role, functions and rights of women in our society” (ASC & OSW, 1985, p. 17), identifying women’s sports/media as a microcosm of wider issues confronting women in Australian society (ASC & OSW, 1985).

The Report’s fourth discursive strategy is to regularly use language that frames ‘women in sport’ and ‘sportswomen’ in contrast to ‘men’s sport’ to articulate how discrimination was enacted. This strategy denies men’s sport the power to exclude women’s sport through the practice in media and policy texts of using the term ‘sport’ when writing or speaking about male sport. The Report drew attention to the process of exclusion of women’s sport when it examined structural discrimination, with the amalgamation of male and female sporting and athletic organisations identified as a major contributor (ASC & OSW, 1985). For example, it noted that when the male

Athletics Union amalgamated with the women's athletics association, each male organisation received two votes and each women's organisation a single vote (ASC & OSW, 1985). Thus, the men's organisations had a structural advantage of a two-thirds majority built into the new association. Subsequent research has confirmed the 1985 Report's statements about the impact of the amalgamation of women's and men's sporting organisations on women's sports (see, for example, Stronach & Adair, 2009; Velija et al., 2014). Their scholarship and other research have focussed on various forms of ongoing discrimination subsequent to such restructuring and amalgamations. The lack of women's representation in governance structures has been examined, with research showing that, even where "resistance to male-dominated leadership and governance was evident, transformational organizational change was lacking". (Piggott & Matthews, 2020, p. 1)

The Report's fifth discursive strategy links the representation and presence of women's sport in the media to public funding, arguing for a range of transparency measures to identify and publish "the break-up of [public] funds allocated between women and men... the division of government and private funding for sport in schools between girl's and boy's sport" (ASC & OSW, 1985, p. 5). It also recommended that public funding applications from sporting associations be required to detail "the division of resources between women and men and action undertaken to provide equality of opportunity for women and girls in their sport". (ASC & OSW, 1985, p. 5)

Nonetheless, while recommending a wide-ranging survey of Australian sport to "define the scope and nature of women's sport in Australia" (ASC & OSW, 1985, p. 4), the policy discourse did not encompass analysing the political economy of the

[male] sports media industry, despite the economics of sports media being substantially transformed for Australian men's sport in the decade preceding the Report.

A closely aligned sixth discursive strategy was to argue for an assumed public policy intervention through articulating approaches using television content regulatory powers. The Report used language that was conciliatory in recommending that the Australian Broadcasting Tribunal (ABT) monitor and evaluate "the performance of individual commercial and public broadcasting and television stations, concentrat[ing] on the coverage of women's sports under both the Australian content and 'adequate and comprehensive provisions'" (ASC & OSW, 1985, p. 6). However, the Report also employed more directive language if progress was not achieved within two years, proposing "Federal Government amendments to licence condition to require more equal coverage of women's sports" be introduced (ASC & OSW, 1985, pp. 6-7). The recommendation may not have been possible to implement, given that it was arguable that the ABT (despite its broad powers compared to Australia's current media regulator, the ACMA) could evaluate commercial broadcasters' women's sports coverage under the existing legislation or regulations. Nonetheless, the language demonstrated the Report's willingness to engage in a policy discourse that asserted a regulatory policy role as one of the "elements of the long-term strategy which... will result in a fairer deal for women in sport in Australia" (ASC & OSW, 1985, p. 3).

ABC and women's sport

Before examining the 1985 Report's analysis of the role of the ABC in women's sports media it is important to provide a context. From the 1970s and especially in the 1980s, the ABC dramatically increased women's sports coverage (Goldsmith, 2016, p. 74;

Inglis, 1983, 2006; Ward, 2017). In 1983 the newly constituted Australian Broadcasting Corporation asserted that “programs must address fluid and changing minorities and majorities within the community” (ABC, 1984, p. 6 cited in Ward 2017). As identified in my previous research (Ward 2017), in reworking its sports strategy, the ABC increased coverage of a “more diverse range of sports” (ABC, 1994, p. 40); so that by the mid-1990s, it was the “leading Australian broadcaster of women’s sport”, broadcasting 17 national and international women’s competitions (ABC, 1994, p. 40; ABC, 1995, p. 25 in Ward, 2017).

In the decades following the loss of international men’s cricket rights, the ABC also lost rights to other sports, such as the Commonwealth Games, tennis and international men’s football competitions. However, it maintained sports broadcasts through greater coverage of women’s sport, such as netball and women’s cricket, as well as women’s and men’s hockey and basketball, men’s football regional competitions, and parasports such as the Paralympics (see Table 8.3 below and Ward, 2017 pp. 70-71, p. 95).

While the ABC increased the range and hours of women’s sports broadcasts, initially commercial television markets failed to develop for women’s sports. The ABC argued in public policy submissions and annual reports (ABC, various years; Dix,⁶¹ 1981; Department of Transport and Communications, 1988; Mansfield, 1997; Ward, 2017, p. 69) that sport was a cultural activity central to national identity and social cohesion and therefore critical to its public service media (PSM) remit (ABC, 1984, p. 6; ABC, 2009, p. 1; Ward, 2017, p. 69).

⁶¹ The 1981 Committee of Review of the Australian Broadcasting Commission was regularly referred to as the ‘Dix Report’.

Table 8.3: Australian women’s sport first broadcast on ABC television

Event	Year
International cricket match (England women’s tour)	1958
Australian national netball competition	1975
Australian hockey championships	1982
One-day international cricket match (Australia / England)	1985
Cricket World Cup final	1988
National basketball competition final series	1989
Hockey World Cup (host broadcaster)	1990
World Netball Championships	1991
World Gymnastics	1993
Bowls World Cup	2000
Hockey World Cup	2002
Hockey Champion’s Trophy	2003
Football Asian Cup	2006

Sources: Author’s analysis based on Australian Broadcasting Commission and Australian Broadcasting Corporation Annual Reports (1960-2017), ABC submission Senate Inquiry into Women’s Sport and Recreation in Australia, 2006. Note: Indicative list.

The ABC’s commitment to televising women’s sport occurred in a media environment where a continuing absence principally characterised women’s sport. The ABC’s role can be analysed in the context of the failure of private sector broadcasters to generally see the value in such broadcasting, and the often hostile views regarding women’s sport in the media. For example, in the 1980s, in response to a proposal that, in addition to 20 male scholarships to the Australian Cricket Academy, one should go to women, a local newspaper, the News Corporation-owned *The Sunday Mail*, opposed the concept, stating that women “should be back in the pavilion buttering scones and making tea”. (Cashman & Weaver, 1991, p. 180)

The Women sport and the media Report and the ABC

The 1985 Report had an ambivalent textual relationship with the Australian Broadcasting Corporation. It referred to the ABC only eight times in the text. Yet, two of its most important statements were related to and implicitly critical of the policy and operation of the ABC. The context for this criticism, the ABC’s role in women’s sports media, is discussed in detail below. The first major statement, as noted above,

included the ABC and SBS in recommendations for ABT monitoring of women's sports media content.

In stating that media organisations' coverage of women's sports should be formally monitored and measured, the Report voiced the coda, "especially the ABC and SBS" (ASC & OSW, 1985, p. 6). On several occasions, the Report articulated the view that public service broadcasters have a greater responsibility concerning women's sports media. However, the ABT did not have the power to assess the programming or content of the Australian public service broadcasters ABC and SBS (Davis, 1988). The most significant statement of the PSB responsibility that links an ideological relationship between concepts of nation, sport and media was the recommendation "[t]hat the charter of the ABC be amended to include 'sport' so that it will be required to 'encourage and promote all sports in Australia, including women's sports'". (ASC & OSW, 1985, p. 6)

The Report's rationale for a particular focus on the ABC (and, to a lesser extent, SBS) was its stated recognition that "key distinctions must be drawn between the commercial media and the ABC" (ASC & OSW, 1985, p. 36). The stated reasons were that "[c]ommercial media outlets are independent, private organisations responsible to their shareholders for making a profit" (ASC & OSW, 1985, p. 36). While not denying commercial media had "obligations", the report nonetheless articulated a market-oriented rhetoric marked by "commercial imperatives" (ASC & OSW, 1985, p. 36). This was no more clearly stated than in the following paragraph: "The ABC is in a different situation". (ASC & OSW, 1985, p. 36)

The responsibilities of the ABC are summarised as its position as a “statutory corporation with a... considerable degree of independence... publicly funded and... an important position as the national broadcaster” (ASC & OSW, 1985, p. 36). To further sustain its position, the report cited the ABC legislative Charter, explicitly noting the requirement to broadcast programs that “contribute to a sense of national identity... and reflect the cultural diversity of the Australian community”. Further emphasis is placed on the ABC's obligations by stating that it is legally required to promote “the performing arts” (ASC & OSW, 1985, p. 38). The Report frames these legislative responsibilities as providing a rationale for “to improve its record not only in the coverage of women’s sport but also in the employment and training of more women as sports journalists and sportscasters”. (ASC & OSW, 1985, p. 38)

Arguing for the ABC to “improve its record” (ASC & OSW, 1985, p. 38) for broadcasting women’s sports, the Report did not provide any data on the ABC or other broadcasters’ performances. While, as noted at the beginning of this chapter, the 1985 Report does not adopt a robust rhetoric of neoliberalism, there is a firm articulation of the market’s pre-eminence and obligations resting primarily with public service broadcasters. It is worthwhile, then, examining in more detail women’s sports media in Australia and the ABC’s role in the context of the Report’s stated views and recommended actions.

Women’s sport and Australian television

The 1985 *Women, sport and the media* Report and subsequent reports provided empirical evidence of the lack of women’s sports coverage in the Australian media. The data from 1985 to 2017 in Table 8.4 compare women’s sports broadcast on Australian

television as a percentage of total hours of sports broadcasts.⁶² The listed inquiries either received submissions, undertook specific research, or drew on other research that identified the very low percentage of women’s sports broadcast on Australian television.

While the 1985 Report was only able to cite newspaper data, later reports identified the percentage of women’s sport on Australian free-to-air television at between 1.3 and 7 per cent of total sports broadcasts (see Table 8.4). The analysis noted only a slight increase in the amount of women’s sport on Australian television over more than thirty years, and women’s sports never achieved one-tenth of the total hours broadcast, according to data for the period to 2017. The data presented in the reports demonstrated that women’s sport constituted a small proportion of total sports media in Australia, continuing the historical situation for media coverage of women’s sports examined in Chapters Three and Four of the thesis.

Table 8.4: Women's Sport in Australian Media (% of total hours broadcast*)

Year	Report	Women's sport in the media: TV (%) *
1980	Women, Sport and the Media (newspapers)	2*
1985	Women, Sport and the Media (newspapers)	1.3*
1992	Half way to equal: Report into equal opportunity and equal status for women in Australia	1.3
1992	Invisible Games: Media Coverage of Women’s Sport	1.2
1996	An Illusory Image: media coverage and portrayal of women’s sport in Australia	2
2006	About time! Women in sport and recreation in Australia	10 **
2010	Towards a Level Playing Field: sport and gender in Australian media	7
2014	Women In Sport Broadcasting Analysis	7
2017	Intergenerational Review of Australian Sport	7

Sources: Author’s analysis based on 1980 & 1985: ASC & OSW, 1985; 1992: Australian House of Representatives Standing Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs, 1992; 1994: Stoddart, 1994; 1996: Phillips, 1997; 2006: Australian Senate, 2006; 2010: Lumby et al. 2010; 2014: Australian Sports Commission, 2014; 2017: Australian Sports Commission and The Boston Consulting Group, 2017.

*1980 & 1985 Newspapers.

**Only ABC and Pay television supplied data to the Inquiry.

⁶² Sports were analysed in terms of total sports hours, consisting of ‘mens’, ‘womens’, and ‘combined’ or ‘mixed’, e.g., Olympics or tennis competitions featuring mixed and both gender competitions, as well as ‘other’ sports broadcasts, such as horse racing.

In the United States, for example, a 25-year longitudinal study of gender in televised sports news from 1989 to 2014 provided evidence that women's sport achieved less than 10 per cent of total broadcast output (Cooky et al., 2015). New Zealand research over almost 30 years from the 1980s "show[ed] that males average more than 80% of coverage and females less than 10%" (Bruce, 2008, p. 58), and a 2014 report indicated that women's sport constituted just 10 per cent of the total sports content broadcast on UK television (*Women In Sport*, 2014). The data demonstrates that the only exceptions to the low levels of women's sports media have been in years of Olympics and Commonwealth Games coverage (Xu et al., 2019).

Discussion

The 1985 Report links a discursive framework of women's place and condition within an articulation of Australian identity. As noted above, the Report uses the term 'Australian' eighty-five times, although never in the context of Australian or national identity (ASC & OSW, 1985). Nonetheless, it invokes ideas of the nation and identity regularly and critically. For example, it quotes research that argues that "[i]t is only on intermittent occasions that sportswomen in Australia attract great attention", and it is on these occasions when women's "efforts are associated with the image of Australia" (King, 1979 in ASC & OSW, 1985, p. 19). Further, as it uses the research to state that "we must stop equating Australians and sport with Australian men" (King, 1979 in ASC & OSW, 1985, p. 19), it also questions "how far we have come in Australia in realising these simple, yet apparently ambitious goals [to ensure that "the sexual politics of sport cease[s] to exist]" (ASC & OSW, 1985, p. 19). Thus, the report directly linked the social relations of Australian sport with a wider set of social relations.

The strategies of the 1985 *Women, sport and the media* report (ASC & OSW, 1985) invoked a historical and emancipatory discourse of women's sports media. The discursive strategies include an advocacy role for policy stating "[m]edia coverage of our own activities provided a small, but significant, example of what might be achieved for women's sport in the future". (ASC & OSW, 1985, p. 11).

Women's sports media policy: 1985 to 1997

The following section briefly examines the policy discourse of three reports on women's sports media that followed the 1985 *Women, sport and the media* Report to provide evidence of the policy environment for women's sports media before the 2006 Senate *About time* Report.

In a little over a decade, the 1985 *Women, sport and the media* Report was followed by three other reports addressing women's sports coverage in Australian media. In 1992, the Australian House of Representatives Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee delivered a report, *Half way to equal*, that included a section on 'Portrayal of Sportswomen in the Media' (Australian House of Representatives, 1992). Two years later, a council of Australian federal and state ministers for sport commissioned a report on the media coverage of women's sport by the Australian Sports Commission's (ASC) Women and Sports Unit and Australian academic Brian Stoddart (Stoddart, 1992). Five years later, the ASC's Women and Sports Unit commissioned a report by the University of Canberra to evaluate media coverage of women's sport (Phillips, 1997).

Each of these reports echoed the discursive strategies of the 1985 report, articulating not just the data about the continued absence of women's sports coverage in the media

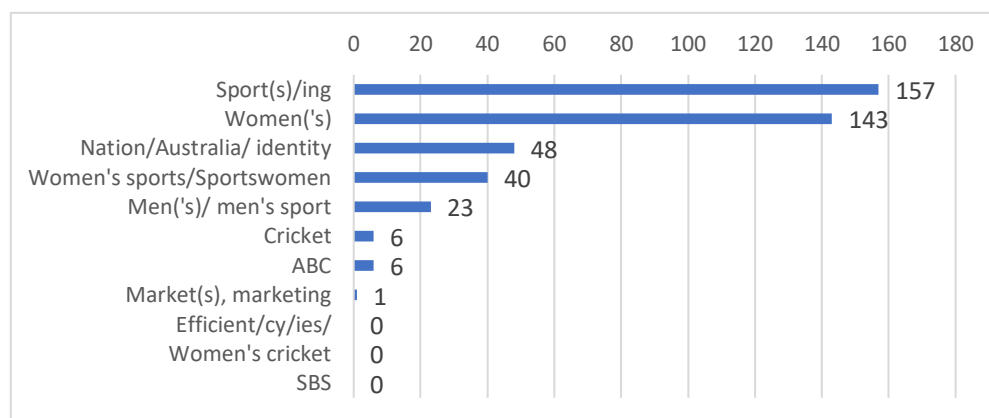
but giving a voice to the underlying structural and ideological frames for such absence (Phillips, 1997; Australian House of Representatives, 1992; Stoddart, 1992).

1992 *Half way to equal* Report

The 365 page House of Representatives Committee *Half way to Equal* Report was released in April 1992. It gave voice to expert evidence that attributed the cause of the problem as “the dominant ideology in sport is one of patriarchy, and that sports reporting both reflects this ideology and reinforces sport as a masculine activity” (Ho, Equity for Women in Sport Seminar, p. 187, cited in Australian House of Representatives, 1992, p. 121). A section of the Report on the ‘Portrayal of Sportswomen in the Media’ (Australian House of Representatives, 1992, pp. 117-125) was part of a chapter on ‘Leisure and Sport’ (Australian House of Representatives, 1992, pp. 107-145).

The graph below provides evidence from a content analysis of the 1992 Report. The data are from an analysis of the forty-one pages in Chapter Six of the report, which focused on women’s sports media

Figure 8.3: 1992 *Halfway to Equal* Report: Number of times selected key terms used



New data were published on the absence of women's sports media that showed that "only 1.3 per cent of television sports coverage was devoted to women's sport - 56.8 per cent of television sports coverage focussed on men's sport, 39.8 per cent on mixed sport and 2.1 per cent on horse and dog racing" (Australian House of Representatives, 1992, p. 118). The Report found that often women's sports "coverage diminishes the sporting achievements of Australia's sportswomen by highlighting non-sporting attributes or accomplishments" (Australian House of Representatives, 1992, p. 121). The case of Australian women's cricket was highlighted, noting the "difficulties that they have experienced in obtaining media coverage... even though the team is ranked first in the world in both Test and one-day competitions" (Australian House of Representatives, 1992, p. 118). As described in Chapter Four, three series of women's cricket were broadcast on ABC Television (1984/85, 1988 and 1991/92) in the years immediately before the 1992 Report. In that context, the Report notes that "ABC Radio and ABC Television provide a far wider range of coverage of women's sport than any other Australian electronic media outlets". (Australian House of Representatives, 1992, p. 121)

Evidence cited by the Inquiry noted several reasons for the general lack of coverage of women's sports or inappropriate representation. These included "the dominance of men as sports journalists and concurrently the lack of women as sports journalists... male commentators [ignorance] regarding women in sport and their achievements... reliance on traditional areas of sports coverage and the belief that women's performances are second rate" (Ho, Equity for Women in Sport Seminar, p. 187, cited in Australian House of Representatives, 1992, p. 119). The Report noted that media

organisations' reasons for not broadcasting women's sport included that "public are being given what they want [and]... women's sport is less exciting and intrinsically less interesting" (Australian House of Representatives, 1992, p. 120). In summarising, the Report cited evidence arguing:

that the dominant ideology in sport is one of patriarchy... sports reporting both reflects this ideology and reinforces sport as a masculine activity... only those women's sports which are considered to be traditionally feminine are seen as being appropriate and acceptable. (Ho, Equity for Women in Sport Seminar, p. 188, cited in Australian House of Representatives, 1992, p. 121)

The discursive strategic approach echoed the 1985 report in calling for regulatory action by the Australian Broadcasting Tribunal (ABT)⁶³ to assess whether women's sports media coverage was "adequate and comprehensive" and whether there was a need for the introduction of a "new program standard for the coverage of women in sport" (Australian House of Representatives, 1992, p. xxx). Neither the ABT nor its successor ever conducted such an inquiry.

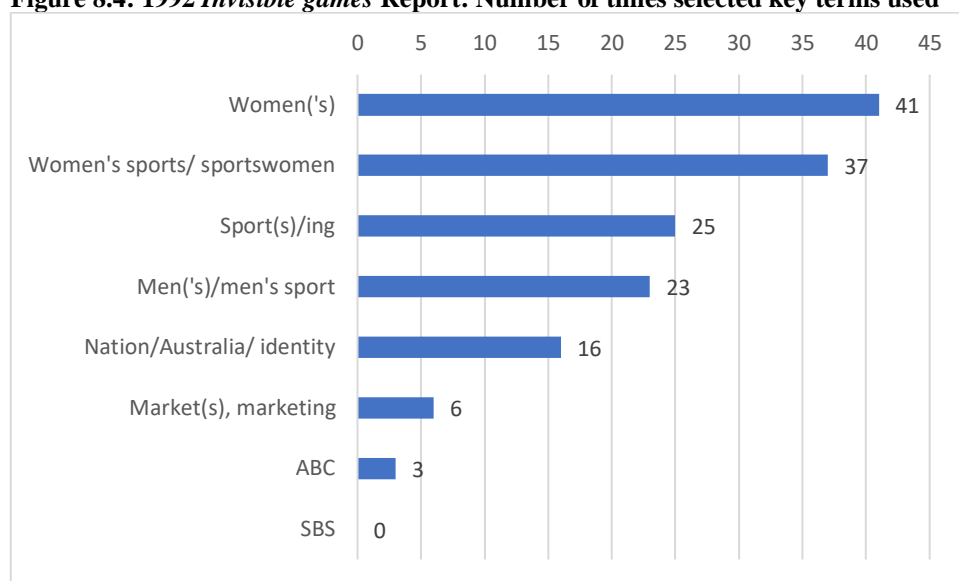
1992 *Invisible games* Report

In the same year that the House of Representatives report was published, federal and state sports ministers commissioned the Australian Sports Commission to provide a brief update on women's sports media coverage. Table 8.4 shows that the situation

⁶³ The Australian Broadcasting Tribunal took over the regulatory responsibilities of the Australian Broadcasting Control Board on 1 January 1976 (ABT, 1976), and was the broadcasting regulator until the establishment of the Australian Broadcasting Authority in 1992 (BSA, 1992).

remained unchanged, with television coverage remaining at 1.2 per cent of total sports broadcasts. The *Invisible games* Report (Stoddart, 1992) linked the meagre media coverage to ongoing funding issues due to a lack of media rights income and sponsorship.

Figure 8.4: 1992 *Invisible games* Report: Number of times selected key terms used



Noting that the Report is just sixteen pages, the data in Figure 8.4 shows that terms such as ‘women(s)’ and ‘women’s sport’ are the most used of the selected terms for analysis. The usage was also consistent with the articulation of historical and contemporaneous discrimination noted in the two prior reports, including comments such as “Australian women are considerably under-represented in televised sport [with]... improvement in the coverage of and portrayal of women in sport being made more slowly in television” than in print media (Stoddart, 1992, pp. 9-10). Terms such as ‘market’ were used to highlight the difficulties noted in Chapter Three. That is, achieving increased media coverage depends on an ability to promote or market

women's sport, which in turn leads to increased sponsorship income to develop it. This promotion is difficult to achieve with little media coverage (Stoddart, 1992). The identified solutions included a recommendation for regulatory action for "legislative action to improve the situation". (Stoddart, 1992, p. 15)

1997 *An illusory image* Report

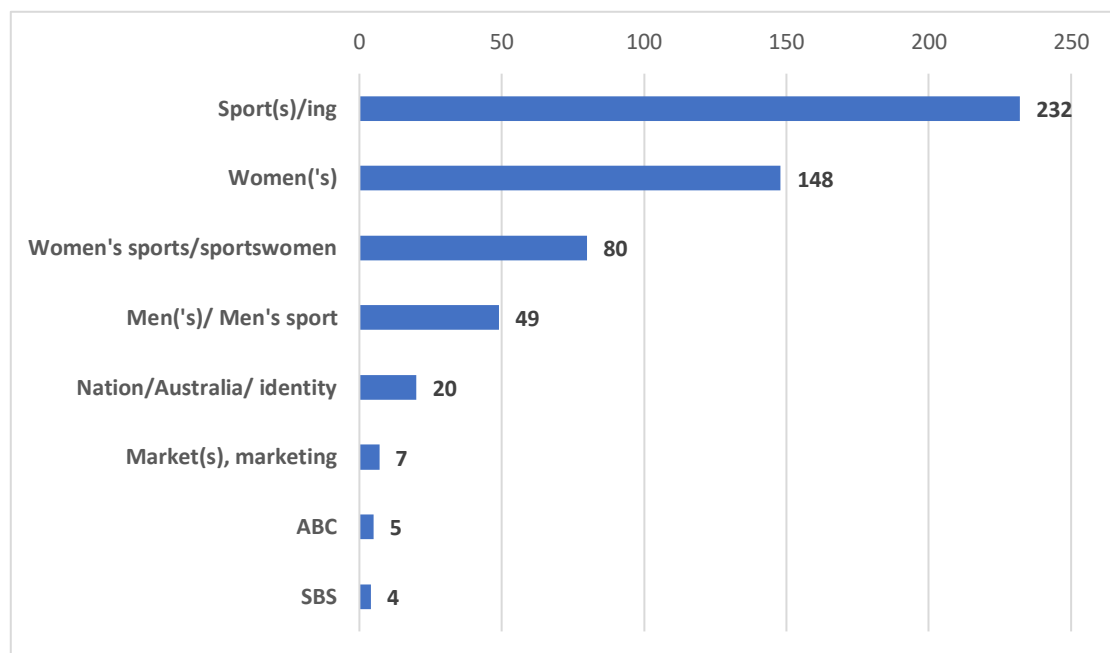
In 1996 the ASC commissioned a further report, *An illusory image: a report on the media coverage and Portrayal of Women's Sport in Australia* (Phillips, 1997), that again articulated the ongoing lack of women's sports coverage as it gathered and presented data about "whether newspapers, magazines and television devoted more or less space and time to women's sport... [and]... how... the mass media depicted women in sport" (p. 1).

The Report found that "women have struggled to get consistent, long-term and supportive media attention in Australia" (Phillips, 1997, p. 19). The data showed that "women's sports represented 2 % of the total television sports in 1996" (Phillips, 1997, p. 12). It also analysed whether there was a difference "between commercial and non-commercial (government funded) television networks and radio stations in their representations of sporting women" (Phillips, 1997, p. 1). It found that the situation on commercial television was particularly dire, with women's sport barely visible, accounting for 0.2 per cent of sports broadcasts (Phillips, 1997, p. 12).

However, there was a more significant presence on public service broadcasters, with women's sports making up 20 per cent of all ABC television sports broadcasts as it "regularly showed netball games and women's basketball" (Phillips, 1997, p. 12).

Figure 8.5 (below) shows that the most significant number of references was to the term ‘sport(s)/ing’ with 232 instances. The terms ‘women(s)’ and ‘women’s sport’ were employed on 148 and 76 occasions respectively. This level of use contrasts with just 36 and thirteen instances of ‘men(s)’ and ‘men’s sport’. None of these findings is surprising in a report on women’s sport media, especially given that most instances of references to ‘men’ show the stark difference in the coverage and treatment of women’s and men’s sports in the media. For example, “[w]omen’s sport was covered very differently to men’s sport and, in most cases, the method of reporting devalued women’s achievements” (Phillips, 1997, p. 8), and representational “stereotypes that have historically prevented women’ sport from being accepted on par with men’s sport”. (Phillips, 1997, p. 19)

Figure 8.5: 1997 *An illusory image* Report: Number of times selected key terms used



Source: Phillips, 1997

There were no instances of the use of ‘nation/al’ in the Report and only twenty substantive references to ‘Australian’. Most references were to Australian “sport” or

“athletes”, particularly in the context of comparing data on media representation of Australian women athletes and/or sports with men’s sports and/or athletes. For example, “[b]etween 1911 and 1990 Australian women at the Commonwealth Games constituted only 27% of all Australian athletes and had only 11% of sports available, yet they won 35% of all Australian gold medals” (Phillips, 1997, p. 1). The report also used the term ‘Australian’ as a reference to a general social or political perspective – for example, that the lack of women’s sports coverage in the media appears to reflect a view “that women’s sport is not valued in Australian society” (Phillips, 1997, p. 7). The Report did not investigate this view but pointed to a range of structural and ideological issues that confront the data it presents regarding limited increases in media coverage of women’s sports in the period 1980 to 1996 (Phillips, 1997).

As for other reports during the period of the 1980s and 1990s, most references to ‘markets’ were as promotions, for example, to “identify and market key personalities” and “ideas for marketing your sport” (Phillips, 1997, p. 27). A problematic aspect of media promotion was noted as “women are being asked to market their sports according to voyeuristic potential” (McKay 1994, p. 78, in Phillips, 1997, p. 19). However, there was no indication of the usage that became prevalent in women’s sports media reports from 2006, when it became an invocation of markets in the context of neoliberal discourses.

Conclusion

The 1985 *Women, sport and the media* Report (ASC & OSW, 1985) articulated a historical struggle for the recognition and representation of women in sport, and critiqued the erasure of women’s sport in the media. Its ideological positioning of women’s struggle

was addressed through recommendations that assume a robust public policy intervention, including by media regulators. In contrast, the other reports analysed in this research do not invoke a historical struggle or a gendered national identity presented through the ideological framing of sport and sports media. The reports focussed on data presentation to represent sports media markets as opportunities for women's sports, invoking an individualist discourse. The discursive strategies in these reports are discussed in Chapter Nine, focusing on the findings of an examination of the 2006 *About time! Women in sport and recreation in Australia* Report (Australian Senate, 2006) and subsequent women's sports media reports.

Chapter Nine: Women's sports media reports 2006 to 2017

Introduction

Chapter Nine examines the 2006 *About time! Women in sport and recreation in Australia* Report (Australian Senate, 2006). The chapter begins with a content analysis of the Report before presenting a discourse analysis of it, with a further exploration of the development of discourses of women's sports in Australian media policy. Following a detailed examination of the 2006 Report, more recent reports on women's sports media are considered, extending the analysis of major ideological shifts that have transformed discourses of women's sports in media policy.

2006 *About time!* Senate Report

The Australian Senate's *About time! Women in sport and recreation in Australia* Report is a second major discursive moment in women's sports media policy. The 2006 Report has received limited but significant scholarly attention, including for its articulation of the "dismal amount of news and television coverage that women's sport has received" (Hutchins and Rowe 2012, p. 61), and more recently regarding its findings of "entrenched sexism and lack of balance in media coverage of sport" as evidence of the disparaging media treatment of women's sport (English et al., 2019, p. 113). In terms of policy discourse, the 2006 Report is the last occasion on which the Australian Parliament or an Australian public agency engaged in a detailed policy argument about the role and situation of women's sports media in Australia. This is significant, contrasting, for example, with the discourses examined in Chapter Eight of the four parliamentary and public agency reports on women's sports media policy in a little over

a decade between 1985 and 1997. Following a content analysis, this chapter presents a discourse analysis of the 2006 Report, including an examination of emerging neoliberal discourses that frame the 2006 Report and subsequent reporting.

Context

In March 2006, an Australian Senate Committee⁶⁴ began an inquiry “into women in sport and recreation in Australia” with wide-ranging terms of reference that included “the portrayal of women’s sport in the media” (Australian Senate, 2006, p. 1). The Inquiry received eighty-eight written submissions and held “[p]ublic hearings ... in Sydney, Melbourne and Canberra [including]... teleconferences with witnesses from South Australia and the Northern Territory” (Senate, 2006, p. 2). A 150-page report, *About time! Women in sport and recreation in Australia* was tabled in the Australian Senate in September 2006.

The media discourse about women’s sports at the time of the Report was framed by and was consistent with the history of discrimination against women's sports described in Chapter Three. Like other women’s sports media reports examined in this research, the 2006 Senate Inquiry was held in an environment of hostility to women’s sports and women’s sports media, with the Senate reporting on “the historically dismissive and patronising elements that have been a feature of women’s sports coverage” (English et al., 2019, p. 113). For example, the environment was characterised in the Report by comments such as:

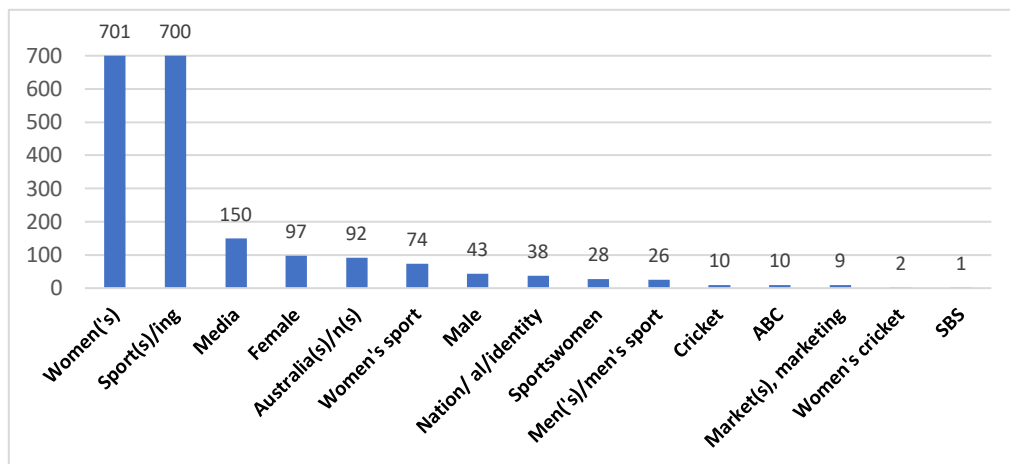
⁶⁴ The Senate Environment, Communications, Information Technology and the Arts References Committee.

Women's soccer is a joke... Women's cricket is not much better...
 Women... do their best, but it is, by definition, second-best [and]... the
 fact of the matter is blokes hit the ball further, kick the ball harder, go in
 harder, it's better to watch, end of story.⁶⁵ (Australian Senate, 2006, p. 97)

Content analysis

A detailed content analysis of the Report provided data about the usage of key terms noted in Chapter Six. The most cited terms, by a considerable margin compared to others, were 'women' and 'women's sport', used on 775 occasions and 'sport/sporting' with 700 instances. Nonetheless, the ninety-two references to 'Australia' and 'Australian(s)' and the use of 'nation' and 'national identity' thirty-eight times are also significant. Figure 9.1 shows the instances in which identified key terms are used in the 2006 Report.

Figure 9.1 2006 *About time!* Report: Key coded terms (processed data)



Source: Australian Senate, 2006.

Of the 701 instances of ‘women(s)’, 639 were occasions when ‘women’ was used, with 74 cases of ‘women’s sport’. The term ‘women’ was used to describe a range of situations, such as a chapter heading: “Why does women’s sport get so little attention?” or in noting that “Zoe Goss was one of Australia’s top women cricketers when in 1994 she famously dismissed Brian Lara in a charity match” (Australian Senate, 2006, p. 98). The terms ‘women’s’ and ‘women’s sport’ were also used in intersectional terms as when reporting that:

Since Louise Sauvage retired we have not had a picture of a woman with a disability in a single national daily... [t]here is not a thing about Paralympians or women with disabilities doing anything participatory at a national level, nothing at all. (Australian Senate, 2006, p. 50)

In addition to using the term ‘women’, the term ‘female’ occurred 97 times, almost interchangeably with ‘women’. The term ‘female’ was often used when citing or referring to statistical data; for example, “Female participation rates in organised sport declined from a high of 64 per cent at 11 years to 53 per cent at 14 years” (Australian Senate, 2006, p. 16). The term ‘female’ was used to describe ‘female athletes’, for example, when noting that “Cricket Australia stated that its national female athletes do not receive payment; however, expenses... such as travel, accommodation and allowances are provided”. (Australian Senate, 2006, p. 61)

The most significant use of any other term is ‘media’. It was used 150 times in the Report, with television occurring thirty-eight times, radio nine times and print five times. There were ten references to the ABC, eighteen to commercial broadcasters

and/or free-to-air networks, while subscription television services were mentioned ten times.

Although the terms ‘markets’ and ‘marketing’ were used only nine times in the Report, they are deployed to invoke the idea that promoting women’s sports was the solution to a lack of media coverage. This included drawing on a submission about New Zealand’s women’s sports media stating that “[a]nother reason for the change [in New Zealand coverage of women’s sports] may be marketing success... the right marketing strategies, getting the sport to the point where it is something that journalists and editors want to cover” (Australian Senate, 2006, p. 106). As discussed further below, this articulation of market solutions ignored the Report’s own discourse of structural discrimination that had been evidenced. It also initiated a rhetoric of focusing on individual organisations and sports to achieve media coverage.

Discourse analysis

The following section examines the 2006 Report using the discourse analysis approach described in chapter Six. In introducing its findings, the 2006 Report articulated a context for its findings and recommendations that notwithstanding “challenges faced by women ... [there were] solutions to the challenges [and]... all sportspeople have a part to play” (Australian Senate, 2006, p. 3). It is relevant to the analysis to note the Report constructed a policy argument that acknowledged ongoing issues as it sought to re-articulate a framework for individual engagement and action. These statements are examined in more detail below.

The Report (Australian Senate, 2006) is structured according to its terms of reference:

To inquire into women in sport and recreation in Australia, with particular reference to:... the role of the government to regulate and review the coverage of women's sport in the media (print, radio and electronic)... the influence of pay television on the coverage of women in sport... strategies to improve the amount and quality of media coverage for women's sport.

(pp. 1-2)

The media reference was addressed in Chapter 6, *Women's sport and the media* (Australian Senate, 2006).

Table 9.1: Chapter headings, *About Time!* Report

Ch	Chapter heading	Main Code/theme	page #
1	Introduction	Women/sport/Australia	1-4
2	Health Benefits of Participation in Sport	Women/sport/Australia	5-14
3	Grass Roots Participation	Sport/women/ Australia	15-56
4	Elite Participation	Sport/women's sport/women	57-76
5	Leadership and Governance	Women/sport/women's sport	77-96
6	Women's Sport and the Media	women's sports media	97- 116
	Appendix 1 - Context of the inquiry		117-118
	Appendix 2 - Submissions and Tabled Documents		119-122
	Appendix 3 - Public hearings		123-126
	Appendix 4 - Responses to letters sent to state and territory Departments of Education		127-end

Source: Australian Senate, 2006.

The introductory section (chapter 1) of the Report provided information about the inquiry process, such as terms of reference, submissions received, public hearings, and issues noted by the Inquiry. There were also eighteen recommendations for policy

action (Australian Senate, 2006). This content structure not only informed but established the credentials of the Report as an authoritative policy document.

In the last three paragraphs of the introductory section, the Report also provided a statement about the outcomes of its inquiry. Four terms were used in that section - 'health', 'benefits', 'challenges', and 'opportunities' (Australian Senate, 2006). These terms recur in the Report and are significant in endorsing the importance of sports engagement, including through media coverage. The section ended with an invocation that it is “**about time** that women have enhanced opportunities, access, media coverage and roles in all sports and activities” [emphasis added] (Australian Senate, 2006, p. 3). The phrase 'about time' is also the short form title of the Report, drawing on concepts of history, the imperative for action, and a sense of justice.

Women's sport and sports media history

The Report articulated a similar view to previous reports about the success of Australian sportswomen and female athletes (ASC & OSW, 1985; Australian House of Representatives, 1992):

Australian women's sport includes high-achieving teams and magnificent individual efforts. Australian sportswomen at international meets have given brilliant performances, sometimes outshining the men, such as when the Australian women's swimming team at the 2004 Olympic Games secured more medals than their male counterparts. (Australian Senate, 2006, p. 98)

Having noted the achievements of Australian sportswomen and athletes in historical and contemporary terms, the Report made a statement similar to previous documents: “Despite many great achievements, women’s sport gets little media coverage” (Australian Senate, 2006, p. 98). The Report (Australian Senate, 2006) articulated some of the history of women’s coverage in the media when it stated that the “picture painted of television sports coverage by *An illusory image* was scathing: only 2 per cent of coverage was for women’s sport, and this was carried almost exclusively by non-commercial networks” (p. 99). Moreover, the Report noted that the problem was not a lack of available screen time. An anecdote exemplified this point: a television news media segment from 1992 included a six-minute story on guinea pig racing while allocating fifteen seconds to a women’s sports segment (Australian Senate, 2006). The Report also identified discriminatory practices such as “[c]overage of female sport has been found to appear in the middle of the week when there is less men’s sport, and in less prominent positions (Phillips, 1997; Senate Inquiry, 2006)” (English et al., 2019, p. 112). It also identified that there was “more reporting [of women’s sport] during these periods when men’s sport was not being played”. (English et al., 2019, p. 119)

The Report (Australian Senate, 2006) further noted women’s sporting success, stating that “Australians have continued to excel in elite sporting performance in the international context” (p. 57). This success was located in structural terms “as a result of focussed investment by successive governments [and] a high level of organisation” (Australian Senate, 2006, p. 57). This structural assessment was framed later in the Report (Australian Senate, 2006) when evidence was cited that “there are over 3,000 full-time jobs for men as athletes in team sport in Australia. There is not one single job

for women in that role” (p. 59). The economic and structural issues were further elaborated when it was noted that “[w]omen athletes earn far less than men when playing in a national league”. (Australian Senate, 2006, p. 59)

ABC and women’s sport

A key element of the history of Australian women's sports media was noted in the analysis of the relationship between the role of public service broadcasting, sport and national identity:

The charter of the ABC requires it to ‘broadcast programs that contribute to a sense of national identity and inform and entertain and reflect the cultural diversity of the Australian community’ and in responding to this, it broadcasts significant amounts of women’s sport. (Australian Senate, 2006, p. 107)

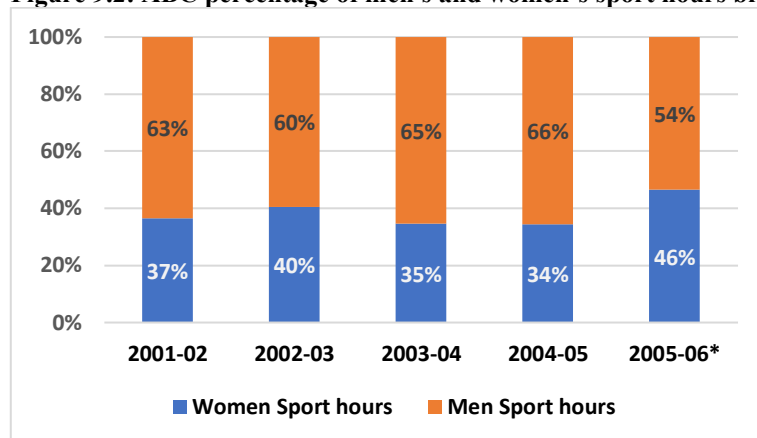
Under the heading *The Portrayal of women’s sport in the media*, it was noted that the ABC (2006) had submitted that “[t]he broadcast of women’s sport is an important role for the national public broadcaster” (p. 2). The ABC (2006) referred to its history of broadcasting women’s sports as a significant contribution to the recognition of women’s achievements in sport [that]... contributes to a sense of national identity” (p. 2)⁶⁶

Women’s sport was identified as constituting a significant proportion of sports broadcast on ABC Television (Australian Senate, 2006, p. 99). Figure 9.2 is from the

⁶⁶ See Chapter Four for a detail analysis of the ABC sports and women’s sports role.

Report and shows that women’s sport accounted for over one-third of ABC television sports broadcasts during this period and, in some years, for example, 2005-06, almost half (46%) of broadcast output. The findings were significant because it found that media coverage of elite sport was ‘essential’ (Australian Senate, 2006, p. 57). The subscription television sector provided data showing that 10 per cent of sports broadcast on Fox Sports were women’s sports (Australian Senate, 2006, p. 99).

Figure 9.2: ABC percentage of men's and women's sport hours broadcast (2001 - 2005)



*Women’s sport as a percentage of total national sport broadcasts.
 Source: ABC Submission, Senate Inquiry into Women in Sport and Recreation in Australia (2006, p. 3) and Inquiry Report (2006, p. 99)

As the content analysis findings presented above showed, the report used the terms ‘nation’, ‘national’, and ‘national identity’ thirty-six times. Several of the references within the text related to the scope of competitions and activities, such as “the creation of **national** leagues in netball, softball, basketball, cricket, soccer and hockey, to an increased number of disciplines and sports at Commonwealth and Olympic Games” (Australian Senate, 2006, p. 28). The reference to the ‘national’ also referred to the importance of Australia-wide scope for policy activity such as “**national** efforts to

reduce lifestyle health risks such as inactivity, obesity, alcohol and smoking”.
(Australian Senate, 2006, p. 12)

There was also a strongly articulated relationship between the use of the terms ‘nation’, ‘identity’ and ‘sport’ in statements such as:

Elite sport is essential to the Australian sport and recreation system as it has three roles: assisting athletes realise their full potential; providing inspirational role models for existing and future participation; and evoking local, regional and national identity and pride. (Australian Senate, 2006, p. 57)

A connection is made between the concept of a ‘nation’ that is engaged with activities and the achievements of sportspeople because “[i]t is important that we as a nation celebrate and value the contribution of sportswomen just as sportsmen are promoted and valued as role models”. (Australian Senate, 2006, p. 75)

On two occasions, there were specific statements about the role of sport in ‘national identity’, first about the role of sport in “provid[ing] inspirational role models for existing and future participation; and evoking local, regional and national identity and pride” (Australian Senate, 2006, p. 57). On a second occasion, the Report noted the ABC’s legislated policy role to “contribute to a sense of national identity”. (Australian Senate, 2006, p. 107)

Most substantive references to ‘Australia’ were qualitative or quantitative statements about women and sport in ‘Australia’. The Report (Australian Senate, 2006) also articulated a relationship between the idea of ‘Australia’ and national sports

representation; for example, “elite sport is essential to the Australian sport and recreation system” (p. 57). This was further linked to the media as “essential’ in providing an “inspirational role” in “local, regional and national identity and pride”. (Australian Senate, 2006, p. 57)

A discourse of neoliberalism

Of the Report’s eighteen recommendations, four related to media issues (Australian Senate, 2006), each of which engaged in a discourse of a form of public intervention through financial support for improving media coverage, including, for example, “to assist with production and associated costs of televised coverage” (2006, p. 112) and “to better utilise media” (2006, p. 114). However, there was no linkage to an overall statement about a regulatory approach, despite the focus of the Inquiry, as noted above in the terms of reference, being to inquire about the “[r]ole of the government to regulate and review the coverage of women’s sport in the media (print, radio and electronic)”. (Australian Senate, 2006, p. 1)

The examination of media coverage and potential solutions did not encompass the rhetoric of regulatory intervention. Despite that specific reference, the Report did not articulate a case for regulation, stating “that implementing such regulation would be difficult” (Australian Senate, 2006, p. 109). Discussion of a potential regulatory approach was limited to just a few paragraphs (Australian Senate, 2006). The language and arguments framed were not in favour of regulation. Without a detailed analysis or explanation of the issues raised, words such as ‘concern’, ‘difficult’, ‘wrong’, ‘hard’ (twice), and ‘impossible’ were deployed when articulating the issues about regulatory approaches (Australian Senate, 2006, p. 110).

The discourse of policy intervention, including discussing submissions recommending regulatory approaches, was tentative, if not timid, with apparent concern about a women's sports content "quota" for television (Australian Senate, 2006, p. 110). The only submission cited was employed to argue that "there should be no regulation of the media... [as] [p]ublic support for a sport or event will determine what the media covers" (Australian Senate, 2006, p. 110). The Report allowed a statement of market determination to stand unopposed despite earlier identifying the ongoing issue of minimal amounts of women's sports media coverage in Australia.

In the same section, the Report stated that a "**regulatory balancing act** would be **hard** to get right, and easy to get **wrong**" [emphasis added] (Australian Senate, 2006, p. 110). It pointed to the 'dangers' of content regulation with the view that "Australian television could end up with more women's sport, but less Australian sport, with no benefits for Australian women players" (Australian Senate, 2006, p. 110). Without apparent reflection on the metaphorical phraseology and etymology, the Report stated, "it would be **hard** to implement **a level regulatory playing field** [emphasis added]". (Australian Senate, 2006, p. 110)

The earlier 1992 Report had recommended that the Australian Broadcasting Tribunal investigate whether there was "'adequate and comprehensive coverage' of women in sport in the media" (Australian Senate, 2006, p. 109). A historical policy shift is evident in the 2006 Report reflection that there had been no evidence of action following the government's agreement "to pass the [1992] recommendation to the... Australian Broadcasting Authority" (Australian Senate, 2006, p. 109). The 2006 Report made no

recommendation regarding media regulation to increase the percentage of women's sports media content.

These paragraphs in the 2006 Report represent a major discursive turn in Australian media policy, signalling an ideological shift from the dominant ideas and arguments of the 1985, 1992 and 1996 reports, and reflecting the changing political circumstances with a transition from a centre-left Labor government in 1996 to a conservative government until 2007. In an overt signal to neoliberalism, the general concept of content rules for women's sport was labelled as potentially "heavy-handed regulation" that could lead to deleterious and unintended negative outcomes with media reports of the Inquiry expressing the concern that "minimum coverage could encourage people to report any sport, however obscure" (Australian Senate, 2006, p. 110). The Report, having raised the issue of concern, a lack of media coverage of women's sport, rejected a regulatory approach in fear that it might force:

Free-to-air broadcasters [into] grudgingly doing a **second-rate job** of producing some women's sport, instead of enthusiastic partnerships between sport and media working to bring first-rate sports productions to audiences through digital channels or pay television [emphasis added].

(Australian Senate, 2006, pp. 110-111)

A rhetoric of regulation leading to poor outcomes compared to the free market's unfettered operation is deployed in the remainder of the Report's articulation of possible solutions to the 'challenges' for women's sports media.

The rationalising of the free-market approach is evident a few paragraphs later when it highlights the problematic market economics of women's sport, citing women's

football. It provides a short narrative of the “situation... in the international organisation for football, Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA), and its limited support for the women’s game” where successful men’s teams qualifying in the World Cup can earn almost CHF 10 million “as [the] Australia [men’s team] recently did... [while a] women’s team with a similar achievement receives nothing” (Australian Senate, 2006, p. 111). The inconsistency in the discursive approach to a market-orientation eludes the rhetorical argumentation, which concludes by citing a submission that entreats the Inquiry “to bring the benefits of regular increased media coverage on women’s sport to the fore in its report and to recommend the adoption of strategies that will change the media scene for women in sport”. (Australian Senate, 2006, p. 112)

While media regulatory intervention was rejected, the Report argued for increased public funding for “initiatives that provide specific opportunities for greater ongoing coverage of women’s sport” (Australian Senate, 2006, p. 112). The idea was that funding could be applied to “partnerships with broadcasters” or to pay for screen time (Australian Senate, 2006, p. 112). The recommendation for partnerships appeared to be adopted by the Coalition Government in 2017 in an example of the increasing marketisation of sports media policy (DITRDC, n.d.). Having cut the ABC’s funding, with a resulting reduction in women’s sports broadcasts, the Australian Government “perversely provided AUD 40 million to Foxtel to broadcast women’s and other under-represented sports”. (Rowe et al., 2022, p. 11)

As noted above, the Report invoked the health benefits associated with women's sports participation, with the term 'health' used 151 times. For example, in stating the

health benefits of physical activity, the Report cited evidence that “physical activity reduces the risk of cardiovascular disease, which is the leading cause of death in Australia” (Australian Senate, 2006, p. 5). In articulating the issues confronting Australians, specifically Australian women, the cited data supported the view “that the majority of Australian women are not physically active enough to obtain health benefits” (Australian Senate, 2006, p. 10). The Report linked sports participation, activity, and the role of the media as having positive economic benefits, with evidence of the economic “costs of illness attributable to physical inactivity in Australia [finding] that the annual direct health care cost is approximately \$377 million per year”. (Australian Senate, 2006, p. 5)

An expert discourse was invoked concerning the health and related benefits for communities. The focus on health is significant, as it is addressed in the first substantive chapter. The Report cited twenty-three national and international health and medical research sources, such as the US Surgeon General, National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC), Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW), and VicHealth, in articulating evidence for its argument and recommendations for women’s sports participation (Australian Senate, 2006).

In contrast, little independent research about women’s sports media representation was presented. Only four research works were cited, and although relevant, they were in some cases, almost twenty years old.⁶⁷ Previous parliamentary reports from 1992 and 1996 were quoted regarding “tentative” approaches to content regulation

⁶⁷ The four texts cited were Bernstein, 2002; Henley, 2004a; Henley, M., (2004b); and Menzies, 1989.

(Australian Senate, 2006, p. 109). The media regulator, the Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA), made no submission, presented no data to the Inquiry and did not appear at hearings. Although the Department of Communications, Information Technology and the Arts was listed as appearing in public hearings, no comments or statements were recorded. The absence of communications policy input is striking, given the extensive information from state and federal health, education, and sports agencies noted above (Australian Senate, 2006).

The Report's discussion of media policy regulation indicates a significant policy silence. A further indication of the continuing challenges for women's sports media was the failure of commercial free-to-air television broadcasters to participate. While the ABC, SBS and subscription television provided data and submissions to the Inquiry, "[n]one of the commercial free-to-air networks provided data on their sporting coverage to the committee" nor made submissions, nor appeared at public hearings (Australian Senate, 2006, p. 99).

Discussion

While the 2006 Report gave voice to the importance of developing an 'economic model' for women's sport, highlighting continuing economic and, consequently, political inequities and injustices, it did not provide a discourse of historical struggle as in the 1985 Report. This is despite the ongoing issues noted in Chapter Three, where a political economic analysis of women's sports demonstrated the vastly inferior situation to that of Australian male sports. For example, the evidence shows that, while male cricketers have been deriving an income from the sport for over 100 years, as recently as 2006 (Australian Senate, 2006, p. 61) Cricket Australia stated that "its

national female athletes” did not receive payment but were paid out-of-pocket costs.⁶⁸ This meant that national-level women cricketers were not full-time sportspeople, but needed to finance their lives through other work, as noted in Chapter Three. Given that the literal meaning of the term ‘professional’ relates to paid employment, using the term ‘professional’ in the 2006 Report is invariably aspirational. The reality in 2006 was that “for young women, there is no full-time professional career path as an athlete in a team sport”. (Australian Senate, 2006, p. 59)

However, it is also possible to understand the discourse as being critical of women’s sport as lacking in certain ways – for example, in sporting prowess and being inferior to an elite athletic and sports performance level. This impression occurs due to a rhetoric that presents women’s sport, including cricket, as “not professional” (Australian Senate, 2006, p. 58), which can be read as inferior to men’s cricket. It was almost certainly not the intention for this connotation to be made, especially noting statements such as “[i]t is important that we as a nation celebrate and value the contribution of sportswomen”. (Australian Senate, 2006, p. 71)

The rhetoric of lacking professionalism was not directed at ‘on field’ prowess but related to a discourse of ‘market’ and ‘marketing’. According to this discourse, the lack related to an inability to ‘market’ or promote women’s sport, a situation that could be addressed by “[i]ncreasing the level of training and skills in organisations promoting women’s sport [which] will help improve media coverage” (Australian Senate, 2006, p.

⁶⁸ Subsequent to the 2006 Senate Report, although Australian women cricketers began to receive employment contracts and regular payments with substantial improvements in 2021 and 2022, Australian national and international women cricketers continue to receive substantially less income than their male counterparts (Cricket Australia, 2022; Litchfield & Osborne, 2019).

114). There was an important caveat in the Report's findings: "it will only be effective if NSOs⁶⁹ are serious about backing their women's competitions with resources and commitment". (Australian Senate, 2006, p. 114)

There is further evidence of the implications of a discursive approach that failed to interrogate the ideological formations of the conferring of national 'status' on sportsmen, while focussing on a neoliberal discourse of promotion and marketing. For example, the Report cited commercial subscription television sports media organisation, Premier Media Group's, implicit criticism of women's sports organisations (and a consequent lack of media coverage). Premier Media Group "produce[d] and broadcast Fox Sports and Fox Sports News in Australia" and became Fox Sports Australia when the Murdoch /Packer joint venture ended in 2012 (Rowe, 2013, p. 75). The 2006 Report noted Premier Media Group's comment that "the better organised they [women's sports organisations] are and the more professionally organised, the better outcomes are achieved for them and for us" (Australian Senate, 2006, p. 113).

Notwithstanding that "[l]ess than a quarter of households have subscription television", the Report expressed hope for increased opportunities for women's sports media with "the increasing availability of additional channels, both through subscription television and through multichannels" (Australian Senate, 2006, p. 108). The Report (Australian Senate, 2006) noted the ABC's view that "[i]f the multichannel genre restrictions are lifted... ABC2 will be able to broadcast international women's

⁶⁹ National Sporting Organisation (from 2006 Report).

sporting events” (p. 108). Ultimately, despite its strong articulation of the inadequacy and continuing injustice experienced by women’s sports media coverage, the Report made no recommendations to achieve change, expressing only the hope that technology would improve the situation.

Speaking in the Senate in 2006, Committee Deputy Chair and a future Labor Government Sports Minister, Senator Lundy, asserted that the importance of the Report was not just that it found “disparities in the level of participation and opportunity among females... from grassroots to elite sport, [and] media portrayal [but] because it placed all these issues on the record” (Commonwealth, 2006). However, unlike previous reports on women’s sports media (for example, ASC & OSW, 1985 and Australian House of Representatives, 1992), there was almost no analysis of the underlying ideologies that limit women’s sports coverage. Notwithstanding an expression of disappointment “at the continuing poor coverage of women’s sport by all media”, the Report opted for a consensus approach (Australian Senate, 2006, p. 114). It did not provide a critical analysis but hoped that implementing its recommendations would “make a significant contribution to improving the media profile of women’s sports” (Australian Senate, 2006, p. 114). The single caution was that “improvements in media coverage of women’s sport have been slow in the past” (Australian Senate, 2006, p. 114). To guard against inaction, it recommended a review by the Senate by 2010 and that the Australian Sports Commission “undertake an annual survey of coverage of women’s sport” (Australian Senate, 2006, p. 114). As of 2023, the Senate has made no subsequent inquiry into women’s sports media.

A rhetoric of reasonableness and rationality characterised the articulation of achieving identified policy goals through a market-oriented discourse. The solutions to the challenges were framed as common sense and cooperative. This articulation also related to a discourse of the ‘deserving’, a rhetoric of fairness that assumed a media system framed by individual decision-making about what constitutes ‘newsworthiness’ and ‘marketability’.

After the 2006 Senate Report

Notwithstanding continued low levels of women’s sport in freely available media services, there is evidence of a women's sports media policy silence since 2006, at least in terms of interrogating the ideological formations of discrimination relating to women’s sports media. This is despite research that “noted women’s sport in Australia was still under-represented, with a decline in the proportion of coverage from 1996 until 2015 across all media platforms” (English et al., 2019, p. 112).

Except for a 2009 Inquiry noted below, there has not been an Australian Parliamentary (House of Representatives or Senate) inquiry into women’s sports media (or women's media) for seventeen years. Further, no agency, such as the Office of the Status of Women (Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet), has conducted such an inquiry.⁷⁰

The Australian Sports Commission has conducted further work, commissioning research on three occasions: two instances of a report by the University of New South Wales Journalism and Media Research Centre, *Towards a level playing field* (ASC & Lumby

⁷⁰ The agency responsible for co-authoring the 1985 report, the Office of the Status of Women, was one of several Australian government policy units, including the Women’s Sports Unit, to be removed, reshaped or defunded during the Howard government 1996-2007), finally being “demoted from the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet and relocated as 'The Office for Women' in the Department of Family and Community Service” (Sawer, 2007, p. 14).

et al., 2010; 2014), and a 2014 report by a consulting company, Repucom, *Women in sport broadcasting analysis* (Paterson et al., 2014).

The remainder of this chapter examines subsequent reports about women's sports media to provide a context for the examination of the 2006 Report.

2009 Senate Report

The 2009 Australian Senate Inquiry into *The reporting of sports news and the emergence of digital media* (Australian Senate, 2009) did not focus on women's sports media. The Inquiry "followed a series of protracted disputes between national sports organisations, and news media companies and agencies" (Hutchins & Rowe, 2010, p. 696). Although it included a statement that the reality for 'marginalised' sports on Australian television continued to be "disappointing" (Australian Senate, 2009, p. 46), the term 'women' was only used on five occasions in sixty pages, once in referring to the 2006 Senate Report and five times in a single paragraph quoting a submission (Australian Senate, 2009).

The "disappointing" level of women's sport on Australian television persisted, as commercial television continued to be "very slow to use their digital channels for broadcasting women's sports" (Australian Senate, 2009, p. 46). As in previous reports, the exception to the lack of women's sports media was the ABC, including its use of a digital multichannel, ABC2, to broadcast "Women's National Basketball League, the W League [football]... Bowling (male and female) and some special women's events" (Australian Senate, 2009, p. 46). The ABC linked its broadcasting of a diversity of sport, including women's sport, to its public service media role of contributing to national identity "in serving all Australian communities" (ABC, 2009).

In an interview for this research, former ABC Managing Director Russell Balding stated that using multichannel television services for sports broadcasts had been an ABC policy objective for several years from the early 2000s (2022). In 2005 the ABC attempted to obtain men's cricket television rights for the Ashes series in England through a deal that would have required the Australian Government to amend the Broadcasting Services Act to permit sports broadcasts on digital multichannels (Balding, 2022). Balding explained that the ABC approach evolved in:

2005 with the Australian men's Ashes series... from the UK. Channel Nine had indicated [they wouldn't broadcast all matches]... there was going to be a significant clash with Nine because Nine, from memory, had Wimbledon[so]... a decision [was made] to try and take the ABC back into major television sport through test cricket. (2022)

The ABC strategy recognised the significance of the new “digital multichannel platform that meant you could cater for an emerging demographic that was looking to get content from a digital platform” (Balding 2022). Balding said that the strategy was threefold:

First of all, to get back into mainstream sport on television, which is the Ashes cricket... [second] promote our digital channel, promoting the take-up of digital, [and third] to grab back a demographic that we'd lost a long time ago, that we'd lost from ABC sport. (2022)

However, free-to-air television services “were restricted in what we could put on the digital platform” (Balding, 2022). Although the Howard Government rejected the

ABC approach in 2005, by 2007, the government had announced its intention to relax multichannel genre restrictions (Hitchens, 2007).

The ABC stated to the 2009 Inquiry that “there is no doubt that sport is an integral part of Australian culture and plays a significant role in shaping the Australian national identity” (ABC 2009 Inquiry submission cited in Ward, 2017, p. 96). While expressing hope for future improvement, the Report merely noted a submission that “it always seems to be... women’s programs that get axed first” (Australian Senate, 2009, p. 46).

That the 2009 Report contained no recommendations relating to “marginalised” sports is not surprising given the emphasis on commercial outcomes articulated in five of its nine Terms of Reference that required the Committee to take into account “commercial interests... commercial negotiations [and]... a fair commercial return” (Australian Senate, 2009, p. 46). As for the 2006 Report, the discourse of the 2009 Senate Report was of individual failure to take the opportunities of the media market, as it stated that “sports organisations and media players... must carry some responsibility for a situation that sees some sports continue to be under-reported” (Australian Senate, 2009, p. 46). The historical analysis of social, cultural, economic and political discrimination articulated in the 1985 Report was replaced by a discourse of individual responsibility rather than examining structural issues.

2010 and 2014 *Towards a level playing field* reports

This section briefly examines the 2010 and 2014 versions of a report on women's sport media. The Australian Sports Commission commissioned researchers from the University of New South Wales Journalism and Media Research Centre and Media Monitors “to undertake qualitative research and identify new initiatives to address the

promotion of women’s sport, particularly in the media” (Lumby et al. & ASC, 2014, p. ix). The principal researchers were Professor Catharine Lumby, Dr Helen Caple, and Dr Kate Greenwood.

The 2010 and 2014 reports exist within a historical frame of women's sports and sports media advocacy. The reports briefly invoke that history, noting the 2006 Senate report’s disappointment “at the continuing poor coverage of women’s sport by all media” and the need for “an annual survey of coverage of women’s sports” (Lumby et al. & ASC, 2010, p. vii; 2014, p. ix). The 2010 and 2014 versions of the *Towards a level playing field* Report implement a 2006 Report recommendation “that the government fund the Australian Sports Commission to replicate in 2008–09 the surveys and analysis performed in the 1996 report *An Illusory Image*” (Lumby et al. & ASC, 2010, p. vii; 2014, p. ix).

Content analysis

Table 9.2: 2010 and 2014 *Towards a level playing field* key coded terms

Themes	Coded items	2010	2014
	SBS	7	40
	Women's cricket	2	1
	Cricket	16	17
	Market(s), marketing	40	39
	ABC	100	163
Identity	Men(s)/men’s sport	87	50
	Women's sports	51	37
	Nation/Australia/ identity	122	160
Women's sports /Sport	Women(s)	127	96
	Women(s)/ sportswomen	147	118
	Sport(s)/ing	648	706
	Sportswomen/woman	20	22
	Sportsman		1
	Sportspeople/person		0
	Female		0
	Male		296
		126 pages	74 pages

Source: Lumby et al. & ASC, 2010; 2014.

Table 9.2 shows that the *Towards a level playing field* Report (Lumby et al. & ASC, 2010; 2014) used the terms ‘women’s sports’ and ‘sportswomen’ 59 (2010) and 71 times (2014), a substantial decrease compared to previous reports. For example, the *Halfway to equal* Report used the terms over two thousand times (Australian House of Representatives, 1992). Compared to other women’s sports media reports examined in this research, there was a substantial increase in references to the ABC (100 and 163 times) and SBS (7 and 40 times). There was also an increase in the use of the terms ‘market(s)’ and ‘marketing’ 40 and 39 times in each report.

It is noteworthy that a report on the media coverage of women’s sport should routinely slip into the practice of referring to a male version of a sport by defaulting to the direct articulation of the sport. That is, rather than noting men’s and women’s cricket, the Reports state when writing about men’s cricket that “cricket was the second most prominent sport in both Sydney and Melbourne and had the highest cumulative audiences across the two markets” (Lumby et al. & ASC, 2010, p. 88; 2014, p. 110).

The 2014 Report (Lumby et al. & ASC, 2014) also discussed marketing and representation issues, noting that “[a]dvocates of female athletes argued that, if anything, the media appeal of healthy and fit young women playing sport, if appropriately positioned, could be an opportunity to promote media coverage, rather than a regressive step” (p. 17).

There is evidence in the two documents of an attempt to maintain a policy continuum, or at least a historical data set for qualitative and quantitative analyses of media coverage of women’s sport, with the 2006 Senate inquiry invoking the need for

updating the 1996 report and the 2010 Report stating that it was an outcome of this recommendation by the Senate Committee (Lumby et al. & ASC, 2014).

2014 *Women in sport broadcasting analysis report*

The Australian Sports Commission commissioned further research in 2014 from consulting firm, Repucom and authored by Paterson and Matzelle to analyse “traditional and new media platforms over 3 waves to determine the proportion of hours provided to Women’s Sport” (Paterson et al., 2014, p. 5) compared to data gathered in December 2008 and provided in the 2010 and 2014 versions of *Towards a level playing field* Reports (Lumby et al. & ASC, 2010; 2014). The *Women in sport broadcasting analysis* Report (Paterson et al., 2014) gathered data from one year of free-air and subscription television from April 2012 to March 2013, finding that 7 per cent of total broadcast sports hours were of women’s sports- the level identified in 2008 (Paterson et al., 2014). Of that amount, the Report (Paterson et al., 2014) found that:

Women’s cricket provides just 101 hours of content across the year [data collected 2012-13] with nearly 70% of this in February 2013 due to the Cricket World Cup. It also only accounts for 2% of all cricket shown on TV. (p. 43)

During 2012 and 2013, just outside the data gathering period, the ABC broadcast the international women’s cricket series against New Zealand (2012/13) (ABC, 2012b) and England (Farrell, 2014). Despite those broadcasts being outside the survey period, the Report found that the ABC continued to broadcast the highest proportion of female

sports content- (Paterson et al., 2014). However, while the ABC's total television broadcasts of women's sports at 20 per cent of total sports output was substantially more significant than for other free-to-air services, the percentage had significantly decreased from the levels of over 40 per cent noted in the 2006 Report. The 2014 Report (Paterson et al., 2014) also showed, in the only example provided of audience numbers, that the ABC average audience for women's golf of 212,000 viewers was more than 20 times the audience on subscription television: Foxtel's average audience of 10,120 (p. 40). Notwithstanding that data, the Report found that 70 per cent of women's sports broadcast was on subscription television (Paterson et al., 2014). The percentage of women's sport on television news decreased from 9 per cent in 2008 to between 4 and 8 per cent in 2014 (Paterson et al., 2014).

Table 9.3 shows that key terms included the use of 'nation/Australia/identity' on sixty occasions. However, the term was rarely used in commenting on a national role or significance for women's sport, nor the activity of women's sport as 'national', such as, for example, cricket being played as a national and international competition. It was almost exclusively used (19 of 21 occasions) to refer to the 'national' sample used for the research report; for example: "Research study conducted online to a **National** [emphasis added] representative sample (>18 years old) at a 99% confidence level (Paterson et al., 2014, p. 70). Similarly, the term 'Australia' was used to describe national sporting teams or organisations (e.g., Netball Australia or Cricket Australia), or in referring to women's sports media content, such as "Swimming and Gymnastics were two female sports that were posted about more than others in Australia throughout the 2012 London Olympics". (Paterson, et al., 2014, p. 65)

Table 9.3: Repucom Women In Sport Broadcasting Analysis Report (processed data)

	2014 ASC Women in sport broadcast
SBS	6
Women's cricket	2
Efficient/cy/ies/	1
Cricket	9
Market(s), marketing	16
ABC	24
Men(s)/men's sport	40
Women's sports	95
Nation/Australia/ identity	60
Women(s)	59
Women(s)/ sportswomen	59
Sport(s)/ing	528
	153 pages

Source: Paterson et al., 2014

In the only instance of media ownership issues identified in this research, the Report noted that the highly concentrated ownership of Australian media required sports organisations to “look to increase competitive tension by implementing their own Direct to Customer (D2C) offers” (Paterson et al., 2014, p. 116). The Report (Paterson et al., 2014) also found that Australian media organisations believed “that more Women’s Sport should be covered through traditional media channels... [however] networks look at each sport/event on it’s [sic] merits, and viewership and interest are broadcasters’ key decision drivers”. (p. 97)

In contrast to the ideological, structural and historical issues identified in the 1985, 1992 and 2006 reports, the Report framed the problems, issues and solutions in market-liberalist terms (Curran, 2007). The market discourse was restated in solutions and processes so that, for example, the Report recommended the importance of “[c]reat[ing] metrics around this strategy that ultimately reflect the level of passion and

advocacy that we believe will be necessary to have critical mass by 2016-17 at which point Women’s Sport has a level of interest that drives consumers to tailored channels and platforms”. (Paterson et al., 2014, p. 14)

2017 *Women In Sport* Report

As discussed in Chapter Six, the consulting company Accenture published a report in 2017, *Women In Sport* (Dinsdale et al., 2017), commissioned by Cricket Australia and the Australian Rugby Union. The Report’s stated purpose was to address “significant barriers remaining to [women’s sports] progress... [by] illuminat[ing] some of the key issues and actions [needed] in breaking this conundrum” (Dinsdale et al., 2017, p. 2).

The Accenture report, as previously noted, is short (sixteen pages). A content analysis was conducted as part of this research project (Table 9.4). The analysis found several references to ‘women’s sport’ (25) and ‘women’s’/‘sportswomen’ (57). The importance of women’s sports was noted in the context of an “Australia, where sport is an integral part of the national heritage”. (Dinsdale et al., 2017, p. 2)

Table 9.4 Content Analysis 2017 Accenture *Women In Sport* Report

Coded Terms	2017 Accenture
SBS	0
Women's cricket	0
Efficient/cy/ies/	0
Cricket	7
Market(s), marketing	9
ABC	0
Men(s)/men's sport	22
Women's sports	25
Nation/Australia/ identity	25
Women(s)/ sportswomen	57
Sport(s)/ing	98

Source: Dinsdale et al., 2017

Marketing discourses strongly framed women's sports media policy solutions, which were articulated in statements such as “[b]eyond their on-field exploits, women are the fastest growing fan segment and continue to exert primary influence as parents to the next generation of athletes” (Dinsdale et al., 2017, p. 2). The articulated policy solutions to a “chicken and egg problem” (Dinsdale et al., 2017, p. 2) of media coverage, public and audience support and income from sponsorship and media rights rested with ways to address the difference in “the commercial value of men's and women's sport” (Dinsdale et al., 2017, p. 3). The Report (Dinsdale et al., 2017) is a further example of the increasingly neoliberal discourse that frames the market exclusively as the solution to the issue of women's sports media coverage.

The Accenture Report (Dinsdale et al., 2017) also demonstrated another significant shift in Australian policy processes. This was the second instance (see Paterson et al., 2014) of the ‘outsourcing’ of the policy and research process to private sector organisations. This process has accompanied a general marketisation of the media policy analysis that holds that “market forces provide the most powerful logic for the organization of the environment as a whole” (Freedman, 2008, p. 50).

Discussion

The 1985 *Women, sport and the media* Report and the 2006 *About time* Report each noted the contribution of the ABC to women's sport media. As the analysis in Chapter Four demonstrated, the ABC was a pioneer in women's sports media, both on radio and television, and increased its broadcast of women's sports from the 1980s (Goldsmith, 2016; Inglis, 1983, 2006; Rowe, 2014). The ABC commitment occurred in a media

system characterised by an absence of women's sport in commercial media and a generally unsympathetic attitude about women's sport among elements of the media.

However, as also noted in Chapter Four, the ABC significantly reduced its coverage of sport, including women's sport, after 2014. In an interview for this research, Emeritus Professor David Rowe (2022) links the ABC's shift away from sports media to a long-standing "snobbishness around sport" where sport is not "central to the remit". The implications of removing an entire genre question the ABC's commitment to the PSM values or principles of comprehensiveness and complementarity discussed in Chapter Two.

Like the public service media policy reports examined in Chapter Seven, the policy contexts for the 1985 and reports in the 1990s, 2006 and subsequent reports demonstrate an increasingly market-oriented policy discourse from the early 2000s. That is, the broader policy framing was the influence of an increasing neo-liberalism, albeit at different stages of development. While the 2006 *About Time* Report was located within twenty years of the neoliberal ideology shaping media policy in Australia, it echoed, to some extent, the 1985, 1992 and 1997 reports, which demonstrate a commitment to articulating the importance of confronting historical, patriarchal ideologies that had marginalised and attempted to silence women's sport in the media. In contrast, the 2009 Senate Report presents a stark indication of the shift in the policy discourse. There is a lack of an official discourse about the need to address the continuing absence of women's sport in the media. At the same time, it is characterised by an articulation of commercial interests.

The discourse of regulatory intervention, including recommending action by the media regulator, while perhaps only moderately stated in the 1980s and 1990s (ASC & OSW, 1985; Australian House of Representatives, 1992), was replaced over time with market-oriented rhetoric and an absence of any articulation of regulatory action (see, for example, Australian Senate, 2006; 2009). There is clear evidence of an ideological shift occurring in the discourses of sport, gender and identity in media policy framing the increasingly neoliberal ideology identified in Chapter Seven in PSM policy discourses.

In a neoliberal analysis, an absence of women's sports media is evidence of a lack of consumer interest and, therefore support. Neoliberalism is "problematic because it shifts our attention from the economic and political relationships, structures and supports that actually constitute markets" (Meehan & Torre, 2014, p. 62). Neoliberalism holds that, in this example, more women's sports would be supplied if there was sufficient demand or improved promotion of their 'product' by individual women's sports, shifting policy focus from historical and contemporary issues of structural discrimination to issues such as women's sports 'marketability'.

The shift in discourses of women's sports media policy with the adoption of a market orientation has occurred in tandem with transformations in the economic and political organisation of women's sports. The change in the administration of women's cricket is an important example. In 2003, responding to financial issues and pressure from the Australian Sports Commission, the Women's Cricket Association 'amalgamated' with

the existing men's organisation, the Australian Cricket Board, to form Cricket Australia (Stronach & Adair, 2009).⁷¹ Six years after the 'amalgamation', it could be noted that:

The subsequent creation... with a board composed entirely of males, remains a stark reflection of fundamental disparities in the participation, profile and power of men and women in cricket [with]... [o]ngoing dominance of male decision making within the management of the game in Australia. (Stronach & Adair, 2009, p. 910)

Such "restructuring and re-scaling are partly, and significantly, semiotic and linguistic transformations" (Fairclough, 2002, p. 164) that establish revised ways of speaking about (linguistic) and presenting (semiotic) women's cricket. Elements of the presentation and organisation include employment contracts, improved promotion, workplaces and playing conditions in a discourse of organisational and employment professionalisation (Stronach & Adair, 2009). While presented as enhancing women's cricket with improved "managerial efficiencies" (Stronach & Adair, 2009, p. 918), notwithstanding some clear benefits, merging women's cricket with the men's agency has also led to challenges. As noted about women's sport more generally, there is a mixed set of data ranging where, notwithstanding the success of international women's cricket as exemplified by the 2020 World Cup final and the Women's Premier League "[s]port's historically unequal gender order is not easily overturned" (Rowe & Silva, 2023, p. 4). The evidence concerning Australian women's cricket includes match

⁷¹ In 1998 the UK Women's Cricket Association merged with England and Wales Cricket Board (Velija et al., 2014).

scheduling, the decline of women's long-form test cricket, and the marginalisation of women's cricket during the Covid pandemic (Symons et al., 2021).

Conclusion

This Chapter has charted an increasing discourse of neoliberal ideological approaches in the discourses that have developed in women's sports media policy, drawing on the definitions of neoliberalism discussed in Chapter Two. The analysis carried out for this project identified only limited evidence of neoliberal discourses in the earlier reports on women's sports media (for example, ASC & OSW, 1985). However, there is clear evidence of an increasing reliance on a discourse that frames media policy in neoliberal terms from the 2000s. These discursive strategies were analysed in the relevant sections of this chapter, especially focussing on the increased reliance on the articulation of neoliberal terms and ideas such as 'markets' in reports from 2006.

A transformation in policy discourses has been identified in chapter Seven about women's sports discourses in PSM policy, the analysis in chapter Eight of the critical policy moment of the 1985 women's sports media report, and the 2006 and subsequent reports examined in this chapter. The evidence presented in these chapters is drawn together in the final chapter.

Chapter 10: Conclusion

This project examined the evolution of discourses surrounding women's sport in Australian media policy, including public service media policy, from 1981 to 2018, spanning almost forty years. The thesis explored the role of national identity, its significance in and for women's sports media and public service media policy, and the influence of neoliberalism and marketisation discourses. This concluding chapter provides a summary of the main findings, highlights the research's significance, discusses its limitations, and suggests opportunities for future research.

The research identified significant ideological shifts reflected in transforming discourses of women's sports media policy. These shifts also influenced public service media policy, reshaping the role of the ABC in sport in general, and women's sport in particular. The thesis documented these changes and revealed that national identity, while still influential in sports media and public service media policy discourses, has become constructed in market terms. Consequently, sports media no longer hold the same importance in public service media policy interventions. These changes have led to a redefinition of the ABC's role in sports media, challenging long-standing definitions of public service media principles.

As a further consequence of these changes, sports media are no longer a defining component of public service media policies. These changes and a resulting redefinition of the ABC's sports media role are transforming our understanding of long-held definitions of public service media principles.

The analysis of women's sports media policy discourses also involved an examination of the national identity framework within sport. Historically, Australian women's sport was marginalised or erased in comparison to male sport.

As the first media policy statement on women's sports media to an Australian Government, the 1985 *Women, sport and the media* Report was a crucial policy moment that reframed Australian women's sport and sports media history by advocating women's sports achievements. It reconstructed Australian sports media policy within a discourse of the historical struggle for recognition and representation of women in sport and sports media.

By providing a policy critique of the marginalisation and erasure of women's sport, it documented the media role as "central to the condition of women's sport" (Rowe & Brown, 1994, p. 98). Building on that critique, the Report advocated for women's sports media in the context of an ideological construction of dominant Australian male sport, confronting a key element of the construction of Australian national identity. Its final significance as a media policy moment is that it sought to establish a discursive framework based on advocacy of a robust public policy intervention with increased media regulation in commercial and public service media policy through an ideological repositioning of women's struggle.

Following the 1985 Report, policy reports during the 1990s that addressed women's sports media continued to articulate an ideological discourse that linked the historical marginalisation of women's sports in the media with advocacy for major public policy interventions. This policy moment did not last. After the 1990s, discourses of media policy shifted from policy interventions to deregulated market-oriented approaches,

with, as discussed below, significant consequences for public service media and women's sports media.

Public service media policy

The research has also investigated how discourses about women's sports developed in public service media policy, specifically examining the ABC. It identified 1981 as a key policy moment that enunciated public service broadcasting principles while providing early signals of a policy shift that saw public service broadcasting no longer a central component of media policy interventions. The 1981 Dix Report is the first occasion in which a framework of public service broadcasting principles, such as a universality of service and content provision, including the concepts of comprehensiveness and complementarity, independence and innovation, were articulated in Australian media policy. The principles were woven into a discourse encompassing the ABC role of "contribut[ing] to a sense of national identity" (ABC Act, 1983), a concept framed in legislation for the first time after 1981.

The second significant policy articulation of the Dix Report was its historical framing of the ABC sports role, as it called for the ABC to remove itself from television sports due to an increasing commodification of sports media. While the Report did not elaborate, it noted the ABC's historical role in women's sports broadcasting, a significant exception to the erasure of women's sport in the media. This understanding led to a third component of this research: the Dix Report's policy discourse of the future ABC role in women's sports media. Finally, the 1981 Report is an important discursive moment because it represents the first policy articulation of a transformation in the public service broadcasting policy role, with the introduction of

a sports media market focus that privileged commercial media and market operations over public policy interventions.

National identity and reformed media policy discourses

The formation of national identity plays a significant role in public service media and sports media policies. The thesis found that discourses of national identity are enduring parts of Australian media policy discourses, with concepts of nation and national identity central to sports media, women's sports media and public service media policy discourses. As also identified, ideological formations of national identity have historically been framed predominantly as white, Anglo, settler, and male in Australian sports media policy discourses. The media policy documents examined in this research demonstrated a discursive transformation as ideas such as gender and race were reframed within wider definitions of the concept of nation. Nonetheless, evidence suggests that women's sports media policy is still articulated as part of a media policy framework in which discourses of Australian male sports media dominate.

An increased marketisation of sports media has sought to assume the evolving discourses of national identity. The research points to an alignment of discourses of nation and identity with market operations as part of media policy orientation to the market, demonstrating an appropriation of the ideological concept of the nation as a component of neoliberal formations. This phenomenon is not new, as noted in the examination of the historical development of Australian sports, focusing on Australian cricket history (see Chapter Three) with, for example, discourses of cricket encompassing shifting political and economic relationships between the colony and empire, albeit within a white, male frame.

After 2006 the articulation of women's sports media's role in media policy changed. The *About time! Women in sport and recreation in Australia* Report was a turning point, after which sports media policy reports assert a powerful rhetoric of the market. The discursive shift represents a turn from a regulatory intervention policy approach to one framed around discourses of market solutions and individual marketing skills. In these discourses, sports media markets are framed as inevitable and naturally occurring phenomena in which women's sports media are subject to market forces within an increased deregulatory policy approach and a marketisation of policy. Policy solutions for issues such as a lack of women's sports in Australian media are framed through an increased commodification of (women's) sports media, with a focus on individual responsibility to gain the attention of audiences and media decision-makers and so access to media markets.

Discourses of commodification and marketisation have transformed the articulation of women's sports media policy. The discourse of women's sport, constructed as part of a national identity framework, has been reformed to align with the increased marketisation of sports media. Women's sports media have been reframed as a commodity within the dominant neoliberal ideology. Articulations in more recent reports on women's sports emphasise marketing, promotion and the need for individual sportswomen, athletes and individual organisations to work to ensure they and their sports are marketable as media commodities. In this reformed discourse, the nation is critical to marketing and promotional discourses.

Increased commodification of sports media and the role of PSM

Sports media were part of the ABC's role and articulated in media policy as a core component of meeting public service media principles. The ABC's sports role, approach and alignment with these principles was articulated in a redefined policy approach from 1981, with an increased focus on women's sports. However, an increasing commodification of sports media has effectively ended the ABC's sports media role, at least insofar as screen content is concerned. The ABC has reframed its commitment to PSM principles to accept a limitation of its media role. The impact of the policy shift identified in this research has resulted in a discursive realignment that paved the way for a reduction in ABC women's sports media. Further, the evidence indicates that the policy shift threatens PSM principles by accepting a discourse that limits the PSM role as articulated in a series of policy reports.

The research has shown how PSM policy documents have increasingly adopted discourses of efficiency, commodification and market competition to articulate and organise the ABC's policy role and activity. Public service media policy has been subject to a repositioning in a broader media policy framework that frames markets as inevitable and naturally occurring forces. An outcome of the policy discourses was that the ABC failed to adopt innovative approaches to women's sports content delivery in the face of increasing sports media marketisation. Further, adopting such discourses effectively required the ABC to withdraw from its long history of women's sports media leadership with decisions from the early 2010s to limit and all but completely remove women's sports content on television and online screen platforms. The findings of this research highlight the implication of this ABC decision. A consequence

of the framing of ABC decision-making within market discourses has been an absence of a range of women's sports in Australian media, especially on freely available content. The policy change has compromised PSM principles to the extent that the ABC has accepted that, in relation to one genre, sport, it is not even a market failure broadcaster, a policy approach that would have required focusing on sports (especially women's sports) that are not able to attract other media attention. This abandonment, even if only in terms of a single genre, of a historically significant comprehensive **and** complementary media role, represents a major shift in Australian media policy. The discursive reframing of PSM policy is delegitimising the ABC's role, as the market is now the mechanism for policy decision making, such as delivering women's sports media. Equally important, abandoning a whole genre, women's sports media, can be analysed as also abandoning key components of public service media principles. The evidence points to a fundamental reshaping of principles of comprehensiveness and complementarity. These principles articulated as "the National sector should seek to program for mass audiences **as well** as special interest groups [emphasis added]" (Dix, 1981, Vol 2, 3.16) have been replaced by policy discourses of efficiency, core business and adherence to market principles. The policy reframing and the discourses adopted in media policy documentation indicate, then, a compromising of long-standing public service media principles.

Limitations

The scope of the project, examining the discourses in media policy documents over almost forty years, provides the opportunity to conduct a major comparative content and discourse analysis that provides important research findings. Nonetheless, a

research project of such scope presents issues regarding the period covered and the volume of material examined. Each report examined potentially provides a deeper range of material for analysis that may contribute to both historical contexts for media policy research than can be addressed in a single research project. For example, further analysis of the political economy contexts in which each report was presented would provide further insights into the political discourses deployed. Also, while a case for the four reports on which this research focused has been argued, there are other policy documents that could not be included, even within a discussion of the policy context, such as various media policy reports on ‘anti-siphoning’ (Rowe, 2013) and the 2018 report on competitive neutrality about the ABC and SBS (Kerr et al., 2018).

Further, it is significant that this project is the first to have undertaken the analyses and developed the findings noted. Nonetheless, the project would have been enhanced by having models on which to approach Australian media policy discourses. It is hoped that it will assist others in conducting future research.

Further research

There is an opportunity for further research to examine the discourses of market-oriented ideologies in other aspects of Australian media policy. Important contributions to media policy scholarship could be gained from analysis of how a neoliberal market discourse is erasing historically formed media policy that adopts strong interventions in framing media systems, including articulating policy principles about universality, and concepts of comprehensiveness and complementarity in public service media.

The analysis of discursive frameworks of recent media policy in this research could be extended to other media policy documents, such as the Media Reform Green Paper (2020). A contribution could also be made to important recent scholarship about Australia's sports media policy, including sports media markets and anti-siphoning policies (for example, Hutchins et al., 2019; Rowe et al., 2023) through research using discourse analysis approaches to the media policy documents (reports, legislation, explanatory memoranda) relating to Australia's anti-siphoning sports media policy. These contain important discourses about media, including sports media and PSM policy.

The significant transformations in Australian public service media policy over recent years, including as demonstrated in this research, are an area for analysis by media scholars. Almost no critical research has examined the array of policy documents, including 2011 and 2013 Senate reports on outsourcing ABC content production (Australian Senate, 2011; 2013) and a report on the competitive neutrality of the ABC and SBS (Kerr et al., 2018). The reshaping of PSM policy discourse, and the resulting change in the ABC role concerning women's sports media, indicate a significant research gap in investigating the current and future articulation of public service media principles in the Australian context.

This research has included analysis of the ideological framing of national identity in Australian media policy discourses, focused on women's sports and public service media policy discourses. There is value in conducting more comprehensive research that examines the ideological formations of national identity in media policy, especially the continuing influence, impacts and resistance to historically formed discourses of a

white, Anglo, settler, male national identity. A particular area for research lies in exploring how discourses of neoliberalism reframe media policy through historically normalised definitions of national identity, including the significance of colonial and neo-colonial continuities in the ideological framing of national identity.

There is also a significant research opportunity to apply a discursive analysis of women's sports media documents in other national media policy frameworks. Analogous case study opportunities are in other 'post' British imperial nations, such as an investigation of Indian women's cricket, briefly discussed in Chapter Three. The historical and contemporary discourses of colonialism, post-colonialism, gender and sport as an identifier of the nation provide an appropriate context for analysis of national media policies, such as, for example, the development of Indian cricket media coverage of (men's) Indian Premier League (Majumdar, 2011) and the Women's Premier League (WPL) in 2023.

There is also value in data gathering and analysis of the amount of women's sports on Australian media platforms, including free-to-air (FTA), subscription (STV) television, and streamed content. No new research has been conducted about FTA or STV output for a decade, and there has been no published research about streamed sports content. The increasingly complex media distribution and screening environment (especially the impact of digital giants on sports media delivery) places an urgency on the need for such research. Further and more detailed research about the amount of women's sports on various platforms and media outlets, including OTT streaming, commercial and PSB FTA and STV, could provide the opportunity to analyse the presence of

women's sports media on traditional and new platforms in the context of market-oriented media policies.

Conclusion

This project has examined the discourses of women's sports in Australian media policy, demonstrating a shift in policy discourses. The four media policy reports that are the focus of this research represent significant moments in Australian media policy history. The early 1980s discourse that sought to enhance media regulation to address structural and historical discrimination has been replaced by a dominance of neoliberal ideologies that frame the market as the opportunity and solution for policy challenges. This ideological dominance is reshaping the role of organisations like the ABC as the traditional principles that underpin public service media policy are replaced by market rationalisation. This reorganisation of media policy threatens PSM's future as part of the media system. Further, the changing discourses of Australian women's sports media policy mean that discourses of national identity are now invoked on behalf of the market with implications for the presence of women's sport in the media.

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⁷² Reprinted from Williams, R. (1977). *Marxism and Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), pp. 55-71.

Appendices

Appendix A

Australian PSB/PSM Reports and Women's Sports media reports

Doc #	Year	Short-form title; PSB/PSM reports	Document Name
1.1	1981	Dix Review (Vol 1 & Vol 2)	The ABC in Review: National Broadcasting in the 1980s: Report (Dix, 1981).
1.2	1988	Review of national broadcasting policy (DOTAC)	Department of Transport and Communications Review of national broadcasting policy: Discussion papers (DOTAC, 1988).
1.3	1997	Mansfield Review	The Challenge of a Better ABC: The review of the role and functions of the ABC (Mansfield, 1997).
1.4	1999	Productivity Commission Broadcasting Report	Productivity Commission. (2000). <i>Broadcasting: final report.</i>
1.5	2008	ABC submission: Towards a digital future	ABC submission to the Department of Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy Discussion Paper "ABC and SBS: Towards a digital future."
1.6	2008	ABC & SBS: Towards a digital future	ABC and SBS: Towards a digital future. Discussion paper (DBCDE, 2008).
1.7	2008	Digital Future	ABC and SBS: Towards a digital future. Final. DBCDE.
1.8	2011	ABC submission: programming decisions	ABC submission: Senate References Committee on Environment and Communications Inquiry into recent ABC programming decisions.
1.9	2011	ABC programming decisions – September 2011	Senate References Committee on Environment and Communications Inquiry into recent ABC programming decisions.
1.10	2013	ABC submission ABC & Regional Diversity	ABC Submission to Senate Committee: The ABC's commitment to reflecting and representing regional diversity
1.11	2013	ABC & Regional Diversity	Australian Senate. (2013) Inquiry into the ABC's commitment to reflecting and representing regional diversity.
1.12	2014	National Commission of Audit	2014 National Commission of Audit: Towards Responsible Government. Australian Government, 2014
1.13	2014	DCA	ABC and SBS efficiency study. Department of Communications and the Arts (DoCA). (DCA, 2014)
1.14	2018	ABC submission CNI	ABC. (2018). Submission: Inquiry into the Competitive Neutrality of the National Broadcasters.
1.15	2018	CNI	Inquiry into the Competitive Neutrality of the National Broadcasters —report by the Expert Panel (Kerr et al., 2018)
1.16	2018	Tonagh & Bean	National Broadcasters Efficiency Review Tonagh & Bean, 2018).
1.17	2020	Media Reform Green Paper	Media Reform Green Paper: Modernising television regulation in Australia (Commonwealth, 2020)
Doc #	Year	Short title -Sports media reviews	Document Name
2.1	1985	<i>Women, sport and the media</i>	Australian Sports Commission and Office of the Status of Women. <i>Women, sport and the media: a report to the federal government from the Working Group on Women in Sport.</i>
2.2	1992	<i>Half Way to Equal</i>	House of Representatives Standing Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs. <i>Half Way to Equal: Report the inquiry into equal opportunity and equal status for women in Australia.</i>

2.3	1994	<i>Invisible games</i>	Sport and Recreation Ministers' Council (Australia) & Stoddart & Australian Sports Commission. Women and Sport Unit. <i>Invisible games: a report on the media coverage of women's sport.</i>
2.4	1997	<i>An illusory image</i>	Phillips & Australian Sports Commission Women and Sport Unit. <i>An illusory image: a report on the media coverage and portrayal of women's sport in Australia.</i>
2.5	2004	ABC submission: Anti-Siphoning Bill 2004	ABC. Senate Environment, Communications, Information Technology and the Arts Committee into provisions of the Broadcasting Services Amendment (Anti-Siphoning) Bill 2004.
2.6	2004	Senate Inquiry: Anti-Siphoning Bill 2004	Senate Environment, Communications, Information Technology and the Arts Committee into the provisions of the Broadcasting Services Amendment (Anti-Siphoning) Bill 2004.
2.7	2006	ABC submission Senate Inquiry into Women's Sport	ABC submission Senate Inquiry into Women in Sport and Recreation in Australia, 2006
2.8	2006	<i>About time</i>	Senate Environment, Communications, Information Technology and the Arts References Committee. <i>About time: Women in sport and recreation in Australia.</i>
2.9	2009	ABC submission: inquiry into reporting of sports news	ABC Submission Senate inquiry into the reporting of sports news and the emergence of digital media.
2.10	2009	Reporting of Sports News & Emergence of Digital Media	Senate Committee on Environment, Communications and the Arts. <i>The Reporting of Sports News and the Emergence of Digital Media.</i>
2.11	2009	Crawford Report: <i>the future of sport</i> in Australia	Crawford, Department of Health and Ageing, Commonwealth of Australia <i>The future of sport in Australia.</i>
2.12	2010, 2014	<i>Towards a level playing field</i>	Australian Sports Commission (Lumby et al.). (revised, 2014). <i>Towards a level playing field: sport and gender in Australian media.</i>
2.13	2013	Future of Australian sport	CSIRO future of Australian sport
2.14	2014	<i>Women in sport broadcasting analysis</i>	Repucom for Australian Sports Commission <i>Women in sport broadcasting analysis—final report.</i>
2.15	2017	Intergenerational Review of Australian Sport	ASC (Australian Sports Commission) and The Boston Consulting Group). 2017. Intergenerational Review of Australian Sport.
2.16	2017	<i>Women In Sport</i>	Accenture, <i>Women In Sport</i> report
		PSB reports	
3.1		ABC Annual Report (year)	

Appendix B

Interview Permission Consent Form sent to each interviewee



Department of Media and Communications
Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences

ABN 15 211 513 464

Associate Professor Benedetta Brevini
Chief Investigator (Supervisor)

John Woolley Building A20
The University of Sydney
NSW 2006 AUSTRALIA
Telephone: +61 2 9351 4734

Email: benedetta.brevini@sydney.edu.au
Web: <http://www.sydney.edu.au/>

**The Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC) and national identity:
ideology, hegemony, and gender in ABC women's sports media**

PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

I, [PRINT NAME], agree to take part in this research study.

In giving my consent I state that:

- ✓ I understand the purpose of the study, what I will be asked to do, and any risks/benefits involved.
- ✓ I have read the Participant Information Statement and have been able to discuss my involvement in the study with the researchers if I wished to do so.
- ✓ The researchers have answered any questions that I had about the study and I am happy with the answers.
- ✓ I understand that being in this study is completely voluntary and I do not have to take part. My decision whether to be in the study will not affect my relationship with the researchers or anyone else at the University of Sydney now or in the future.
- ✓ I understand that if I do not wish to be audio recorded I can still participate by providing background information to the researcher.
- ✓ I understand that I can withdraw from the study at any time.
- ✓ I understand that I may stop an interview at any time if I do not wish to continue, and that unless I indicate otherwise any recordings will then be erased and the information provided

will not be included in the study. I also understand that I may refuse to answer any questions I don't wish to answer.

- ✓ I understand that if consent to an audio recording of an interview, a transcript will be provided to me and I will be given three weeks to review and provide comments on the transcribed recording, including how I would like to be attributed, e.g., my position title.
- ✓ I understand that personal information about me that is collected over the course of this project will be stored securely and will only be used for purposes that I have agreed to. I understand that information about me will only be told to others with my permission, except as required by law.
- ✓ I understand that I may consent to be identified as part of the research.
- ✓ I understand that the results of this study may be published, and that publications will not contain my name or any identifiable information about me unless I have consented to be identified.

I consent to:

- | | | | | |
|---|-----|--------------------------|----|--------------------------|
| • Being identified in the research | YES | <input type="checkbox"/> | NO | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Audio-recording | YES | <input type="checkbox"/> | NO | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Reviewing transcripts | YES | <input type="checkbox"/> | NO | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Would you like to receive feedback about the overall results of this study?

YES NO

If you answered **YES**, please indicate your preferred form of feedback and address:

Postal: _____

Email: _____

.....
Signature

.....
PRINT name

.....
Date

Appendix C

Participant Information Statement sent to each participant



Discipline of Media and Communication
School of Literature, Art and Media
Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences

ABN 15 211 513 464

**Associate Professor Benedetta
Brevini**
Chief Investigator (Supervisor)

A20 - John Woolley Building
The University of Sydney
NSW 2006 AUSTRALIA
Telephone: +61 2 9351 4734
Email: benedetta.brevini@sydney.edu.au
Web: <http://www.sydney.edu.au/>

**The Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC) and national identity:
ideology, hegemony, and gender in ABC women's sports media**

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION STATEMENT

(1) What is this study about?

You are invited to take part in a research study about the processes by which Australian national identity is constructed through an examination of the Australian Broadcasting Corporation's (ABC) role in women's sport. The project seeks to understand whether women's sports media is constituted as part of or in opposition to national identity. It does this by examining key public service media (PSM) and women's sports media policy from 1980 to 2018, and charts and interrogates national media policy frameworks and ABC policies. The two documentary strands of public policy are broadcasting / PSM reports, and inquiries into women's sports media representation.

You have been invited to participate in this study because you are a person who has worked in sports media, or have developed public broadcasting policy, or you have professional experience and knowledge of sports media activities and/or Australian media policy, especially relating to the ABC. This Participant Information Statement tells you about the research study. Knowing what is involved will help you decide if you want to take part in the research. Please read this sheet carefully and ask questions about anything that you don't understand or want to know more about.

Participation in this research study is voluntary.

By giving your consent to take part in this study you are telling us that you:

- ✓ Understand what you have read.
- ✓ Agree to take part in the research study as outlined below.
- ✓ Agree to the use of your personal information as described.

You will be given a copy of this Participant Information Statement to keep.

(2) Who is running the study?

The study is being carried out by Michael Ward, PhD student, Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, as the basis for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy at The University of Sydney. He is being supervised by Associate Professor Benedetta Brevini.

For the purpose of transparency, Michael Ward was an employee of the ABC from 1999 to 2017. However, he is not currently employed by the institution or in receipt of any ABC funding.

The study was not requested or commissioned by the ABC and is completely independent of the ABC despite the researcher being formerly employed by the ABC

(3) What will the study involve for me?

As part of the research, you will be asked to participate in a semi-structured interview of around 60 to 90 minutes at a time and public place of your choosing. The questions will ask about your experience and knowledge of PSM policy and women's sports media, including your role.

With your consent an audio recording of the interview will be made.

If you have consented to an audio recording of an interview, this will later be transcribed and a copy of the transcript provided to you for review. You will have a period of three weeks in which to review and provide any feedback, including how you would like to be attributed, e.g., your position title. There will be an opportunity for you to review any material based on your interview that is included in the research outputs (thesis, journal articles and conference presentations). You can choose to be identified in the research or assigned a general attribution (e.g. "ABC producer..."). If you do not want the interview recorded, you can still contribute background information to the research.

If you agree to the recording, you will have the opportunity to review any quotes attributed to you or your generic identity before publication of the research.

(4) How much of my time will the study take?

It is anticipated that the interview will take around 60- to 90 minutes. At a later date, an estimated 30 minutes will be required to review transcripts of audio recordings if you have agreed to a recorded interview and to approve any material to be included in the research.

(5) Who can take part in the study?

Participant's being approached for this research include those who have worked on the commissioning, research, production and/or delivery of live and recorded sports content on television or radio, who made decisions about television sports programming and PSM policy leaders. This includes sports journalists, commentators, producers, executive producers, commissioning editors, heads of department and senior PSM executives who worked on PSM strategy and policy. Participants also include people who have been engaged in Australian media policy scholarship, research or analysis, focussing on PSM.

(6) Do I have to be in the study? Can I withdraw from the study once I've started?

Being in this study is completely voluntary, and you do not have to take part. Your decision whether to participate will not affect your current or future relationship with the researchers or anyone at the University of Sydney.

If you decide to take part in the study and then change your mind later, you are free to withdraw at any time. You can do this by emailing Michael Ward, advising you wish to withdraw.

You are free to stop the interview at any time. Unless you say that you want us to keep them, any recordings will be erased and the information you have provided will not be included in the study results. You may also refuse to answer any questions you do not wish to answer during the interview.

(7) Are there any risks or costs associated with being in the study?

No. The research does not seek any information that will be harmful to participants, including reputational, legal or economic harm. If any information is revealed in the interview process that you consider may be harmful to you, you will have the opportunity to have that information removed and excluded from the research. Aside from giving up your time, we do not expect that there will be any risks or costs associated with taking part in this study.

(8) Are there any benefits associated with being in the study?

No, we cannot guarantee that you will receive any direct benefits from being in the study. However, there may be benefits, such as the further development of women's sports media policy.

(9) What will happen to information about me that is collected during the study?

By providing your consent, you are agreeing to us collecting information about your involvement in PSB sports broadcasting for the purposes of this research study. Your information will only be used for the purposes outlined in this Participant Information Statement.

Your information will be stored securely and will only be disclosed with your permission, except as required by law. Study findings may be published. However, you will only be identified in these publications if you consent to this.

(10) Can I tell other people about the study?

Yes, you are welcome to tell other people about the study.

(11) What if I would like further information about the study?

When you have read this information, Michael Ward will be available to discuss it with you and answer any questions you may have. If you would like to know more at any stage during the study, please contact Michael at mwar7704@uni.sydney.edu.au or Benedetta Brevini at benedetta.brevini@sydney.edu.au.

(12) Will I be told the results of the study?

You can tell us that you wish to receive feedback on the overall results of the study by completing the feedback section on the Participant Consent Form. This feedback will be in the form of a summary of the research findings. You will receive this feedback after the study is finished. The thesis will also be publicly available via the University of Sydney library.

(13) What if I have a complaint or any concerns about the study?

Research involving humans in Australia is reviewed by an independent group of people called a Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC). The ethical aspects of this study have been approved by the HREC of the University of Sydney [*INSERT protocol number once approval is obtained*]. As part of this process, we have agreed to carry out the study according to the *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (2007)*. This statement has been developed to protect people who agree to take part in research studies.

If you are concerned about the way this study is being conducted or you wish to make a complaint to someone independent from the study, please contact the university using the details outlined below. Please quote the study title and protocol number:

The Manager, Ethics Administration, University of Sydney:

- **Telephone:** +61 2 8627 8176
- **Email:** human.ethics@sydney.edu.au
- **Fax:** +61 2 8627 8177 (Facsimile)

This information sheet is for you to keep

Appendix D

Interview questions

The research employed semi-structured, expert interviews to sports media broadcasters and journalists, executive producers and heads of television sports departments. Interview were also conducted with ABC policy leaders, including managing directors and other senior executives and Australian media scholars, especially those who have focussed on PSM or sports media.

Group 1: Women's sports broadcasting production personnel.

Group 1 questions: Women's sports broadcasting

1. Can you describe your work in sports media? What is your most memorable viewing or broadcast you felt contributed to the way people thought about Australia?
2. How important is sport to a sense of nation and identity?
3. How important is coverage in the development of women's sport?
4. Does women's sports media challenge or change the way people think about sport or who we are as a nation?
5. What factors have helped develop women's sport? For example, changes in society and sport (e.g., sponsorship, govt. policies)
6. Does the ABC have to deliver women's sport as part of its remit? Why?
7. Have digital/online services changed the ABC sports role?

Group 2 questions: (Women's) sports broadcasting executives.

1. Can you describe your work in sports media? What is your most memorable viewing and/or broadcast that you felt was contributing to a sense of being Australian?
2. How important is sport to a sense of being Australian(s)?
3. Women's sport on television and streaming services has developed considerably in recent years, with an increased broadcast of many sports. What influenced increased media coverage of women's sports?
4. Can you talk about how the ABC TV/radio sports department worked in terms of state, regional and national sports? How were decisions made about women's sports?
5. Does women's sport media challenge or change the way people think about sport or who we are as a nation?
6. Is there an ABC ethos? How does it relate to women's sports?
7. Does the ABC have an impact through broadcasting sport/women's sport?
8. Have digital/online services (including more commercial services) changed the role of ABC sports programming?

Group 3: questions: Australian PSB strategic leaders.

1. Can you describe your work in media? What are/were your roles?
2. You have been involved in the development of media policy. How do you think the policy process shaped ABC action in terms of programming, content or platforms?
3. How important is sport to a sense of being Australian(s)?

4. Is there an ABC ethos?
5. How important is the ABC to a sense of being Australian(s)?
6. Women's sport on television and streaming services has developed considerably in recent years (pre-Covid-19), with an increased broadcast of many sports. How important was/is media coverage in the development of women's sports?
7. Does women's sport media challenge or change the way people think about sport? About what it means to be Australian? About women in Australia?
8. Does the ABC have an impact through broadcasting sport/women's sport? How?
9. Have digital/online services (including more commercial services) changed the role of ABC sports programming?

Group 4: Australian media policy scholars and researchers.

1. Can you describe your work in media policy scholarship and research?
2. You have been involved in research about media policy, including PSB/PSM policy. Do you think the historical PSB/PSM reviews (1981, 1988, 1997, 2008, 2018) have framed the way the ABC has "contributed to a sense of national identity" ABC action in terms of programming, content or platforms? If so, how?
3. Are PSB principles discernible in these policy review processes?
4. Are those principles/ the Charter relevant to the development of women's sports on ABC television/television/radio?
5. How important is sport to a sense of being Australian(s)?
6. Does women's sport media challenge or change the way people think about sport? About women in Australia? Or about what it means to be Australian?
7. Women's sport on television and streaming services has developed considerably in recent years (pre-Covid-19), with an increased broadcast of many sports. How important was/is media coverage in the development of women's sports?
8. Does the ABC have to deliver women's sport? Why?
9. Did ABC broadcast of women's sports help develop women's sports media?
10. Have digital/online services (including more commercial services) changed the role of ABC sports programming?

Appendix E

Volumes 1 and 2 The ABC in Review: National Broadcasting in the 1980s [Dix report]

Vol	Part	Chapter heading	Main Code/theme	para #
1	1	Our General Conclusions: National Broadcasting in the 1980s		1-7
1	1	Our General Conclusions: Questions Australians would like answered about the ABC		8-105
1	2	Summary of Principal Recommendations		106-108
1	3	Our Legislative Recommendations		109-110
2	1	Introduction		1.1-1.18
2	2	Summary of Recommendations		2.2-2.3
2	3	The National Broadcasting Service		3.1-3.17
2	4	The origins and Growth of National Broadcasting in Australia		4.1-4.44
2	5	ABC Independence and the Public Interest		5.1-5.43
2	6	The Management of National Broadcasting		6.1-6.79
2	7	The ABC and the Audience		7.1-7.57
2	8	Development of the ABC's Radio Networks		8.1-8.66
2	9	Development of the ABC's Television Network		9.1-9.94
2	10	Informing Australia- The ABC's Primary Role		10.1-10.104
2	11	Programming and Programs	Women(s)/sport	11.1-11.239
2	12	Some Special Program Issues		12.1-12.56
2	13	The ABC and Australian Content		13.1-13.61
2	14	The ABC and Music		14.1-14.89
2	15	The ABC and Education		15.1-15.148
2	16	Radio Australia		16.1-16.99
2	17	The ABC's Archives and Records		17.1-17.31
2	18	Merchandising		18.1-18.44
2	19	Funding of National Broadcasting		19.1-19.108
2	20	Financial Management and planning		20.1-20.187
2	21	Training		21.1-21.
2	22	Personnel Management and Industrial Relations		22.1-22.211
2	23	The Overseas Visits Committee		23.1-23.21
2	24	Property & Buildings		24.1-24.52
2	25	The National Service Transmitters		25.1-25.61
2	26	The Structure of the Organisation		26.1-26.120
2	27	Future issues for the ABC		27.1-27.42
		Attachments		1-8

Source: Dix, Vol 1, 1981

Appendix F

Media policy report coding examples

1985 *Women sport and the media* Report Coding

Term	Context	Comment	Reference
Australia(s)/ Australian(s)	“w]hen the ... Working Group sat down for their first meeting...they knew there were some fundamental problems facing Australian women and sport	Policy framing discourse in report, foregrounds issue as a problem	ASC & OSW, 1985, p. 9
Australia(s)/ Australian(s)	The test celebrated 50 years of competition at that level between England and Australia	Cricket used as example of significance of women's sport and its erasure from public knowledge	ASC & OSW, 1985, p. 13
Australia(s)/ Australian(s)	Women's sport in Australia ... suffered the consequences of a long tradition of prejudice and lack of concern. ... caused by the inadequate coverage of women's sport in the media	Part of invoking evidence of gendered discrimination. Discursive framework emphasises the historical conditions that shaped women's sports.	ASC & OSW, 1985, p. 33
Australia(s)/ Australian(s)	Sport will take its place along with arts, economic enterprise and technology as areas of human endeavour representing the widest range of abilities which shape our changing Australian culture.	Discourse frames sport as important political and cultural form.	ASC & OSW, 1985, p. 56
Nation/ National/nationally	i]t is only on intermittent occasions that sportswomen in Australia attract great attention”	Invokes ideas of the nation and identity critically.	
Sport	[There] was the almost complete lack of knowledge of the activities and achievements of and spectator support for women in sport in Australia. People who claimed that public demand was the basis for decision making admitted that they were unaware of the numbers attending women's sporting events.	Report confronts ‘common sense’ ideas that are drawn on in discourses such as media reporting and coverage, especially media decision making	ASC & OSW, 1985, p. 34
Sport	Television has had a major impact on the definition and interpretation of ‘news values’ when it came to sport	Discourse recognises the development of sports media as significant.	ASC & OSW, 1985, p. 34
Sport	[The Adelaide Advertiser, 3 April 1985] Australia has produced its sporting heroines, ‘men historically gathered for games and captured the public interest as a group, just as they dominated decision-making’	The Advertiser editorial written about the decision to establish The Women in Sports Media inquiry.	ASC & OSW, 1985, p. 34

Sport	[A] balance must be struck if women's sport is to receive a greater share of airtime and resources. Especially when dealing with commercial media - and it should be remembered that the vast majority of Australians receive their news, information and entrainment from commercial television- sporting associations need to know and bear in mind the pressures on those organisations and the criteria which they are looking to satisfy when making a decision.	Despite highlighting the lack of objective criteria in media decision making and a long history of ideological framing of discrimination, the report gives voice to a 'liberal' notion of balance. That is women's sport must bear some responsibility for its lack of media coverage.	ASC & OSW, 1985, p. 35
Sport	In discussions with the [Australian Broadcasting] tribunal, it was suggested that it would not necessarily be productive to embark on an intrusive process of regulation to ensure greater attention buy individual stations to women's sport.	Despite children's programs, drama, documentary, and overall Australian content regulations steadily increased for commercial TV since 1961.	ASC & OSW, 1985, p. 38
Sport	The policy statement on 'adequate and comprehensive' provides a number of important avenues that should be explored by women in sporting associations in seeking a better deal from their local media organisations	The Report placed responsibility on local sporting associations to pursue needs at licence hearings. Inconsistent with findings.	ASC & OSW, 1985, p. 38
ABC	That the Charter of the ABC be amended to include 'sport' so that it will be required to 'encourage and promote all sports in Australia, including women's sports'	While not adopting a neoliberal ideology the 1985 Report privileged market, while seeing the ABC as having PSB responsibility	ASC & OSW, 1985, p. 7
ABC	The Group recognised quickly that certain key distinctions must be drawn between the commercial media and the ABC in establishing the extent to which activities, decisions making and priorities can be influenced.	While not adopting a neoliberal ideology the 1985 Report privileged market, while seeing the ABC as having PSB responsibility	ASC & OSW, 1985, p. 36
ABC	... there is considerable scope for the ABC to improve its record not only in the coverage of women's sport but also in the employment and training of more women as sports journalists and sports casters	Contrast with ABC record as noted in Chapters 4 and 7	ASC & OSW, 1985, p. 36
women	The coverage of women's sport by all media in Australia is at the moment grossly inadequate	Women's sports erased from sports history	ASC & OSW, 1985, p. 11
women	... the coverage of the 1984-85 summer of the tests between the English and Australian women's cricket team would have been the first they knew that Australia even had an international women's cricket team	Cricket is articulated in the reports as a distinctive contributor to the identification of sport and the construction of the nation.	ASC & OSW, 1985, p. 13

women	The history of women's involvement in sport is long, illustrious and almost completely ignored	Women's sports erased from sports history and as part of construction of national identity is a key component of report's discursive strategy	ASC & OSW, 1985, p. 14
women	"You won't see many women on television playing cricket, football, rugby, soccer, baseball or riding racehorses, not because women don't play these sports, but because they are not normally considered newsworthy" [Mitchell & Dyer, 1985, p. 4]	Media decision making processes are highlighted as problematic and ideologically framed	ASC & OSW, 1985, p. 15
Women(s)	The history of women's cricket holds a particularly important place in the wider story [of women's sport]	Another framing of cricket's central role in nation forming	ASC & OSW, 1985, p. 15
women's/feminine	... the first 'mistake' these and many other women made was to take up and become serious about sport... By doing so, they violated codes of acceptability that patrol the borders between masculinity and femininity [sic]	Sports media discourse reinforce gendered identities and ensures few positive media role models for girls and women	ASC & OSW, 1985, p. 16
masculine	It is for that reason that 'the female athlete places her femininity in jeopardy and risks being labelled as masculine if she makes a serious commitment to sport	Women as "outsiders" leads to lack of media attention - an ideological "process of institutionalised discrimination [that] is sanctioned and reinforced"	ASC & OSW, 1985, p. 17
Market(s), marketplace	marketing, ... more likely are they to succeed in persuading them to help if they can present facts and figures that show to the sponsor the size and quality of the direct and indirect 'market	While articulating a strong regulatory stance, the Report showed an awareness of early marketisation rhetoric	ASC & OSW, 1985, p. 29

1992 *Half Way to Equal* Report terms and themes

Code	Text example	Comment	Reference
Australia(s)/ Australian(s)	Popular history has not adequately recorded the enormous contribution that women have made to Australia.	Women erased from nation through sport erasure.	Australian House of Representatives, 1992, p. xv
Australia(s)/ Australian(s)	Sport is an integral and prominent part of the Australian lifestyle... Most of our national heroes are sportsmen or sportswomen and... millions of Australians watch or play sport	Sport invoked as part of national identity	Australian House of Representatives, 1992, p. 108
Australia(s)/ Australian(s)	The Australian Broadcasting Tribunal has the responsibility of ensuring commercial broadcasters provide an 'adequate and comprehensive' service.... It is open for the Tribunal or its successor to inquire on the coverage of women's sport"	The Report adopts a regulatory articulation for intervention in sport media.	Australian House of Representatives, 1992, p. xxxi

Australia(s)/ Australian(s)	The Committee - Australian Broadcasting Tribunal inquire into whether there is an 'adequate and comprehensive coverage' of women in sport in the media and ... need to establish a program standard for the coverage of women in sport	The Report adopts a regulatory articulation for intervention in sports media.	Australian House of Representatives, 1992, p. xxxi).
Women's sports	dominant ideology in sport is one of patriarchy, and that sports reporting both reflects this ideology and reinforces sport as a masculine activity... non-traditional women's sports are labelled as 'unnatural, biologically dangerous and definitely unappealing to the spectator...unnatural is either excluded or demeaned [in any media coverage]' 26	The report invokes patriarchal ideology, albeit via an expert witness.	Australian House of Representatives, 1992, p. 121

1997 *An Illusory Image: A report on the Media Coverage of and Portrayal of Women's Sport in Australia* coded terms and themes

Code	Text example	Comment	Reference
Australia(s)/ Australian(s)	The achievements of Australian women at the Commonwealth Games is equally impressive.	Compares data on media representation of Australian women athletes and/or sports with men's sports and/or athletes	Phillips, 1997, p. 1.
Australia(s)/ Australian(s)	that women's sport is not valued in Australian society"	Reference to lack of women's sports coverage in the media reflecting wider ideological context	Phillips, 1997, p. 7
Women's sports	Despite these achievements, our surveys of media coverage of women's sport (in 1980 and 1984 reported in Menzies 1989; in 1988 reported in Gordon 1989, and in 1992 reported in Stoddart 1994) have unequivocally shown that the mass media has underrepresented women's sport.	The report framed the lack of women's sports media coverage in a historical context of discrimination, using the success of women's sports and athletes to demonstrate discriminatory behaviour.	Phillips, 1997, p. 1.
ABC	ABC television "regularly showed netball games and women's basketball as well as devoting airtime to mixed sporting events	The ABC is contrasted with commercial television.	Phillips, 1997, p. 12
market	identify and market key personalities... ideas for marketing your sport." (p. 27)	Most references to 'markets' were as promotions.	Phillips, 1997, p. 19

2006 *It's About Time!* Report: coded terms and themes

Term	Context	Comment	Reference
Australia(s)/ Australian(s)	The inquiry's terms of reference were to inquire into women in sport and recreation in Australia	Terms of Reference	Australian Senate, 2006, pp. 1-2
Australia(s)/ Australian(s)	There are great health benefits for all Australians that come with being physically ... solutions to the challenges faced by women's sport are not for women alone to implement	invocation of health benefits (synecdoche)	Australian Senate, 2006, p. 3
Australia(s)/ Australian(s)	Australians have continued to excel in elite sporting performance in the international context as a result of focussed investment by successive governments.	invocation of nation of sports people (synecdoche)	Australian Senate, 2006, p. 57
Australia(s)/ Australian(s)	Cricket Australia has no female representation on its board but increased female representation is an 'active goal' of the organisation.	See also coaches.	Australian Senate, 2006, pp. 78-79
Australia(s)/ Australian(s)	Cricket Australia noted that approximately five per cent of accredited coaches are female. Females in administrative and officiating roles are generally 'very low'.	See also board and management	Australian Senate, 2006, p. 92
National identity	Elite sport is essential to the Australian sport and recreation system ...providing inspirational role models for existing and future participation; and evoking local, regional and national identity and pride.	The single reference to national identity (excluding quoting ABC Charter).	Australian Senate, 2006, p. 57
Nation	It is important that we as a nation celebrate and value the contribution of sportswomen. (repeated p. 77)	Substantive reference to nation.	Australian Senate, 2006, p. 71
National	Increased participation in sport and recreation activities plays a role in promoting public health and social cohesion within the community, and is central to creating role models and inspiring greater participation and national pride	Substantive reference to nation.	Australian Senate, 2006, p. 77
ABC	The charter of the ABC requires it to 'broadcasting programs that contribute to a sense of national identity and inform and entertain, ... and in responding to this, it broadcasts significant amounts of women's sport	Critical of ABC despite major contribution.	Senate, 2006, p. 107
ABC	There may be scope for the coverage of women's sport to be improved through the increasing availability of additional channels, both through subscription television and through multichanneling... The ABC for example notes that: If the multichannel genre restrictions are lifted later this year, as	ABC planning for more sports including women's sports in 2006	Senate, 2006, p. 108

	planned, ABC2 will be able to broadcast international women's sporting events		
Broadcasting	The WA Sports Federation opposed [to] broadcasting regulation... [p]ublic support for a sport or event will determine what the media covers.	A single submission is quoted to support deregulatory approach	Senate, 2006, p. 110
Broadcasting	implementing such regulation would be difficult, as was acknowledged by some of its supporters. This would be a regulatory balancing act that would be hard to get right, and easy to get wrong ... hard to implement a level regulatory playing field between the commercial broadcasters.	Example of neoliberal discourse	Senate, 2006, p. 110
Broadcasting	There are also risks to women's sports if they are dragged into broadcasting before they are ready, and put on show purely because regulations required it. Requiring television channels to broadcast women's sport might result in them just increasing the use of overseas content.	Example of neoliberal discourse	Senate, 2006, p. 110
Women	Everyone in the media, male or female, needs to take every opportunity to give the diversity of sports the coverage they deserve. It is about time that women have enhanced opportunities, access, media coverage and roles in all sports and activities	Opportunities for women's sports media linked to individual initiatives	Australian Senate, 2006, p. 3
Women's	Women in Sport Media Group ... urged this inquiry to bring the benefits of regular increased media coverage on women's sport to the fore in its report and to recommend the adoption of strategies that will change the media scene for women in sport.	While noting submissions from women's sports organisations for action, the report adopted a discursive approach that endorsed a non-regulatory, market approach.	Australian Senate, 2006, p. 112
women's cricket	... Zoe Goss was one of Australia's top women cricketers when in 1994 she famously dismissed Brian Lara in a charity match. ⁶ Her compatriot Belinda Clark retired with nearly 4000 runs at an average better than that of Steve Waugh or Alan Border.	Highlighting of individual women's sports achievement - by focussing on women playing in men's sport	Australian Senate, 2006, p. 98
women's sport	Despite many great achievements, women's sport gets little media coverage.	As per previous reports	Australian Senate, 2006, p. 98
women's sport	only 2 per cent of coverage was for women's sport, and this was carried almost exclusively by non-commercial networks...	cites previous report	Australian Senate, 2006, p. 99
men's sport	men's sport has the advantage of incumbency. Men's sports have been reported for decades. They gain numerous advantages from this: familiarity to audiences; loyalties that have developed amongst viewers, including loyalties that are handed down	the pre-existing discourse of men's sport is acknowledged but not confronted.	Australian Senate, 2006, p. 102

	within families; established business models and business experience, reducing the risks of failure; cash flows that allow them to continually advertise and promote their products.		
	The WA Sports Federation opposed [to] broadcasting regulation... [p]public support for a sport or event will determine what the media covers.	a single sports organisation is quoted in expressing opposition to a regulatory approach	Australian Senate, 2006, p. 108
women's sport	... forcing some existing free-to-air channels to host women's sport broadcasting might undermine the ability of some subscription television channels and production companies to forge links with sporting organisations to produce women's sporting competitions for niche markets...	elaborated argument against regulation	Australian Senate, 2006, pp. 110-11
women's sport	could end up with free-to-air broadcasters [into] grudgingly doing a second-rate job of producing some women's sport, instead of enthusiastic partnerships between sport and media working to bring first-rate sports productions to audiences through digital channels or pay television	elaborated argument against regulation	Australian Senate, 2006, pp. 110-11
women's sport	Australian Government provide financial support, to be administered by the Australian Sports Commission, for initiatives that provide specific opportunities for greater ongoing coverage of women's sport	Support for direct funding for women's sport	Australian Senate, 2006, p. 112
women's sport	undertake an annual survey of coverage of women's sport"	echo previous reports for surveying media coverage	Australian Senate, 2006, p. 114
women's sport	The committee is disappointed at the continuing poor coverage of women's sport by all media ...	a discourse of disappointment	Australian Senate, 2006, p. 114
Sport	It is about time that women have enhanced opportunities, access, media coverage and roles in all sports and activities	Continued strong discourse of advocacy did not extend to a discourse of regulation	Australian Senate, 2006, p. 3
Sport	4 ... since Louise Sauvage retired we have not had a picture of a woman with a disability in a single national daily... There is not a thing about Paralympians or women with disabilities doing anything participatory at a national level. nothing at all.	In a discussion of media role models the issue of 'disability' sports models was raised.	Australian Senate, 2006, p. 50
market	Do we market the game so that we attract some media coverage and they look really good, or do you play the sport as it needs to be played at the really high level? 75"	citing a witness on the problematic of marketing, dress codes and media coverage	Australian Senate, 2006, p. 38

1981 Dix Inquiry coded terms and themes

Code	Text example	Comment	Reference
Australians	The ABC should continue its policy of providing programs of high quality with wide audience appeal and programs for diverse minority interests. We reject the notion that the ABC should confine itself to catering for a cultural or educated elite.	The Report links the scheduling of high-quality programs with its nation-building policy role. This is overtly stated in the summary of recs in Vol 2	Dix, 1981, Vol 1, para 21
Australians	[i]t is an important function of the ABC to assist Australians to interpret the world, to gain a knowledge of themselves as part of society, and to stimulate local artistic talent.	Statement of the Report's articulation of its view of the PSB's ideological role	Dix, 1981, Vol 1, 25
Australians	'the ABC' [is], for good reasons, part of Australian history and culture.	The Report links the abbreviation, role and recognition of the ABC to a wider concept of the nation – Australian history	Dix, 1981, Vol 1, 44
Australians	We recommend that the ABC should provide a national service for all Australians, balancing as best it can the need to provide quality mass appeal programming with the demand for a wide range of special or minority interest broadcasts.	The role of the PSB in nation-building is again linked to a comprehensive and complementary programming role (contrasts with other reports)	Dix, 1981, Vol 2, 2
Australia(s)/ Australian(s)	We recommend that the ... Broadcasting and Television Act 1942 for the Commission to provide 'adequate and comprehensive programs' be altered to read that the Commission (or its successor) 'provide to Australian society as a whole, and to its and to its component community groups, broadcasting and television programs which are informative, entertaining and innovative	The comprehensive and complementary programming role of the PSB as nation-building is extended in the recommendation	Dix, 1981, Vol 2, 2
Australia(s)/ Australian(s)	That the ABC continue and extend its activities as the national broadcasting organisation in Australia.	General reference to ABC national role	ABC submission to Review, Dix Vol 2, 1981, 2.3
Australia(s)/ Australian(s)	(b) a radio and television service which contributes to the growth of national unity and the development of Australian identity through programs designed to appeal to as many people as possible and taking particular account of the needs of people living outside the metropolitan areas	A are reference to the issue of contributing to national or Australian identity linked to programming decisions and delivery.	Dix, 1981, Vol 2, 2

Australia(s)/ Australian(s)	ABC submission to review: That the ABC continue and extend its activities as the national broadcasting organisation in Australia	The ABC articulated its national role to the Dix Review.	Dix, 1981, Vol 2, 3.1
Australia(s)/ Australian(s)	ABC submission: Between the end of World War II and 1970, broadcasting in Australia developed in an orderly fashion in accordance with the pattern established in the 1920s and 1930s. Both the commercial and National sectors were permitted to share the new medium, television, in a protective atmosphere which allowed for leisurely development of their respective spheres of influence...	General reference to Australia. However, note the refer to PSB as the 'National sector' to distinguish from commercial FTA television and radio. See also section 'markets' where this para also refers.	Dix, 1981, Vol 2, 3.1
Australia(s)/ Australian(s)	Rather, the ABC should attempt to develop unexploited kinds of popular programming, appealing to tastes which perhaps have not already been fully cultivated, and then endeavour through the quality of its productions to maintain high audience following for the programs concerned	While the commercial broadcasters supported the 'non-compete' concept, they objected to the view of the ABC as a national broadcaster and as a leader in innovation or 'pacesetter' (Green Report, 1976).	Dix, 1981, Vol 2, 3.13
Australia(s)/ Australian(s)	National sector should seek to program for mass audiences as well as special interest groups provided, in the judgment of the organisation, the programs have a standard of quality about them which distinguishes them from other programs directed to this segment of the audience. ...	Further reinforcement of the ABC's role as both comprehensive and complementary broadcaster linking the 'successful' achievement of that delivery to community support.	Dix, 1981, Vol 2, 3.16
Australia(s)/ Australian(s)	The ABC 's submission to ... stress on the national character of the Commission's service and its ability to cater for all Australians... the one organisation capable of contributing to the development of a sense of national unity. This is highlighted by its ability to ... reflect a strong sense of national identity	ABC submission – again assets its national and nation building role. The Report endorses the ABC view.	Dix, 1981, Vol 2, 3.17
Australia(s)/ Australian(s)	Such a definition [provide to Australian society ... and to its component community groups, broadcasting and television programs which are informative, entertaining and innovative] emphasises both the national role of the organisation and the requirement that it cater for special or minority interests.	The Report states the importance of articulating the ABC role national identity role in legislation. The first time this occurred.	Dix, 1981, Vol 2, 3.37

Australian	The Australian Broadcasting Commission, like most other Australian institutions which came into being before World War II, was modelled directly on its United Kingdom counterpart, the British Broadcasting Corporation. The BBC of Lord Reith inspired high respect in Australia in 1930	The term is used to denote the ABC as a public organisation based on UK model. The Report locates the ABC as part of an Imperial British history, where institutions take their form, role and place from the British Empire	Dix, 1981, Vol 2, 6.6
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Code	Text example	Comment	Reference
Nation/ National/nationally	People recognise that the ABC is different from other broadcasters. It provides a national service, and is not obliged to rely on simple ratings figures to determine the types of programs it broadcasts.	In another example of the Report's 'pre' neoliberal framing, the ABC identified as different and national, and market-oriented ratings should not apply.	Dix, 1981, Vol 1, 9
Nation	The ABC provides a large number of important public sector activities which the community or nation wants but which do not necessarily 'pay	The Report articulates a sense of the nation or community's ideas as a singular abstraction.	Dix, 1981, Vol 1, 82
National identity/identity	[T]he commercial and National sectors were permitted to share the new medium, television, in a protective atmosphere which allowed for leisurely development of their respective spheres of influence: dominance of the mass market for the commercials and a varied role for the ABC	The history of media policy is presented within the Report as an important context for the ABC's national identity role. The broadcasting sector a shared policy space	Dix, Vol 2, 3.1
National identity/identity	The ABC 's submission ... lays stress on the national character of the Commission's service and its ability to cater for all Australians... the one organisation capable of contributing to the development of a sense of national unity. This is highlighted by its ability to ... reflect a strong sense of national identity through the content and character of its programs, argues the ABC.	The ABC articulated its national role in both content and technical capacity terms. This it argued enabled it to 'reflect' national identity back to the nation.	Dix volume 2, 1981, 3.17
Nation/ National/nationally	We recommend the ABC should provide a national service for all Australians, balancing as best it can the need to provide quality mass appeal programming with the demand for a wide range of special or minority interest broadcasts	The Report endorsed the ABC national identity and nation building role.	Dix, Vol 2, 3.35

Nation/ National/nationally	ABC had established a “national image [and was]... the only television service which can be turned on nation-wide to provide national perspectives and news, the coverage of significant events and the provision of comment	The Report’s stated concept of ABC Television contribution to national identity through with a “national image’ that is delivered nationally and with a national perspective on news and events.	Dix, 1981, Vol 2, 11.17
Independent/ce	People recognise that the ABC is different from other broadcasters. It provides a national service, and is not obliged to rely on simple ratings figures to determine the types of programs it broadcasts.	The Report does not define “the people” but asserts a relationship with the ABC that recognises it as a different media organisation. It links to a statement of ABC independence	Dix, 1981, Vol 1, para 9
Independent/ce	Our investigations confirm the view that Australians feel strongly about the independence of the ABC. They want the organisation to be independent, and to be seen to be independent from outside interference, political and otherwise.	Noting it is based on ‘investigation’ the Report asserts the importance of ABC independence. This section titled “How important is the ABC’s independence” was followed later by a section “Is the ABC’s independence eroded by external controls?”	Dix, 1981, Vol 1, 32
Market(s), marketing, marketplace	Consistent with the publicly-funded nature of ABC’s television enterprise it should not be necessary for the ABC to bend to the exigencies of the commercial market place in television production to the same degree as commercially-financed television.	The report argued that the ABC did not need to become more ‘commercial’ in its programming given it was not subject to the commercial market	Dix, 1981, Vol 2, 9.85
Sport(s)/ing	Federation of Australian Commercial Television Stations advised that they believed any of their members would make available to the ABC signals of their broadcasts of sporting events free of charge to enable people to receive the broadcast where there was no commercial transmitter	The Report cited detailed evidence to support its idea that commercial FTA television would provide content to the ABC for regional broadcast.	Dix, 1981, Vol 2, 9.63.
Sport(s)/ing	Traditionally, Australia has developed a reputation as a sporting nation: an image resulting from the large number of Australian sportsmen and women who have gained international acclaim, and from Australians ' high level of interest in sporting activity both as players and as spectators.	The references recognised also articulated a link between sports, sports media and the ABC role in nation building and identification.	Dix, 1981, Vol 2, 11.111
Sport(s)/ing	The 'sporting nation' perception has been strongly reflected in the program output of Australian radio and television, both ABC and commercial. On ABC Television for example, sport occupies more transmission time than any other program category after education and drama.	The significance of sport to the ABC role was indicated by the amount of broadcast time allocated.	Dix, 1981, Vol 2, 11.111

Sport(s)/ing	Events such as major cricket series or tennis championships are therefore likely to dominate the airwaves at certain times of the year for long periods of the day, displacing other programs.	The dominance of sports such as cricket concerned the Report	Dix, 1981, Vol 2, 11.118
Sport(s)/ing	it is now time for the ABC to remove itself from the running [sports broadcasting] and divert at least some of this expenditure into other areas more appropriate for the national broadcaster	The Report was unequivocal about the contentious public debate about the ABC's loss of cricket and other sports rights.	1981, Vol 2, 11.127
Sport(s)/ing	There be no amendment to the Broadcasting and Television Act to provide that no organisation may gain exclusive television rights to sporting or other events	The Report opposed the ABC submission for a UK style regulatory approach that ensured some sports (e.g. test cricket) be available for PSB broadcast.	Dix, 1981, Vol 2, 11.128; Dix, 1981, Vol 2, Rec 68
Women	On ABC television, there are no programs designated as women's programs or designed for a primarily female audience.	Further indication of the Report's considerable space to analysing women's programming	Dix, 1981, Vol 2, 11.160
Public Service Broadcaster/ing (PSB)	a publicly owned corporation to provide public service broadcasting for Australians commanded bipartisan support in the Parliament... For the nation as a whole the strong publicly-owned broadcasting network would enable fuller benefit to be drawn from international broadcasting linkages	As noted above the Report linked bipartisan political support to PSB as a nation building exercise.	Dix, 1981, Vol 2, 4.33
Efficient	The need for the ABC to engage in planning all major aspects of its activities emerged early in our inquiries. Its failure to do so effectively has seriously affected the efficiency and responsiveness to change of the organisation.	The Reports discourse of effectiveness and efficiency was linked to a discussion of business operations and objectives	Dix Vol 1, 1981, para 37

2018 Tonagh- Bean Inquiry coded terms and themes

Code	Text example	Comment	Reference
Australia(s)/ Australian	The ABC and SBS have, over the past 20 years, significantly increased the scope of their services to the Australian public	The report’s rhetorical positioning of the ABC was not an endorsement of its commitment to PSM principles of universality, comprehensiveness and complementary. It was a critique of a ‘failure’ to focus on ‘core’.	Tonagh & Bean, 2018, p. 48
National identity/ identity	The ABC and SBS are vital public news and cultural institutions that strengthen Australia’s media diversity, contribute to the cultural and social fabric of the nation and represent a major Commonwealth contribution to civic journalism	Despite apparent endorsement the report focusses on a shift from universality of service and PSM principles to ‘core’ functions.	Tonagh & Bean, 2018, p. 56
National identity/ identity	Under its charter, the ABC is mandated to provide innovative and comprehensive services which contribute to a sense of national identity, inform, educate, entertain and reflect Australian cultural diversity.	Almost the only reference to ‘national identity’ is on the context the ABC charter. The report does not address how the concept of national identity is addressed through comprehensive and complementary services. In fact the report focusses on a shift from universality of service and PSM principles to ‘core’ functions.	Tonagh & Bean, 2018, p. 20 p. 36 & p. 11
National	We also found that the national broadcasters could achieve cost efficiencies in a number of areas.	The terms ‘nation’ and ‘national’ are principally used to describe the ABC and SBS, and invariably in a critical frame	Tonagh & Bean, 2018, p. 3
National	The terms of reference also recognise that it is appropriate that from time to time the national broadcasters be part of a review that provides advice to Government and to their respective boards about ways in which they could be more efficient	The report establishes its credentials in several ways including through a rationalisation of regular policy reviews and accountability rhetoric	Tonagh & Bean, 2018, p. 12
independence	The Australian Parliament has ensured that the ABC and SBS enjoy operational and editorial independence, and are responsible for meeting a broad range of requirements under their respective Charters, establishing Acts and other Acts. This legislated independence is the foundation of public broadcasting” (from Terms of Reference for review)	Despite apparent endorsement of the importance of PSM independence the Report does not address how independence is maintained in the increasingly commercialised media environment recommended	Tonagh, 2018, p. 16
Market(s), marketing, marketplace	This is in contrast to the sector-wide trends which shows an increase in radio consumption driven by the streamed radio and podcasting market	A discourse of efficiency, market and competition and the commodification of citizens as consumers is implicit in statements about ‘sector-wide trends’, that	Tonagh & Bean, 2018, p. 24

		are in fact commercial radio moves to 'segment audience into discrete markets.	
Market(s), marketing, marketplace	International and digital market participants actively compete with Australia's national and commercial broadcasters not only for audiences (and advertising revenue) but also for content.	The complexity of the various content 'markets' in which the ABC (as other media organisations) operates is briefly acknowledged.	Tonagh & Bean, 2018, p. 31
Market(s), marketing, marketplace	The emphasis of their programming investments has shifted towards favouring live viewing, where linear audiences remain relatively more resilient, to meet the shrinking overall advertising market.	As noted above the discursive strategy frames the ABC policy role in commercial market terms, as if markets are the only and natural form of media activity.	Tonagh & Bean, 2018, p. 32