**‘Why are they all looking at me?’: Watching women be fans in the stands**

Examining social surveillance is an under-explored area when it comes to self-surveillance and the perceived or prescribed gendered behaviours within sports fan culture. This paper explores what it feels like to be watched while watching, and the complex ways in which gendered practices complicate the position of women as spectators of sport. Through using the method of reflexive autoethnography, (see Delamont, 2009; Ellis et al., 2010 and Holman Jones, 2016) and practice led creative writing (see Smith & Dean, 2009, and Gandolfo, 2014) I will explore key research on female sports fandom and representations of women as fans in literatures and popular culture. This paper will then creatively re/address how women are framed as fans in the sports fan space.

As Nash notes, one, ‘key feature of autoethnography is that the researcher’s narrative is ‘written in’ to the research process’ (Chang, 2008 in Nash, 2015, p.4). Likewise, I intend to add personal reflections to connect to, challenge and re-position some representations of female sports fans through this framework in order to creatively explore different ways of engaging with the existing research. This method builds on innovative approaches to exploring fandom through mixed method and ethnographical investigations that have been developed in studies by key researchers in the field such as Hoeber & Kerwin’s work on collaborative self-ethnography to explore the experiences of female sports fans (2013), McParland’s approach to using autoethnography in ‘Forging a New Direction in Feminist Sport History’ McPharland’s (2012) and Richards’ ethnographic field work in football fandom in the UK as a self-identifying female football fan herself (Richards, 2015 & 2018). Popovic, also uses autoethnography in her research on self-identity through sports fandom and participation in ice hockey by engaging with her personal memories, poetry, song lyrics and theory (Popovic, 2010).

Applying the lens of reflexive autoethnography as the primary methodology will further allow me, an engaged participant myself, to re-explore my previous experiences to give gendered perceptions of sports fandom further nuanced consideration. This approach aims to offer alternative and creative ways managers and marketers can use to consider understanding female sports fans and their multi-layered and complicated experiences of fandom by re-viewing how women as fans are represented in popular culture. This paper will move through an examination of the existing research on gender and sports fandom, and touch on the seminal self-surveillance research from Foucault (1979), to connect key ideas to the reflective autoethnographical entries and pop culture examples, bringing a different way to understand the gendered experience of being watched while watching sport in a stadium.