Feminism in the name of sports
A Multimodal Critical Discourse Analysis of Nike’s and Under Armour’s “femvertising” campaigns
Dream Crazier and Unlike Any

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Abstract

The purpose of this thesis is to examine how female athletes are represented in Nike's and Under Armour's "femvertising" campaigns *Dream Crazier* (2019) and *Unlike Any* (2017). At first, the narrative and visual strategies of *Dream Crazier* campaign video and the *Unlike Any* campaign videos are comparatively analysed. Secondly, I shall examine how elements of post-feminism relate to the key elements of the campaigns. Thirdly, the representation of Black and African athletes is studied through the lens of intersectional feminism. Previous research on femvertising and representations of female athletes and intersectionality in sports advertising is complemented with a close and comparative analysis of more recent brand campaigns. A Multimodal Discourse Analysis was used as a means of discovering how different modes of the campaigns interactively construct meaning. Therefore, I connect Norman Fairclough's framework of Critical Discourse analysis (1995) with Kress and Van Leeuwen’s (1996, 2013, 2014) and Jewitt’s (2013) approach to notions of multimodal discourse. The samples were gathered online and included the key campaign videos as well as the campaigns' key images portraying famous female athletes. The results indicate that although these campaigns evoke a positive image of female athletes as strong and self-determined role models, stigmatizing still exists within the campaigns. In comparison, Nike's campaign is more firmly oriented towards reminding consumers of gender discrimination, whereas Under Armour has put more emphasis on representing the athletes personal (physical and mental) barriers. Significant post-feminist elements were 'self-surveillance and discipline', 'individualization and personal choice', femininity as bodily preoccupation, 'irony and knowingness', and 'feminism undone'. Particularly striking was the campaign's representation of female athletes as heroes. Furthermore, I argue that the campaigns have both countered and reinforced stereotypes of Black and African American athletes. However, Nike's campaign was more actively focused on tackling underrepresentation in sports and racist stereotypes.

**Key words:**

Female athletes, Gender discrimination, Sports advertising, Sports brands, Nike, Under Armour, Multimodal Critical Discourse Analysis, Post-feminism, Intersectional feminism
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1. Introduction

"No matter how toughened a sportswoman may be, her organism is not cut out to sustain certain shocks."

Baron Pierre de Coubertin, founder of the modern Olympic Games, 1896

Nowadays, it seems hard to believe that the founder of the modern Olympic Games declared women as biologically not made to play sports professionally, or that women were excluded from the first Olympic Games in 1896 (Pfister, 2010, p. 236). Nevertheless, culture has defined the sports industry as a man's domain, and, until this day, female athletes have had to fight against being stigmatized as "too weak" to participate in sports and gymnastics. For many years, it was generally believed that certain types of sport, like boxing, soccer, or American football were not suitable for women, and that women would "lose their femininity" if they played these sports (Pfister, 20120, p. 234). Besides, female athletes are frequently victims of sexual harassment and abuse, primarily perpetrated by members of the athlete's entourage who maintain positions of power (UN Woman, 2010). Ethnic and social backgrounds foster discrimination, marginalization, and underrepresentation of women, who are already underprivileged due to their gender. These include, for instance, race, religious and cultural backgrounds, sexual orientation, and lower social classes (Pfister, 2010, p. 237). As an example, scholars encountered stereotyping and othering of Black and African American female athletes as “natural talents” and the media hypersexualizes their bodies or stereotyped them as “man-like” (Withycombe, 2011; Zenquis and Mwaniki, 2019).

Discrimination and sexism against women in the sports industry have become a popular theme for marketing products and brands in so-called "femvertising" campaigns. Feminism, or "the advocacy of women's rights on the ground of the equality of the sexes." (Oxford dictionary, n.d.) is thereby used as a strategy to reach female consumers. Fighting gender discrimination in advertising is a particularly interesting phenomenon because the representation of women in advertising was historically deemed sexist and stereotypical. Recently, two sports companies have represented strong female athletes breaking barriers in the sports domain and gained high public resonance: U.S. market leaders in sports fashion Nike and Under Armour (short: UA). In their campaigns Dream Crazier (Nike, 2019) and Unlike Any (Under Armour, 2017), the sports companies have focused on the success of women in professional gymnastics and sports
and turned to famous figures such as Serena Williams (Nike) and Misty Copeland (Under Armour).

In this thesis, I will analyze and interpret Nike and UA’s contemporary femvertising campaigns *Dream Crazier*, and *Unlike Any*. Thereby, my purpose is to understand the representation of female professional athletes as part of the marketing strategy of the two sports brands. The study is notably focused on U.S. consumers, and draws on U.S. American feminist theories. The reason is twofold: Nike and UA sell sportswear internationally, but are both U.S. based brands, and the most popular brands of U.S. consumers, U.S. feminism is often perceived as the most visible, radical and popular (Scott, 2002, p. 17), and American culture is often understood as "ground zero of capitalism, marketing and consumer culture" (Scott, 2002, p. 17). I am contributing to the field of research on contemporary feminism and its intersection with advertising and complementing critical studies done on Nike and Under Armour advertising targeted to women by comparatively analyzing how female athletes are represented in the two campaigns. Moreover, I will turn attention to post-feminist elements and the use of intersectional feminism as a strategy of the campaigns. Sport fashion companies are especially relevant in that case because apparel and sport apparel campaigns tend to portray a specific "desirable" image of sporty, sexy, and slim women (Nash, 2016). Moreover, femvertising frequently aims to empower females in an intersectional manner, meaning that diverse women of different ethnicities and races, class, sexual orientations, and ages are portrayed, and different stereotypes are challenged (Becker-Herby, 2016). As a case, I am further interested in Black and African American female athletes’ representation in the light of intersectional feminism. For a comparison of the two campaigns, I am asking the following research questions:

1. What are the campaign videos’ *Dream Crazier* and *Unlike Any* narrative and visual strategies to approach gender discrimination?
2. How are post-feminist elements evident in the representation of female athletes in the two campaigns *Dream Crazier* and *Unlike Any*?
3. How can the representation of Black and African American female athletes be understood in the light of intersectional feminism?

To understand the different semiotic choices made by Nike and Under Armour to construct female athletics and athletes in their campaigns, I will conduct a Multimodal Critical Discourse
Analysis (MCDA) of the two campaigns. The study will be based on a mix of Kress and Van Leeuwen's (1996, 2001, 2013, 2014) O'Halloran's (2003), and Jewitt’s (2013) conceptions of multimodal discourse and Fairclough's three-dimensional model for conducting Critical Discourse Analysis, that reveals hidden power relations behind discourses (1995). The thesis seeks to analyze how a variety of different semiotic choices construct an image of female athletes. Thus, I have selected all key elements of the campaigns: the campaign videos and the key images. All these elements were collected online.

In the following chapter, I will provide a brief description of the context of the study, including all necessary facts surrounding women and girls' participation in sports worldwide and the U.S., as well as the inclusion of this topic in contemporary femvertising campaigns. Subsequently, I will defer to the theoretical framework of the thesis, discussing the theories surrounding Multimodal Critical Discourse Analysis and femvertising. Then, I will discuss the previous literature concerning female representations in sport fashion advertisements. These include particularly Nike and Under Armour advertisement, as well as scholars' discussions concerning femvertising campaigns. Next, I will present the sample selection, Methodology, and analytical process and refer to the limitations, validity, and ethical considerations that underline the study. Building upon the previous chapters, I will present the findings concerning the research questions. Finally, I will discuss the conclusions of the study in relation to my research questions and society at large and re-connect my results to the previous literature.

2. Context

For an understanding of famous female athletes’ representation in femvertising campaigns of popular sports companies, it is vital to reflect on historical and contemporary conditions of female participation in sports, and the role of femvertising in the debate. As this study focuses first and foremost on the U.S. market, the problem area will be both introduced in an international, and U.S. American context.


2.1 Women and girls’ participation in sports worldwide and the U.S.

Gender equality and respectful treatment of women in the sports domain has come a long way. From the end of the eighteenth century onwards, gymnastics and sports were developed by men and for men (Pfister, 2010, p. 236). In the U.S. and Europe, it was not until the end of the nineteenth century, that women started to take part in sporting activities (Pfister, 2010, p. 236).

In the modern Olympic Games, women were excluded from the date of foundation, in 1896 until 1900, when women were admitted to the sport disciplines tennis and golf (Pfister, 2010, p. 236). In 1928, women were finally allowed to compete in athletic disciplines such as running, high jump, and discus. However, the proportion of women competing in the Games in that year was only 9.6% (Pfister, 2010, p. 236). In 1972, U.S. law implemented the so-called Title IX intending to go against discrimination in education. Title IX offered girls and women new possibilities to enter sports in schools, colleges, and universities and to achieve equal opportunities to those of men. The federal law says:

"No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance." (NCAA, n.d.)

Before Title IX, one in 27 girls played sports in U.S. schools. In 2016, the Women's Sport foundation estimated this number to be two in five schoolgirls (Olmstaed, 2016). Furthermore, the UNESCO recognized sports and physical activity as a human right since 1978 (Casselbury, 2018). In the Olympic Games, women have steadily increased their participation (Pfister, 2010). At the 2018 Olympic Winter Games, 1,704 male athletes (58.6%) and 1,204 female athletes (41.4%) participated (Women's sports foundation, 2018, p. 3). The U.S. Olympic team included 107 (44.4%) female athletes and 134 (55.6%) male athletes (Women's Sports Foundation, 2018, p. 40).

However, the sports domain is still marked by gender discrimination and inequality. Collegiate institutions in the U.S. spend just 24 percent of their athletic operating budgets on female sports, as well as just 16 percent of recruiting budgets and 33 percent of scholarship budgets on female athletes (Casselbury, 2018). Moreover, the Women's Sports Foundation reveals that, on average, male athletes earn $179 million more in athletic scholarships each year than females do. Although women may be nearly as present as men in doing sports, they are barely represented in news media. Statistics introduced by the Tucker Center for Research on Girls and Women in
Sport have shown that women's sports receive only 4% of all sports media coverage in the United States (Women's net, 2017).

2.2 Racism in U.S. sports in the case of African American female athletes

Recently, acts of racism in sports have increased in the U.S., referring to the Central Florida’s Institutes for Diversity and ethics. The Institute lists 52 acts of racism in sports in the U.S. in 2018, up from 41 in 2017 (Lapchick, 2019) In the U.S., racism in sports has been studied by American scholars with a specific focus on the discrimination and segregation of Black minorities. For example, African American athletes were found to be overrepresented in team sports such as American football or basketball, but largely underrepresented in positions such as coaches, managers or sports officials (Alkemeyer, Bröskamp, 1996). Also, sports reporters fail, until today, to give African American athletes equal credit for their accomplishments, as they give to white athletes (Wenner, 2002; Withycombe, 2011). Furthermore, Edwards already discussed in 1969, the reoccurring stereotype that African athletes would be “natural talents” and that white athletes would be disadvantaged next to black athletes (1969).

Female African American athletes in specific are stereotyped as “manlike”, because their bodies do not fit society’s white ideal of female bodies: limited muscul arity, small body height and high voices (Zenquis and Mwaniki, 2019, p. 28). Withycombe enlists that black female athletes are often othered as “super-talented” and overly disciplined. Meanwhile, their bodies are hypersexualized and their characters are stereotyped as “aggressive”, ”loud” or “obnoxious” (2011). Referring to Yarbrough and Bennett (1999), the “othering” of African American female athletes can be traced back to colonial times and American slavery. At that time, African American women were stereotyped as “sinful” and “deviant” towards white women, a similar pattern that connects to contemporary stereotyping of female African American athletes.

2.3 Female athletes, femvertising and Nike’s and Under Armour’s campaigns Dream Crazier and Unlike Any

In contemporary Western societies, there is a high emphasis on sports and fitness for both sexes. Aesthetically, strong is said to be “the new skinny” and sports and fitness are considered to
make people more self-confident and empowered. Also, fitness clothing and sneakers enjoy great popularity. Famous athletes configure as role-models, frequently speaking up against social issues, including gender discrimination, sexism and racism. Therefore, it comes as no surprise that brands such as Nike and UA capitalize on feminist issues and push forward female athletes’ achievements in sports.

In this thesis, I use the term “femvertising” for Nike’s and UA’s campaigns Dream Crazier and Unlike Any. The term femvertising was created by the female lifestyle page SheKnows.com in the year 2014 and is used to describe the use of feminism as a strategic communication method to target in particular consumers in advertising (Akestam et al., 2017) Strategy thereby means competing in the market and increasing organization’s market share (Hallahan et al., 2007, p. 12). Strategic communication is the "purposeful use of communication by an organization to fulfil its mission“ (Hallahan et al., 2007, p. 3). Strategic communication influences how consumers feel, what they know, how they feel, and how they act. Advertisement, and femvertising campaigns particularly, are a form of marketing communication, that has the aim to sell more products/attract and retaining customers and improve the performance of Nike and Under Armour as organizations and brands (Hallahan et al., 2007, p. 5 f.). In specific, the companies use cause marketing as a strategy, as they aim to enhance community impacts and create public awareness of gender inequality in sports (Murray, 2013)

Furthermore, femvertising differentiates itself from the original female empowerment advertising that have existed since at least the 1960s, because it directly “focuses on questioning female stereotypes acknowledged to be (at least partly) created by advertising” (Akestam et al., 2017, p. 796). Femvertising campaigns are regarded to be strongly effective in reaching female consumers, and brands have achieved high number of clicks on YouTube using a femvertising strategy (Akestam et al., 2017, p.795). In any case, there are strong reasons to target female consumers. According to She-economy.de (2016), women account for about 85% of all consumer purchases, either directly or by influencing men. Besides, women are considered to feel more emotionally connected to specific brands than men (Walter, 2012, Yu et al., 2014).

The issue of gender inequality in sports is frequently referred to in femvertising of different brands. At first, besides Nike and Under Armour, also other major sport brands frequently use femvertising as a marketing method. In Adidas’ recent campaign #She breaks barriers (see figure 1), young and teenage girls are empowered to compete in sports. Reebok #BeMoreHu-
man (see figure 2) campaign aims to inspire confidence in women in life and in fitness whilst portraying famous models and sportswomen as role models. Secondly, female hygiene product brands like always (see figure 3) or the energy drinks company and endorser of famous athletes Redbull (see figure 4) are also examples for companies that discuss the issue of gender discrimination in the sports domain and aim to empower girls and women to compete in sporting activities and gain confidence from sports.

The campaigns Dream Crazier and Unlike Any

Nike’s campaign *Dream Crazier* was created by Nike’s advertising agency Wieden and Kennedy. The campaign went viral in February, when the Dream Crazier commercial video debuted at the Oscar Award ceremony, one of the most watched TV shows worldwide. Narrated by tennis star Serena Williams, the video sheds a spotlight on professional female athletes
breaking with barriers, including stereotypes in sports. Nike introduces the aim of the campaign as following:

Dream Crazier shines a spotlight on female athletes who have broken barriers, brought people together through their performance and inspired generations of athletes to chase after their dreams.

The spot is the start of a celebration of women in sport ahead of this summer’s football tournament in France and features a compilation of moments by some of the greatest athletes in the world […] (Nike, News, 2019)

The *Dream Crazier* campaign video (see figure 5) features next to tennis champion Serena Williams, the famous Olympic athletes Ibtihaj Mohammad (fencing), Chloe Kim (snowboarding), Simone Biles (gymnastics) and Simone Manuel (swimming). The commercial video (see figure 5) has reached 10 million clicks on YouTube and 31,9 million views on Twitter (Dream Crazier YouTube, 2019; Nike, Twitter, 2019) In connection to the campaign video, Nike uses six different images featuring some of the female athletes starring in the video (see figure 6).

UA’s campaign *Unlike Any* was launched in January 2017 and created by the Agency droga5. In *Unlike Any*, Under Armour aims to celebrate sportswomen’s unique experiences, due to the company’s notice that great achievements of female athletes in the Summer Olympics 2016
were frequently compared to men’s (Richards, 2019). UA introduces the campaign on its website as following:

Women are achieving unbelievable feats of athleticism beyond anything the world has seen. Breaking convention and elevating themselves above any plane of comparison. With the help of lyricists, poets, and spoken word artists, we’re celebrating these women who are UNLIKE ANY. (Under Armour, Unlike Any, 2019).

The brand currently showcases six famous female athletes: prima ballerina Misty Copeland (see figure 7), skier Lindsey Vonn, sprinter Natasha Hastings, taekwondo champion Zoe Zhang (see figure 8), stuntwoman Jessie Graff and long-distance runner Alison Désir (UA, Unlike Any, 2019). The athletes are filmed during performances in empty settings.

3. Theoretical framework

This chapter introduces the theoretical framework that underpins this thesis. I will begin by presenting the theories of my chosen method, Multimodal Critical Discourse Analysis: discourse, critique, and multimodality. Next, I will outline several theories that I deem relevant for my chosen topic: feminism and commodity feminism, as well as the theories that underlie my research aim: post-feminism and intersectional feminism.
3.1 Discourse and critique

The interdisciplinary method Multimodal Critical Discourse Analysis (MCDA) draws on the different theories, 'discourse', 'critique', and 'multimodality', which derive from a long history of linguistic studies. At first, MCDA is an analysis of 'discourses,' a notion that has been subject to a variety of different usages in the social science. Moreover, it is often understood as text, talk, speech, topic-related conversations, or language per se (Wodak and Meyer, 2007, p. 3).

More narrowly, Fairclough defines discourse as language use and a form of social practice. Thus, discourses have been developed in specific social contexts and serve the interests of different social actors in these contexts (Fairclough 1995). In his approach to Critical Discourse Analysis, Fairclough considers relations between discourses and their social context and the dependence of discourse on their production and consumption processes (Fairclough, 1995). Hence, in this thesis, discourses are understood as constructed knowledge of female athletes in Nike's and UA advertising campaigns.

Next, MCDA is used to critically analyze the different semiotic choices that shape discourses in the campaigns systematically (Van Leeuwen, 2014). The critical impetus of the method is rooted in the Frankfurt School's 'Critical Theory', meaning that social theory should be oriented towards critiquing and changing society. In contrast, the traditional social theory was oriented solely to understanding or explaining it. Critique in that sense, aims to understand society by integrating significant social implications, including economics, sociology, history, political science, anthropology, and psychology (Wodak and Meyer, 2007). In the name of gender equality, the critique in this thesis aims to take the side of oppressed females. However, criticism is not necessarily negatively connotated (Van Leeuwen, 2014, p. 286), and it needs to be noted that both positive and negative criticism will be expressed in this thesis. An aim of critique in MCDA is to reveal underlined relations of hegemony in different patterns found in the analysis. Fairclough draws from Gramsci's idea of hegemony, a process, in which meaning is constructed as common sense and dominance over individuals is practiced by achieving a consent (Philips and Jørgensen n, 2003, p. 76). Referring to the notion of hegemony, I draw from the idea that gender is a hegemonic construct. The representation of female athletes in the advertising campaigns counters male executed hegemony in sports and construct a common sense of their image in society.
3.2 Multimodality

In this thesis, I draw from the notion that advertising campaigns such as Dream Crazier and Unlike Any are multimodal documents. Multimodality is the idea that meaning is created via different interacting modes, which are understood as "socially shaped and culturally given" semiotic resources for constructing meanings (Kress, 2013, p. 54). Using the concept of modes as different interacting semiotic resources, MCDA draws on linguistics and social semiotics. Semiotic resources were in traditional linguistic studies termed 'signifiers' (e.g., words, images) that expressed a specific meaning ('signified') (Jewitt, 2013, p. 23). However, the use of the term mode instead of 'signifier' further implies that meaning is constructed through a system of modes, and discourses regulate and shape how modes are used in the advertising campaigns. The consideration of multimodality is of crucial importance for Critical Discourse Analysis, since injustice relates to a variety of different semiotic choices as well as intertextuality (Van Leeuwen, 2014).

Examples of modes are image, written language, layout, music, gesture, speech, moving image or soundtrack as well as clothing and appearances (Kress, 2013, p. 54) According to Kress and Van Leeuwen, different modes can also have the same capacity of creating meaning, e.g. what is expressed in written language through lexical choices, may be equally expressed in images through choices of colour and compositional structures (Kress and Van Leeuwen, 1996, p. 2). In the case of this thesis, modes are analyzed in terms of how they form representational patterns of female athletes, and how they can be related to post-feminism and intersectional feminism.

3.3 Feminism

Feminism is a significant strategy of Nike's and UA’s campaigns, Dream Crazier and Unlike Any. Feminism is "The advocacy of women's rights on the ground of the equality of the sexes." (Oxford, n.d.) However, in contemporary Western and U.S. American culture, feminism is a complex social movement, that can be best understood in plural forms (Loke et al., 2017, p. 123). Hence, feminist scholars may refer to a variety of different forms of feminism, such as, commodity feminism, post-feminism, and intersectional feminism defined in the subsequent sections.
The history of Western feminism is divided into three different waves, and some scholars may even add a fourth wave, harnessed by the power of the Internet and social media in contemporary society (MacLaran, 2015). The first wave of feminism has started around the 1850s and centers around the worldwide battles of the suffragette movement and their key demands on suffrage, education, married women's legal rights and employment opportunities (MacLaran, 2015, p. 1733, Boles and Long Hoeveler, 1996, p. 134). Second-wave feminism has started in the 1960s and has focused on criticism of female depictions in the media. It is generally estimated that the third wave started during the 1980s in the post-Reagonist era of the United States. Third-wave feminists challenged the "whiteness" of the second wave by including intersectionality to the movement. For instance, racism, classism, ethnicity, religion and sexism were discussed in relation to feminism (MacLaran, 2015, p. 1733, Bronstein, 2015, p. 784) The third wave was led amongst others by post-structuralist gender theorist Judith Butler's Gender Trouble (1990) who discussed gender as a social (and not biological) construct. Also, during the third wave of feminism, the theory of post-feminism emerged (MacLaran, 2015).

3.4 Post-feminism

Critical feminist theorists have often referred to post-feminism in relation to representations of females and femininity in popular culture (Gill, 2007; McRobbie, 2004) Post-feminism is rooted in the neoliberalist sense of individualism and self-fulfilment (Lazar, 2014) and appears as rather complex, with scholars dedicating different meanings to the theory (Gill, 2007, p. 147). In this thesis, I share assumptions on post-feminism elaborated by McRobbie and Gill, because of their accurate description of different post-feminist elements. Additionally, both scholars cite advertising as an example and key element of post-feminist culture.

McRobbie understands post-feminism as elements of contemporary popular culture that lead to an undoing of feminism (2004, p. 255). The scholar claims that, in post-feminist media culture, gender issues are not understood in consequence of the hegemonic power of the state, patriarchy or law, and gender equality is perceived as achieved in post-feminist discourse (2004). Post-feminism is, therefore, a term designed to find patterns in societal behaviors and popular media. However, both scholars speak about a depoliticized version of feminism. McRobbie observes a "double-entanglement," that takes feminism into account, while simultaneously undermining
it. Gill further claims that feminist and anti-feminist ideas are entangled, in which feminism is "treated as common sense" (p. 161).

Gill argues, more carefully, that post-feminism as "a distinct sensibility" of popular and mass media (2007). Further, she outlined several concrete representational patterns that construct female in postfeminist media culture. At first, she claims that a sheer "obsessive preoccupation" (2007, p. 149) with the female body as a core aspect of post-feminist media culture. Thereby, femininity is a bodily preoccupation. The possession of a sexy body tends to be presented as women's source of power and identity (p. 149). Women's appearance is also read in psychological turns, as a "healthy" and controlled treatment of the body gets regularly connected to female success. (p. 149).

Gill further talk about a sexualization of culture, in which women's bodies are frequently coded in sexual terms (Gill, 2007, p. 150). This sexualization counts both for everyday discourses and all kinds of different media environments such as advertising. Women thereby sexualize themselves deliberately and for their own enjoyment (McRobbie, 2004, Gill, 2007).

Further significant elements of post-feminist representations are individualization and personal choice. Therefore, women lead their life self-determinedly, to manage their own identities (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim, 2002). In advertising, women would be portrayed as free agents who are no longer constraint by inequality and oppression. As autonomous subjects, they follow their hopes and dreams without pleasing anyone else besides themselves (Gill, 2007, p. 153 f.).

Furthermore, post-feminist media representations emphasize self-surveillance and discipline of female agents. Women's discipline applies for all kinds of life-spheres and intimate relationships. "Successful" women are often young and upper-class women who achieved high education and high work positions (McRobbie, 2009).

Furthermore, Gill notices a reoccurring discourse of sexual difference in post-feminist media culture. This reassertion of sexual difference was partially led by evolutionary psychology and genetic science, but also literature texts, such as John Gray's book Men Are from Mars, Women Are from Venus published in 1992, that located difference between the sexes as psychological and cultural rather than biological. In this culture, women and men would struggle to understand
each other. However, their differences are, in some ways, also eroticized and constructed as "pleasurable" (Gill, 2007, p. 159).

Lastly, Gill acknowledges the use of irony and knowingness in female representations (Gill, 2007). Referring to Gill, irony is a significant method of advertising that can create a "safe distance between oneself and particular sentiments and beliefs" (Gill, 2007, p. 159), as well as the impression of not caring too much. (Gill 2007) In that way, sexism is also constructed as "harmless" (Gill, 2007, p. 160). Knowingness is created using intertextual references that audiences are flattered to be aware of, constructing them as sophisticated while simultaneously manipulating them (Gill, 2007, 259).

Reading Gill’s and McRobbie’s text on post-feminist elements, I noted the high interrelation of representational elements, in specific the patterns enlisted by Gill. The elements and their interrelations are understood as constructing female representations in advertising. I therefore present my reading of the scholars’ outlined post-feminist elements in the following mind-map (figure 9).

![Figure 9: Mind-map of post-feminist elements in popular media, e.g. advertising and their interrelations. The reading refers to Gill (2007) and McRobbie (2004) ](image-url)
As a theory that has existed for three decades (Gill, 2016), it is worth arguing whether post-feminism is still relevant for contemporary media, such as femvertising campaigns of sport fashion corporations. Recently, Gill (2016) asked whether post-feminism has become irrelevant and if we may now speak of a post-post-feminism in a time where feminism has become popular again and is frequently discussed across the globe (Gill, 2016). However, critical discussions of corporate usage of feminism are still related to post-feminism, as advertisements are perceived as a capitalist issue of "faux feminism" (Gil, 2016). There is no evidence that post-feminist representations do not persist in a culture where feminism and feminist activism are popular trend terms.

3.5 Commodity feminism

Post-feminist theory was largely applied to the strategical use of feminism in mass media advertising to women. Goldman terms this form of strategical communication as "commodity feminism," a form of feminism that "represents an aesthetically depoliticized version of a potentially oppositional feminism [...] tailored to the demands of the commodity form" (Goldman, 1993, p. 130). Goldman's theory of commodity feminism draws on the Marxist terms' commodity' and 'commodity form.' A commodity was an object which through its qualities satisfies human needs. Commodities would, in contrast to goods or services, have a use-value and a social value, and refer to tangible things and ephemeral products (Goldman, 1993). The 'commodity form' is a concept that rules consumerist culture and means that capitalism is oriented versus commodities (Goldman, 1993, p. 8).

In commodity feminist theory, feminism becomes a commodity and is used to target female consumers. Also, commodity feminism is distinct from political feminism and turned into a lifestyle "composed by visual signs that 'say who you are'" (Goldman, 1993, p. 133). Since the late 1980s, advertisers use the power of feminism and criticize mass media's traditional limited beauty ideals (Goldman, 1993, p. 130). Marketers redefine feminism and use the meaning of female empowerment and emancipation to sell commodities (1993, p. 131).
3.6 Intersectional feminism

Intersectional feminism or 'intersectionality' is a theory designed to expose how different identities are conceptually related together in cases of discrimination, marginalization or stereotyping of women (Hancock, 2016, p. 248). The term was brought into feminist research by legal scholar and critical race theorist Kimberly Crenshaw, who argued explicitly black women's experiences with lawsuits in the U.S. (1989). Crenshaw focused on discrimination lawsuit cases of privileged black women and outlined that race discrimination intersected with sex discrimination in the cases. She coined that, in general, "any analysis that does not take intersectionality into account cannot sufficiently address the manner in which Black Women are subordinated." (1989)

During third-wave feminism, Crenshaw's thoughts lead to the recognition of intersecting aspects of identity that should be considered when analyzing discrimination and sexism of all women, e.g., race, class, ethnicity, gender, and sexuality (MacLaran, 2015, p. 1735). Thereby, feminism started to go against the first and second-wave feminist thought that heterosexual white middle-class women could speak for the rights of all women (MacLaran, 2015, p. 1735). Nash (2008) further adds that intersectional feminism needs to focus on the experiences of women whose voices have been ignored during first and second-wave feminism (p. 3).

Referring to Becker-Herby (2016), intersectional feminism would be a relevant part of successful femvertising. She claims femvertising frequently aims to portray women in diverse manners, thus intersectional representation means representing diverse women. In the case of representation of famous female athletes, I will focus solely on African American athletes’ representation. However, intersectional feminism is vital for an examination of stereotypical or oppressive representations connected to different identities.

4. Literature review

In this chapter, I will present and discuss the previous literature I am contributing to in this thesis. At first, research done on female representation in advertising, in general, will be presented. Secondly, I will continue with a discussion of the contemporary term femvertising and how scholars critically analyze female representations in femvertising campaigns. I will con-
Continue with a discussion of the literature about the representation of female athletics and female athletes in sports advertising and draw specific focus on research done on advertising campaigns of the brands Nike and UA. Attention will be drawn on scholars' examinations of elements of post-feminism and intersectional feminism in advertisings. Finally, I will embed my research within the previous literature and discuss the research gaps the study will fill.

4.1 Femvertising's commitment to feminism and female representations

Research on female representations in femvertising campaigns is limited, whereas scholars have drawn a stronger focus on the effects of femvertising on female consumers (e.g., Akestam et al., 2017). However, few studies were found to critically analyze femvertising, for instance, in the case of Dove's iconic Real Beauty campaign and the Spanish brands Kaiku and Desigual.

Murray (2013) discussed how Dove's Campaign as a cause marketing strategy, in a semiotic analysis of the campaign in print, television, and new media texts (2013). According to Murray, Dove’s campaign communicated the myth of "Real Beauty" and was post-feminist, as it went against the traditional ideals of "Beauty" while dictating another "Beauty ideal" based on self-esteem, appearance, and behaviors, requiring self-judgment and constant self-monitoring of one's emotional state. Thereby, Dove distanced itself from its cultural role of representing "Beauty norms" by placing the responsibility for women's and girls' lack of self-esteem on themselves (2013, p. 96).

A study on female representations in the Spanish femvertising commercials Da el paso (Kaiku) and Tu decides (Desigual) by Pilar and Gutiérrez (2017) argued that companies producing femvertising ads show different commitment to feminism. Also, the advertisements tended to manipulate consumers with "faux activism". Even though women were self-confident and emancipated in the ads, there was a lack of diversity in female portrayals. All the models in the ads were white, young, slim, and firstly represented as attractive and sexy (2017, p. 342; 345).
4.2 Female representation and intersectionality in sport advertising

Studies on female representation, and, the role of female athletes in advertising for sports products, have been conducted by several scholars throughout the beginning of the 21st century. Most frequently, quantitative content analysis has been applied to reveal stereotypical representations of women in these advertisements.

First, a content analysis study on advertisements in popular Western women's sport and fitness magazines conducted by Lynn, Hardin, and Walsdorf (2004) found proof for the reinforcement of sexual differences in sport and fitness ads. The scholars examined all sport and fitness related ads in the magazines *Shape, Real Sports, Sports Illustrated Women* and *Women's Sports and Fitness* and revealed, that women appeared more frequently in "passive" poses than actively practicing sport and fitness (Lynn et al., 2004, p. 343). This emphasis was found in all magazines besides Real Sports, which focuses more strongly on professional sports rather than fitness (Lynn et al., 2004). Referring to Goldman (1991), the scholars argued that commodity feminism serves to intensify traditional femininity and supports the masculine hegemony that governs the sports world (Lynn et al., 2004).

Another content analysis by Kim and Sagas (2014) used Goffman's gender display framework to discover differences in sexual portrayals between female athletes and models in the Sports Illustrated swimsuit issues from 1997 until 2011. The scholars found that the degree of nudity and the sensuality of the facial expressions did not differ much and concluded that both athletes and models were sexualized to the same extent (2014).

More recent research on the representation of female athletics in sports advertising examined different semiotic choices made by marketers (Namie and Warne, 2017; Nash, 2016), as it is the case in this thesis. Namie and Warne (2017) combined quantitative and qualitative analysis and analyzed how female athletes were represented in sports nutrition advertising (drinks, protein powders, bars, etc.) The analysis included packaging, websites, and commercials for nutrition products. Female athletes were rarely depicted in the packaging but appeared more frequently in television commercials, and their athletic ability was more emphasized than their sexuality, or their role as wives or mothers. Furthermore, several semiotic devices preserved masculine hegemony in the ads. For instance, females frequently did not appear in sports clothes
or a competitive sport setting and not female, but almost exclusively male voice-overs were used, which the scholars connected to the authority of men in the sports domain (2017).

A study by Nash examined the website of the Australian fitness fashion company Lorna Jane's (2016). The scholar investigated how health and fitness were constructed on the website and showed how an interdisciplinary Multimodal Critical Discourse Analysis of the website offered a detailed analysis of the semiotic choices of the fashion company's marketers. Nash applied post-feminist theory and analyzed the website's visual, typographic, and layout choices (2016). Nash noticed the website's notion of individualism, emotionality, and discipline. For example, in the website's integrated blog, consumers are informed about self-care, gratitude and healthy eating as part of a sporty lifestyle, and the visuals show that exercising makes women happy and embrace personal responsibility (2016, p. 223). Consumers were empowered to choose this lifestyle for themselves and supported to become "sporty sisters" of the Lorna Jane community (2016, p. 223) The author also remarked that the brand solely depicted white, young and slim women (2016, p. 227). Nash's research also indicated that the design of Lorna Jane's sports clothes articulated a "postfeminist aesthetic," an interesting finding in consideration to Nike and UA’s designs worn by professional female athletes in their campaigns (2016, p. 226). For instance, Lorna Jane's manufactures sports bras in the colors pink, red, and black colors – that associates with sexy and youthful femininity (2016, p. 226).

Carty (2005) has examined textual portrayals of female athletes in a content analysis study on advertisements that aired from 1996 until 2002. The scholar included TV commercials and print advertisements in her sample and focused on the representation of athletes' sex appeal and the inclusion of an either politicized or depoliticized feminism (Carty, 2005). Moreover, she examined how stereotypical representations interact with gender, on the one hand, and race and ethnicity, on the other hand. Gender differences were portrayed as insignificant, and as constructed, sex appeal was connected to muscular bodies, and females were defining themselves and their bodies on their own terms (2005, p. 150). Moreover, there was a tension to represent the heterosexuality and relationships of female athletes to make them appear more traditionally feminine (Carty, 2005). Besides, black female athletes appeared less sexualized, and an even stronger focus was drawn on their muscles and strained expressions (Carty, 2005, p. 142).
Furthermore, many studies have studied racism in sports advertising that feature man and women of colour. McKay (2005) examined both race and gender in representations of athletes in randomly selected Nike, Reebok, and Puma advertisements from the 90s and early 2000s. The scholar found a frequent representation of both white and African American athletes in the ads, and a counter-narrative of the "misbehavior" stereotype of African Americans that renders African Americans as criminals (2005, p. 85). While sports advertising was found to allude to the American Dream by proclaiming that everyone was able to achieve success in sports, the advertisements stayed silent about racial inequality in professional athletics as well as salary discrimination of women and black Americans in sport (2005, p. 85; p. 88 f.). Therefore, the scholar termed sports advertisements as mythical representations of female athletes and athletes of color (2005, p. 88).

4.3 Female representations in Nike's advertising

Analysis of Nike's representations and articulation of female sports was primarily played out in the 1990s and early 2000, assumingly in consequence of the controversy of Nike women's advertising around that time. At that time, scholars have already illustrated that Nike used narratives of empowerment, self-control, and emancipation in its commercials, images, and texts, and that Nike rearticulated the political aims of feminism for the benefits of consumption. (Helstein, 2003; Cole and Hribar, 1995; LaFrance, 1998) Thereby, a certain number of scholars have connected Nike advertising to different political-economic and societal conditions that have defined 1990s and 2000s U.S. America. For instance, Cole and Hribar (1995) and LaFrance (1998) connected Nike advertising targeted to women from the 1990s with post-feminist attitudes such as individualization, choice, and independence and pointed out that Nike solely represented white, slim and muscular women (Cole and Hribar, 1995; Lafrance, 1998).

Cole and Hribar (1995) tried to reveal the political power of former president Ronald Reagon's administration in the 90s in Nike advertising. The authors claimed that the Reagon administration responded to heightened unemployment and poverty by establishing a "national common sense that transposed structural societal problems into individual inadequacies (mobilized through a logic of lifestyle) in order to legitimate its defunding of social welfare programs" (p. 354). After Reagons administration ended in 1989, U.S. society was marked by a "national
preoccupation with the body" (195, p. 354) that put individual bodies in the center of discourses about success, discipline, and effort, as well as fitness and health (1995, p. 354). Cole and Hribar state: "They are propaganda of free will in an age when the logic of addiction populates everyday culture." (1995, p. 362). For instance, the scholars remark that in the ad, *Did you ever wish you were a boy?* Nike showed young women with an androgynous look and a muscular body that connotes the 1990's Americas values youth, nature, peace freedom, health, and satisfaction as achieved by individual will and power (view advertisement text: Appendix 3).

Furthermore, LaFrance (1998) has looked at Nike's controversial *If you let me play* ad from 1995, which showed young vulnerable girls listing the benefits they would have if they were enabled to play sports (see Appendix 1). For instance, the ad was found to represent that sports would help to provide (sexual) violence against women and girls and simultaneously presuppose male-made aggression as one of the causes of these issue (1998, p. 126 f.)

Michelle Helstein (2013) interpreted Nike's empowering narratives as producing a desire for women. The scholar examined representations of female professional athletes in a Nike advertisement called from the early 2000s, that portrayed famous U.S. American basketballer Cynthia Cooper as a godlike hero (Appendix 2). Helstein argued that the advertisement used a metaphor that implied that the female gaze was "distorted by a desire for emancipation" (2003, p. 285) and that excellent performances in sports would have led to this emancipation (2003).

Furthermore, Capon and Helstein (2006) discussed Nike advertising that appeared in the sports magazines *Sports Illustrated for Women, Women's Sports and Fitness, Fitness, and Shape* of the 1999s constructed a "myth of the hero". A myth was thereby understood as a reflected knowledge about something that exists in the world (Capon and Helstein, 2006, p. 49). Capon and Helstein found that Nike made claims that women can be "heroes" just as much as men can be, while simultaneously using conventional markers of femininity, foregrounding the heterosexuality of women or their role as mothers (Capon and Helstein, 2006, p. 51).

Analyzing the first ten years of Nike advertising (1990-2000), Grow (2006) has used a mixed-methods approach, including a semiotic analysis of 27 Nike women print advertising texts and in-depth interviews with the creative team that has produced these ads. Nevertheless, instead of focusing on heroic and desirable female representations (Helstein, 2003, LaFrance, 1998; Cole
and Hribar 1995), the scholar claimed that Nike Woman's advertising was "rooted in a shared historical understanding of female cultural-experience" (p. 6) and outlined that Nike has aimed to build a community of strong and empowered women, using signifiers of empowerment and community (p. 6).

4.4 Female representation in Under Armour’s advertising

Tuncay Zayer et al., (2019) have analyzed the surrounding discourses of Under Armour's campaign #IWillWhatIWant, the predecessor campaign of Unlike Any. The scholars examined the campaign in the press as well as online consumer engagement on Twitter (2019). However, the scholars analyzed the discourses of the campaign itself without much critical emphasis using different feminist theories, which I aim in this research on Nike and UA. #IWillWhatIWant has portrayed professional ballerina Misty Copeland and supermodel Gisele Bundchen spreading messages of female power and will and fighting against the stereotypes existing against their personas. The scholars analyzed how UA drew from gender discourses and found aims of exemplifying girl power and celebrating female mental and physical strength, whereas its association with the feminist movement was not explicitly expressed (2019, p. 207). They concluded that the company has aligned itself with a "soft feminism" that celebrates female power while avoiding any political statements. These are essential findings in terms of how UA's campaign Unlike Any will discursively construct the inequality issue of female athletics in its contemporary campaign Unlike Any and how the campaign can be interpreted as post-feminist material.

4.5 Situating the study within the literature

This thesis can enrich previously reviewed literature, as it provides insights into the discursive constructions of female athletes of two specific contemporary sport femvertising campaigns. By conducting a comparative analysis of Nike's Dream Crazier campaign and UA's Unlike Any campaign, the study will further show patterns in the use of different modes, or semiotic resources in the athletes' representation in a time where the popularity of femvertising is firmly on the rise, particularly in the sports domain.
As outlined in the analysis of previous literature, the representation of women in sports advertising, and femvertising has already been studied by a large number of scholars from multiple perspectives. Scholars have turned mainly to quantitative content analysis to reveal representational patterns, whereas only a few scholars have used or integrated a qualitative approach such as CDA and MCDA (e.g., Namie and Warne, 2017; Nash, 2016). Many scholars have focused on the representations of female athletes and their relation to hegemonic power influences and applied post-feminism in their analysis. Thereby some studies examined early Nike advertising to the early 2000s. Besides, one recent study on UA’s #IWillWhatIWant campaign offered thought-provoking insights in terms of post-feminism. Unfortunately, scholar's attention to Nike’s advertising targeted to women seemed to end in the early 2000s. Also, no actual study was found on the use of post-feminist elements in the representation of female athletes in recent sport femvertising campaigns and in the era of the femvertising movement. Furthermore, one study was found to study gender and race as intersectional elements of female athletes' representations (McKay, 2005).

5. Data and Methodology

In this chapter, the data and methodology of this study will be explained. I will describe the process of choosing and gathering the samples, the study design, and the analytical process, including its limitations, validity, and ethical considerations.

5.1 Sample selection

I chose to focus on Nike’s campaign *Dream Crazier* and UA’s campaign *Unlike Any*, because of the popularity and temporality of the campaigns, which were produced in 2019, 2018, and 2017, as well as their focus on representing famous female athletes. Also, I selected campaigns of sport fashion brands that depict only famous female athletes and their pathways in the sports domain. Moreover, I was intrigued by the contrast of Nike’s “crazy dream” narrative and UA’s artistic poems. Besides that, Nike and UA’s advertising strategies related to feminism was discussed by previous literature.
I also believe that these two specific brands make an interesting case for a comparative analysis, due to their role as direct competitors. Both brands are popular and offer a wide array of sportswear in different categories and sponsor many professional athletes and sports teams.

As pointed out by Houser (2015), Nike’s and Under Armour’s brand images are slightly different. Nike is expected to be worn both by people who frequently, or rarely do sports. Also, Nike’s clothing is sold in a large variety of different shapes and sizes. Under Armour’s typical consumer is often associated as sporty, and as outlined by Under Armour’s advertising agency droga 5, the brand is considered “manlike” (Houser, 2016; droga5, 2017)

Nike has further outlined inclusivity in its company mission: “Bring Inspiration And Innovation To Every Athlete In The World. If You Have A Body, You Are An Athlete.” (About Nike, 2009). UA has formulated that their mission is “to make all athletes better through passion, design and the relentless pursuit of innovation.” (About Under Armour, 2019)

Nike was founded in 1967 and has a longer history with empowerment of women and other marginalized populations, critically studied in previous research (see chapter 4.2 and 4.3). In contrast, Under Armour was founded in 1996. The brand has used femvertising as marketing method since 2014 with its #IWillWhatIWant campaign.

**Nike**

The sportswear company Nike was made to empower people to do sports without any excuses by using the signature slogan "just do it." Nike sells both sportswear and sport shoes in the categories running, basketball, football (soccer), training and sportswear, American football, baseball, cricket, lacrosse, skateboarding, tennis, volleyball, wrestling, walking and outdoor activities. Nike further manufactures products designed for kids and other athletic and recreational uses (Nike news, 2019, p. 55). The brand’s popularity vastly increased in the late 1980s, primarily due to its famous collaboration with basketballer Michael Jordan (Cole and Hribar, 1995, p. 349). Today, Nike is deeply rooted in American popular culture and is an internationally well-known sports brand. Nike’s 2019 annual revenue represents the highest revenue of sports retailers worldwide: $39.1 billion U.S. Dollar (Nike News, 2019).

From the beginning of its foundation onwards, Nike was designed to promote female empowerment, as the name Nike refers to the Greek goddess of victory (Singley, 2002, p. 459). However, in 1987, when Nike first entered the female market, the company showed a tasteless ad, summarized by Cole and Hribar as followed:
It featured triathlete Joanne Ernst moving through a gruelling workout and a voice-over continuously repeating the 'just do it' directive. The ad ended with what Nike intended to be a humorous tagline: "And it would not hurt if you stopped eating like a pig" (1995, p. 369)

In response to the failure of the ad and the increasing value of the women's market, Nike hired female marketers and has firmly aimed for authentic feminist communication since then (Singley, 2002, p.460). In 2019, Nike has made substantial efforts to target the women's market. It has increased its variety for sports bras in extended sizes and yoga pants and outfitted 14 of the two dozen national teams playing in the 2019 FIFA Women's World Cup this summer (Thomas, 2019). Moreover, since 2017, Nike sells sports hijabs and therefore made a statement against hijab bans. For instance, the FIBA, (‘International Basketball Federation’) has prohibited religious headgear until the same year.

Today, Nike actively aims to positions itself in the debate of gender and sport. The company pursues the initiative "Made to Play" to support physical activities for girls worldwide. The idea of Made to Play is that girls who participate in sports will be happier and live better lives. In the course of the initiative, Nike finances local communities that support girls' participation in sports (e.g., in the U.S., Canada, China, South Africa, France, the Netherlands). Throughout the last couple of years, a variety of female empowerment ads were produced to target female consumers. The Dream Crazier ad (2019), which aired at the Oscars in February 2019 is one of them. Besides, Nike's femvertising is not limited to the U.S. or the Western market. For instance, Nike equally targets the Middle Eastern, the Russian, and the Indian market with feminist advertising commercials.

_Under Armour_

The sportswear company Under Armour was launched in Baltimore, Maryland, in 1996 and was at first popular for its stretchy shirts that wicked sweat fast and kept athletes cool and dry. For the brands' identity, UA uses the concept of "WILL," The company sells sportswear for fitness, running, yoga, and golf (About Under Armour, 2019). In 2018, UA's total revenue was 5,2 billion U.S. dollars, and the North American revenue was 3,7 billion U.S. dollars. Referring to the brands' advertising agency droga5, UA's products have initially been perceived as "too masculine" by female consumers, therefore the brand currently firmly aims to increase women sales (droga5, Under Armour, 2019). Efforts to compete in the women's market got stronger in
2010 when UA aimed to manufacture comfortable sports bras that were uniquely constructed for a variety of different cup sizes. In 2014, UA has launched its first female empowerment campaign #IWillWhatIWant starring prima-ballerina Misty Copeland and supermodel Gisele Bundchen (Tuncay Zayer et al., 2019). The campaign was produced by the U.S. based advertising agency droga5 and included an extensive corporation with influencers, including a number of famous athletes and was widely spread on social media using the hashtag #IWillWhatIWant (Tuncay Zayer et al., 2019). In comparison to Nike, UA does not support female athletics specifically, but runs different initiatives to build communities through sport activities, invests in education and supports kids’ participation in sports activities (Under Armour, We Will, 2019).

Selected elements of the campaigns

For this Multimodal Critical Discourse Analysis, I intend to find patterns in choices of aesthetics and content in the campaigns Dream Crazier (2019) and Unlike Any (2017, 2018). For a comprehensive analysis of different semiotic choices made to produce the campaigns, I have decided to focus on both the key campaign videos and their connected images, which were sourced online.

For a comparative analysis of the campaigns’ narrative and visual strategies to approach gender discrimination, I decided to focus on the campaigns key videos. From my point of view these are:

- Nike’s Dream Crazier video (2019), narrated by Serena Williams (Nike, YouTube, 2019) featuring a long list of female athletes (see Appendix 5) in the categories tennis, soccer, basketball, American football, boxing, sprint, marathon, swimming, para-triathlon, fencing, gymnastics, snowboarding and skateboarding
- The six Unlike Any videos published on UA’s website (2017) featuring the athletes Misty Copeland (ballet), Natasha Hastings (sprint), Alison Désir (marathon runner), Zoe Zhang (taekwondo), Jessie Graff (stunt woman) and Lindsey Vonn (Alpine skiing)

When analyzing Nike’s representation of female athletes in consideration of post-feminism, and intersectionality I focused on the videos Dream Crazier (2019), “Dream Crazier: Chantel
Navarro”, “Dream Crazier: Ayesha McGown” and “Dream Crazier: The Honeybeez” and the campaign's images of famous female athletes equally featured in the Dream Crazier video. The Dream Crazier campaign has used six different visuals with integrated text portraying tennis player Serena Williams, fencer Ibithaj Muhammad, snowboarder Chloe Kim, gymnast Simone Biles, swimmer Simone Manuel, and boxer Marlen Esparza. The visuals were published on the agency's Wieden and Kennedy's website (Wieden and Kennedy, 2019).

The examination of post-feminist and intersectional elements in UA’s campaign Unlike Any includes the six Unlike Any videos as well as one further video of Lindsey Vonn published on YouTube. The visuals of the Unlike Any campaign are integrated on the campaign's website and connected to a few text lines from the poems found on the top and next to the images. In total, I collected 30 campaign images on the Unlike Any campaign website (Under Armour, Unlike Any, 2019).

5.2 Study design

In this thesis, I aim to understand Nike’s and UA’s narrative and visual strategies to approach gender discrimination in their femvertising campaigns. Further, I examine how the campaigns representations of female athletes apply to post-feminism and intersectional feminism. Thereby, campaigns are considered as complex documents consisting of multiple different semiotic choices that construct meaning. Hence, I have chosen to conduct a Multimodal Critical Discourse Analysis (MCDA) that connects approaches to multimodal analysis developed by Kress and van Leeuwen (2001) Jewitt (2013) and Fairclough’s three-dimensional analysis for conducting Critical Discourse Analysis (1995).

As basis framework for the analytical conduct, I have connected Fairclough's critical discourse analysis with Kress and Van Leeuwen, and Jewitt’s notion of multimodal discourse. For instance, advertising campaigns focus on increasing consumption and use cultural and social experiences to construct a brand/ product (Grow, 2006, p. 3). As outlined figure 10, Fairclough's three-dimensional model is based on text analysis (the term 'analysis of multimodal texts’ is used instead), an analysis of discourse practice, and an analysis of socio-cultural practice (Fair-
clough, 1995) Fairclough considers the relationship between these three concepts as complex and under constant development (Fairclough, 1995).

![Three-dimensional framework for CDA Fairclough (1995, p. 59) applied to Multimodal Critical Discourse Analysis](image)

**Analysis of multimodal texts**

Firstly, 'Analysis of multimodal texts,' is a detailed descriptive analysis of the multimodal texts that constitute Nike and UA’s ad campaigns. Instead of Fairclough's dimension text analysis, I used the term 'analysis of multimodal text' to avoid contractions as text not only consists of written words but multimodal elements such as text, image, and appearances.

**a. Campaign videos**

The analysis of the campaign’s approach to gender discrimination and their representation of female athletes in the campaign’s commercial videos involved an examination of the moving images and the voice-over. The text of the voice-overs (see Appendix 3 and 6) were analyzed by focusing on reoccurring themes, and the use of specific narrative styles and rhetorical figures as relevant for the campaigns’ approach to gender discrimination and the representation of fe-
male athletes. Further, I considered point-of-view and narrated time as relevant. In the case of rhetorical figures deemed necessary to focus on metaphor, repetition of specific words, and irony, a rhetorical figure which was considered a fundamental feature in Gill's perception of post-feminist media representations (2007). My intention was drawn to the athletes' representations by chosen frame size, camera angles, and camera movements, as well as how the athletes' gaze was directed to (into the camera/other actors or the distance), and their movements (their performances on camera, slow-motion/fast-motion or real-time). Moreover, close attention was drawn on the athletes' appearances (clothing, facial expressions, and make-up).

b. Campaign images
The representation of female athletes, in the campaign's key photographs was analyzed by examining the athletes' appearance, by focusing on their poses (active or passive) and their facial expressions. Further the analysis takes the images' color, lightening, and composition into consideration. The analysis of color included the image as a whole and the athletes clothing. Color was analyzed focusing on hue (the actual colors used for the photographs, e.g., black, white, blue, red, etc.), saturation (the purity of a color) and value (the lightness or darkness of a colour). The images' lightening considered whether the shot was made in a low-key or high-key lightening and whether/how the lightening highlights elements or actors portrayed in the photographs. The analysis of the composition focused on how female athletes were put in the focus of the image. Furthermore, I examined the choice of framing (see p. 34, close-up, long-shot, etc.), and how the audience's gaze was directed by using lightening and color (Kress and Van Leeuwen, 1996).

Discourse practice

The second analytical step, Discourse practice involves the examination of the text in terms of its context of production and consumption, which are realized in the features of the text (Fairclough, 1995, p. 58). With this, a focus is drawn on how the producers of multimodal texts draw on already existing discourses and genres and how the campaign's audiences' may have received these discourses. I will concentrate on the specific role of the text in constructing the brands Nike and UA. Thus, analysis of discourse practice implies "thinking like a marketer" of the agency's Wieden and Kennedy and droga5, who have produced the campaigns for Nike and UA. The construction of female professional athletics is understood as vital in this case.
A close focus in the analysis of Nike’s and UA’s commercial video and advertising images is drawn on intertextuality, because intertextual meanings are essential for the meaning of advertising in general (Mucundorfeanu, 2017, p. 78) and, I argue, intertextuality is particularly relevant in the case of understanding the construction of female athletes’ identity in the advertising campaigns. The intertextual analysis is looking at the text "from the perspective of discourse practice," asking "what discourses are drawn upon in the text and what traces of them are in the text. (Fairclough, 1995, p. 61) The use of intertextual relations is a common technique of advertising because of audiences like the convenience of being drawn to things they already know of (Mucundorfeanu, 2017, p. 78). While analyzing the campaigns' intertextuality, I am specifically interested in how the representation of female athletes in the campaigns is connected to their representation in the media, and biographies of female professional athletes (Mucundorfeanu, 2017, p. 78).

The questions I ask are: What discourses do the campaigns connect to, e.g. biographies of athletes, media texts, literature or specific knowledge? What values did the producers want to associate the brands Nike and UA with? What could have been presupposed in the campaigns?

**Socio-cultural practice**

Analysis of the socio-cultural practice of the two ad campaigns *Dream Crazier*, and *Unlike Any* involves the situational context and the broader frame of society, culture, and history, the campaigns are embedded in (Fairclough, 1995, p. 62). Fairclough lists three basic categories that can be used to differentiate these broader contexts: economic, political (concerned with the power of the market, state, etc.) and cultural (concerned with societal values and identity) (1995, p. 62).

My research focus was how female athletes are constructed and how post-feminism and intersectional feminism (in terms of gender and ethnicities) are applied in the campaigns. First, the analysis of socio-cultural practice was centered around the role of female athletes in contemporary society, especially the popularity of the female athletes portrayed in the ad campaigns.
Secondly, I focused on intersecting stereotypes of gender and ethnicities in the U.S. and Western societies in general.

5.3 Analytical process

For the analytical conduct of this study, I have established several codes that build a framework for a more in-depth, interdisciplinary analysis of female athletes' representation in the campaigns Dream Crazier and Unlike Any.

For the examination of the campaigns’ approaches to gender discrimination (RQ1), I have established three inductive codes throughout the analytical process: the notion of history, the use of poetry and addressing the viewer.

For the analysis of post-feminist elements in the campaigns (RQ2), I could establish deductive codes based on the discussion of post-feminism. These codes included the femininity as body preoccupation (Gill, 2007; McRobbie, 2004), sexualization (Gill, 2007; McRobbie, 2004), individualization/personal choice (Gill, 2007), self-surveillance/discipline (Gill, 2007), sexual difference (Gill, 2007), irony and knowingness (Gill 2007), and feminism undone (McRobbie, 2004). While writing the literature review, I added the deductive code heroes (Capon and Helstein, 2006) as relevant for the discussion of post-feminism in sports advertising. Further, I discovered the inductive code Muscular physique while reading the campaigns.

For the analysis of intersectional feminism in the case of Black and African American female athletes, I have not established specific codes. Instead I focused individually on racist stereotypes of Black and African American athletes and how they intersect with gender.

After establishing the coding framework for the analysis, I gathered the selected elements of the campaigns in a Word-document. In a first reading, I have summarized the campaigns overarching content and gathered my first reactions towards the campaigns. For a closer examination of the campaign videos, I turned to Boggs (1985) vocabulary for analyzing films listed in his work The Art of Watching Film. Further, I set up spreadsheets describing the campaign videos voice-overs, images and camera movements, frame sizes, and camera positions (Appendix 5; 7). Therefore, the respective videos were divided into short periods of significant sequences or scenes. This was done for Nike's Dream Crazier video, and for UA’s Unlike Any video starring Natasha Hastings. In the case of UA, a detailed description was done for only
one of the videos, because a closer examination of all the videos’ aesthetic designs did not fit in the scope of time available for this thesis. Moreover, all Unlike Any campaign videos follow the same aesthetic principles. I have chosen Natasha Hasting's video for a closer examination, because the video invoked the most clicks on YouTube (Under Amour, ‘Natasha Hastings,’ YouTube, 2017), and it is one of the six videos visible on the, Unlike Any campaign website. I gathered notes on the athletes' pose, gaze, movements, and facial expressions in the videos and images (see 5.2 Study design) and described how patterns in athletes' representations relate to my list of codes. In particular, the code self-surveillance/discipline was identified as central code of the discourses on female athletes and a reoccurring and guiding theme of these interrelated categories. I further identified the code heroes as subcategory of self-surveillance and discipline and muscular physique as sub-category of femininity as bodily preoccupation.

Keeping my critical impetus in my mind, I turned to the previously formulized questions concerning discourse practice, including traces of intertextuality. As a critical feminist scholar, I aimed to keep in mind that the samples are advertisements that serves a corporate interest: to sell commodities (Goldman, 1992). Finally, I interpreted my findings in a broader socio-cultural context concerning gender, sports, and advertising (see 5.2 ‘Study design’).

5.4 Limitations and validity

A first limitation of the methodology concerns the amount of data gathered for the analysis. It needs to be pointed out, that the scope of advertising campaign is extensively large and expands on print magazines, the brands social media, athletes’ social media accounts and more. Also, the marketers and CEO’s of the brands make statements surrounding the campaigns. Thus, I cannot assure that the campaigns do not contain further narratives., and I cannot make explicit interpretations on the whole scope of the campaigns. However, I have aimed to gather the key elements of the campaign, which are, I believe in the core focus of surrounding discourses of the campaigns.

Secondly, Jewitt (2013) note that multimodal research often seems "impressionistic" (p. 26) in practice. For instance, how does the researcher know that a specific image, speech, gesture, posture, or clothing has a defined meaning? As modes can have multiple meanings, they need
to be analyzed in their context and considered as flexible semiotic resources (ibid.). I acknowledge that relying on patterns in the data, without matching interviews with the marketing team of Nike and UA is one of the limitations of this methodology.

Lastly, a Critical Discourse Analysis aims to detect social inequality and is popular for the implication of a researcher’s political stance. To obtain objectivity, it was necessary to keep in mind to maintain distance from the examined data and operate a careful and systematic analysis and systematic self-reflection to sustain one's objectivity (Wodak and Meyer, 2009, p. 33). Therefore, I intended not to take examples of the texts that correlate with my assumptions of the issue and instead aimed for a self-reflective analysis (ibid., 33). However, as I am interpreting the data, a slight degree of subjectivity could perhaps not be avoided, for instance in the case of how sexualization is provoked.

5.5 Ethical considerations

Regarding research ethics, I aim to outline, that I was dealing with a vulnerable issue in my analysis: the discrimination of women in sports. Moreover, these women are further stereotyped and stigmatized due to their ethnic backgrounds. My research aim was to analyze the representation of female athletes, who deal with several injustice issues, and I cannot assure that these athletes conform with my intend. However, as they are famous athletes and public figures, who feature in advertising campaigns with a far reach, I believe that the athletes expect to be part of discussions surrounding gender inequality and intersectionality. Further, it was my first aim to write a feminist analysis, and to critically analyze female representations in sports and advertising campaigns. At this point I would like to note, that femvertising, as it was discussed in the previous chapters, is not a black-and-white issue. Therefore, it was vital to consider different aspects of athlete’s representations. I assume that Nike and UA’s advertising campaigns might both actively tackle discrimination against the female athletes and, on the other side foster several stereotypes against them.

Referring to Lazar (2007) I consider it a problematic ethical issue that I am making claims about marginalized female athletes of different ethnic backgrounds without collaborating with these them, nor with members of their communities. As a 25-year-old student from Germany and of
European Caucasian ethnic background, my point-of-view is quite external. Besides, the campaigns I am researching display first and foremost US American athletes and I have placed a focus on US American context of femvertising campaigns. My interpretation draws on academic and non-academic sources as well as theories and my own knowledge of the field. I want to remark that this thesis is considered to open a discussion and can be conceived as a research paper under development. Therefore, comments and critique can be sent to my e-mail address, which is listed at the cover page of the thesis.

6. Results

In this chapter, I will present the results of the analysis. At first I will explain female athletes’ representation in Nike and Under Armour’s campaigns *Dream Crazier* and *Unlike Any*. Then I will turn to the intersection of gender and ethnicity as part of the athletes’ representation. Finally, I will compare the elements of representation identified, by drawing a specific focus on the postfeminist elements and the use of intersectional feminism in the case of Black and African American female athletes.

6.1 The campaign videos’ approach to gender discrimination

6.1.1 The notion of history

Nike's campaign *Dream Crazier* campaign video opposes inequality with images of female athletes' excellent performances and emphasizes gender inequality by presenting the situation of the present, as well as the past, and reminding the viewer that females have had to fight for their position in sports historically.

In its *Dream Crazier* campaign video, Nike features a flashback of the year 1975 when women were not allowed to enter marathons. The scene shows a woman in a printed t-shirt bearing the words “Et les femmes?” and “Pourquoi pas les femmes?”. As shown in figure 11, she starts running the marathon and is pulled off the course by some of the marathon's officials. Meanwhile, Williams’ voice-over comments on the images “A woman running a marathon was crazy” (Nike, 2019, 00:39 – 00:44).
Under Armour’s *Unlike Any* campaign has not used archived material and only once alludes to the history of gender inequality in sports more generally. In the poem dedicated to Copeland it is alluded to how the African American prima ballerina is breaking with historical barriers:

To solo and to feel alone.
To take up space in history’s home (Under Armour, Misty Copeland, 2017).

6.1.2 The use of poetry

UA's use of poems for the narration of the Unlike Any videos construct a metaphorical femvertising campaign. The use of a metaphorical and symbolical language is, in Mucundofeanu's word used when the message is abstract or difficult to verbalize and when the marketers want to verbalize more than one message (2018, p. 74) Thus, I would interpret that UA's poetic approach was used to soften the complex issue of gender (and race) discrimination in sports.

By using poetry for the campaign, I would state that UA's, Unlike Any campaign video and images, follow a softer approach to gender inequality in sports than Nike's. For instance, in Misty Copeland's poem, the author Sean Williams uses the expressions "to shatter norms," and "to shift the form" for her fight against gender discrimination. The male-dominated sport domain is alluded to as a "systematic structure," and the poem indicates that "the oppressor's eye ain't all eye-seeing" (Under Armour, Misty Copeland, 2017).
UA further used a specific aesthetic and style by working together with popular U.S. American poets, poetry slam artists and rappers (Saul Williams, Amir Mohamed el Khalifa/ Oddisee, Dominique Christina, Aristophanes/ Pan Wei Ju, Kojey Radical and Aja Monet). The campaign interrelates to American popular culture and activism in an artistic way. Feminism and its intersection with race are articulated metaphorically and intertextually. For instance, Saul William’s, the author of the poem dedicated to Misty Copeland is an African American poet, musician and poetry slam performer, but also an activist, who tackles racist issues in his art.

6.1.3 The voice-over and point-of-view

In the case of the campaign video's voice-overs, there is a significant contrast between Nike and UA's videos. Nike's video is narrated from Serena Williams' point of view. Williams' voice-over reminds the viewer of gender discrimination speaking from her experience and for all female athletes in the first person. By the end of the video, Williams speaks in the second person and addresses the consumer. I interpret that using Williams' voice for the videos' narration creates an intense and emotional campaign. UA's six campaign videos have been narrated by the poets. This voice-over narration is more external than Nike's. However, the poems were written from the perspective of the athletes, and the symbolism that guides the poetic style creates a profound connection to the issue of gender discrimination in sports.

6.1.4 Addressing the viewer

Regarding Nike's narrative style, I argue that the brand connects the athletes more deeply to their audience. As stated above, Serena's voice-over in the Dream Crazier campaign video directly addresses the consumer: "So if they want to call you crazy? Fine. Show them what crazy can do." (Nike, Dream Crazier video, 2019, 01:13 – 01:21) Moreover, by the end of the campaign video, the athletes Olivia Moultrie, Simone Manuel, and a young female boxer look directly into the camera (Ibid., 01:14 – 01:17). This gaze into the camera could foster the ambition of the viewer to follow the lead of these athletes and see them as role models. Secondly, Nike's ambition to construct the athletes as role models is in line with its general approach to gender discrimination in sports. Nike's "Made To Play" initiative (see 5.1' Sample selection') and its purpose of increasing young girls' participation in sports by featuring role models. Looking up
to the athletes portrayed in the Nike campaign, the brand might want to inspire young girls to follow their lead.

The six *Unlike Any* campaign videos portrayed on the website did not identify specific connection of the female athletes and the viewers. The narrators of the videos are poets, and not the athletes, and there was no eye-contact or any kind of interaction of the athletes and the camera in the videos.

6.2 Post-feminist elements of the female athletes’ representations

6.2.1 Self-surveillance and discipline

Nike’s and UA’s campaign have both displayed strong and exceptional female athletes. A guiding theme of both campaigns is the athletes’ extraordinary discipline and self-surveillance. Also, the athletes appear, as godlike and unhuman like figures. Their perfect appearances and self-discipline might foster a feeling of insufficiency among female consumers. Thus, I believe that the campaigns could psychosocially foster consumers’ aim to extensively discipline themselves.

Nike’s campaign is guided by the narrative that anyone can achieve their dreams and if those dreams are called “crazy” by anyone, one should “show them what crazy dreams can do. Striking was Williams discipline to have a baby and continue her extraordinary career soon afterwards.

Landing a double-cork 1080 or winning 23 grand slams, having a baby, and then coming back for more? Crazy, Crazy, crazy, and crazy. (Nike, Dream Crazier video, 2019, 00:58 – 01:06)

In UA’s campaign, the female athletes are represented to strive for continuous self-improvement to become consistently stronger and improve their physical abilities. For instance, Lindsey Vonn and Zoe Zhang are celebrated for their abilities to overcome their injuries.

I come here with my injury.  
To see your injury  
From here on,  
I fight against what I can  
And what I can’t (Under Armour, Zoe Zhang, 2017)
My body breaks, and it breaks  
And I do not (Under Armour, Lindsey Vonn, 2018)

Heroes

Further, I argue the campaigns construct the female athletes as heroic figures. Referring to Joseph Campbell’s (1961) idea of the “good” hero figure in myths, legends, and fairy tales, heroes break with both personal and historical limitations. Moreover, they are represented sacred, as they have noble ideas for human life (Campbell, 1961, as cited in Schwartz, 1969). Thus, the athletes, who have found to break with historical barriers of gender discrimination ad well as physical and mental barriers, are comparable to heroes. The idea of the hero, who breaks with historical limitation was particularly striking in Nike’s Dream Crazier campaign (see 6.1.1, ‘Gender discrimination’).

I have Nike’s general design of the Dream Crazier campaign as heroic. The athletes are represented as heroes visually by featuring their excellent performances and breaking with records, and by using a low-key lightning with black and white shades that, I argue, foregrounds their perfection and constructs them sacred and undefeatable. The campaign image featuring Ibtihaj Mohammad further compares her to a hero, telling the viewer to be as much hero-like as she is (see figure 12). Referring to the post-feminist notion of personal choice once again, Nike might express that the fencer never needed a hero to pursue her dreams and pursued her ambitions on her own terms.

Figure 12: Ibtihaj Mohammad featured in Nike’s Dream Crazier campaign (Wieden and Kennedy, 2019)
Under Armour's *Unlike Any* campaign portrays the female athletes as perfect subjects, who are, as the title dictates, "Unlike Any." Referring to the campaign's introduction, the athletes are "achieving unbelievable feats of athleticism beyond anything the world has seen. Breaking convention and elevating themselves above any plane of comparison." (Under Armour, *Unlike Any*, 2019) It is particularly striking how the campaign continuously draws from notions of flying, rising, lifting, and the sky in general (the moon, the stars, the clouds) while representing the athletes. Examples are the poems dedicated to Jessi Graff and Zoe Zhang:

I fight in my own way,
So I will rise above all (Under Armour, Zoe Zhang, 2017)

I looked onwards in awe and said
teach me to fly through the air
like the flight of Pegasus (Under Armour, Jessie Graff, 2017)

Frequently, the poems render them as unhuman, sheer godlike subjects. Referring to Schwartz (1969), the representation of supernatural powers, constructs them as heroes (p. 84).

### 6.2.2 Individualization and personal choice

Referring to Gill, I state that both Nike's and Under Armour's discourses are underpinned by "a grammar of individualism" (2007, p. 153). The post-feminist notions of individualization and personal choice are guided by a sense of enlightened self-interest and pursuing hopes and dreams on their own terms (Gill, 2007) as well as finding their own identities (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim, 2002). Yet, inequality and oppression equally play a part in the discourse, a finding that contrasts Gill’s post-feminist individualization (2007).

The Nike campaign video focuses on female athletes’ performance and her achievements by dedicating short-cut scenes to the individual athletes. Particularly, tennis star Serena Williams was foregrounded as the main protagonist. The representation of Serena Williams as excellent athlete, who manages to become a mother and shortly afterward continues her success in sports can be interpreted referring to the post-feminist notion of personal choice and self-determination that concerns both her professional and her personal life (Gill, 2007) Furthermore, Nike’s YouTube videos about the athletes Chantel Navarro and Ayesha McGown, and the plus-size dancing group “the Honeybeez”, the famous female athletes share their personal stories, their discipline to be the athlete they are now and their pursuit to happiness (Nike, YouTube, 2019).
Moreover, athletes’ individual performances are in the core focus of the composition in both the campaign video and the images. The black-colored background and the low-key lighting, which is positioned slightly in front and above the athletes, visually foreground the excellence of their performances.

The campaign of Nike and UA were written from the perspective of the athletes, although they are narrated by the poets. UA’s campaign videos further continuously and frequently start the sentences with the subject. The stories told in the videos are about athletes’ drive to find their own identities by proving their abilities in sport. Nike has further changed to the second person in the last scene of its *Dream Crazier* campaign video and directly addressed the consumer (Nike, Dream Crazier video, 2019, 01:13 – 01:21).

The UA campaign's poems, as well as its website's introductive texts intertextually, refer to the athletes' biographies. Besides, each female athlete, has, discovered her individual identity. For instance, Misty Copeland is the passionate prima ballerina who breaks personal barriers and was the first principal ballerina at American Ballet Theater who is African American. Natasha Hastings is the "400M Diva", who is both athlete and the owner of a personal make-up brand, and who proves that femininity and power are not conflicting, Zoe Zhang is the taekwondo champion and Chinese actress who fought her way back after a significant injury, Jessi Graff is the superhero, who defies gravity, Alison Désir is the activist who supports women's rights with her organization Harlem Run and who knows how to achieve a healthy lifestyle (Under Armour, Alison Désir, 2017). The athletes are individually represented in the videos and the images, which focus on their performances, their sportswear in individual empty settings. In UA’s still images, the athletes Natasha Hastings and Alison Désir smile brightly and self-confidently into the camera. In case of Natasha Hastings and Jessi Graff, I observed self-determined and confident gazes into the camera.

The notion of personal freedom is also the ending line of the *Unlike Any* poem dedicated to marathon runner and activist Alison Désir:

> I am most free running for freedom (Under Armour, Alison Désir, 2017).

The poem metaphorically connects running to the feeling of freedom and allude to her activist organization “Harlem Run”, that supports communities by organizing inclusive runs and events.
6.2.3 Femininity as bodily preoccupation

Referring to Gill (2007) post-feminism views femininity as a bodily preoccupation. The female body has become a source of identity in post-feminist media representations, and the body has become a project for continuous self-improvement (2007, 2004). This discourse was particularly found relevant for UA’s campaign. The Unlike Any poems have further frequently referred to the athletes’ bodies as a constant source of improvement. The athletes have, referring to Under Armour, achieved perfection by understanding the physics of their bodies. For instance, the poem dedicated to Natasha Hastings reads:

I figured out how to fly
How to command my limbs (Under Armour, Natasha Hastings, 2017)

Muscular physique

In both campaigns by Nike and Under Armour, the female athletes' bodies were rendered in the focus and the muscular physique was visually foregrounded.

In the UA campaign, the athletes were frequently dressed in sports bras, revealing their abdominal muscles, and the composition of the campaign's images was designed to focus on their strained muscles (see figure 13).

In the Nike photographs, the choice of lightening features the muscular physique of the athletes' bodies. The Nike photographs lightning is low-key and positioned in front and slightly above the athletes. The hard light turns attention to the athletes' faces, their muscular body parts, and their Nike clothing. Moreover, the black background, the white letterings and the lightning built a sharp contrast (see figure 14).
6.2.4 Sexualization

Post-feminist notions of women's sexualization of their own bodies are not generally used in both Nike's and UA's campaigns. I observed that the athletes do not appear sensually, or playing with their sexuality per se. A stronger representational focus is set on female athletes' abilities and excellent performances.

In one of Nike’s Dream Crazier campaign images featuring the campaign's main protagonist and tennis player Serena Williams, the athlete's breasts have been turned into the center of the composition (see figure 15). In Serena's image a low-angle-shot and a flash of low-key lightning highlight her face and breasts. In the case of this one image, this emphasis on Serena's breasts could be interpreted as an emphasis on her feminine sexuality.
However, Nike has represented female athletes in a variety of different poses and sports categories, both in the campaign video and the images. Hence, referring to point 6.2, this image plays only a small part in the whole campaign. Moreover, Williams frequently wears tight and sexy Nike outfits during her tennis match, and in her private life. I assume that her sexualized appearance might be in accordance with her self-representation. However, her endorsement contract with Nike plays a part in her sexualized appearance.

6.2.5 Sexual difference

In UA's Unlike Any campaign, Natasha Hasting's feminine beauty is discursively foregrounded and connected to her performances. In post-feminist terms, this could emphasize the sexual difference of the female athlete towards men, in the case of style. On the campaign website, the athlete's feminine style is read as a source of her power, and she gets introduced as "400M Diva", referring to her make-up brands' "400M Diva" collection.

When you look best, you perform your best – and Natasha Hastings is not shy about her passion for both her style and her sport. Known as the “400M Diva”, this multiple gold medalist overcame self-doubt and the critics by breaking records and proving that being feminine and powerful are not mutually exclusive. (Under Armour, Natasha Hastings, 2017)

Also, her appearances and clothing draw a focus on female's femininity, yet this was done in a powerful, empowered matter. For instance, she wears a red lipstick (assumingly from her make-
up collection) on the campaign images and during her sprint in the video (see figure 16). The red lipstick, I argue, is a signifying element of feminine beauty.

![Figure 16: Unlike Any campaign image featuring Natasha Hastings wearing a red lipstick (Under Armour, Natasha Hastings, 2017)](image)

6.2.6 Irony and knowingness

I argue that Nike’s campaign *Dream Crazier* is built to express irony by repeating the word ‘crazy’. The Nike campaign video repeats the word crazy, and emotion-indicating adjectives refer to women’s achievements and behaviours in sports. Yet, of course women are not crazy, if they show emotions or if they are coaching an NBA-team. However, the use of irony in Nike’s campaign alludes to the discrimination of women in sports and their ongoing stigmatization as not being able to compete in sports, the way men do. Visually, Nike’s irony is put to the extreme by connecting Serena Williams’ voice-over to excellent performances of famous female athletes on screen. Furthermore, Nike builds upon the knowingness of the audience by alluding to outstanding performances and records female athletes have broken, as well as females own personal achievements (e.g. Serena Williams who had a baby and recontinued her tennis career shortly afterwards), and representing them to the audience as a reminder of women’s treatment in sports.

UA more strongly capitalized upon metaphorical descriptions in its poems dedicated to the six famous female athletes. However, UA has not as significantly referred to gender discrimination like Nike and draws from inequality discourse metaphorically in the poem *exts*. I argue that the poetic style in general lead to an alluding full of metaphors and intertextual references. Referring to Gill (2007), the poems would thus flatter its audience with knowingness.
6.2.7 Feminism undone

Referring to Goldman’s commodity feminism (1997) and Gill’s (2007) and McRobbie’s (2004) post-feminism, the Nike and UA campaigns are, by nature advertisements that intend to sell commodities, in this case sport clothing and shoes. According to Gill (2017), post-feminism is characterized by the thought that women were not held back by gender inequality, most notably caused by capitalist patriarchy and institutionalized sexism but by their own lack of self-esteem (2017). This brings me to questioning the intention of Nike and UA’s heroic representations of female athletes. I argue that these representations, as part of the brand’s marketing communication, speak to consumers self-confidence, empowering them to pursue their ambitions, while simultaneously presupposing the discrimination and of women caused by the companies themselves. Regarding Nike’s and UA’s company cultures, their use of feminism as a marketing strategy can be understood as an exploitation of the movement, or in McRobbie’s words, an “undoing of feminism” (2004, p. 255).

A salient example is Nike’ real treatment of pregnant women and mothers. As mentioned above, Nike foregrounds Serena Williams’ role as a mother and star athlete. However, in May 2019, three months after the Dream Crazier campaign was aired, the New York Times published a commentary by track and field runner Alysia Montano, former Nike sponsored athlete and Olympic that turns Nike’s rhetoric “Dream Crazy” against the company: “Nike Told Me to Dream Crazy, Until I Wanted a Baby.” (Montano, 2019). The article features a video about sponsors reactions towards her pregnancy. Referring to Alysia’s article, especially in the track and field discipline, athletes’ income depends on sponsorship deals However, the article reveals that, according to a 2019 Nike track and field contract shared with The New York Times, Nike can still reduce athlete’s payment “for any reason” (ibid, 2019) if the athlete does not meet a specific ranking. The company thereby does not make exceptions for childbirth, pregnancy or maternity. She, as well as many other female athletes, was not able to compete the standards while having a child. Therefore, she also lost her health insurance. Interestingly, Montano mentions that the four Nike executives who negotiate contracts for track and field athletes are all men (ibid., 2019). With regards to gender inequality, Nike’s treatment of mother athletes means that females cannot get paid and lose their health insurance for a specific time, if they do not meet the athletic threshold, whereas men continue to compete without having these disadvantages.
In the case of UA, discriminative treatment of pregnant athletes is not publicly known. The company claimed they have “always supported and has not reduced payment for our female athletes during pregnancy”, and that they were proud of their “continued support female athletes before, during and after their pregnancies.” (Butler-Young, 2019)

Furthermore, both Nike and UA have been accused for male executed discrimination at the workplace. For instance, in a New York Times article published in April 2018, former Nike employees have described sexist behaviours and sexual harassments of women at the workplace, and a work culture where men were promoted ahead of women (Creswell et al., 2018). Moreover, in November 2019 the Wall Street Journal has claimed that UA’s male employees frequently visited strip clubs, and that managers invited women to company events based on their attractiveness. Moreover, some UA employees have shared their feelings of being disenfranchised based on their gender and race (McDonald, 2019).

Next, Nike and Under Armour’s products are both example of large “fast fashion” companies, that aim to produce vast amounts of clothes and shoes without emphasizing fair production conditions. In the case of Nike, it is known that the products are made in conditions that do not resonate with human rights. In a documentation called “Nike Sweatshops: Behind the swoosh”, educator activist and filmmaker Jim Keady presented the working conditions of Nike’s factory workers and reveals that Nike pays its workers not more than only 1,25 US$ a day (TeamSweat, 2011). Nike is also one of the large Western retail companies that has produced in the unsafely constructed Rana Plaza factories in Dhaka, Bangladesh, which has collapsed on April 24, 2013, and caused the deaths of over a thousand Bangladeshi garment workers (ibid., 2011, see figure 17).

![Figure 17: Collapse of Rana-Plaza on 24 April 2013, in Dhaka, Bangladesh (Preuss, 2018)](image)
Both Nike and UA are part of the Fair Labour Association (FLA). However, both companies do not state whether they take measures to improve labour conditions in the production or whether living wage payments are realized at its apparel manufacturers (Rankabrand, 2017; 2018). Finally, the exploitation of garment workers is a feminist issue, due to the fact that most workers are female. For instance, the Fashion Revolution movement states: “Today, more than 70% of garment workers in China are women, in Bangladesh the share is 85%, and in Cambodia as high as 90%” (Fashion Revolution, 2014)

6.3 Intersectional feminism and Black/African American female athlete’s representation

Ethnicity and race and their intersections with gender are vital for Nike and UA's representation of female athletes, as the athletes have diverse ethnic backgrounds that relate to their representation in the campaigns. As a case, I examined the intersection of race and gender as part of Black female athletes or African American female athletes. Therefore, I am referring to studies of U.S. scholars most frequently, because Nike and Under Armour have represented African American athletes from the U.S. (Serena Williams, Natasha Hastings, Misty Copeland, Alison Désir, Ayesha McGown et al.).

Most significantly in Nike's and UA's campaigns were Serena Williams' representation as a disciplined athlete (Nike) and Natasha Hastings, Misty Copeland's, and Alison Désir's self-determination to pursue their best performances and to overcome physical and mental barriers. These images contrast the pre-existing stereotype of Black athletes (of both genders) as natural talents who would not need to pursue strong work ethics due to their physical superiority towards white athletes. Withycombe has also listed a stereotype of the "lazy African American athlete" (Withycombe, 2011, p. 479).

Moreover, the focus on Natasha Hastings' feminine beauty can be understood as counter-stereotype towards the stereotypical man-like and animalistic portrayals of female African American athletes. However, instead of being represented as manlike, her accented-feminine style is foregrounded, evoking a rather post-feminist image of the athlete.
Besides, Withycombe lists that female African American athletes were often portrayed in more extreme sexualized poses than white athletes. I would like to point out that it might not be coincidence that Serena Williams, as an African American tennis champion, was the only athlete in the *Dream Crazier* campaign who was slightly sexualized in one of the campaign images.

In its *Dream Crazier* ad campaign video, Nike intertextually refers to the discriminatory treatment of track and field runner Caster Semanya, who is a two-time Olympic and three-time world champion from South-Africa. The video featured Semanya running at the Olympics, with Serena Williams’ voice saying, “when we’re too good, there’s something wrong with us.” (Nike, Dream Crazier, 00:26-00:28). Since 2009, officials of the International Association of the Athletics Federations (IAAF) have stated that Semanya was "biologically male" and that she should reduce her level of testosterone if she wanted to compete in the Olympics (New York Times, 2019). The athlete was forced to take testosterone, limiting medication between 2010 and 2015 (Ingle, 2019). However, it cannot be proven that Semanya’s excellent performances relate, in any ways to her level of testosterone. The IAAF’s decision can be understood as discrimination of the athlete based on her intersecting identities gender and race, as well as her androgynous look that does not meet with society's constructed ideas of femininity and masculinity (Zenquis and Mwaniki, 2019). However, this can be solely read intertextually in Nike’s campaign video, Nike makes a statement against the IAAF’s treatment of the athlete.

Moreover, Nike has referred to the underrepresentation of African American athletes in specific sports categories. In the video, “Dream Crazier: Ayesha McGown”, the cycling athlete McGown talks about her dream to become the first professional African American cyclist. Therefore, Nike pulls the discussion of African American athletes as minorities in specific sports in the U.S.

### 7. Concluding discussion

This chapter provides a concluding discussion on the representation of famous female athletes in Nike’s and UA’s campaigns. At first, I will summarize my main conclusions in relation to my research aim and research questions and re-connect m findings to the literature review.
Then, I will turn to the relevance of this study for society at large. Finally, the limitations of my study and future research agendas will be discussed.

7.1 Summary

Due to the high popularity of sports brands and the increasing use of feminism as an advertising strategy to target female consumers, my interest in this thesis lay in a discussion of sports brands femvertising campaigns. As famous athletes are vital brand ambassadors for companies that sell sports clothes, and as their representation was deemed problematic in previous literature, my research was focused on the representation of female athletes in sports brands femvertising campaigns. The analysis was conducted on the contemporary femvertising campaigns of Nike and UA Dream Crazier, and Unlike Any, as these campaigns were considered using different narrative and aesthetic strategies, and because of the high relevance of the U.S. based sports brands in Western, and U.S. American society.

By comparing Nike’s and UA’s visual and narrative approaches to gender discrimination in the campaign videos Dream Crazier and the six Unlike Any videos, significant differences were found. Nike's campaign was more firmly oriented towards reminding consumers of gender discrimination in the present and the past. Under Armour put more emphasis on representing the athletes personal (physical and mental) barriers. UA used poems for a metaphorical, and, I argued, softer approach to gender inequality in sports.

This thesis has argued that both campaigns have put forward a progressive, yet also stigmatizing discourse of famous female athletes. Different elements of post-feminism were discussed for both campaigns referring to McRobbie (2004) and Gill (2007). However, I could not argue, that either of the campaigns would be more post-feminist than the other. Gill’s (2007) post-feminist element self-surveillance and discipline was a reappearing paradigm of the campaign’s discourses surrounding female athletes. Both campaigns can be understood as discourses of individualization. Particularly striking was the sexualization of Serena Williams in Nike's campaign and Under Armour's foregrounding of Natasha Hastings' feminine beauty. In their femvertising campaigns, the brands have flattered their audience with their knowingness by using intertextual references. Nike has further constructed an accented ironic discourse. Also, both brands portrayed female athletes as heroic figures.
Furthermore, Nike and UA have shown powerful and determined female athletes and tackled stereotypes against Black and African American female athletes. Nike further referred to the underrepresentation of athletes and contrasted stereotyping intertextuality. However, UA's hyperfeminine visual representation of Natasha Hastings and Nike's sexualization of Serena Williams in her campaign image could evoke further problematic and stigmatizing images of the athletes as "sexy" and "divas."

Finally, it was discussed that Nike and UA presented feminist discourses, but, as companies, they have a problematic relationship to gender inequality and sexism, as well as further social injustice issues.

7.2 Limitations and Need for Further research

The scope of data used in this thesis was small for an analysis of post-feminist and intersectional feminism, as I only analyzed two campaigns by the sports brands Nike and UA. I would like to express the need to critically analyze female representation in different sports advertisements, both quantitatively and qualitatively. With an intersectional and post-feminist theoretical approach, a focus on popular athletes such as Serena Williams would offer an informing analysis.

In this thesis, I discussed intersecting elements of gender and race as part of the representation of Black and African American female athletes. Due to the small scope of this thesis, I could not focus on the specific representation of other ethnicities, such as Muslim female athletes or athletes of Asian background for example. Also, other intersecting elements, such as age and diverse body sizes could not be examined. Hence, further quantitative and qualitative studies on advertising of sports brands such as Nike and UA could focus on the degree of inclusivity used to represent female athletes. Qualitative research such as Critical Discourse Analysis could further focus on the brands’ efforts to oppose stereotypes against women through the lens of intersectional feminism.

This thesis has critically and comparatively analyzed the representation of famous female athletes in Nike’s and UA’s recent femvertising campaigns, with a specific note post-feminism and intersectional feminism. However, it only looks at the latest and most recent campaigns and
does not take historical developments into account. The historical developments of femvertising campaigns might clarify where the brands are going and what strategies they use to target female consumers. Therefore, I argue that further research could concentrate on how Nike's and UA’s representation of female athletes changed over time and how different narratives were used to represent the athlete's individual stories and encounter with gender discrimination. This research aim would be intriguing, as sensibilities concerning feminist or racist issues in society change over time due to the era of social media and hashtag movements such as #MeToo. In that case, analysis of popular campaigns could focus on both campaign videos and images by conducting a Multimodal Critical Discourse Analysis. As discussed in the Literature Review and in my own findings, Nike has been studied intensely in terms of its heroic representations of female athletes, and its corporate image concerning feminism. As Nike has a longer history with femvertising and the inclusion of social injustice issued in its advertising, it offers a more extensive case than UA.

Lastly, I have made statements in this thesis that could further be validated by conducting audience research. For instance, I am stating that the disciplined, exceptional and god-like representations of female athletes could lead to a feeling of insufficiency towards female audiences (see 6.2.1). For clarification, it would be intriguing to have information surrounding female consumers’ perception of the campaigns gathered by interviews and surveys.

7.3 Reflections on of the Sociocultural Dimension of the study

Considering the popularity of Nike, and UA among consumers worldwide, the brands' campaigns are estimated to have a significant impact on their audience and society at large. Their activist messages are, building a connection between female consumers, who, as noted in the context (see 2.1), feel more emotionally connected to specific brands than men. Moreover, Nike and UA’s campaigns reach the mass media and on individual social media platforms surrounding the treatment of female athletes.

However, Nike and UA cannot be considered feminist companies (see 6.7), and are, according to Goldman's (1992), femvertising can be understood an approach to sell commodities and a depoliticized approach to feminism. Therefore, the brands have exploited political feminism for their corporate interest. This serves as an example of how feminism could end as a lifestyle, as
women wearing Nike or UA shorts would feel like “feminist” due to their consumption of these sport products. Furthermore, we do not know whether viewers of the campaigns regard the female athletes as role models, or that they would feel inspired to be more physically active and compete in sports. However, since we live in a corporatized world, brands such as Nike and UA are integrated into people's daily life and have the power to impact our culture. For instance, they are driving discussions surrounding gender inequality and sexism in sports, as well as discrimination due to gender and ethnicity. Finally, I believe femvertising of sport brands plays a part in fight for gender discrimination in sports but should be regarded critically.
Glossary for image and video analysis

This glossary was used for the analysis of image and videos, and is based on Boggs, 1985 pp. 443 – 446.

Video structure

Shot: A part of the video that is produced by one single continuous run of the camera.

Scene: A series of shots cut together. A scene communicates a unified action taking place at one time and setting.

Sequence: A series of scenes. A sequence forms a significant part of a video and forms part of a video’s dramatic structure.

Sound

Voice-over: A voice off screen that narrates the story, gives background information or simply reads a text.

Framing

Extreme close-up: A more close focus on a specific body part of a subject (the eyes, the feet, etc.) or on an object (e.g. a ball).

Close-up: The subject/ objects fills most of the frame and little of the surroundings is shown. A close-up of a person generally focuses on the face only.

Medium shot: The subject and the surroundings are both visible. The picture shows the upper body of a person and maximum the upper parts of the legs.

Long shot: A human usually takes up less than half the height of the frame: often used to show the setting of a scene.

Extreme long shot: The camera is far away from the subject, emphasising the surroundings.

Camera angles

High- angle shot: The camera is placed above eye-level and diminished the importance of the portrayed subjects.
Low-angle shot: The camera is placed below eye-level and exaggerates importance to the subject.

Lightening

Low-key lightening: Most of the setting is in shadow and subjects/objects are only defined by a few lightening highlights.

High-key lightening: Strong lightening and little shadows. Subjects and objects are highlighted and seen with little contrasts.
Appendices

Appendix 1: If you let me play, Nike, 1995


If you let me play,
I will be 60 percent less likely to get breast cancer …
I will suffer less depression …
I will be more likely to leave a man who beats me …
I will be less likely to get pregnant …
I will learn what it means to be strong.”

Just do it.

Appendix 2: Hero advertising, Nike, n.d.

(Nike, n.d., as cited in Helstein, 2003, p. 283)

The ad portrayed an image Cynthia Cooper in a high-five position together with a teammate coupled with an image of a young girl wearing a Cynthia Cooper replica sweatshirt. The text on the right side next to the images says:

TWO YEARS AGO EVEN SHE DIDN’T KNOW SHE WAS A HERO:

How do you know you’re a hero? Is there an exact moment – when a little girl walks up to you wearing a team jersey, and you realize it’s yours?
Is it the first time you hear the sound of a sold-out arena?
Or see a face on the front page of the sports section, instead of inside?
Two years ago, if you asked someone who Cynthia Cooper was, You might get a blank stare.
But after two WNBA championships, two MPA awards, two sparkling seasons Full of enchantment, excited fans, when you asked, you’ll hear:
“Man that’s who I want to be.”

Just do it.
Appendix 3: Voice-over text: Nike, Dream Crazier campaign video, 2019

If we show emotion, we’re called dramatic.
If we wanna play against men, we’re nuts.
And if we dream about equal opportunity… delusional.
If we stand for something, we’re unhinged.
When we’re too good, there’s something wrong with us.
And if we get angry, we’re hysterical, irrational, or just being crazy.
But… (music starts)
A woman running a marathon was crazy. (background voice)
A woman boxing was crazy.
A woman dunking… crazy.
Coaching an NBA team… crazy.
A woman competing in a hijab, changing her sport, landing a double-cork 1080
or winning 23 grand slams, having a baby and then coming back for more?
Crazy, crazy, crazy, crazy and crazy.
So if they want to call you crazy? Fine. Show them what crazy can do.

Just do it.
Nike.
Appendix 4: Female athletes featured in Nike’s Dream crazier campaign, 2019

Serena Williams: U.S. tennis player and former Wimbledon winner

Victoria Azarenka: Belaruse tennis player and former Wimbledon winner

Li Na: Romanian tennis player and 2019 Wimbledon winner (July 2019)

Megan Rapinoe, Alex Morgan, Julie Ert, Alyssa Naehe, Sam Kerr: U.S. national soccer team players

Olivia Moultrie: 13-year old soccer player from the U.S. (youngest American female soccer player turning professional)

Diana Taurasi: U.S. American basketballer players

Lisa Leslie: Former U.S. American national basketball player

Becky Hammon: Texas national basketball team coach

Cheryl Reeve: U.S. national basketball team coach

Sam Gordon: U.S. American football player

Marlen Esparza: U.S. Boxer and the first American women competing in boxing at the Olympics in 2012

Caster Semenya: South African Olympic track and field runner

Ibtihaj Mohammad: U.S. American Olympics fencer and member of Somalian fencing team, first U.S. champion to wear a hijab at the Olympics

Simone Manuel: U.S. American swimmer

Tatyana McFadden: U.S. Paralympian

Sky Brown: 10-year old skateboarder from Great Britain

Simone Biles: U.S. American Olympic gymnast
Chloe Kim: U.S. American snowboarder, the youngest woman to win an Olympic snowboarding gold medal
### Appendix 5: Transcription of the Dream Crazier campaign video, 2019

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Voice-over</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Image + camera movement</th>
<th>Framing and camera positions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>If we show emotion, we’re called…</td>
<td>00:00</td>
<td>Unknown female athlete football player taking off her helmet and crying [CUT]</td>
<td>Close-up, Medium shot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>00:05</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>…dramatic</td>
<td>00:06</td>
<td>The same athlete crying in front of journalists. [CUT]</td>
<td>Medium shot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>00:08</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If we wanna play against men… we’re nuts.</td>
<td>00:08</td>
<td>Female football player on the field playing against men. The football player is seen from behind. [CUT] Then she gets hustled to the ground. [CUT]</td>
<td>Long shot, medium shot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>00:11</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>And if we dream about equal opportunity…</td>
<td>00:14</td>
<td>Scene of U.S. national female soccer team with camera focusing on the faces of female soccer players in profile. The camera moves horizontally from Alex Morgan to Julie Ertz and Alyssa Naeher singing the national hymne. [CUT]</td>
<td>Medium shot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>00:17</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>… delusional.</td>
<td>00:18</td>
<td>Soccer player Megan Rapinoe in semiprofile during the national hymne is sang. [CUT]</td>
<td>Close-up</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If we stand for something…</td>
<td>00:19</td>
<td>Scene of tennis player Li Na arguing with referee during a tennis match. [CUT]</td>
<td>Medium shot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>00:21</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>…we’re unhinged.</td>
<td>00:22</td>
<td>Scene of basketball player arguing with referee. [CUT] The camera shows her more closely and follows her walking on the basketball field shouting angrily. [CUT]</td>
<td>Long shot; medium shot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>00:25</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When we’re too good…</td>
<td>00:26</td>
<td>Fast-runner Caster Semenya finishing her race being the fastest runner. [CUT]</td>
<td>Extreme long shot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>00:27</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>…there’s something wrong with us.</td>
<td>00:27</td>
<td>She raises her hand celebrating her performance. [CUT]</td>
<td>Medium shot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>00:28</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>And if we get angry…</td>
<td>00:29</td>
<td>Scene of basketball player Diana Taurasi who argues with referee. [CUT]</td>
<td>Medium shot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>00:31</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>…we’re hysterical, irrational…</td>
<td>0:31</td>
<td>Basketball coach Cheryl Reeve angrily shouting on the soccer field and tearing off her jacket. [CUT]</td>
<td>Medium shot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>00:34</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time</td>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Duration</td>
<td>Type</td>
</tr>
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<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------</td>
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<tr>
<td>00:34</td>
<td>Tennis player breaking her tennis rack. [CUT]</td>
<td>00:36</td>
<td>Extreme long shot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>00:37</td>
<td>Scene of a marathon in Fribourg, Switzerland. Only men are competing. [CUT]</td>
<td>00:38</td>
<td>Extreme long shot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>00:39</td>
<td>Woman in a printed shirt bearing the words “Et les femmes?” [CUT] She tries to compete in the marathon.</td>
<td>00:40</td>
<td>Medium shot, long shot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>00:41</td>
<td>A man tries to pull her of the course. [CUT]</td>
<td>00:44</td>
<td>Medium shot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>00:45</td>
<td>Boxer Marlen Esparza boxing into the camera; looking determined and angry. [CUT]</td>
<td>00:47</td>
<td>Close-up, medium shot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>00:48</td>
<td>Match between two female boxers [CUT]</td>
<td>00:50</td>
<td>Medium shot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>00:51</td>
<td>Scene of basketball player Lisa Leslie. The camera follows her while she is running towards the basketball basket and throwing the ball into the basket. [CUT]</td>
<td>00:53</td>
<td>Extreme long shot, medium shot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>00:54</td>
<td>NBA coach Becky Hammon encouraging her team, the San Antonio Spurs (Texas professional basketball team) [CUT]</td>
<td>00:56</td>
<td>Medium shot, close up</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>00:56</td>
<td>Fencer Ibtihaj Mohammad in a match whilst wearing a hijab. She wins and pulls her arms into the air and shouts tremendously. [CUT]</td>
<td>00:58</td>
<td>Extreme long shot, close-up, extreme long shot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>00:58</td>
<td>A scene of swimmers competing against each other. [CUT] The camera shows swimmer Simone Biles in a close-up after finishing her swim race. She cheers and places her hand over her mouth. [CUT]</td>
<td>01:00</td>
<td>Extreme long shot, close-up</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>00:58</td>
<td>Scene of snowboarder Chloe Kim performing. [CUT] Chloe Kim smiling after finishing her performance. [CUT]</td>
<td>01:01</td>
<td>Extreme long shot, close-up</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>01:01</td>
<td>Tennis player Serena Williams during a match, catching the ball. She wears a white tennis outfit and looks strained [CUT] Quick scene of the racket catching the ball [CUT] Focus on Serena shouting [CUT] Serena pitches the ball. [CUT]</td>
<td>01:06</td>
<td>Medium shot, big close up, medium shot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time</td>
<td>Description</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>...and crazy! 01:10 - 01:13</td>
<td>Gymnast Simone Biles showing a strong performance. [CUT]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fine. 01:17 - 01:19</td>
<td>A reappearing shot of Serena Williams during her match. [CUT]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Show them what crazy can do. 01:19 - 01:21</td>
<td>Serena pitches a tennis ball: Quick shot of a tennis ball flying through the air [CUT] Her racket catches the ball. [CUT]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/ 01:22 - 01:23</td>
<td>White letters in front of black background: Its only crazy until you do it. [CUT]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/ 01:23 - 01:26</td>
<td>Just do it. [CUT]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/ 01:26 - 01:29</td>
<td>Nike swoosh logo</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Extreme long shots

Close-ups

Big close-up

Close-up; medium shot

Misty Copeland

The systemic structure built to keep me in place is the stage I dance on. Black and Woman. Motherships, my mother’s hips beheld deep space. Astronaut of corporal grace. Born in a land mine.

As an idea points its toe to flex to shape the form of possibility I am testament twirled into afterthought the touch and taste of epiphany.

To match my strength is to feel your own Yet, like any born to blaze a trail to sing a song and land in jail to risk it all to change the game

to solo and to feel alone to take up space in history’s home to harbor hopes wishes and dreams to bring the untold into being

I am testament twirled into afterthought the touch and taste of epiphany.

Natasha Hastings

It’s quiet now I am alone with myself Remembering the days When I didn’t think I could When I didn’t know I should When doubt was a hiss in my ear.

But I’m awake now, Can you see me?

I, ambassador I, fire starter I, rain-maker

I figured out how to fly How to command my limbs

Of my immaculate womanness The red lipstick war paint, I am a chariot of possibility.

I, am unlike...any

Alison Désir

I lift myself, I raise I am a heel breaking the ground
unafraid and daring
I am what escapes
what flees ad flies
what splits and dashes
I am a dance
I do not fall
the dust of toes
wings waving in the wing
I move,
I am movement,
focused and fierce, I smile.
I laugh,
I lift and carry sisters
I am most free running for freedom

Unlike Any

Zoe Zhang

I come here with my injury,
to see your injury.
From here on,
I fight against what I can
and what I can’t
I fight against those who dismiss me,
my pain,
and my potential.
I fight in my own way,
so I will rise above all.

Unlike Any.

Jessie Graff

I want to know what it feels like
to leap from cloud to cloud
and not look down once
I looked onwards in awe and said
teach me
teach me to fly through the air
like the flight of pegasus
and remind me of exactly what it’s like
to be unlike any.

Lindsey Vonn

I saw a mountain I had to conquer
At its peak I stood, its base I pondered
To win or lose are both down hill
Injuries repaired by screws into my bones
I rise above my lowest points
to overcome my broken joints
With strength and will, I return descending
I’ll finish first or unlike any.
countless stitches to mark the
wounds I own

Lindsey Vonn, renewed version (2018)

In the art of metal joinery
A cracked pot fuses back together
With precious molten liquid
Gleaming vein at the sight of each braking

This is what I became
each wound filled with sunlight
to bond my old self to my new

I was hurt and did not end
and now I am endless
my body breaks
and it breaks
and I do not
my body splits
and I make home around its borders

A life force the colour of precious metals
pours out and sutures my wounds
makes me a map of all I survive
and makes me Unlike Any.
### Appendix 7: Transcription of the Unlike Any campaign video / Natasha Hastings, 2017

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Voice-over</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Image</th>
<th>Framing/camera angle</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>/</td>
<td>00:00</td>
<td>Black screen with white lettering: “For Natasha words by Dominique Christina”</td>
<td>Extreme long shot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/</td>
<td>0:05</td>
<td>The black screen and the letterings slowly disappear and a scene of a desert blends in. The camera brings the scene slowly in sharper focus. The camera moves towards Natasha Hastings while rotating and showing the scene upside down. She is in start position to run.</td>
<td>Extreme long shot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It’s quit now.</td>
<td>00:06</td>
<td>The camera moves closer to Natasha. [CUT]</td>
<td>Extreme long shot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/</td>
<td>0:10</td>
<td>The camera is closer to Natasha and rotates until the scene is upside down. [CUT]</td>
<td>Long shot; American</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/</td>
<td>0:14</td>
<td>The camera rotates and shows Natasha’s head in profile.</td>
<td>Close-up</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Remembering the days when I didn’t think I could, and I didn’t think I should…</td>
<td>00:14</td>
<td>The camera rotates and shows Natasha’s head in profile from upside down. [CUT] Quick shot of her back from upside down. [CUT]</td>
<td>Big close-up, Close up</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When doubt was a hiss in my ear.</td>
<td>00:18</td>
<td>Quick shot of Natasha’s head in profile. (horizontally) [CUT] Quick shot of Natasha’s head in profile. (vertically) [CUT]</td>
<td>Close-up</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>But I’m awake now.</td>
<td>00:22</td>
<td>The scene is shown from the distance. Natasha lifts up. [CUT] Her head is shown in a close-up.</td>
<td>Extreme long-shot, Big close-up</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can you see me?</td>
<td>00:27</td>
<td>Natasha blinks. [CUT]</td>
<td>Big close-up</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[no voice-over]</td>
<td>00:27</td>
<td>Shot of Natasha’s feet and legs. She starts running and the sand whirls. [CUT]</td>
<td>Close-up</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I, ambassador, I…</td>
<td>00:28</td>
<td>Natasha starts running in slow-motion. [CUT]</td>
<td>Long-shot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Firestarter… I…</td>
<td>00:31</td>
<td>Natasha is seen from upside down in slow-motion [CUT]</td>
<td>American</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rainmaker. I figured out how to fly</td>
<td>00:32</td>
<td>The slow-motion stops. Natasha runs fast, the camera rotates and shows her vertically.</td>
<td>American/ Long Shot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scene Description</td>
<td>Duration</td>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Shot Type</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How to command my limbs</td>
<td>00:37-00:38</td>
<td>The camera rotates until Natasha is shown up-side down. [CUT]</td>
<td>Medium Shot; Close-up</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Of my immaculate womanness, The red lipstick war paint.</td>
<td>00:38-00:42</td>
<td>Natasha is seen in profile while running. [CUT]</td>
<td>Close up</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I…am a chariot of possibility.</td>
<td>00:43-00:46</td>
<td>Natasha runs. The lettering “Natasha Hastings World Champion Sprinter” appears. [CUT]</td>
<td>Extreme close-up</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am unlike any.</td>
<td>00:47-00:49</td>
<td>White lettering in front of black background: “Unlike Any”. [CUT]</td>
<td>/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/</td>
<td>00:49-00:52</td>
<td>White Under Armour logo + White lettering in front of black background: “Under Armour. I will.”</td>
<td>/</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Reference List

Empirical data


Non-academic references

Internet sources


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