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Lessons from media darlings: Gender, context and celebrity culture

Masters dissertation

The Department of Media Studies

The University of the Witwatersrand

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There are a few people I would like to thank for their support through my journey of completing this study. These are my mom, my friends and my supervisor, Dr Dina Ligaga.

Dedication

To Khanyi Mbau and Deepika Padukone, media darlings extraordinaire. Nothing in this study is meant to be understood as personal inferences about who you both are as people. Rather, it is the nature of the media coverage you guys receive that is analysed in great detail.

Abstract

In examining select media coverage of media darlings Khanyi Mbau and Deepika Padukone this study explores the manner in which South African and Indian media shape public understandings of gender. Theoretically centred within the realms of celebrity culture and postfeminism this study explores the role the media plays in the process of teaching the audience about gender, which is notably a learned experience. Furthermore, the study examines the ideals of gender that are disseminated through the content about the media darlings in question.

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Chapter one

Introduction

Aim

The aim of this research is to establish how the coverage of media darlings perpetuates societal gender norms. In so doing, this study intends to clearly demonstrate how the media attempt to shape public discourse and understandings of gender.

Introduction to the study

It is often noted that as a social construct, gender is a learned experience (Deaux: 1987). Various socializing factors including interactions with parents, peers, teachers and the media influences this learning process. Bearing this in mind, this study focuses on the role the media plays in the process of teaching gender. Here it is noted that the media are very much in tune with hegemonic gender ideals and thereby disseminate these ideals through their content. While this is acknowledged theoretically (Rakow and Wackwitz: 2004; Schudson: 2003), there is an absence of a study that clearly demonstrates the lessons about gender that exist in content that the media disseminates. This study thus locates itself within this niche.

Furthermore, in an attempt to clearly demonstrate the way in which the media perpetuate gender ideals, this study looks at gender representation in two global contexts. It is here that one is introduced to the concept of media darlings, a relatively new term in academia. With a theoretical foundation set in the understanding of the term celebrity, media darlings are those celebrities that are widely covered in the media and as a result are widely known in audience circles. Central to this study's understanding of media darlings is the commodification of celebrity. The media use certain celebrities to sell and/or promote specific ideals and norms to the audience (Jooma: 2011). With strong links made to gender within this study, media darlings are thus those celebrities that the media use to represent the ideals that fall in line with societal hegemony. Here the focus will be on gender. This study thus explores the representation of media darlings for the purposes of understanding the gender lessons that the media are teaching.

It can thus be noted that the argument being made in this study is that through the coverage of media darlings, exemplars of societal hegemony and counter hegemony,

the media make clear inferences of gender. Through a detailed analysis of various media texts this study demonstrates the way in which these inferences stand as lessons about gender that are disseminated to the audience.

Centred within discourse around celebrity culture and gender, this study focuses on the representation of media darlings from South Africa and India. In establishing why this study has chosen to use the South African and Indian context, it can be noted that research of this nature links broadly to the Indian Ocean public sphere. With various transnational agendas growing at a rapid rate in contemporary society, the South-South connection South Africa and India share is increasingly fascinating. Seale (2011) notes that both countries come from a turbulent past rooted in discrimination. Caste in India and race in South Africa have influenced and continue to influence "the structure and composition of both societies…" (Seale 2011: 07). This study thus builds on these shared histories and thereby argues that research on both contexts becomes important in attempt to gain an understanding of certain complexities from both countries.

While this study does not expand into a comparative study in its truest form, the analysis of texts from each context comes together to prove the overall argument being made in this study. Thus the benefits of such inter-contextual research especially within the contexts of South Africa and India are bountiful. Hofmeyr and Williams (2011:11) build on this in arguing that,

> …comparative research is especially fruitful in trying to understand the complexities of India and South Africa, as both countries (and scholarship on the countries) have tended to see themselves as exceptional, reducing social and political phenomena to the uniqueness of their respective societies.

The study will thus analyse the representation of media darlings in the media of each context. When dealing with media from different contexts, understanding their agenda is key. However, a common characteristic of most media platforms is the importance given to media relevance. When looking at the complexities of the agenda of any media context, it is clear that gaining media relevance is key to being known. It has long been known that this links to the fact that the media works hand in hand with public relation companies, spokespersons and many other communication networks through industries like the entertainment industry on the principle of quid pro quo

(Jooma: 2011). In getting out media content to an audience that can be both harsh and supportive, relevance is created. Publications guide the audience into accepting and/or rejecting a person/film/television-show and/or song's relevance (2011). For the purpose of this study reference is made solely to the relevance of people when talking about media relevance. In manufacturing relevance, media and public relations industries alike guide a celebrity with regards to how to negotiate the media for the purpose of maintaining public interest (2011).

Furthermore, in an industry that is centred on the generation of profit (like the entertainment industry), marketing is extremely important. Linking to the aforementioned relevance, the more relevant a celebrity is the more profit that can be generated. Agrawal and Kamakura (1995: 56) thus note that:

> Celebrities make advertisements believable and enhance message recall. Furthermore celebrities aid in the recognition of brand names, create a positive attitude towards the brand and create a distinct personality for the endorsed brand. Ultimately, celebrity endorsements are believed to generate a greater likelihood of customers choosing the endorsed brand.

This thus ends up working in a cycle of sorts. A person gains relevance, the media gives her/him attention in turn maintaining the relevance thereby allowing profit to be made from this relevance through ad-campaigns and so forth. It is thus argued that from within this foundation of media relevance, marketing and profit comes the term media darling.

The choice to study the representations of media darlings in South African and Indian media links to cultural globalization and my experience of accessing material from both contexts. In accessing this material I noticed preliminary issues that offered grounds (linking to how they tie into the overall arguments made in this study) for research in both contexts. Media darlings like Kim Kardashian are likely to occur in every media but my choice of analysing only South African and Indian media links to the ties these two countries shares both in reality and in the context of the global media I consume. Hopper (2007) links this to the increased fluidity of culture in modern times. He argues:

> …we are likely to be gathering cultural influences to a much greater extent than in the past, with media, information and people flows in particular ensuring that we do not

> have to move far in order to undergo a range of cultural experiences (Hopper 2007: 43).

Bearing this in mind, in both countries, there are women that are regularly reported about in the media for different reasons. In South African media one often sees stories about specific women who are spoken about in specific ways. The manner within which they are spoken about almost always directly impacts how the audience talks about them on platforms like *Twitter*. Someone like Bonang Matheba is often seen/heard in the media whether on magazine covers, radio shows or on television screens presenting shows like *Top Billing*. Upon first glance the coverage she receives is generally positive. However, her personal life also plays out in the media with magazines like *Drum* writing about her abusive boyfriend and so forth (Chelemu: 2012). Nonetheless, Matheba bounces back each time and is adored by fans. However, for the purposes of an argument that the study follows linking to media darlings and negativity, the media darling that was chosen from South Africa is Khanyi Mbau.

Mbau is an actress, singer and socialite that is infamous in South African. The self-described Queen of Bling, Mbau is known for her love of luxury and the lavish life (Mofokeng: 2012). Mbau's personal life has often provided spicy cover stories that sleazy gossip publications long for. She has an unapologetic attitude and is arguably of the belief that any publicity is good publicity. In the past she has openly spoken about her love for plastic surgery and her affair with a married man. Based on this, the media love to report about her. When considering these reports, at first glance it is clear that the reporting that emerges is judgemental and negative. This adds an interesting element to the study as it links to providing room to explore gender ideals that are not celebrated in the media.

Looking at India, I was introduced to India and Indian media through Bollywood film. Bollywood is India's largest cultural export where Hindi films are produced and disseminated (Ebrahims: 2008). Having previously done research on Bollywood looking specifically at gender representation within Bollywood film it became evident that there was room for further studies to be done (Suparsad: 2012). Within Bollywood film itself it appears that narratives and representation are structured around rigid patriarchal frameworks. However, this study moves away from fictional representation

to look at the representation of Indian media darlings and whether the same rigid frameworks apply.

In India, celebrities that are mainly written about are actors and actresses. Media darlings in India then are those actors and actresses that are most popular in the industry in mention. Popularity is often linked to commercial box office success and critical acclaim. Based on this there is a Bollywood actress who entered the industry 7 years ago and slowly rose to the top. Deepika Padukone made her Bollywood debut in 2007 and since then has won over critics and the audience alike. With Bollywood tending to rank actors and actresses, Padukone is currently ranked the number one heroine in the industry (indiantelevision.com Team: 2014 & Tanwar: 2013). Padukone is thus an interesting media darling to consider because of her new found popularity in the industry. While she was recognized as an actress to take note of in the past, she is currently experiencing a career high and is thus also seeing a large number of stories written about her in the media. Upon first glance it is clear that these stories stand in clear contrast to the overtly negative coverage that Mbau receives in the South African media.

As a whole it can thus be said that the two issues that emerge as central to this study are the role the media plays in extending dominant social norms as well as patriarchal hegemony. Linking to the case studies in South Africa and India this study examines exactly how the said media darlings in each context are represented. Here the attributes emphasized of the said media darlings are going to be especially considered. In so doing the study explores the lessons about gender that the media are disseminating through the representation of Mbau and Padukone in the mainstream media texts considered. In establishing the nature of these lessons, this study will be able address the research questions in hand.

Rationale

Carrying out a study about the representation of media darlings in South African and Indian media links to two factors. The first is that work around media darlings in the academic field is limited. While many argue that media content about celebrities in general are influential, and rightfully so, there is a specific kind of influence that stories about media darlings appear to have. Linking to this, there are specific elements

of gender in relation to the socialization process that stories about media darlings perpetuate. Furthermore, the selection of media darlings Khanyi Mbau and Deepika Padukone prove to be fascinating case studies based on the detailed nature of their coverage. Upon first glance as well as through the process of analysing the media texts considered it became clear that the contrasting coverage they receive exists on opposite ends of the same spectrum. Their examples thus clearly link back to the overall arguments this study makes around media and gender as well as media darlings and the role they play.

Beyond this, the second factor that this study links to is the connection shared between South Africa and India. With its roots in history, the multifaceted connection between these two countries links to politics, economics and even culture. Politically and economically, post-apartheid, both countries have been and continue to be apart of agreements that link directly to trade and investment (first IBSA (India, Brazil, South Africa) and now BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa)). The Research and Information System for Developing Countries Institute (2008) notes that the formulation of these agreements highlights the importance and power of South-South cooperation. Campbell (2013) notes that economically, trade agreements and trade in general is in a positive space between both countries while politically both countries acknowledge the necessity for a relationship. Furthermore, Campbell notes that common journeys to democracy have highlighted the similarities between both countries (2013). Even if at different stages of democracy, Campbell points out that the countries' pasts have led to their respective economies adopting similar structures (2013). Consequently, within the BRICS agreement, with a focus on economic growth, BRICS nations are "slowly creating a new power centre" (Wood 2013:01). This shows the potential power both countries have.

Socio-economically, both countries share similar challenges where colonial pasts are still impacting present governance. Brand South Africa (2011:02) further notes that both South Africa and India

> […] have great political regard for each other, rooted in India's anti-colonial role and its uncompromising opposition to apartheid, South Africa's liberation struggle, and the fact that each country gave rise to a towering figure of the 20th century- in the case of India, Mahatma Gandhi and in South Africa, Nelson Mandela.

Culturally, it appears that cinema has had significance in both countries. This can be seen with the popularity of South African comedy films such as Leon Schuster's *Mr Bones* in India, and the immense popularity of Bollywood in South Africa (Ebrahims: 2008). Ebrahims notes that films are India's largest cultural export (2008). In South Africa, Bollywood films are now considered mainstream and are consumed by South Africans from all backgrounds (Radhakrishnan: 2011). As a whole however, India gives South Africa a lot more culturally than South Africa gives India. The numerous Bollywood films circulating in South Africa cannot compare to the few South Africa comedy films circulating in India. Nonetheless, it is important to note that even if the cultural connection is unequal it is still present in both countries. Understandings of cultural globalization can thus be brought in here, focusing in particular on Appadurai's (1996) work on this topic. Hopper (2007:43) notes that Appadurai draws strong links between modernity and globalization thereby placing "great emphasis on the movement of culture." It is within this argument that Appadurai explains culture as something that gains mobility with ease and is also heterogeneous (2007).

Thus in noting the political, economic, social and cultural relations that both these countries share it is clear that their connection is not random. It thus becomes important to carry out research like this study to obtain a greater understanding of both contexts going forward.

Hypothesis

The media considered in both the South African and Indian contexts do use media darlings and the coverage thereof in attempt to shape public discourse around gender.

Research questions

Through the coverage of media darlings does the media in South Africa and India attempt to shape public discourse around gender?

- Are there clear ideals about what women should and should not do being disseminated to the public?

Chapter 2

Literature review

In this study I aim to unpack issues of gender representation of media darlings that emerge in two different media contexts. Defined within the parameters of celebrity culture, the term media darlings links to a specific type of celebrity that often has stories about them in the media and that are more widely known than a normal celebrity. For the purpose of this study, I link media darlings to gender with the aim of exploring how media darlings are presented as role models (or the opposite thereof) for the purpose of perpetuating societal gender norms. Through this link, I aim to understand which attributes are emphasized in relation to gender and how this is done.

This literature review thus explores debates within the fields of celebrity culture as well as gender and identity. Linking to celebrity culture, this review will explore issues of fame, commodity culture, identity as well the imagined relationship audiences share with celebrities and thus the power given to celebrities. When discussing gender and identity, the review considers issues of gender socialization, media and gender, gender roles in society as well as postfeminism, postfeminist sensibilities and their link to third wave feminism.

Celebrity culture

Celebrity culture as a field of study has long been concerned with understanding fame, celebrities and audience interaction with celebrities through various platforms. Mapule (2009) notes that celebrity culture found its roots in early times where many people were notably fascinated with monarchs. There was a charm these individuals possessed and it was this charm that separated them from those individuals that were not celebrities (2009). This fascination opened an entire niche in academia that looks at various issues that emerge from the existence of celebrities in society. For the purpose of this study, this section engages with various teachings of celebrity culture to better understand media darlings and the role they play in the audience's life. The section begins by introducing celebrity culture and defining celebrity within the frames of this study. The review then proceeds to look at the role the media plays in celebrity culture while also breaking down the role celebrities play in the lives of the audience and how certain ideals are promoted. More broadly this will link directly to arguments that are made in this study about celebrity culture, media and gender.

Evans (2005: 1) defines a celebrity as "a resource created and deployed by a range of often interlocking media – such as the press, films and television programmes –to which audiences respond in all manner of ways." Celebrity culture thus links to the focus, interest and sometimes even obsession with celebrities that occurs in modern society. Gqola (2013) notes that celebrity culture is often understood as a form of worship of celebrities in a manner that supports the ideals of capitalistic consumption. For the purpose of this study, celebrity culture is understood as something that is "assisted by global media which promote[s], laude[s], sometimes abominate[s], and occasionally annihilate[s] figures, principally from entertainment and sports" Cashmore (2006:3). Driessens (2012: 1) thereby argues that celebrities are now the defining characteristic of mediatized societies. Building on this, Jooma (2011) notes that the media are vehicles within which celebrities find relevance. She argues that the media is responsible for selling various ideals, norms and even products through the stories of celebrities that are deemed relevant. Chung (2003) adds to this in asserting that popular culture has adopted dominant societal ideologies as part of a capitalist agenda to generate profit. Evans (2005:2) thus emphasizes that content around celebrities in the media can be seen as "vehicles for the creation of social meaning." This coupled with the immense interest shown by audiences allows celebrities to have an increased power of influence.

Building on this, Holmes and Redmond (2006) note that celebrities and their fame are considered by many to be very powerful and desirable. Gqola (2013) breaks this idea down noting that at the core of this power and desirability is talent. Celebrities are considered talented in some way or another and it is this talent that arguably sparks the deeper interest audiences have with them. She brings in the work of Mapule (2009: 6) who argues that, "the talents of ascribed celebrities represented the ideals that the untalented and ordinary individual could only dream of emulating and made such celebrated persons worthy of public admiration."

The celebrity industry thus takes advantage of these dreams by turning celebrities into commodities. Jooma (2011:48) thereby argues that "the celebrity is produced, traded and marketed by the media and publicity industries" for the purpose of prolonging relevance and manufacturing interest within public imagination. For the media, producing content that they think audiences will be interested in is key. It is thus

through this content that the media arguably use celebrities and celebrity life to frame social affairs (Evans: 2005). This is crucial for this study in noting that a greater interest is shown in the media darlings that supposedly live their lives in the media.

The framing of social affairs that one sees can thus be linked to issues within postmodern identity. Holmes and Redmond (2006) argue that postmodern identity is very vain and narcissistic which thereby give celebrities and celebrity culture more validity and relevance. Celebrities operate in an industry where appearance is everything and it appears that this is now becoming an increasingly important aspect of modern day life as many individuals wish to replicate the lives of celebrities (2006). However, a further element of postmodern identity links to insecurity and the anxiety that comes with wanting to fit in. It can thus be noted that audiences turn to celebrities when trying to establish how to fit in (2006). Holmes and Redmond thus argue that:

> Stars articulate what it means to 'be human' in a capitalist society, dramatizing 'ideas of personhood, in large measure shoring up the notion of the individual but also at times registering the doubts and anxieties attendant on it' (2006:9).

Celebrities thus serve as a point of reference for many when trying to establish what to do/ what to wear/ how to behave and so on in modern day life. In this way a one-way trust is formed where the audience member trusts the celebrity (2006). Couldry and Markham (2007) thus argue that celebrities develop into role-models for many member of the audience. Elliot (2011: 471) builds on this in arguing, "personal subjectivity in the media age is more and more fashioned in the image of celebrity culture." This then is another crucial point to note for the purposes of this study. The manner within which audiences take a special interest in and at times seeks to learn from celebrity (or role-model) life links closely to the ideals portrayed in the representation of media darlings in particular.

The role of the media in this celebrity equation is thus beneficial. Without the media, audience members would have no relations with celebrities. Bonner (2005) attributes this to the fact that encounters with celebrities are mediated in that one rarely meets a celebrity face-to-face so it is through the media that one learns almost everything one knows about the said celebrity. Nonetheless, "stars and celebrities have often been perceived as performing a surrogate function standing in for absent or non-existent friends and family" (Holmes and Redmond 2006: 03). The imagined relationship

shared between a celebrity and an audience member is thus an important factor that is constantly studied in celebrity culture research. Due to the fact that audience members eventually turn to these celebrities (or the media avatars of these celebrities) for guidance, a solid *relationship* needs to be established.

Part of the process of establishing a relationship of trust with the celebrity involves identifying the real person behind the fancy clothes, the make-up and poses seen on red carpets and in the glossy pages of magazines. Audiences are thereby constantly seeking insight into the personal lives of celebrities for the purposing of establishing the *real* side of the celebrity (Holmes and Redmond: 2006). Bonner (2005:69) further builds on this point in arguing that:

> Despite the extravagant lifestyle of the stars, elements such as the rags-to-riches motif and romance as an enactment of the problems of heterosexual monogamy suggest that what is important about the stars, especially in their particularity, is their typicality or representativeness. Stars, in other words, relate to the social types of society.

The media has benefited greatly from this curiosity where story after story about celebrities are printed, published, uploaded, shared and more. The emergence of new media and the tools that come with it has particular significance in this process. Elliot (2011) argues that new media technologies have become a part of everyday life and this has impacted celebrity culture too. The sharing of information and/or stories about celebrities has become all the more instant (Holmes and Redmond: 2006). Diressens (2012) thus argues that with the emergence of new media, celebrity production has been decentralized. This is actively the case in both South Africa and India where most if not all major news agencies are on social networks sending out information to stories as they occur. One also sees active social network users in both countries. While many do not have access to such technology in both countries, those that do are constantly browsing, spreading and discussing the latest issues (which often include celebrity stories). Celebrities themselves are also on social networks and one often sees both South African and Indian celebrities sharing peeks into their lives. New media has thus added fresh dynamics to the celebrity culture media relationship.

Looking now at the content of stories seen in the media about celebrities, one is able to note that these range from positive to negative. Bonner (2005) notes that often the

positive content seen links to preplanned media campaigns linked to marketing specific products/works thereby serving a specific function. Public relation, marketing and celebrity management teams all work closely to ensure that this is done correctly (2005). However, "there is [also] a body of text that is not authorised by the celebrity and her or his management. These include gossip items, unflattering photographs from public events and photographs taken by paparazzi" (Bonner 2005:66). Holmes and Redmond attribute this to the fact that audience believe that seeing a celebrity run errands or workout somehow gives insight into the *real* celebrity (2006). This insight allows audiences to establish exactly how desirable that celebrity is if they still look good without the smoke and mirrors. This insight however also allows audiences to establish how average/normal the individual is if it emerges that without the smoke and mirrors the celebrity looks much like everyone else (2006).

The issues considered in the above section thus link closely to the topic of media darlings because media darlings are seen in the media more than a normal celebrity. Media darlings thus add a new dynamic to this equation because they have an established relationship with the audience (positive or negative) and through these instant media channels information is generated and disseminated with the greatest of ease. It is also assumed that the audience is greatly interested in content about the said media darling.

Gender and identity

The study of gender and feminism is a broad field that is always growing. In focusing on gender and the media, one comes across many studies on representation. Gill (2006) notes that based on the argument being made, some find gender in the media today somewhat progressive (in relation to another time) while others find it increasingly less feminist oriented and generally less conscious. Either way, when studying modern media one is bound to find issues in relation to gender representation. Thus in relation to this study on gender representation in South African and Indian media, a variety of sources and arguments are considered. Working as a progression, this section of this literature review begins by looking at gender identification as well as the media's role in gender identification (more broadly socialization). In noting that gender is a learned and constructed experience, the roles of media darlings as per this study become all the more crucial to analyze. The review then proceeds to look at issues of gender and identity that emerge from this socialization where links are made to stereotype,

masculinity and femininity. This in turn brings the review to postfeminism where issues around the female body and contemporary media are considered. Debates around postfeminism, the female body and contemporary media assist this study in offering a greater understanding when accessing the meanings of the texts about the specific media darlings that are going to be considered. Problematizing these issues in relation to the texts studied link to the overall feminist background of this study.

Media darlings are characterized in very specific ways. In linking to the points around celebrity culture and audiences turning to and looking at celebrities as role models (Couldry and Markham 2007) it is important to understand gender identification. Here it must be emphasized that gender is a social construct (Singh 2004: 03). It is thus argued that an individual begins gender identification from an early stage. Beach (1987) points out that gender identification happens from the moment a child is born. He argues:

> As soon as a human infant is born, its genital morphology elicits special reactions from adults in the social environment that result in sex assignment and thus determine the sex role to which the neonate eventually will be trained. With development of language as a means of communication and a cognitive tool, the child gradually acquires the ability to internalize elements of the childhood sex role and to compare it with her or his own behavior… The child should easily learn the 'appropriate' behavior and enjoy performing it. (1987: 30-31).

Building on this, Deaux (1987) argues that gender is a learned experience. She suggests that a child's earliest teacher when it comes to gender is her/his parent of the same sex. This process is both direct and indirect as parents teach their children things consciously while other things children pick up through means of observation and so on (1987). However, this process is ongoing. Gender identity is forever changing and as a child grows into a teenager and eventually an adult there is a variety of 'teachers' that she/he encounters. These 'teachers' occur in people met, society in general as well as the media. Understanding the roots of gender socialization in society allows for a better understanding of the role the media plays in advancing the gendered agenda of the media in relation to the content generated around media darlings, specifically looking at how they are represented.

Looking at the role of the media in this process, Rakow and Wackwitz (2004) note that many would argue that media merely represent the culture of the context they operate within and it is therefore incorrect to label the media a teacher in the aforementioned sense. However, they oppose this idea in arguing that "representations in media are part of culture *as* reality" (2004: 174). In arguing this, Rakow and Wackwitz suggest that the complex process of representations is not about re-presenting reality but is rather about assisting in understanding realities (2004). They thus suggest that in studying representation it is increasingly important to read between the lines of what is being represented to establish what is being conveyed about issues like gender. "Given the means and ends of production, therefore, rather than reading representations (or images), we are better off thinking in terms of reading representation practices and relationships" (Rakow and Wackwitz 2004:175).

Rackow and Wackwitz thus argue that one should never forget that texts are created to guide receivers of that text in a specific direction (2004). Linking to this, in noting that the media texts that are disseminated to the audience are non-fictional, understanding that lessons lie within these texts would not be incorrect. Barber (2009) argues that audiences tend to identify with certain texts as per their own lived experience and in so doing they are able to identify and learn from the lessons that are embedded in the texts they consume. Creators of texts thus present the texts in ways that maintain/work within certain ideologies (like patriarchy). Schudson (2003) builds on this in noting that creators of texts have to be responsive to what they think the market demands ideologically. This can be understood as a society's hegemony. As a result he argues that the media rarely go against these demands so as to frame content that is supposedly relatable as well as understandable by the majority of society (2003). In relation to gender, looking at how patriarchal outlooks trickle through media content becomes crucial. Furthermore in aiming to understand the way in which gender is represented it thus becomes increasingly important to understand the roots of gender and identity.

When looking at identity in current times, it is important to note the concept of postmodernity and one of its defining characteristics, fluidity. The postmodern ideas stem from a reflection on modernity (Eliot and du Gay: 2009). The shift that occurred is thus from one of tradition, structure and organization into something increasingly

abstract and fluid. This links directly to identity where noting the fluidity of modern identity is crucial to this study.

Elliot and du Gay (2009: xii) thus argue that identity here links to the processes of "deconstruction and reconstruction of the self as fluid, fragmented, discontinuous, decentred, dispersed, culturally eclectic, hybrid-like." Emphasis is placed here on the fact that identity is performative. It can thus be argued that the media is partly responsible in influencing the performance of identity. Noting this fluidity becomes important in understanding the nature of gender in relation to one's identity and how one learns gender from the media.

Bauman (2009) argues that in modern day society, one of the most important challenges an individual faces is finding an identity that can render them normal in society. He suggests that through this process individuals are able to find safety in numbers. Here he argues that as people gravitate towards a normalness or a sameness, they find security in being able to fit in the crowd (2009). However, because identity in the context of postmodernity is fluid, Bauman points out that identity building evolves into a process of identification. He describes this process as "a never ending, always incomplete, unfinished and open-ended activity in which we all, by necessity or by choice, are engaged" (2009:11). This is an important point for this study as it links to consumption of media content about media darlings. In linking to the argument that audiences look at celebrities as role models, understanding that identity is fluid links directly to the on-going content dissemination that is seen with stories about media darlings. The media pick up on the fluidity of audience identity and cater to the very same. The way in which they cater to this need for on-going content is what this study aims to examine.

Elliot and Lemert (2009:58) thus argue that the way in which people shape their own identity is of great importance today as one looks at "the cultural forms through which people symbolise individual expression and desire, and perhaps above all the speed with which identities can be reinvented and instantly transformed."

Looking at gender and identity, it is important to note the patriarchal context of society. Ideologically, patriarchy favors men. Furthermore, Kunjakkan (2002: 133) explains:

> Patriarchal ideology is embedded in our socio-economic and political institutions, indeed in the very language we use, and as such encourages, cajoles and pressurizes people to follow certain paths

Thus in noting that gender is a learned experience, one must bear in mind the influence patriarchal hegemonic ideologies have on identity performing process.

Linking to this, Deux (1987) argues that there are three interlinked characteristics that demonstrate the way in which gender is defined and understood. These characteristics are "defining characteristics (consisting primarily of biological features), identifiable characteristics (such as stature, clothing, and other externally visible signs), and ascribed characteristics (exemplified by trait adjectives)" (1987:290). This accurately demonstrates the complex nature of gender stereotyping that occurs in society to highlight imagined differences between men and women. Being aware of these stereotypes is important when studying gender representation as this study does.

In categorizing gender roles Money (1987) notes that women are described as weak yet passionate while men as powerful yet rational. Deaux builds on this in suggesting that a woman is usually imagined as friendly, kind and emotionally in-tune with herself and others around her (1987). Furthermore, Paul (2006) points out that women are also described as submissive and nurturing. In contrast a man is considered independent, confident and domineering.

Linking to these ideas of masculinity and femininity, Rosalind Gill (2007) and Angela McRobbie (2006) add a modern take on on-going debate. Gill's (2007) discussions around postfeminism gives an accurate idea on the manner within which gender is unfolding in the media culture today. Drawing from literature on third wave feminism Gill introduces the idea of a postfeminist sensibility. Looking first at third wave feminism, Hammer and Kellner (2009) suggest that third wave feminism is often associated with modern interpretations of feminist issues and agendas. While initially aimed at including and giving a voice to the many women that were arguably left out of initial feminist agendas dominated by white women, third wave feminism soon

shifted to other agendas (2009). With this shift one witnessed a new form of feminism that "one-dimensionalized and demonized other feminisms, and feminists associated with the second wave" (Hammer and Kellner 2009:08). From within this framework of third wave feminism, postfeminism emerged. Postfeminism stands within this framework of third wave feminism picking up on specific ideals of the third wave feminism agenda. As a whole however, from a feminist standpoint, postfeminism is problematic in approach and stands as the theoretical lens through which media darling representation will be understood.

McRobbie (2006:59) explains postfeminism to refer to "an active process by which feminist gains of the 1970's and 1980's come to be undermined." Hua (2009) further argues that in line with rejecting feminist assertions from the past, postfeminism emphasizes that women are not victims of men. Postfeminist belief thereby suggests that gender equality has been achieved and the difference between women and men translates into women's sexual dominance over men (2009). Gill (2007) thereby notes that through a postfeminist media culture, there is an obsession around the female body. She argues that femininity is now defined closely with the female body where being sexy and *girly* is the key to being considered feminine (2007). As a result of this, women's bodies are constantly the topic within the media in many ways. Holmes and Redmond (2006c: 121) raise an example of this in noting that a celebrity's body is often presented as "an exemplary form of femininity, masculinity or sexual desirability." Gill thus draws a link to celebrity culture in noting that there is now a "cultural obsession with celebrity, which plays out almost exclusively over women's bodies" (2007:06). McRobbie (2009:83) thus emphasizes, "the postfeminist masquerade is a strategy or device for the re-securing of patriarchal law and masculine hegemony…[that] has recently been re-instated into the repertoire of the femininity ironically."

Interestingly, Gill notes that it is through this obsession with the female body that the media informs audiences about the individual's life (2007). "A sleek, toned, controlled figure is today normatively essential for portraying success" (Gill 2007:07). The importance given to these ideals of feminism link closely to being considered attractive enough in the eyes of men. Attracting men is given great importance in the agenda of women as it links back to caring for them and eventually the babies that follow (2007).

Despite the clear problems in this approach to femininity, the crux of what Gill terms a postfeminist sensibility links to the fact that this oppression is of women by women (2007). Gill argues that women are now often seen as willingly objectifying themselves. This is done in a way that replicates actions of being and pleasing oneself (2007). She attributes this to the fact that "the objectifying male gaze is internalised to form a new disciplinary regime…[where] power is not imposed from above or from the outside, but constructs [women's] very subjectivity" (2007:10).

McRobbie (2009: 81) thus argues that the meaning given to women in the media in modern society "are now more weighted towards capacity, success, attainment, enjoyment, entitlement, social mobility and participation." Linking this to a postfeminist sensibility, she notes that there is a shift from wanting equality in society. This shift is based on the fact that in the eyes of many, women are now recognized. Even if this recognition is in the boundaries suggested above, this recognition is enough (2009).

In understanding the debates around femininity and more broadly postfeminism in general, one is able to frame the nature of the study. As mentioned, media content about celebrities is a mixture of planned/wanted attention (photo-shoots, interviews and so forth) and unplanned/unwanted attention (paparazzi, gossip and so forth). It thus proves interesting to establish how postfeminism emerges in media content around media darlings in contemporary media and how this influences the representation thereof.

However, in using these understandings of the progression seen in the gender arguments made in this study as a foundation, it is also crucial to briefly locate the state of gender arguments in the respective contexts within which both media darlings operate. Looking first at the South African context, Gqola (2007) notes that the country's colonial past has deeply influenced the violent context that gender operates in. While the fight against apartheid aimed to eradicate various inequalities including discrimination based on gender, the reality is that this was hardly achieved (2007). Gqola builds on this in arguing that discussions around gender in contemporary South Africa hardly address the crux of the inequality experienced. She asserts,

> The discourses of gender in the South African public sphere are very conservative in the main: they speak of 'women's empowerment' in ways that are *not* transformative, and as a consequence, they exist very comfortable alongside overwhelming evidence that South African women are *not* empowered: the rape and other gender based violence statistics, the rampant sexual harassment at work and public spaces, the siege on Black lesbians and raging homophobia, the very public and relentless circulation of misogynist imagery, metaphors and language (Gqola 2007: 115).

Bhula (2011) builds on the last point Gqola makes in noting that the South African media is often filled with various gender stereotypes. Gqola thereby notes that within the media, women are often encouraged to assert their traditional femininity thereby reemphasizing a hegemonic patriarchal agenda. Buiten (2007:116) thus argues that such happenings in the South African media work towards taking forward ideologies that "legitimizes and maintains women's subordination."

Similarly in India, the clear dominance of patriarchy must be noted. Lowen (2015) however clarifies that patriarchy is just one of the various hierarchies that successfully oppress Indian women. In conversation with Indian feminist author Sahoo, Lowen writes about the religious, political, economic and legal inequalities Indian women face. Furthermore, Sahoo suggests a certain control that patriarchy extends over a woman's sexuality and her sexual desire (2015). Additionally, gender based violence plagues Indian women. Paul (2014) quotes government statistics when pointing out that 92 women are raped everyday in India. Sharma and Gupta (2004) attribute this to reality that "religion, customs, age-old prejudices, etc. have put Indian women in a subservient and exploitable position in many domains of life." Influencing this is the Indian media. In her analysis of Indian news media statistics, Joseph (2012) established that "nearly two thirds (63%) of news stories from the Indian media that were analyzed reinforced gender stereotypes." Furthermore, the analysis revealed that women were often cast as secondary players in stories (even when they were not in actuality) while they were also often identified based on their appearance and "family status" (2012). Beyond the news, the dominance of patriarchy in Bollywood film also cannot be ignored.

Thus with such oppression entrenched in the patriarchal order of the context, Ghose, Panneerselvan and Menezes (1995) point out that context specific efforts to counter

such patriarchy “has to operate within communities, not among individuals.” Sundar (1996: 420) attributes this to the pressure on Indian women to maintain “commitment to nationalist and cultural concerns.” Thus despite the risk of agitating tradition, “Indian women today create new identities through carefully combining old loyalties with new options, ways of life, and forms of imagining themselves: as women, as individuals and as Indians.” (Sundar 1996:421).

In conclusion, this literature review has situated the foundation of this study within the theories of celebrity culture and gender. Using celebrity culture, this review has located the concept of media darlings as those individuals that serve very specific relationships in the lives of the audiences who identify with them. Beyond that, this review further develops the argument that audiences often tend to turn to celebrities and media darlings alike for guidance of everyday life. This review then brings forward the link to gender with regards to the lessons that lie within the equation audiences share with celebrities and media darlings. Centred in gender studies, this review then highlighted the postfeminist agenda of the modern media for the purpose of understanding how media darlings are framed. It is this framing that is explored later in this study for the purpose of gaining a detailed understanding of the gendered lessons that lie within the coverage of media darlings. Furthermore, the review also located the study in relation to the respective contexts that both media darlings operate within. It is with this location that one is able to gain perspective as to how the aforementioned framing is understood later in this study.

Chapter 3

Conceptual framework

This conceptual framework aims to aptly explain the theoretical foundations of this study. The section is divided into two subsections linking to the core of this study. First, media darlings are re-explained, emphasizing the link to celebrity culture and how this this is crucial to the study. Following this, postfeminism and identity will be discussed for the purpose of highlighting how the texts considered will be understood. Here the feminist agenda of the study will also be emphasized.

Media darlings

The term media darling is relatively new in academic circles however it is often used within the media itself. The term in mention is directly linked to media attention. With a foundation in celebrity culture where one is able to note the importance of relevance, the desire for profit and therefore the commodification of celebrities, media darlings emerge. Media darlings are those individuals that the media are always reporting about (Media Darling PR: 2012). Audiences are aware of large amounts of detail about a media darling because of this. Kepes (2009) notes that media darlings are well aware of how to conduct themselves in the media. The idea of a media darling is thus often paired with terms like media fluency, publicity, popularity and relevance (Kepes: 2009). The media in turn thereby appreciates a media darling's ability to give a good interview, while being entertaining and having a great personality (Levinson, Frishman and Lublin: 2008). Importantly, media darlings are different from normal celebrities in that they receive wider media coverage and are therefore more famous.

Here it is important to understand the term celebrity. Celebrities are famous individuals that are powerful because of their fame (Holmes and Redmond: 2006). Celebrities are often commodified for the purpose of marketing and so forth. Bearing this in mind, this study argues that the commodification of media darlings (different to a normal celebrity) manifests in very specific ways. Over and above commodification to suit a capitalist agenda, this study argues that the media sell very specific hegemonic ideals through the coverage of media darlings. In noting that audiences develop imagined relationships with celebrities, this study understands that this is more so the case with media darlings who receive larger amounts of media coverage. Also, in acknowledging the imagined relationship audiences share with celebrities, Couldry and Markham

(2007) note that this relationship sometimes even evolves into the celebrity being seen as a role model. This is especially important to consider with media darlings.

It is thus argued that media darlings are commodified to suit the hegemonic agendas of society. Seeing that media darlings are made by the media (in that the media decide whether to cover stories about them), this study argues that media darlings possess specific qualities that are in line with messages the media tries to sell. Specific to gender, through the coverage of media darlings the media are able to dictate societal norms and maintain patriarchal hegemony. This equation becomes important to study when noting that audiences often use celebrities as a point of reference in living and understanding social life (Holmes and Redmond: 2006). Considering that the relationship between audiences and celebrities is a mediated one it is thereby crucial to consider the content that the media disseminates about celebrities. This study thus argues that it is within the detailed coverage of media darlings that lessons about gender exist. Through media content about media darlings, specific qualities are either celebrated or shamed with the necessary emphasis so as to make the audience aware of positive and negative traits in relation to gender. This becomes the entry point of this study. In understanding media darlings as role model (as sold to the audience by the media) the aim of this study is to thoroughly identify the lessons about gender that exist in the texts about media darlings.

Postfeminism and identity

In this study, postfeminism and identity are understood as linked concepts because of the focus the study has in considering the way media darlings are represented as part of a larger patriarchal agenda. In considering the case studies at hand the study aims to establish if there are links to the idea that there are certain ways in which a woman should and should not act/conduct herself in society. In maintaining the understanding that gender is a learned and constructed experience (Deaux: 1987), looking at identity is key. In this study, identity is understood as fluid (as influenced by postmodernity) (Elliot and du Gay: 2009). This fluidity and ever changing nature gives media darlings further relevance in that the audience are constantly engaging with media content that influences them in different ways.

In relation to gender in society, women have obtained a lot more freedom and equality in comparison to the past. Some would even argue that equality has been achieved. This argument links to Gill's (2007) idea of a postfeminist sensibility. In rejecting the thoughts and ideas of early feminism, a postfeminist sensibility has emerged as a way in which women oppress themselves willingly. This highlights the evolution of gender oppression in society. While many women claim to be liberated, there has been a visible shift towards understanding femininity in relation to the female body (2007). However, emphasis is placed on the agency of these women who objectify themselves willingly. The argument being made thus suggests that being objectified and defined by one's body is not oppression because others are not forcing it on them but is rather a personal choice.

A women's identity is now defined by the nature of her body (Gill: 2007). It is thus argued that a women's key to success in modern day society is through obtaining a slim, sexy and toned body. As problematic as this is, Gill attributes this to the fact that women have internalized the patriarchal, objectifying male gaze (2007).

This understanding of a postfeminist sensibility thus provides a way for this study to understand the way in which contemporary media texts are framed. However, it is important to note that postfeminism is problematized in this study. Using it as a tool to understand contemporary media texts links to the relevance such theory has in modern society. This study uses a feminist background and agenda to analyse and critique such.

Chapter 4

Methodology

In this study the majority of the research that has been done is considered qualitative. However there are elements of quantitative research that has also been intentionally included. Bryman (2004:19) describes quantitative research as "a research strategy that emphasizes quantification in the collection and analysis of data." In a quantitative approach, importance is given to the process of deduction, where theory is tested against the research conducted. There is a level of objectivity in this kind of research that links to the fact that as a method it lies within a positivist approach (Bryman: 2004). In contrast, qualitative research places emphasis on words. A qualitative approach is an inductive process that focuses on generating theory (2004). In contrasting the positivist approach of quantitative research, qualitative research adopts an interpretivist approach that argues that social life and social research is far more complex than made out by a positivist approach. Qualitative research thereby "embodies a view of social reality as a constantly shifting emergent property of individuals' creation" (2004: 20).

In this chapter a detailed account of the research methods used in this study will be discussed. In doing this, the chapter is broken down into three sub-sections. The first section looks at the research design of the study, considering the various methods used to conduct the research. The second section focuses on how the media darlings from South Africa and India were selected. The next section looks at how data collected was analysed. The final section considers the limitations in this study.

Research design

The aim of this study was to conduct a comparative study on representation of media darlings in South Africa and India. To conduct the necessary research, a variety of research methods were used. These methods include critical discourse analysis, thematic analysis and content analysis. In this section, background is given on each of these methods for the purpose of demonstrating a greater understanding of each of the chosen methods.

Starting first with the qualitative methodology in this study, Bryman describes thematic analysis as the process of identifying common themes in data collected

(2012). He notes that the idea of thematic analysis is to identify and construct an analysis of the data collected in the form of central themes and subthemes in relation to the research topic. These identified themes emerge post a thorough analysis of the data collected (2012). This method thereby forces the researcher to become very familiar with the texts being researched to ensure that nothing is missed (Howit and Cramer: 2010). In so doing this method thus also assists in providing a structured approach towards managing large collections of data in a more systematic manner. Once these themes are established, a deeper analysis was needed to properly answer the questions the research has set out to do.

Critical discourse analysis (CDA) is the method that was selected to do this. When explaining CDA, Bryman "emphasizes the role of language as a power resource that is related to ideology and socio-cultural change" (2012:536). Theorist Foucault has played a major role in influencing the approach of CDA through placing emphasis on power. Bryman notes that this emphasis on power links to acknowledging the fact that through discourse, power in relation to existing social structures is exercised (2012). Thus, as a research method CDA is conducted with the aim of "revealing structures of power and unmasking ideologies" (Wodak & Meyer 2009:08). In acknowledging the power of social structures, importance is thus also placed on context. Bryman terms this intertextuality, which he describes as:

> The notion of discourse as existing beyond the level of any particular discursive event on which analysis is focused. The notion of intertextuality thus enables a focus on the social and historical context in which discourse is embedded (2012:538).

Beyond these qualitative methods, a quantitative method has also been used for the purpose of establishing analysis that allows for an overview of selected data. This also offers the opportunity for one to draw levelled comparisons between both case studies. As a methodology, content analysis was thereby selected. Bryman (2012) emphasizes the transparency that emerges when considering content analysis as a research methodology. He notes that as a research method it allows a researcher to analyse content in a lateral and structured manner. The flexible nature of content analysis coupled with a quantitative research methodology allows for "the analysis of documents and texts…that seeks to quantify content in terms of predetermined categories and in a systematic and replicable manner" (Bryman 2012:290). However, it

is important to note that despite the flexible nature of content analysis, the method is scientific (Krippendorff: 2013). Krippendorff emphasizes that as a quantitative research methodology, "it is learnable and divorceable from the personal authority of the researcher" (2013: 24).

Selection of media darlings

Media darlings are defined as individuals who are famous and therefore are the focus of wide media coverage (Media Darling PR: 2012). In this study two media darlings were selected to consider as case studies. One South African and one Indian. These media darlings were selected using prior general knowledge about pop culture and the contexts of the media being looked at. This will be discussed in greater detail in the following paragraphs.

In South Africa there are various individuals that could be classified as media darlings. Celebrities in the South Africa context range from actors, actresses, models, radio personalities, television personalities, sports stars and so on. These individuals often see various stories written and spoken about them in South African media. Interestingly, media darlings in the South African context are mainly women. South African media darlings include Bonang Matheba and Minnie Dlamini, both of whom are often seen on magazine covers, on television screens, written about in newspapers, and heard on the radio. They are also active on social networks. However, another name that features on this list is Khanyi Mbau. Mbau is an actor, a singer and a socialite that often sees her personal life splashed across the media. Mbau came into fame in 2006 at the age of 19 when her marriage to a 50-year-old multimillionaire catapulted her into the spotlight (Scott: 2012). The media's fascination with her links to her relationships with men and her quest to maintain her flamboyantly lavish lifestyle. It also appears as though Mbau is very savvy when it comes to media attention, as she seems to know exactly what to do to get people talking about her. However, a lot of the coverage Mbau receives is negative.

Bearing this in mind, as it is argued in this study that gender is learned, one such teacher of gender is the media. As a result of this, Mbau was selected as the South African media darling, especially because of the negative press she receives. Despite this negative press and the way in which the media tend to dismiss her, Mbau is

regularly written about. It was my fascination with this happening that prompted me to investigate the coverage Mbau receives in more detail. I felt that through a better analysis of texts about Mbau, this study would be able to make conclusions about why the media continue to write about her despite their negative opinions thereof.

In contrast to this stands the media darling selected from India. In introducing Deepika Padukone, it is important to note that celebrities in India are mainly film stars. Actors and actresses from films have huge fan followings and thereby see increasing media interest in all aspects of their lives. Focusing on Bollywood, the biggest film industry in India, actors and actresses often see great popularity. Media institutions and audiences alike tend to rank actors and actresses thereby giving a clear indication of who is currently popular in the industry (Tanwar: 2013). For the purpose of this study, media darlings in India thus refer to those actors and actresses that are currently seeing great popularity in their careers. This popularity ties into critical acclaim for work done as well as commercial success at the box office.

In 2013 actress Deepika Padukone emerged successful both critically and commercially. Padukone worked as a model and entered the Bollywood industry in 2007. Since then she has starred in over 17 films. As a result of her hugely successful 2013, Padukone is now described as one of the top actresses in Bollywood. Furthermore some even describe her as the number one heroine in the industry (indiantelevision.com Team: 2014 & Tanwar: 2013). Padukone saw 4 films release in 2013 all of which individually earned more than one billion Rupees at the box office. Collectively her 4 films earned over 6 billion Rupees at the box office (Bollywoodhungamanewsnetwork: 2014b). Beyond the commercial success, Padukone's performance in her three most recent releases saw her receive immense critical acclaim. As a result of this success the 2013 award season in Bollywood saw Padukone gain recognition for her performances in popular and critics (jury) categories alike (Press Trust of India: 2014b). Thus as a result of Padukone's career high and the large amounts of what appears to be relatively positive media coverage she receives, she was selected as the Indian media darling.

Hence through examples of relatively positive coverage with Padukone and negative coverage with Mbau, this study was then able to access material that allowed for a

holistic analysis of media from both contexts. This analysis would focus on if and how the said media considered from both contexts attempt to shape public discourse and understandings of gender. In so doing the study would then also be able to establish if there are in fact clear ideals about gender that are disseminated to the audience.

Data collection

With media darlings from both South Africa and India selected, the next step in the research process was to establish how data would be collected and analysed. As a start, media houses from South Africa and India were selected. Importantly, because this study focuses on how the said media darlings are represented in public (in the media) it became clear that the corpus of data would be made up only of media texts. I thus began surveying various mainstream media platforms from both contexts to find appropriate sources. The intention here was to collect data from various mediums to establish a wide enough corpus that extended beyond just one medium. It was thus decided that media texts were to be collected from an online source, a magazine source and a television interview (accessed on *YouTube*).

Here it must be noted that the texts that were sought and eventually chosen were selected as a result of the mainstream reach that they have. The various online, magazine and television shows selected are wide reaching. It is wide reaching mainstream media texts that successfully give rise and extend the popularity of media darlings. Looking at mainstream media texts with a wide appeal speaks to the argument this study makes about the way in which the media teaches gender. While audiences are likely to take something away from any media text (including alternate media sources and so on) the wide reach of mainstream media texts disseminate lessons about gender further.

Beyond the need for media sources to be both mainstream and wide reaching, a crucial factor that influenced which of these sources were selected linked to the availability and accessibility of media texts (in relation to texts from the recent and distant past). With these factors in mind, it became clear that there were various publications/media houses that regularly featured stories on Mbau and Padukone. The media that were finally selected are thus explained in the following sub-sections.

(While more data about Padukone was collected, the reality is that the Indian media operates on a larger scale than the South African media does.)

Online sources

With regards to the online sources selected, there were two key criteria that were considered. The first linked to choosing sources that had enough content about the selected media darling. As a result of this, with regards to Mbau, two online sources were selected to ensure that enough articles were collected for the corpus. Beyond this, the second criteria linked to the availability and accessibility of an online archive on the site selected. This then did not limit the research and allowed me to collect as much data as I needed.

South African Media selected

- *News 24*
- *The Mail & Guardian*

Indian Media selected

- *The Indian Express*

As a result, 33 articles were collected from the *News 24* and *The Mail & Guardian* websites while 54 articles were collected from *The Indian Express* website. All the data collected was published before the 1st of February 2014.

Magazine sources

When considering which magazine source to consider for this study, I wanted to choose something different to the genre of the online sources. When surveying the magazine covers that Mbau and Padukone featured on in their respective contexts it thus became clear that women's fashion magazines were a common genre that they both featured in. Looking at these magazines, the assumption is that these magazines serve a predominantly female readership. Furthermore, one can note that these magazines are often a point of reference for many of its readers. This links to fashion, style and so on. Thus with the intention of this study aiming to look at the messages of gender that are being communicated through the texts, women's fashion magazines proved increasingly fascinating.

As a result this genre was chosen. From here, the editions where the said media darling appeared on the cover were collected. The text that was then analysed was the cover feature on the media darling (which was usually an interview).

South African Media selected

- *True Love Magazine (Mbau was on the cover once in 2011)*

Indian Media selected

- *Vogue India (Padukone was on the cover 7 times between 2007 and February 2014)*

Television sources

Two criteria emerged when searching for a television interview with each media darlings. The first linked to finding a full interview online that featured the said media darling. Here a one-on-one interview was preferred. The second criteria linked to the length of the interview. While there was no maximum length established, I did not want a brief interview that was similar in length to a snippet that would appear in a news story on a television or online news channel. In-depth interviews were thus sought.

South African Media selected

- *3rd Degree (Interview in 2010)*

Indian Media selected

- *The Front row with Anupama Chopra (Interview in 2013)*

Data analysis

Once the entire corpus of data was collected for each media darling, I familiarized myself with the data thoroughly. Through this process and keeping the theoretical foundation of this study in mind I was able to note trends in the content of the texts collected. This then allowed me to establish common themes that feature in both corpuses of data. These themes were created with the intention of being able to

organize the data in such a way that I would be able to interlink analysis of the data with theory of this study on a micro level.

While the context is different in South Africa and India, the themes selected were broad and general enough that the data could easily be broken up and slotted into one of the 10 themes established, while still maintaining relevance to the task of answering the research questions of this study. Furthermore, once these themes were established I went through each online article, each magazine feature and both interview transcripts and thematised the data. Here each text was broken up into various parts and each of these parts were categorized into one or more of the 10 themes as necessary. Thematic analysis was thus also a tool that allowed me to organize and arrange the large corpus of data collected into themes that were easier to work with. As noted by Bryman, this is a key feature of such a methodology (2012). Once this was done and I had my raw data organized in themes, I begun the critical discourse analysis.

Here I grappled with each theme individually working towards a fully written up theme that demonstrated the key findings of this theme that emerged throughout the corpus of data. The intention here was thus not to summarize the large corpus of data collected but rather to highlight the major points of observation that emerged. As major emphasis is placed on the power of and within texts along with CDA's role in identifying this power, this is what I focused on. Here power was understood in relation to the meanings of what was said in the texts that link to themes of gender and more broadly identity and celebrity culture. This was crucial to this study because of the emphasis that is placed on the learned nature of gender and the media's role in this learning process.

Quantitatively, I also relooked at each article from the online sources for the purpose of performing a content analysis. This was done only with the online texts because of the nature of these texts. Each article tends to focus on fewer topics (often there is only one topic in the article) in comparison to the wide reaching magazine features and television interviews that are a lot more in depth. The online texts also make up the majority of the corpus collected and so they thereby give a fair indication of the data collected.

I thus went through each online article and categorized them into clear categories (established as a result of my familiarity with the data and the trends therein). Once all articles were considered, the categorization was compiled in numerical form and charts were drawn up. These charts are presented at the start of each analytical chapter as a way of giving a general overview of the data considered.

Limitations

As a result of this study being about work on the publicness of Khanyi Mbau and Deepika Padukone, it is vital to demonstrate this study's understanding of both the South African and Indian contexts considered. This is for the purpose of clearly explaining how the texts from each context were understood through the analysis process. Bearing this in mind it is important to note that a clear limitation to this study is the reality that I am South African. While this is fine in understanding the context within which media darling Mbau operates, problems may emerge for some when I look at media texts about Padukone from the Indian context.

While I do see how this may be a limitation, I argue that this does not limit this study as a whole. Despite not operating in the Indian context, I have grown up with various elements of Indian media, it being part of the overall media I consume regularly. This in turn ties in clearly with cultural globalization and Appadurai's (1996) *imagined worlds*. Of these imagined worlds he explains them to be "multiple worlds that are constituted by the historically situated imaginations of persons and groups spread around the globe" (1996: 33). He further argues:

> An important fact of the world we live in today is that many persons on the globe live in such imagined worlds (and not just in imagined communities) and thus are able to contest and sometimes even subvert the imagined worlds of the official mind and of the entrepreneurial mentality that surround them (1996: 33).

In further explaining how these imagined worlds come about, Appadurai notes that they are built of various –scapes. Each with their own definition, he argues that -scapes are fluid and imperfect in nature. The –scapes relevant to my work are *ethnoscapes*, *mediascapes* and *ideoscapes*. Hooper (2007) explains ethnoscapes as those that link to people of the world and their movement through the world. In comparison ideoscapes link to the global flow of thoughts, ideas and ideologies with enough fluidity that

allows the local context to influence these ideas (2007). Finally, mediascapes link to the global transfer of mass media creations and ideas. Of mediascapes Appadurai (1996: 35) explains:

> What is most important about these mediascapes is that they provide (especially in their television, film, and cassette forms) large and complex repertoires of images, narratives, and ethnoscapes to viewers through the world, in which the world of commodities and the world of news and politics are profoundly mixed.

Appadurai thus argues that as a result of the fluidity that comes with –scapes, media audiences understand and engage with varieties of media texts individually such that they are able to develop an understanding of the topic despite not being near the local destination. It is thus based on these theoretical assertions that I feel that the work within the South African and Indian contexts does work.

Beyond this a further limitation links to the fact that Padukone is known for her acting while Mbau is known for her personal life. In noting this, one may argue that comparing coverage of the two may not match up and articulate arguments that are equally legitimate. Again, while I do note the reservation, there are theoretical arguments that dismiss this. Feasey (2006: 181) quotes Giles, who argues:

> The brutal reality of the modern age is that all famous people are treated like celebrities by the mass media, whether they be a great political figure, a worthy campaigner, an artist… a serial killer or… one of the participants in a … reality TV programme. The newspapers and television programs responsible for their publicity do not draw any meaningful distinction between how they are publicized

What can thus be taken from the argument Giles is making is that while importance may be given to why an individual is famous, once they are famous the media publicize them in the similar way. Here what may vary is the nature and amount of the publicity given. But beyond this they are all celebrities in the media. This then works for this study as the study focuses on media texts about both media darlings.

Chapter 5

Khanyi Mbau: Lessons from negativity

When looking to the South African media to describe media darling Khanyi Mbau, gold-digger is likely to feature quite quickly on the list of descriptions. Such a term however, does not properly give one an idea of the amount of negative press Mbau receives. Born in South Africa, Mbau is an actress, singer and socialite. She is particularly infamous for her lavish lifestyle and relationships with older rich men. Mbau rose to fame through her marriage to a much older millionaire when she was just 19. As that marriage dissolved she engaged in a public affair with another rich older man, who was married to one of her friends. Such scandal tended to follow Mbau around and this translated into the audience being increasingly fascinated with her. However, this fascination was pretty morbid as Mbau mainly receives criticism and negative press for her life choices and is often under attack for the same. Nonetheless, Mbau remains talked about in South Africa. Arguably of the view that any publicity is good publicity, Mbau continued building her brand and used the media attention to her advantage. Thus the media savvy she shows along with the amount of media attention she gets makes her a media darling (Kepes: 2009). She does however break the mould of an ideal media darling because of the fact that the coverage she receives in the media is predominantly negative.

For the purpose gaining a better understand of media darling Mbau, getting a wide enough corpus of data about her was crucial. Eventually 4 sources were selected. The online sources are *News 24* as well as *The Mail & Guardian* (website) where 33 articles were collected. The print media source selected is *True Love* magazine where Mbau featured on the cover in November 2011. This feature was collected. Finally, the television interview source is current affairs show *3rd Degree*. Host Deborah Patta interviewed Mbau in 2010.

Looking at the corpus, as part of the analysis process a brief quantitative analysis was done. This was done on the texts retrieved from the online sources, as each text tends to have one purpose. The magazine feature and television interview carry a variety of issues and therefore are not as narrow in focus as the online sources. For the quantitative analysis, each article from the online sources was read for the purpose of establishing what the overall nature of the article was. The description of the article

was then noted and once the entire corpus was analysed a list was drawn up. In this list it emerged that the texts considered about Mbau could be divided in 5 categories. The first category is data that is positive. This looked at text that spoke about Mbau in a positive light. The second category is data that is negative. This category looked at text that spoke about Mbau in a negative light. The third category is data that is both positive and negative. While the forth category is data that is neutral. The texts in this category were neither negative nor positive. The final category is data that linked to men. In this category, often the story only made reference to Mbau in passing and was actually about men or is about Mbau talking about men or a specific man.

Looking at the chart below (Figure 1), as a whole it is quite clear that Mbau receives far more negative attention in the texts considered than any other category. 18 out of the 33 articles from *News 24* and *The Mail & Guardian* combined were negative. Following this were 7 neutral articles, 5 articles that linked to men and 2 articles that were positive and negative. Importantly, only one article out of the entire corpus was positive and even then it was only positive in the sense that it spoke about Mbau making amends for her past transgressions (News 24: 2011b). This proves interesting when establishing a general understanding of the manner within which the selected media sources report on media darling Mbau.

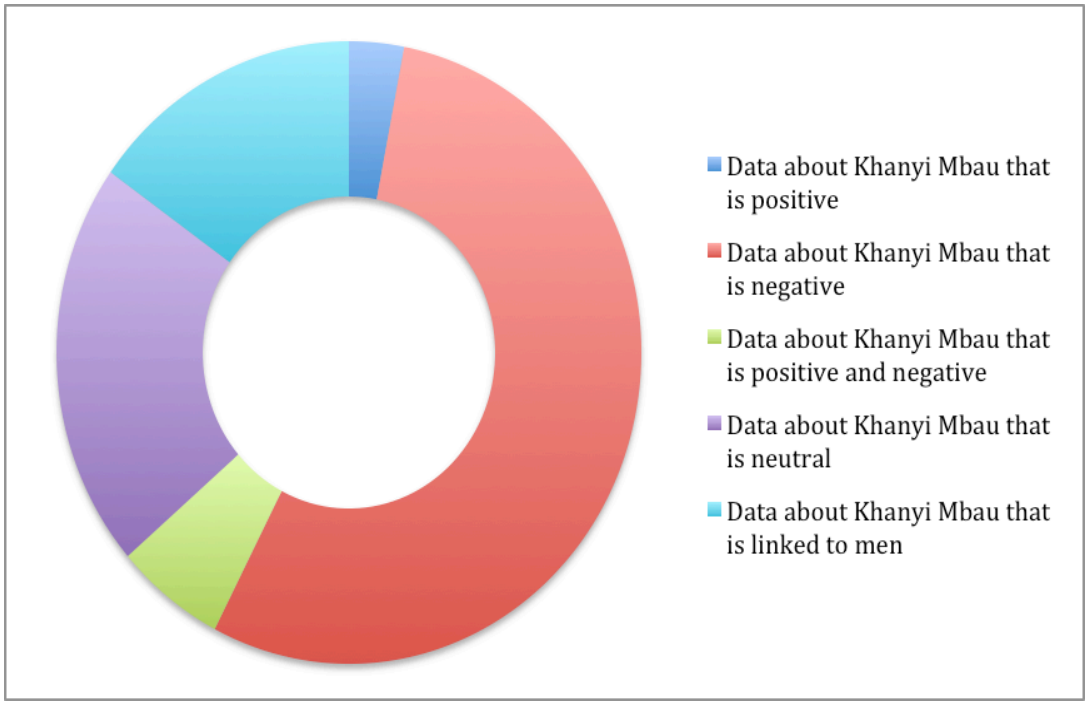


Figure 1

Thus through this chapter, various arguments are made based on the texts analysed. These arguments stem from a theoretical base where issues of gender, identity and celebrity culture are considered. One can begin to understand this theoretical base by considering that Croteau and Hoynnes (1997:14) note that socialization is the "process whereby we learn and internalize the values, beliefs and norms of our culture, and in so doing, develop a sense of self." They further argue that it is through this process that an individual connects to the larger social world. What should be emphasized here however is the way in which a society's hegemony influences this process. Croteau and Hoynnes contend that it is through socialization that the dominant ideals of a society are instilled within and internalized by the said individual (1997). Furthermore, it is also important to note that this process is on going and links to the fluidity of an individual's identity in a postmodern context. Elliot and du Gay (2009) thereby note the performative way in which an individual's identity is constructed. This thus links closely with socialization and the various factors that influence this process. One such factor is the media. The role the media plays here thus cannot be ignored.

However, before exploring this role in greater detail, it becomes important to contextualise this discussion within the frameworks of gender as this is the focus of this study. Here it must be emphasized that gender is a learned experience (Deux: 1987). It is in the processes of socialization that an individual learns gender. Here ideas of femininity, masculinity and the likes are taught to the individual who then grapples with them and then eventually applies them in her/his own life. It is thus beneficial to recall the link that Croteau and Hoynnes (1997) establish between the socialization process and a society's dominant hegemony. Within the context of gender, this hegemony is patriarchy.

Various waves of feminism have emerged as a response to this patriarchal hegemony. One such response is that of postfeminism. Postfeminism rejects a number of the previous ideals of feminism with Singh (2004:18) describing postfeminism as something that "seeks equality of sexes and denies the patriarchal system, but in a cool, calm and compose manner, with a sane and serene approach." Building on this Barrett (2000) further notes that postfeminism places emphasis on the way in which femininity ties in with a woman's identity. It is thus from within postfeminism that Gill's (2007)

postfeminist sensibility emerges. She argues that through this emphasis on femininity and a woman's identity, an obsession around the female body emerges. This is so because of the links established between femininity and being sexy and *girly* while having a sleek and toned body. Emphasis here is also placed on attracting men. Singh (2004: 18) relates this to the ideals within postfeminism that claims to understand the "relationship of interdependence between man and woman." Gill however problematizes these developments in noting that such translates into women internalizing the male gaze thereby willingly objectifying themselves.

Bearing all this in mind, one can now look to the role the media plays in the socialization process where gender is taught. It can be argued that within the media, one such vehicle from which audiences are able to learn from is through celebrities. Here Holmes and Redmond (2006) note that audiences turn to celebrities and the media alike for guidance and inspiration on how to navigate and negotiate modern day life. This is an argument made within the celebrity culture field of study. Holmes and Redmond (2006b:i) argue that celebrity culture moulds "the social values through which we experience the world." It can thus be understood that audiences use celebrities as points of reference in relation to their own lives. But before this imagined trust emerges, audiences feel the need to understand and identify with a said celebrity. Stacey (2006: 253) thus argues that audience identify (or do not) with celebrities based on perceived "recognition of similarities and differences."

It is through these similarities and differences that the media (in their capacity as vehicles of societal hegemony) aim to forge such (imagined) connections between audiences and celebrities for the purpose of perpetuating the norms and values of society. It is here that the coverage of media darling Khanyi Mbau fits in. In arguing within the conceptual framework of this study that media darlings are commodified to sell the hegemonic ideals of society, the coverage of Mbau complicates this claim. As she receives primarily negative press it is demonstrated and argued in this chapter that Mbau is a media darling of negativity. The South African media considered use Mbau, her life and the stories thereof to highlight the antithesis of the gender ideals they stand for.

Mbau can thus be seen in many ways as a *rogue woman* (Abuya and Gacheru: 2013). Simply put, a *rogue woman* is a woman who does not conform to the norms and values of patriarchal gender roles. This deviance is highlighted for all to see for the purpose of shaming these women into conforming. Thus while many other pressing issues around gender are not covered in the same detail, the lives of Mbau and other *rogue women* are constant media fodder. Abuya and Gacheru emphasize that the lives of these rogue women are "insistently exhibited" (2013). Ligaga (2014:04) builds on this by bringing in the argument of Sylvia Tamale who suggests that the "surveillance and control of women's bodies is one of the ways in which public policing takes place in order to produce desired behaviour." Ligaga further notes the power the media has in this process.

This then stands at the core of what this chapter argues as it appears as though the South African media considered are constantly aiming to remind the audience about their problems with Mbau. They thus frame content about Mbau to suit their agenda and highlight the lessons that they suggest she stands for. Schudson (2003: 35) explains framing as "principles of selection, emphasis, and presentation composed of little tacit theories about what exists, what happens and what matters." In so doing they present Mbau in a light that clearly highlights her perceived flaws to the audience thereby reminding them of the levels of shame that come with going against hegemonic gender ideals. This in turn guides them towards the ideals that are deemed acceptable and thereby celebrated by the same media.

It is however also vital to look at the data in greater detail to understand what messages and lessons are sent to the audience about Mbau and gender. The following sections will thus look at the main issues that emerged from the data organised in the themes of how Khanyi Mbau is introduced and described in media texts, what is celebrated, her body, relatability, questions asked, implications in the articles, men, women and how her voice is used. The initial idea was also to have a theme about what is shamed about Mbau in the texts considered however this was disregarded as Mbau receives negative press almost throughout the corpus of data. This theme thus features regularly within the analysis. Through presenting the key findings of each theme, this chapter analyses and demonstrates the lessons that lie in the coverage of Mbau.

How Khanyi Mbau is introduced and described in media texts

The purpose of a theme like this one is to look at exactly how the subject is introduced or referred to. The language used when introducing, describing and/or referring to media darlings is important in understanding how the audience first encounters them in a text. In relation to this study, as a result of their publicness, media darlings tend to have parts of their identity (or the perception thereof by the audience) defined by the media. So while Elliot and du Gay (2009) note that the construction of one's identity is performative, where one can turn to the media for guidance and so on, in relation to media darlings, a new dimension emerges. Here one sees the introduction of the media ascribing facets of a media darling's identity. It thus becomes important to look at how an external force like the media influence the identity and consequently the perceptions of media darlings. Furthermore, emphasis is placed on the concept of framing for the purpose of establishing how the said media darling is introduced to the audience in the text considered. Importantly, there is no doubt that audience members are likely to engage with the text and respond according to their feelings on the subject (being a fan, being neutral, being a *hater* and so on). However, it must be noted that texts do flirt with influence and guide perception.

Bearing this in mind, when looking at the way Khanyi Mbau is introduced and described in the various texts considered, it becomes quite clear that the majority of her descriptions are overwhelmingly negative, some even nasty. Nonetheless, there are a few instances where one encounters relatively neutral as well as positive descriptions about Mbau. In further exploring these descriptions one begins to see the Khanyi Mbau that the South African media considered is portraying.

Starting with the positive it is important to note that these labels that can be understood as positive did not occur in isolation. Surrounded by negative descriptions (often in the same text itself), these positive descriptions appear to be a rare find. In her feature in *True Love* magazine, journalist Melinda Ferguson (2011) wrote about a group discussion she had in her office on whether Mbau deserved to be on the magazine's cover. While there was a sea of negative descriptions of Mbau (in attempt by many to make the case as to why she shouldn't be on the cover) one individual labelled Mbau a "symbol of our times" (Ferguson 2011:95). This can easily be negative if the person took a philosophical route to get to the label, suggesting that there is a moral crisis in

society and Mbau represents the same and so on. However, in comparison to most of the other descriptions, with no further context given, this one can be understood as rather positive. Later in her article, Ferguson describes Mbau (and others like her) as a smart businessperson (2011). The only other instance where Mbau is described in a relatively positive manner is in her *3rd Degree* interview with Deborah Patta (2010). Patta describes Mbau as "sassy" (2010).

While the adjective sassy can be considered both positive and negative, in relation to everything else said in this specific context, it is positive. However, this raises the issue of descriptions that can be understood in different ways in isolation. In some cases, descriptions that appear neutral contain a word or two that turn it negative while in others, many would argue that what is considered negative is not actually negative. Looking first at the questionably neutral, the only issue that arose was around the word ghetto. For some the word ghetto is a neutral word while for others it is negative. In his article in *The Mail & Guardian* Bongani Madondo (2012) describes Mbau as a "ghetto reincarnation of Marilyn Monroe" while also describing her story as "a chapter from a black ghetto fairy tale."

In relation to questionable negative descriptions one sees Mbau being described as a diva (News 24: 2013), sharp-tongued (Ferreira: 2013), a wannabe Brenda Fassie (Mkhabela & Linda: 2007), a wannabe Paris Hilton (Pillay: 2012.) and "baby" (Madondo: 2012). Many would argue that these descriptions are harmless and neutral but this is not the case. Entering this issue from a feminist background, there are clear problems in calling a woman a wannabe as applies to referring to her as baby. In a patriarchal context that the South African media exists within there are also negative tinges to the descriptions diva and sharp tongued (when referring to women).

With positive and questionable descriptions considered one should now look at neutral descriptions of Mbau. Here one sees Mbau being described as a "Socialite and media personality" (Channel 24:2014), "the Queen of Bling" (Amos: 2013.), a "controversial yet hugely popular celebutant" (Ferreira: 2013 A5) and a "Lamborghini-loving socialite" (Channel24: 2011b). She was also described as a celebrity (Stephen: 2011), a "local show girl" (Madondo: 2012), "Soweto's Bling Queen" (Madondo: 2012) and "South African bling queen" (Tabane: 2010). It is important to note that Queen of

Bling is how Mbau refers to herself. She is even known to sign off some of her tweets with #QOB (Twitter: 2014).

Finally, looking at the negative descriptions of Mbau in the texts analysed one sees quite a variety of nasty words used. Mbau is described as a "Mistress" (Madlala: 2013), "The queen of South African controversy" (Amos: 2013), a famous for being famous socialite (Channel 24: 2013), a professional spotlight hogger (Ndebele: 2012a), a "troubled socialite" (Channel 24: 2011) as well as "controversial" (News 24: 2011d). She was also described as a "Ho-cialite" (a combination of slang word ho and socialite) and pseudo celebrity (Channel 24: 2009), a "self-confessed tabloid junkie" (Mkhabela: 2008a), a "tabloid slut" (Mkhabela & Linda: 2007), a media whore (Mkhabela & Linda: 2007), often loathed (Tabane: 2010) as well as "hollow and ridiculous" (Pillay: 2012).

Furthermore Bongani Madondo (2012) describes or refers to descriptions of Mbau as a "plastic princess", a go-go girl, "indefensible," a gold digger and "svelte, daring and problematic". Chris Roper (2012) calls her deeply unlovely, a non-entity, nothing, fiction and an idiot. In another of his articles he refers to her as a "social Mopani worm" (Roper: 2011). Meanwhile, in *True Love* magazine Ferguson (2011: 95) refers to and quotes others in describing Mbau as an "abused wife," a "divorcee," a "home-wrecker," a "high-class hooker," a liar, a "narcissist" as well as a "witch."

It can thus be seen that Mbau is introduced to the audience and referred to in the media considered mostly negatively. In noting the positive and neutral descriptions one is able to not that there is not much positivity present. Mbau is framed negatively and this in turn links to the perceived agenda of the South African media considered to highlight and emphasize the negative gender characteristics through the living case study of Mbau. However, before exploring this negativity one should consider what, if at all, is celebrated about Mbau in the media texts considered.

What is celebrated

Through the general survey of the texts considered in this study (See figure 1) as well as how Khanyi Mbau is described in the texts one was able to note that she faces predominantly negative coverage. However, to get a fair idea of this coverage it is important to look at what positive coverage Mbau receives. Interestingly, even in the little that is celebrated about her, links to something negative are always made.

In noting that Mbau has come from a dramatic past, some articles closer to the current date focus on a grown up Mbau who has left her dramatic past behind. Bongani Madondo (2012) from *The Mail & Guardian* talks about Mbau's commitment to clean up. He asks rhetorically, "So is Mbau, the girl who's had a riotous, idyllic, sad and bizarre growing-up period and a public nervous breakdown, actually growing up (2012 A27)?" In another article titled *Khanyi Mbau: I was as good as satanic* (News 24: 2011b), Mbau's reform is further discussed. The article starts with the words "I'm sorry" a quote from Mbau. Talking about how Mbau nearly broke down after she split from her ex-lover, the article also quotes Mbau apologising to her family and friends for her past actions. She says, "I've lost so many people because of the person I was (2011)." What is celebrated in these cases links to Mbau leaving her transgressive behaviour in the past.

Beyond Mbau turning over a new leaf, in line with Gill's (2007) post-feminist sensibility, Mbau's body also received celebratory coverage in the media. While it is always made clear the Mbau is a fan of plastic surgery, many appreciate Mbau's ample bosom and fit body. Madondo recalls an incident he had as he was leaving a theatre where Mbau had just performed. A fellow audience member stopped to ask him for details about Mbau's plastic surgeon. He writes, 'I want her body' she screamed. 'And oh, did you know she's also bought a new pussy? Yeah…it's all surgery (Madondo: 2012).'"

Melinda Ferguson (2011) of *True Love* magazine also writes positively about Mbau's body. One of the locations for their interview was a spa Mbau frequents and here Ferguson and Mbau undress for a massage. Of seeing Mbau's breasts Ferguson writes, "I glanced at her 32D boobs. They're pretty gorgeous. We all know she's had a job. She invites me to touch them. How can something so fake feel so real (2011:95)?"

Later in the article she describes Mbau's breasts as enthralling. So while the means within which Mbau got her appreciated body comes into question, the celebration of the body itself is not left out. A detailed discussion on this matter follows in the theme about Mbau's body.

Further celebratory points in Mbau's coverage links to the niche she has carved out for herself in the entertainment industry. Ferguson, in line with the above observation that even when Mbau is complimented a link to the negative is always present too, notes that Mbau is a smart businessperson (2011). She notes that Mbau and the likes of Paris Hilton earn their money by being themselves. She then elaborates on the *themselves* by describing them as "ditzy blondes, vulgar bling queens or just rent-a-quotes (2011:96)." This then highlights Mbau's media savvy. While the author reiterates her point highlighting perceived negativities therein, a key point is that Mbau has carved a niche for herself within the media. This further demonstrates Kepes' (2009) point of the awareness media darlings have in relation to the media.

Finally, to bring more relevance to their piece on Mbau in their fashion magazine, Ferguson describes Mbau's home as stylish while writes in great detail about Mbau's shoes (2011). She notes that Mbau has a large variety of designer shoes and intends to move house to be able to have a room just for her shoes. She then ends her feature with a quote from Mbau, which includes, "I'm content now. I'm paying my own way, I've bought my own car and shoes (2011:98)…" The significance of this links in a circular way back to Mbau turning over a new leaf and not relying on *sugar daddies* to fund her lifestyle.

In consolidation, what should be noted here is the link to theoretical discussions about identity. In some ways the coverage of Mbau considered, demonstrates the fluidity of identity in a postmodern context as discussed by Elliot and du Gay (2009). Mbau's sugar daddy lifestyle was problematized and her reform and independence was celebrated as she moved on. However, the problem emerges when noting that despite the reform in Mbau towards something more palatable in the eyes of the media considered, Mbau still receives very little positive coverage. It thus seems as though a non-celebrity's identity is a lot more fluid than the identity of a media darling like Mbau. Furthermore, I argue that the brazen honesty Mbau displays is not often seen

amongst celebrities and so it appears as though the media are holding on to a Mbau that at one time suited their agenda. Despite growth on her part, they are thus not forgetting her past and still use it as a major point of reference in the present. This is important for the media, as Mbau seems to fill a niche for an exemplar of the antithesis of gender that the media aims to demonstrate.

Khanyi Mbau's body

In a study looking at the representation of media darlings using Gill's (2007) post-feminist sensibility as a major theoretical influence, it is increasingly crucial to look at the representation of the said media darling's body in the texts considered. Khanyi Mbau's body in specific proves to be an interesting subject that came up in many of the media texts considered in this study. Adjectives used to describe Mbau's body include fit and bootylicious (Mkhabela and Linda: 2007) Broadly, her body was a site of admiration, disgust, sex, adultery, violence, and age defiance.

Looking closer, while many note the aesthetically pleasing nature of Mbau's body many of the writers wrote about her body in a way that reminded audiences about its constructed (plastic surgery) nature while still ogling. Gugulethu Mkhabela (2008b) from New24 wrote about "Boobylicious Mbau" and her journey "from an A-cup to a D-cup." Mkhabela writes, "Mbau's boobs are now popping out of her top like watermelons after her surgery…(2008b)"

Similarly, in her feature Melinda Ferguson (2011) of *True Love* magazine describes Mbau's breasts as gorgeous and enthralling. She further writes about how she got the opportunity to feel Mbau's breasts. Of this experience she writes, "How can something so fake feel so real? I wonder how many men would sell their cars, leave their wives, hock their businesses, all to swap places with me (2011: 95)." Mbau's breasts are again discussed when talking about Mbau's aspirations at pursuing a university qualification (2011). Mbau indicated that she had applied to study at a university but she was turned away as the course she selected was registered to capacity. In response to this Ferguson writes, "Maybe it's a blessing- I shudder to think what mayhem that cleavage would've caused on campus (2011:96)." Beyond this Fergusson discusses Mbau's revealing clothing, her sex life as well as her penchant for plastic surgery.

Linking to plastic surgery, Mbau's fondness of plastic surgery saw a lot of attention in the texts considered. Journalists were fascinated with Mbau's openness about her desire to age with the help of plastic surgery. Mkhabela (2008b) writes about Mbau's post pregnancy surgery that she underwent to remove scars and stretch marks. Mikgadi Seabi (2011) of *News24* writes,

> Khanyi Mbau refuses to age without a fight. Her weapon of choice is a knife, which she intends to go under as many times as it takes to make sure she maintains her youthful looks

Through comment by Mbau, Seabi then lists Mbau's surgeries in detail. Mbau talks about fixing her teeth and gums, her breast augmentation surgeries as well as her future plastic surgery plans that include a brow lift (2011 A14). Mbau says that she needs to find quick solutions to her beauty issues that also maintain her looks because she sells beauty, as she is known for her looks. Mkhabela (2008b) writes, "It's called suffering for beauty darling."

Mbau's body also comes up during her accounts of her troubled marriage to ex-husband, Mandla Mthembu. In this context, she was pregnant but also she was abused. She has said that while pregnant she was slapped across her face (Ndebele: 2012a). During this time her body is also referred to as a site for sex. She talks about how her ex-husband accused her of having sex with somebody else.

Additionally, as the end of her marriage and the start of an affair with another older married man played out in the media, Mbau's body and sex were coupled together. In one instance she is quoted describing her first encounter with her married lover (2012a), in others, discussion around her naked picture scandal takes place. The naked picture scandal saw talks about Mbau in provocative poses (2012b). One article writes, "Another Twitter user said: Why did Khanyi Mbau show her chicken to the world. Sis (2011c)." *The Mail & Guardian's* Bongani Madondo (2012) snidely adds to this in referring to increased media sales thanks to Mbau's "…baby-oiled hot butt-naked bod on the cover and page three across the land."

Thus the two key issues that emerge from noting the coverage around Mbau's body link to Mbau's media savvy as well as how she demonstrates a post-feminist sensibility. Looking first at the issues linking to a post-feminist sensibility, the media and Mbau's obsessions with her body demonstrates the importance give to a woman having a good body (Gill: 2007). The constant link to men when discussing her body also demonstrates this further. Additionally, Mbau's constant quest to improve her body reveals how she has arguably internalized the male gaze. However, this also

reveals her media savvy in relation to her body. There is an awareness Mbau demonstrates and it is important to note this because this awareness is part of what sets a media darling apart from a normal celebrity. Apart from looking beautiful in a post-feminist sensibility way for the purpose of attracting men, Mbau also emphasizes the need to look a certain way for her work. In noting that she sells beauty, she very astutely identified one of her roles as someone whose life plays out in the media. She is aware that her life is documented in the media and as a result feels that she needs to look a certain way at all times.

As a result she is open about her plastic surgeries as part of her quest to aesthetic perfection. But these surgeries are portrayed sceptically in many of the texts considered, even if it is through insinuation. The audience is thus regularly reminded of her plastic surgeries thereby disseminating their scepticism. This then adds to the points of ridicule that Mbau faces.

Relatability

In maintaining the ridicule and negative coverage given to Khanyi Mbau, further issues of a lack of effort to forge relatability between Mbau and the audience (by the media) emerge. This is crucial to the argument this study makes because it further demonstrates the agenda of the media considered to use the representations of a media darling like Mbau to highlight negative gender ideals. In noting a lack of relatability between Mbau and the audience, a supposed divergent from the societal norm is highlighted by the media. It is thus not surprising that there is not much written about Mbau linking to her relatability to the audience. Of all the articles surveyed the issue of relatability occurred very infrequently but nonetheless one key point emerges. This links to Mbau's ordinariness.

Bongani Madondo (2012) from the *Mail & Guardian* demonstrates this. He suggests that while she claims that her life was always very different (references made to a fancy grandmother who liked fancy things and so on) in reality she hails from a similar working class background as many other people. His point links broadly to the idea that behind all her smoke and mirrors Mbau is just an ordinary person. He further argues:

> She is an ordinary girl who exposes our ordinaries while willing us to dream, costume-play or idealise ourselves as beings we can only dream about: Cinderellas, princes in shining armour and so on (2012).

Mbau herself reiterates this point in her 2010 interview with South African journalist Deborah Patta. Mbau insists that the lesson she carries with her for others links to her coming from a broken home but was nonetheless able to accrue as much as she has which she broadly argues links to striving towards one's dreams (2010).

Furthermore at a different stage in the interview she links to the issue of relatability again when discussing that people hire her to attend their events. She argues that many people enjoy meeting her in person because it is through these interactions that they realise that she is just like everyone else (2010).

In less profound instances of relatability, Melinda Ferguson (2011) from *True Love* includes anecdotes about Mbau's love for shoes. More interesting than this however

was a brief discussion with Mbau's manager who claims that prior to meeting Mbau, she was also one of the people who did not like her. Implications here link to Madondo's point as well as Mbau's point in her interview with Patta stating that people realise that the Khanyi Mbau they encounter in the media is not a true reflection of who she is as a whole. To use Mbau's own words from her interview with Patta, "What I put out in the media is a Barbie Doll effect but it's not really who I am" (2010).

Despite this link to her ordinariness, the infrequency with which relatability between Mbau and the audience is brought up is important to note. Through emphasizing a lack of similarity between Mbau and the audience, a distance is forged. This distance allows the audience to look at Mbau as completely external to oneself thereby ensuring that one does not become like her. It should be remembered that media darlings sell specific ideals and the issue of relatability and Mbau thus demonstrates this can also translate into selling the ideals of how not to be. However, what is also important to note is how Mbau demonstrates a media savvy. Kepes (2009) notes that media darlings know how to conduct themselves in the media. This then translates towards maintaining relevance. Mbau demonstrates the same. Despite efforts to forge a distance between Mbau and the audience, the audience remain interested in her (even if this links to morbid fascination and/or penchant for scandal) thereby prompting the media to continue giving her coverage for reasons of profitability. While the media does nonetheless maintain their agenda of highlighting her flaws and so on, Mbau's media savvy is worth noting.

Questions asked

In further building on the negative image of Khanyi Mbau as portrayed in the various texts considered in this study, it becomes important to look at the questions she is asked when interacting with the media. When looking at the texts surveyed, often because of the nature of majority of the texts the questions asked are implied, as they are not presented to the reader. However there are a few cases where the questions asked are included in the media text. All of these cases were found in the in-depth cover feature in *True Love* magazine as well as the Mbau interview on Current affairs show *3rd Degree*. Furthermore, most of the questions asked were negative and appeared to be in attempt to shame Mbau while reminding the audience about Mbau's supposed transgressions. This element of shame is crucial to this study as it further demonstrates the perceived agenda of the media considered that links to portraying Mbau negatively.

Looking first at the *True Love* feature, one saw interviewer Melinda Ferguson ask categorically about two aspects of Mbau's life (2011). The first linked to men in general and more specifically Mbau's ex-husband and ex-boyfriend both of whom were much older than Mbau and were also labelled *sugar daddies* in the South African Media. Ferguson, entering from a space of familiarity, says "I'm sorry, Khanyi, but what the hell were you thinking going for Mandla and that umlungu Theunis Crous (2011: 97)?" The significance herein links to raising the issue of Mbau's questionable life choices in the eyes of the media. She also asked Mbau about any guilt Mbau felt about breaking her married lovers family (2011).

Seemingly intrigued by Mbau and her men, Ferguson also writes, "I wonder what makes men turn their lives and bank balances upside down for Khanyi. Has she got some special 'love technique' (2011: 98)?" While Mbau does respond with how she features in a relationship the thinking aloud nature of the statement and question is clearly suggestive to the audience in relation to the control Mbau has over men. Furthermore, while this control is problematized, constant reference to Men and Mbau's breasts in these questions ties in with and perpetuates the ideals of a post-feminist sensibility somewhat (Gill: 2007). Here emphasis is placed on the need for a woman to have a good body as part for the purpose of attracting men amongst other issues. The slight variation emerges when noting Mbau's control over men, which is a

problem in a patriarchal context. The idea in this sensibility is that post finding a man, a woman settles down beneath him.

Beyond this, one of the other questions that were included in the copy of the article saw Ferguson questioning Mbau about her child. In discussing the end of her marriage Mbau indicated that she felt shame that she no longer had access to the material luxuries that she was known for (2011). At this point Ferguson interjected with "Hang on! Forget about the mall for a second. What about your child (2011: 98)?" Through *reminding* Mbau that she was in fact a mother, Ferguson also reminded the audience of the same.

Looking at the 3rd Degree interview (2010), in her interview with Mbau, Deborah Patta asks questions as well as makes statements that Mbau builds on when responding. With regards to the questions asked, Patta makes it clear that she is trying to understand the person that Mbau is. Fascinated by Mbau's honesty, Patta begins by asking Mbau about what motivates her (2010). Patta quickly moves to an issue Mbau is infamous for, marrying/dating rich men. Here she goes back to her initial question asking Mbau outright if her aspiration in life was to marry a rich man (2010).

Further questions link to how much Mbau charges to attend events as well as what is so great about Mbau that people are willing to pay for her to attend their events. Patta then brings up the issue of role models and how through existing in the media, Mbau is perceived as a role model. Patta says, "what is a role model? Quite frankly I don't want my kid to be like you (2010)." When Mbau states that she has no desire to be a role model, Patta raises the issue of Mbau's motivational talks that she gives. Here Patta acidly asks, "What possibly can I learn from you (2010)?"

Patta then moves to the inequality in South Africa and how some elite (Mbau included) disregard the struggle of the poor by flaunting their wealth openly through the media. One of Patta's questions includes, "Is there no sense of shame when people are poor that you display such excess where food goes to waste (2010)?"

As the interview concludes Patta makes one more attempt to shame Mbau. She brings in the voice of commentator and author William Gumede who states that Mbau

represents bling culture in South Africa (2010). She builds on this point in asking, “I mean are you proud of that? Is that what you aspired to when you were a four year old girl to be the representative of something so crass (2010)?”

Thus through these questions that were included in the texts considered it becomes increasingly clear that a variety of Mbau’s actions irk the ideals of the media considered. They thereby appear to use their platform to highlight these issues in a manner that presents perceived wrongs to the audience for their information. With audiences in turn turning to celebrities and media as one of the sources for guidance through modern day life (Holmes and Redmond: 2006) and inspiration when constructing their identity (Elliot and du Gay: 2009) this often translates into ideas and ideals of how not to conduct oneself.

Implications

Still linking to the influence media texts can have on the audience, knowing the true intention of a journalist or writer is hard to fully decipher unless speaking to the person directly. But through looking at how text is presented one can become aware of the implications therein. Looking at the implications in texts is important in this research as deeper meaning tends to be suggested and these deeper meanings plays a huge role in shaping audience's perceptions. Looking at the texts considered about Khanyi Mbau, there are many implications that are worth noting. The implications made about Mbau in the texts considered can broadly be categorized into the categories of men and everything else.

Looking first at the implications that are not about men, it is often suggested and/or implied by the media considered that Mbau is talentless. Mkhabela and Linda (2007) suggest that while she has a great body, "if her latest album *Khanyi* is anything to go by, she should stick to her mama-drama, which is obviously where her talents lie." In another article Mkhabela calls Mbau's album a disgrace (2007). Adding to this, in relation to her acting Chris Roper (2012) focuses on how Mbau struggled during her first acting gig. Here Roper recounts how Mbau struggled with her two-word line (2012). It is because of this implied talentless-ness that it is also implied that Mbau is precocious for comparing herself to legends of the past like Brenda Fassie (Mkhabela & Linda: 2007). Mkhabela & Linda write:

> She actually had the audacity to compare her straight-talking self to none other than Brenda 'Ma Brr' Fassie! With such self-pimping no wonder the Mzansi media really luurves to hate her (2007).

Linking to the issue of talent, Gugulethu Mkhabela (2008a) writes in her article about how Mbau unprofessionally failed to show up to scheduled music video recordings. In the article a frustrated record label executive is quoted while details about Mbau's unprofessionalism is laid bare. While this article seems to just be retelling happening in the entertainment industry, Mkhabela ends with a message to the record label executive: "you should have known better (2008)." The implication here is that Mbau is lazy and undeserving of the chance that she was given.

It is also suggested at times that Mbau is dumb even if that is not really the case. When talking about her childhood understanding that animals could talk (influenced by the fairy-tales she was exposed to). In response to this Mkhabela and Linda (2007) wrote "Nope, that's not the bleach talking, that's genuine blondeness." Furthermore, in relation to her motivational talks, during Mbau's interview on *3rd Degree* Deborah Patta (2010) nastily asks, "what possibly can I learn from you?"

Other implications that are not as common include Mbau being irrelevant and desperate for fame. While nonetheless writing about her it is suggested that her limelight is fading (News 24: 2009). This links to the point Deborah Patta (2010) raises in her interview with Mbau when she straightforwardly suggests that Mbau loves the free publicity she gets from interviews.

Linking to publicity, it is also implied that Mbau is cheap. This is implied when talking about nude pictures of her that were leaked in the media. In the *News24* article it is suggested that questions were coming up social network *Twitter* about whether Mbau leaked her own naked pictures media (Channel24: 2011c). There was no indication as to what fuelled such speculation but it was nonetheless included in the article.

In another article, Khaya Dlanga (2010) argues that Mbau may just be a mirror to society "showing us what we've become." Here he says "Maybe there is nothing wrong with Khanyi Mbau… (2010)" thereby that there is something wrong with her and he is raising an alternate viewpoint.

So while Mbau is presented as talentless, dumb and cheap it should be noted that she is still getting publicity. One would wonder why the media considered would continue to give someone they have such issues with coverage and attention. This comes down to Mbau's media savvy and it is this that makes her a media darling. Mbau gets people talking and the media look to capitalize on this. In attempting to give her attention while maintaining their issue with her one sees the manifestation of the continuous negative publicity she receives. She becomes a representation of a social outcast who goes against hegemonic gender ideals and the media thus use this representation as a living lesson to the audience about perceived rights and wrongs. Thus in noting that, as per the theoretical foundations of the study, media darlings are sold to the audience as

role models, Mbau ends up being presented as a model of what not to do and how not to be in society.

Bearing this in mind, in relation to the implications made about Mbau and men, one must be reminded about Mbau's personal life linking to her wealthy older ex-husband and her wealthy, older lover as this is a point of reference for many of the implications made. In an article on *News24* (News 24: 2013) about a local channel's latest reality television show, the three-person cast is introduced. One of whom is Mbau. Cast mate Nonhle Thema is introduced as a "famous TV presenter, actress and businesswoman (2013). " Babalwa Mneno, the other cast mate, is introduced as a model and reality TV regular who competed in various on-air competitions. Mbau however is introduced as "The Queen of Bling known for rich boyfriends/husbands… (2013)." So while Mbau too has acting and other on-air credits to her name she is defined by her personal life. The implication then is that there is nothing more to Mbau than the men she dates.

Still noting this, in another article the audience is told about Mbau's 2010 birthday party (News 24: 2010). In the article Mbau is described as a man-eater and as a person who looks like a "madam in a brothel" because of her fashion choice (2010). But the issue with implication is when the author writes, "The question as to who paid for it all, since Mbau is unemployed, remained unanswered (2010)." Mokgadi Seabi (2010) of *News24* also wrote about the party and he too raised the issue of how Mbau paid for her birthday party. Later in the same article Seabi writes, "Nowhere to be seen, and with good reason – that little restraining order issue – was Theunis Crous, Mbau's most recent sugar daddy (2010)." While Mbau's ex-lover has nothing to do with the party, again one can see quite clearly what the journalists are implying. Mbau, known for entertaining *sugar daddies* for financial stability has not gone on record about any new *Sugar daddy* after Crous but is nonetheless spending money and this is presented as questionable. The audiences are thus reminded of her past while suspicion is also raised because she is spending money with no known man by her side. The implications thereby disregard any independence she has (despite her fondness of rich men).

In introducing Mbau during her interview on *3rd Degree* Deborah Patta (2010) too joins in on questioning Mbau's finances. She notes that Mbau seems to always have

money but its source is never clear. During her interview, when talking about Mbau's comparison to American socialite Paris Hilton, Patta reminds Mbau that Hilton is "genuinely wealthy" because of her family's hotel empire (2010). Having spoken about Mbau marrying rich in early parts of the interview, the implications to the rich men in Mbau's life are thus very clear. The crux of these implications is very crudely put by Mkhabela and Linda (2007) who write, "knowing how to milk your sugar daddy is something Khanyi is a pro at" and the media never let the audience forget that.

It thus becomes clear that the link to men when talking about Mbau is often forced. In presenting Mbau as an example of someone who does not meet the hegemonic gender ideals, the media considered constantly remind the audience of her perceived shortcomings. In so doing they reiterate the problems they have identified to the audience, even if it is through implication. Furthermore, in relation to a post-feminist sensibility while Gill (2007) suggests that men and attracting men are personally central to the actions of a *liberated* woman, the coverage shows how this is further emphasized in the media.

Men

Furthermore, in relation to the patriarchal context that the South African media operates within, it is important to look at the discussions and portrayals around a media darling and men in more detail. It is all the more important in the case of Khanyi Mbau as much of the media attention Mbau receives is because of her relations with men and the perceived scandal thereof. As a result in many of the articles considered for this study, the men in her life define Khanyi Mbau. In one article, Mbau is described as, "The Queen of Bling known for rich boyfriends/husbands… (News 24: 2013)." In another she is described as, "famous for dating older rich men (Mofokeng: 2011)." It is thus also commonplace in the South African media for Mbau's wealth to be purely associated with her husband/boyfriend. In her piece in *The Mail & Guardian, I love you, but I love your bank balance more, Nikiwe* Bikitsha (2011) writes:

> We've seen the likes of Khanyi Mbau who are paraded on the arms of rich men and admit to enjoying an ostentatious lifestyle but can't show any discernible way of having earned that lifestyle, had it not been for the men in their lives.

About her relationships with *sugar* daddies Mbau wrote on her *Facebook* page:

> I believe u have to be honest @ all times. So what if m dating sugar daddies, at least I get to wear the fancy n expensive stuff, get to go places – etc …. Need I say more???? U got a prob, deal with it!!!!! (Tabane:2010)

This theme was thus devised in an attempt to understand how Mbau's relationship with these men are talked about and presented in the media. For the purpose of smoother understandings of these presentations, three sub-categories emerge – contextualising Mbau and men, ex-husband Mandla Mthembu and ex-lover Theunis Crous.

When looking at Mbau and men it is important to understand how Mbau's general relations with men before looking specifically at her ex-husband and ex-lover. In talking about her relationship with her ex-husband, Mbau claims that she did not love her husband as a life partner but rather as a protector (Ferguson: 2011). She further suggests, "He gave me everything I wished my dad could've given me (2011:97 B)." In his article in *The Mail & Guardian*, Bongani Madondo (2012) contextualises Mbau's father, a taxi driver. Madondo notes that Mbau's father was absent in most parts of her childhood, "which is perhaps why she's always had 'daddy issues' (2012)." This is thus used to rationalize Mbau's relationships with men.

Bearing this in mind, Mbau has also been open about her preference for men with money. As a child she is said to have dreamed about marrying into the English royal family (Madondo: 2012). This clearly seems to have influenced her as an adult. In her interview with Deborah Patta on *3rd Degree*, Mbau stated quite clearly that while she would date a poor man, she makes no effort to find them (2010). She also says that she would not have married her ex-husband if he was a squatter.

Linking to this, in her piece on Mbau in *True Love* magazine, Melinda Ferguson (2011) wondered about what Mbau does to men that causes them to "turn their lives and bank balances" upside down for her. Here Mbau noted that she makes her man her world. She notes, "I give a man so much love when I'm with him. He becomes my everything. I can stare at him the entire day; I make him feel like a million bucks." She also says that it is a blessing for these rich men to find her (Patta: 2010). She further rationalises her relationship in saying:

> I was tearing down walls. Breaking taboos. Because of me, younger girls now have the confidence to walk around holding hands publicly with their sugar daddies. They're inspired by my story (Roper: 2012).

Looking now to media coverage about Mbau's relationships, in her interview with Mbau, Deborah Patta (2010) reminds Mbau that while she always aspired for wealth in the end she did not get rich but rather she married rich. Patta is referring to Mbau's marriage to much older millionaire Mandla Mthembu. Mbau began a relationship with Mthembu at age 19. Ndebele (2012a) notes that Mthembu paid R200 000 lobola for Mbau. Mbau tells Ferguson (2011) that Mthembu (described in 2008 as a "53-year-old-tycoon" (Mkhabela: 2008a)) provided her with a wide array of luxuries that she quickly grew accustomed to. She notes that these include a Porsche, a lavish penthouse, large amounts of daily spending money as well as a staff of maids and security (2011). Mkhabela (2008) suggests that Mthembu also paid more than R50 000 for various plastic surgeries that Mbau underwent.

However, their relationship appeared to always be rocky. Mkhabela and Linda (2007) note that in a public argument the couple had at a South African awards show Mthembu referred to Mbau as a gold digger. They suggest as a way of earning her

forgiveness his then wife Mbau, got him to buy her a Lamborghini (luxury vehicle) (2007).

Nonetheless, Mthembu soon grew possessive, jealous and abusive towards Mbau. Ndebele (2012a) writes that Mthembu slapped Mbau across her face when she was pregnant with their child and also accused Mbau of having an affair with a man who is openly gay. Mthembu went as far as questioning the paternity of their unborn child (2012a). In her interview with Ferguson (2011), Mbau noted that at first the luxurious lifestyle Mthembu provided was seductive enough to ignore the abuse. She established that if she avoided asking any serious and/or uncomfortable questions about their finances he wouldn't hit her. However, Mbau grew increasingly aware that there were indeed financial problems. She notes:

> "Of course, when I asked, 'Mandla where's the money?' as I sensed he might be in financial trouble, he took it as a sign that I was a gold-digger. He would crack me – black and blue (Ferguson 2011:97)."

Mbau however soon realised the abuse was damaging her much more than physically. She became increasingly self-conscious and begun spending more and altering her appearance (through surgeries including a breast augmentation) (2011). It is thus clear that their relationship was a lot more problematic than presented on face value. Looking back Mbau says of Mthembu, "I was basically in the care of this man. His property almost (Roper: 2012)."

As her marriage broke, Mbau realised that she needed other options in her life. At this point she connected with her married friend Theunis Crous. Deborah Patta (2010) says, Mbau "…snared Theunis Crous. For a while they blinged it up then it fell apart in the bright lights of the media." Mbau says, their connection came because she looked past his physical appearance (she has described him as ugly and podge) (Ferguson 2011). During their relationship Madlala (2013) notes that Crous also bought Mbau a Lambhorgini as well as paid for her to stay in another penthouse. Mbau claims that it did indeed occur to her that their affair could break up Crous' home as he is married to her former friend (Ferguson: 2011). But she says that Crous justified their affair with the explanation that his wife would physically abuse him and that he was unhappy in

his marriage and intended to leave his wife. Mbau says of Crous, "He was my new father figure. My daddy (Ferguson 2011: 98)."

However, things soon fell apart between the two lovers. Following their break up, a series of dramatic arguments took place in the media including a nude pictures scandal. Ndebele (2012b) notes that Mbau blamed Crous for the leaked pictures. Mbau claimed that Crous was obsessed with her and was trying to destroy her (2012b). McCain (2010) writes that Mbau also accused Crous of being a liar while Crous accused Mbau of only wanting his money. She further includes a quote from a gossip blogger in her article who says, "All their intimate details were splashed in the newspapers. As scandalous as it may have been, it was something we all enjoyed reading about (McCain: 2010)." Reflecting on this relationship Mbau says "Theunis bought my soul for R30 000 a month (Roper: 2012)."

It was the breakup with Crous that caused Mbau to nearly have a breakdown (News 24: 2011b). However, Mbau tells Ferguson (2011) that since her recovery she is content with her life. She speaks about her personal and financial independence noting that "All these men – all the pain – contributed to my growth (Ferguson 2011:98)." While Ferguson does write about Mbau's independence, not many other journalists do the same. In various articles that follow Ferguson's 2011 piece Mbau is still defined by the men of her past.

It must thus be reiterated that as per the media, men define Mbau. It is further presented as though, in line with a post-feminist sensibility (Gill: 2007), Mbau consciously aims to attract men, particularly those that are wealthy. While she did have aspirations to build a career in interior design she was able to easily slip into the trend of dating wealthy men and depending on them. The problem the media considered seem to have with this is with the fact that Mbau openly seeks financial gain from men and is assertive (a trait arguably celebrated in men) in landing a relationship that gives her what she wants. Furthermore it seems that they also have a problem with her allowing herself to be fully dependent on a male. What is important to note here is that the issue of being independent of men is raised.

However, it still remains that this independence in relation to Mbau is forgotten to suit the media's agenda. As discussed when looking at what was celebrated in the coverage about Mbau, independence is portrayed as desirable while emphasizing the problem in dating someone for their wealth and being dependent on them. Despite gaining independence, as Mbau once did partake in these perceived transgressions, she remains the living example that the media feel they need. Through Mbau they are able emphasize their problems with going against societal hegemony in relation to gender. In turn the audience see the representation of a media darling like Mbau and are able to note how her actions are met (presented). In turning to celebrities for assistance in understanding and negotiating modern day life (Rakow and Wackwitz: 2004), they in turn are able to note that moving away from behaviour like Mbau is likely to lead to less societal denunciation.

Women

Beyond men, looking at the relations media darlings as women have with other women is important to this study because it demonstrates the nuanced nature of a woman's identity in a patriarchal context. Furthermore as the men around her primarily define Khanyi Mbau, it is interesting to look at how the texts considered talk about Mbau in relation to women. To get a better understanding of this, this section has been divided into three categories. The three categories are comparisons with other women, Mbau's colleagues as well as Mbau's family and friends.

Looking at how Mbau is compared to other women, while Ferguson (2011) does quote a journalist who suggests that Mbau's celebrity niche was once held by Lebo Mathosa and Brenda Fassie, the one comparison that seems to regularly emerge is the comparison to Paris Hilton. Pillay (2012) describes Mbau as "South Africa's so-called Paris Hilton wannabe." Ferguson (2011) also draws the comparison when she notes that Mbau and Hilton both have similar approaches to earning an income. Adding to this, Mbau herself rationalizes many people's fascination with her by making a link to Hilton. In her interview with Mbau, Deborah Patta (2010) asks her why people are willing to pay her to attend their parties. Mbau explains that people want to have her sit next to them and take pictures with her. Patta proceeds to ask what is so special about Mbau that people want that from her. Mbau says, "I don't know. I think it's, it's like a Paris Hilton effect…(Patta: 2010)." However, Mkhabela and Linda (2007) are a lot harsher in their comparison of Mbau and Hilton. They write, "Mirror, mirror on the wall who's the biggest tabloid slut of them all? Blonde singing budgie Paris Hilton or our own wannabe Brenda, Khanyi Mbau? We rate them (2007)." Through their article they compare both Hilton and Mbau and eventually conclude that South African "media whore" Mbau is the same as Hilton (2007).

Looking now at the category about Mbau's colleagues, in 2013 Mbau featured in a reality show that linked to charity work. She along with two other media personalities featured on the cast for that show (News 24: 2013). Mbau was moved deeply by the show, but she also says she found the experience of working with her two media colleagues enjoyable. She tells Ferreira (2013) while doing press for the show that it was an honour to work with the other two women. Mbau says that both her colleagues

are aware of the reality of the media industry and respect it for what it is. Furthermore, she says:

> They are two women who I respect. They've had enough bad and good publicity – unlike these new girls in the industry now who want to have a certain image – a façade – to sell their business. Nonhle and Babalwa are real about life. They've been through all the badness and good (Ferreira: 2013).

Mbau too has been through good and bad. She notes that it was in these times that she turned to friends and family. She tells Ferguson that during the troubled times of her marriage, she would hang out with rich Jewish women who were her friends (2011). She recalls that when she suspected that her husband was having financial issues these women would tell her to save her own money should she ever need it but also to ask her husband question. Mbau says that when she asked questions her husband would physically abuse her (Ferguson: 2011). She shared this with her friends and they encouraged her to leave him. However, despite their supportive nature, Mbau also indicated that she felt the need to keep up with her rich friends. She notes that when things began to crumble financially she became concerned with how she would be able to be around her friends (2011). She thus tells Ferguson:

> The most glamorous woman in the room is often the one who's abused and the most romantic one's usually the saddest. You send yourself flowers when you're sitting with your friends in the spa, trying to hide the truth from everyone. He tells you you're stupid and dumb. He kicks you like a dog. He starts seeing other women. He gets someone else who reminds him of you and all this time I'm thinking: how am I going to hide this from everyone (2011: 97)?"

Mbau eventually almost broke down and this is when her sister stepped in to help and support her (News 24: 2011b). Channel 24 notes that Mbau's sister is very protective of Mbau. Mbau's sister further told Ferguson that she struggled to see Mbau breaking down while the media were "feasting" on her pain (2011: 98). Apart from her sister, Mbau's mother is also a huge support. She notes that her mother raised her as a single parent. Furthermore, Mbau's daughter currently stays with Mbau's mother too as Khanyi feels that the life she leads is not the ideal space for a child (2011).

Thus the key elements that one can take from looking at the coverage of Mbau in relation to women links to the issues of competition. While the competition aspect does

not come through in relation to the women Mbau works with, there are hints of competition when looking at Mbau in relation to the wife of her married lover. Even then, this was more in a way of Mbau pointing out the wife's flaws as part of justifying how the affair was not as problematic as one would think. However, linking to competition is the issue of comparisons. The constant comparison between Mbau and the likes of Paris Hilton links to Tanenbaum's (2011) argument that femininity and competition are often coupled together resulting in the female role emerging as a constant race to victory. Furthermore it can be argued that through comparison, the media are framing their subject for the audience. In using comparison to other famous/infamous celebrities, the media are bringing in a point of reference. As a result of such comparison a culture of competition emerges amongst women. The coverage of Mbau and the women in her life thus demonstrates how the media perpetuate this.

How Khanyi Mbau's voice is used

Finally, a crucial element to this study links to how Khanyi Mbau's voice is presented in the texts considered. In noting that certain messages are disseminated to the audience with the intention of establishing meaning and an understanding of a said subject (in this context, Mbau) it is important to note the active role given to the subject in the text. Thus for the purpose of understanding how Mbau's voice is used in the text's considered this theme emerged. The theme is broken down into 2 sub-categories where select quotes given by Mbau fit. These sub-categories are Mbau and her life as well as Mbau on life in the media. This theme thereby presents quotes that are not applicable to the other themes discussed.

Looking first at Mbau and her life, in her opinion Mbau always felt that her family were set apart from others. In his piece in *The Mail & Guardian*, *Bitch, please: I'm a hustler,* Bongani Madondo (2012) quotes Mbau when she talks about the fact that as a child her family would eat dinner at the table, using cutlery. She says this was "unusual for most black families back then (2012)." In the same article, Mbau's grandmother is introduced, presumably as one of Mbau's early influencers about style. In this quote she notes that her grandmother loved herself "absolutely" and was very stylish (2012). She also suggests that if life played out differently it is likely that her stylish grandmother would have been living in a fancy upmarket area in Johannesburg (2012).

Still with her childhood, Mkhabela and Linda (2007) note that Mbau had always had a fascination with fairy tales. Referring to the likes of Cinderella and Alice in Wonderland, Mbau indicated that her dreams "were always about wanting to be a princess (2007)." Speaking about further influential elements of her childhood Mbau tells Patta (2010) about a television show she watched as a child called *The lives of the rich and famous*. She says she was mesmerized by opulent lifestyles that show documented. Based on these (and likely other elements) Mbau says she loves opulence. Still with Patta, she says:

> I love nice things. I love living comfortable. I loved getting anything that I want that my heart can dream off. Obviously you can't get everything in life but I've always wanted that (2010).

Mbau initially had the intention of achieving her desired comfort and opulence through a career in interior design (Patta: 2010). She tells Patta in the end she fell in love with a rich man who showered her with gifts and other comforts and that is where she grew used to the luxurious lifestyle she is known for. Patta asks Mbau if she feels bad for living large while many in South Africa struggle with poverty. Mbau responds by indicating that everyone has choices in life and she cannot carry other people's suffering on her shoulders just because she is wealthy. She elaborates:

> The fact is it's not my fault. I had choices in life and I took my choice and I am not killing anyone, whether you like it or not and you can't sleep at night I'm still going to do it (2010).

Mbau does however say that while she does aim for even more luxuries (like a private jet) she plays her part in helping others too. She tells Patta that she constantly donates her clothes to charity and assists in job creation at her father's farm (2010). She justifies these actions biblically noting:

> I believe you give and it shall be given unto you. And it's a scripture in the bible. But I am not also going to sit and be afraid to live out my drama in a public space because people are starving.

She thus says that while she has no intention of being a role model in society there is a lesson in her being (Patta: 2010). She says:

> What you can possibly learn from me is a girl with a single parent has accumulated so much. What I put out in the media is a Barbie doll effect but it's not really who I am (Patta: 2010).

Still with her life in relation to finances, in her interview with *True Love* magazine's Melinda Ferguson (2011) she says she lives her life differently to the norm. She suggests that people are conditioned into living life one way, working in an office and living off a budget and so on. She says:

> You can't do this, you can't do that 'cause your salary won't allow it. I'm throwing that way of life to the side. Most people think that's sin. We're brainwashed to believe we have to toe the line (Ferguson 2011:98).

Moving away from a wealthy life, as a lot of the discourse around Mbau focuses on her sugar daddy past, Mbau has also spoken about her life after her ex-husband and ex-lover. In an interview covered in News24 (2011b) Mbau apologised to her family and

friends for her rocky past. She says that there came a point after her relationship with her married lover that she broke down. “It dawned on me I was as good as satanic (2011).” She describes to Melinda Ferguson (2011) that many people have hurt her but it is easier to keep them around to know about their actions rather than reading about it in the media. She therefore realised that she was lonely.

Of her past in general she says, “I sold my soul to the devil but he couldn’t find a buyer for it, so I am lucky to have it back (Roper: 2012).” She further says that it is through all she has been through that she realised how strong she is. Strength that she found surprising (2012). Speaking about her biography (which seems to have prompted further reflection on her past) she says she has no intention of exposing or destroying anyone mentioned in her book (Ndebele: 2012a). She emphasizes, “I wrote my book as a trail of my history and origin, defining my destination (2012a).” Furthermore, she tells Ferguson (2011 B) that she is now content in her life. She has gained personal and financial independence and has reached a better mental space after her abusive past. She says, “I want to show people there’s much more to me than the one-dimensional tabloid creation. I want to dig deeper and show the world the real Khanyi Mbau (2011:98).”

Looking now at Mbau on life in the media, Mbau talks about knowing and respecting the media game (Ferreira: 2013). When asked to give advice to people who want to be in the media, Mbau built on this statement and demonstrated an understanding of the media business based on her experiences. She says:

> “If you really want to be a public interest property, you need to be passionate. You need to know the reasons you want to do this. You need to understand this business. You need to love every aspect of it. And for every good there’s bad and for every bad there’s good. And its 99% bad that you’ll experience because the world is judgemental and unforgiving. If you’ve got passion it will drive you and you will be able to carry on forever and during difficult times. And you will love what you do and you won’t do drugs and commit suicide – but if you’re not it can kill you and you will die (Ferreira: 2013).”

Speaking about one of her first encounters with the media industry, Mbau had been given a small part in a television production (Roper: 2012). She was determined to

make that part count because as she says, “It was the line that would launch me – that would make the career of the great Khanyi Mbau (2012).” In his article, Lesley Mofokeng (2011) quotes a now famous Mbau as saying even if she is unpopular, her presence in the South African media industry is noted. She says people have written her off many times but she is resilient and continues to return.

In explaining people’s fascination with her (she has said in an interview with Deborah Patta (2010) that she is paid R35000 to attend an event) she notes that people like the idea of Mbau sitting next to them and them being able to take pictures with her. She further explains to Patta, “…I guess people don’t think I’m a real person and then when they get to sit with me and realise ok she’s just like me yay…(2010).”

Beyond this, when looking at Mbau’s life in the media, she has shown in various instances that she is a bold interviewee. In conversation with Bongani Madondo (2012) she asked him a question that completely surprised him. He writes, “Three minutes into the interview, Mbau asks me point-blank: ‘Do you find me fuckable?’” However, one of the most famous of these instances was her interview with Deborah Patta on *3rd Degree*. Tabane (2010) describes Patta as “much-feared” while noting that many viewers were impressed with Mbau for “holding her own and ‘showing up’…” Patta in the interview. During the interview when Patta suggests that Mbau agreed to the interview free of charge because she loves the publicity, Mbau is quick to disagree (2010). She states that she was keen to meet Patta because everyone fears being interviewed by her. She further suggests that she was not at all scared as she saw the interview as climbing a mountain (2010).

In the same interview Mbau continues to stand firm in her decisions, particularly when it appeared that Patta was attempting to make Mbau feel bad for being wealthy. Patta claims that in an unequal country like South Africa, displaying wealth in the way Mbau does is similar to French monarch Marie Antoinette saying, “let them eat cake (2010).” To this Mbau responds, “True. True but you shouldn’t also now make the rich feel sorry for living large (2010).” She further states in relation to other journalists and writers who criticised similarly, “…columnists are only writing their opinions but it doesn’t make it gospel truth nor does it make it a way of living (2010).”

At another point in the interview Patta raises the issue of flaunting wealth publicly in the media (2010). Here she raises examples of a party. Mbau says that the reality is at a party there are going to be cameras present (2010). Patta suggests telling the camera not to come which Mbau states:

> Even if you tell them not to come you will have someone who is going to give the pictures away because unfortunately friends that I have are friends in media and friends in the industry. So it's not that we go out and say um alright I want a camera there and there so that they see me pouring my champagne (2010).

A few years after the interview with Patta, Mbau still notes the perceived conservativeness around wealth in South Africa (Ferreira: 2013). She says:

> And I still think South African society is conservative still, so if you have to party up a storm and pay a million rand for your bar bill you get in trouble – someone will call you from *3rd Degree* or *Carte Blanche* and they want to know why (2013).

This is perhaps why with regards to her 2013 reality television venture an outspoken Mbau recounts how the producers told her that through the show they planned to "humanise" her and show her "soft side" (2013).

Thus what this theme demonstrates is that the media darling Khanyi Mbau, splashed across the media, is very much a creation by the media and Mbau herself. In line with Kepes' (2009) theoretical discussion around media darlings, Mbau demonstrates an acute self-awareness, a boldness as well as media savvy that she uses to her advantage when consciously creating media attention for herself. She knows how to make the media work for her, even if the content they produce is negative. Linking to this negative content, Mbau has also demonstrated resilience. She herself has noted this when pointing out that through the negative coverage attempts have often been made to write her off. This explains the nature of the negative press she receives. In using her media savvy and resilience, she nonetheless continued to generate public interest in her persona thereby forcing the media to continue writing about her. This in turn links to the argument made in this study that the media then use this as an opportunity to continue the negative press thereby using Mbau as an exemplar of someone who problematically lives against the gender hegemony of society.

In so doing, they ignore her growth as a person. Despite not denying her past Mbau has suggested that she has moved on from her sugar daddy lifestyle, gained independence and so on. While this is mentioned in passing in some of the media texts considered, it is forgotten. What is not forgotten is her past that is continuously referred to in the media for the purposes of highlighting their problems with her then lifestyle. This then links back to an argument made earlier in this chapter that while the identity of a common person is fluid, once tainted, a media darling's identity tends not to recover.

Conclusion

It can thus be seen that Khanyi Mbau is presented in the media considered as the antithesis of the gender ideals of society's patriarchal hegemony. This is done both subtly and openly through the various themes that have emerged from the data analysis process. This begins with the way in which Mbau is introduced to the audience in the texts. This is then emphasized through various devices including the implications made in the texts as well as some of the questions posed to Mbau. As a result of this, efforts are made to emphasise the lack of relatability between Mbau and the audience. This then works towards the overall attempt by the media to portray Mbau as an example of someone who goes against the patriarchal hegemonic *norms* as perpetuated by them. Furthermore, the detailed coverage she receives (as a result of being a media darling) demonstrates the way in which someone who does not adopt the gender ideals that fit within the patriarchal hegemonic framework of society is problematised and shunned. Additionally, the minor celebration of Mbau's reform further highlights the issue with Mbau's original conduct.

Beyond this, special mention must be made to the manner in which Mbau's body is discussed and at times celebrated. Linking strongly to Gill's (2007) post-feminist sensibility, the need for women to have a certain type of body is emphasized in the texts about Mbau. However, as a whole, the coverage of Mbau highlights the terms and conditions that have manifested as a post-feminist media culture becomes increasingly normalised. When looking at the need for a woman to have a slim and sexy body, it is implied in the texts considered that turning to plastic surgery should not be the only resort. In problematizing Mbau's appreciation of plastic surgery, audiences are reminded that to achieve a noteworthy body within the parameters of post-feminism a woman is meant to work hard for it, with plastic surgery being seen as an easy option. While surgery as a whole is not disregarded, Mbau's open penchant for it is discredited. Furthermore, in relation to post-feminism and men one is able to note the specificities that are required when attracting a man. Mbau's openness with regards to her preference of wealthy men and so on is problematised thereby highlighting further terms and conditions of modern day post-feminsim.

It can thus be seen that there are indeed clear lessons about gender that are disseminated to the audience through the coverage of media darling Khanyi Mbau. The

impact of these lessons lies in the theoretical assertion within the celebrity culture field of study that notes that audience members look to celebrities for assistance in defining identity while also establishing how to live life in the modern context (Holmes and Redmond: 2006). Through the condemnation of Mbau by the media, audiences are thus given clear examples of the gender characteristics that are shamed in society while also getting a glimpse into the consequences that follow adopting such *problematic* ideals.

Chapter 6

Deepika Padukone: Lessons from positivity

Deepika Padukone is a recent Bollywood superstar. The Indian media are thus increasingly fascinated with this model turned actress. Born in Denmark, Padukone grew up in India. Starting off as a model, Padukone made her Bollywood debut in 2007. Through working on her film career continuously since then, Padukone saw major critical and commercial success in 2013. That year 4 of Padukone's films released and all 4 films earned over 6 billion Rupees at the box office, a feat that no other in Bollywood has achieved. Furthermore Padukone saw great critical acclaim for three of the four films, which resulted in her being nominated and winning various awards for her performances. Padukone is thus experiencing a career high. Filmmakers are desperate to work with her, audiences are desperate to see her on screen and know about her while the media are desperate to publish about her. Many in the Bollywood circles are thus fascinated with Padukone, who is being branded by some as the reigning queen of Bollywood.

It is this increased popularity and fascination with Padukone that makes her a media darling. Media coverage about her sees a lot written about her personal and professional life. Furthermore, her story to the success she is currently seeing is a narrative that can be presented as heart-warming to the audience. As a result it is argued in this study that the media considered use her and her story as a representation of the ideal they endorse. Consequently the media attention Padukone receives from the media allows her to be presented as an exemplar of the gender ideal they encourage. In so doing they are able to perpetuate the patriarchal hegemony they stand for and thereby disseminate the necessary lessons about gender. This chapter will thus explore this argument in greater detail.

In order to establish a greater understanding of a media darling like Padukone, a diverse corpus of data needed to be collected. As a result, 3 sources were selected. The online source is *The Indian Express* where 54 articles were collected. The print media source is *Vogue India* where Padukone has featured on the cover 7 times since 2007. Each of these were collected. In addition, the television interview source is *The Front row with Anupama Chopra* where host Anupama Chopra interviewed Padukone in 2013.

A quantitative analysis was performed on all the articles retrieved from *The Indian Express*. Each of these 54 articles was studied to establish the overall nature. From here one could see clearly that each article fit in one of three categories. The first category is thus data about Padukone that is positive. The second category is data about Padukone that is neutral while the third category links to data where Padukone is tagged but not mentioned.

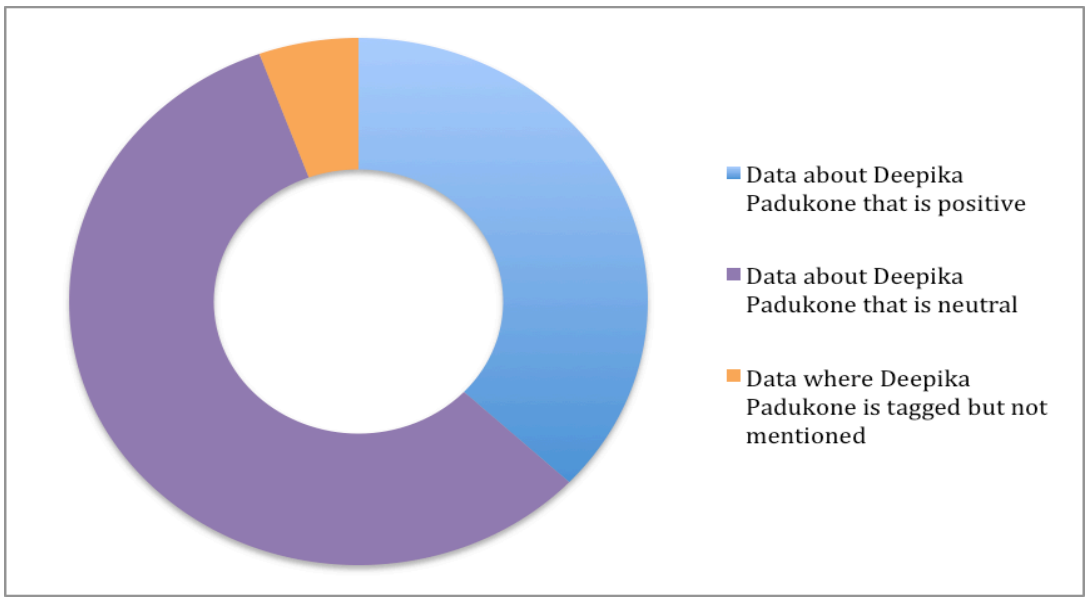


Figure 2

As per the chart above it is clear that most of the articles about Padukone are neither positive nor negative but rather are neutral. 31 of the 54 articles considered can be classified as neutral. Of the remaining articles, 20 were positive and 3 had a Deepika Padukone tag (web feature) but made no mention of her. Interestingly, none of the articles considered about Padukone were negative.

In noting that the coverage Padukone receives is a mixture of neutral and positive, one is able to make clear conclusions about the role she plays in the Indian media considered. Furthermore, in understanding that the media use media darlings like Padukone to sell very specific ideals linking to societal hegemony, it emerges that Padukone plays a very specific role when it comes to enforcing the gender ideals valued in the Indian media considered. Here she is used as a stellar example of somebody who embodies *admirable* gender ideals and therefore sees coverage that

presents her accordingly. Conclusions like these thus tie in with the theoretical framework of this chapter that looks at celebrity culture, gender and identity.

Linking to gender, in a society that favours patriarchal hegemonies, one often sees feminist efforts that aim to combat patriarchal beliefs and bring about gender equality and so on. One such response to this issue is postfeminism. Postfeminism disregards various elements of previous waves of feminism and supposedly places emphasis on women's agency. Barrett (2000:46) thus notes that postfeminism is a response to patriarchy that "puts femininity back into women's sense of identity and aspiration." Singh (2004:18) builds on this in noting that postfeminism further gives importance to "individual woman's inner freedom and awakening…" resulting in women pronouncing their womanhood boldly. Gill (2007) thereby highlights that postfeminism gives extreme importance to the female body. Furthermore, emphasis is placed on men and attracting men. Gamble (2002) explains this to be a result of the heterosexism that is found in the foundation of postfeminist thought. As a result she notes that often a postfeminist agenda includes finding "place for men as lovers, husbands and fathers as well as friends" (2002:36).

This then gives rise to what Gill (2007) terms a postfeminist sensibility. Within this sensibility, an obsession with a woman's body emerges where her success links to her glossy, toned and sexy body. Part of this success thus links to attracting and finding a man to settle down with. Gill thus argues that what eventually happens is that through postfeminism, women internalize the patriarchal male gaze and thus objectify themselves willingly. Naturally from a feminist standpoint this is problematized heavily. However, in line with the patriarchal ideals of modern society, a postfeminist media culture emerges. It is within this media then that the ideals of postfeminism are perpetuated.

One such way this occurs is through the coverage of celebrities and media darlings. The media give a lot of coverage to the lives of media darlings like Padukone. Furthermore, as mentioned above, it is argued in this chapter that this is because she is used by the media as a role model of the gender ideals they stand for. The reason this is significant is because as Holmes and Redmond (2006) point out, celebrities serve as a point of reference for many in the audience who are seeking a better understanding of

modern day life. This is all the more the case with media darlings who see more detailed coverage about their life in the media. Couldry and Markham (2007) thus note that audiences identify with celebrities and thereby establish an imagined relationship with them. It is through this relationship then that links to identity and socialization are made.

In relation to identity, Elliot and du Gay (2009) note that identity in a postmodern context like the current day is both performative and fluid. They thus point out that an individual's identity is ever changing and evolving as per the various influences (like the media) the said individual encounters through their life. This intertwines closely with socialization which links to the process by which an individual learns to fit in within society through learning and accepting the prevailing norms and values that govern the said society (Croteau and Hoynnes: 1997). It is thus argued that audiences see the celebrations of various gender ideals presented through Padukone and thereby aim to emulate the same as a way of trying to successfully navigate their own life while also fitting in within society successfully.

Thus in line with this agenda it is therefore further demonstrated through the analysis of the texts considered that Padukone is mostly framed and presented in a very neat and convenient (for the media) way. This links well to the way in which Reese (2003: 10) presents Entman's understanding of framing. He writes,

> to frame is to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation. (Reese 2003: 10)

It can thus be argued that the coverage Padukone receives in the Indian media texts considered approve and thus often celebrate Padukone and her behaviour. While she does not get solely positive coverage, it is understood in this study that neutral coverage links to acknowledging an existing norm. So while celebration emphasises hegemonic gender ideals in a celebratory manner, neutral coverage normalises it. It is this normalness about Padukone that acts as a lesson on the norms of gender in society. Exploring these norms and celebrations are then the core of this chapter. Furthermore, the chapter demonstrates how gender ideals are enforced through the coverage

Padukone receives. This is done through analysing the data in relation to the central themes that emerge. These themes are how Deepika Padukone is introduced and described in media texts, relatability, questions asked, how her voice is used, her body, what is celebrated, what is shamed, implications in the articles, men as well as women. Through this analysis, this chapter demonstrates the lessons about gender that are found within the texts about Padukone

How Deepika Padukone is introduced and described in media texts

Establishing how a media darling like Deepika Padukone is introduced and described in media texts, gives one an understanding of how she is presented and framed to the audience in the media texts considered. This guides audience perception on the subject. It is thus argued in this study that the identities of media darlings are a lot more complex than the identity of individuals who aren't in the media. This is so because while identity is performative and fluid for a person who is not famous (Elliot and du Gay: 2009), in relation to media darlings, the media often prescribe traits of their identity based on perception and agenda. While these may or may not be true to who the media darling is in her/his personal life, this is nonetheless disseminated to the audience who then solidify perceptions of the media darling they may eventually feel they know. This links to the imagined relationship audiences tend to have with a said media darling they identify with (Couldry and Markham: 2007). It is thus important to understand how a media darling like Padukone is presented to the audience.

Specific to this study, after surveying the media texts being considered it became clear that generally, Padukone is described in a neutral to positive manner. However, for the purpose of establishing a detailed understanding of how Padukone is described in the media texts considered, the descriptions were categorized into three sections. These sections can be understood as work, appearance and general. Through these sections a better understanding of how Padukone is described will emerge.

Starting with general descriptions about Padukone, one sees her being described as an Indian woman (Pacheco: 2014a), the "daughter of Badminton champion Prakash Padukone" (Indian Express: 2014b), girl (Sen: 2013), ingénue (Chopra 2009: 80), feisty (Khanna 2010:110) as well as calm-as-Zen (Masand 2013:260). Aishwariya Subramanyam (2011: 177 and 178) also describes Padukone as "Friendly but guarded, bitten and shy, dignified but impish" as well as "Classic, cool. Politically correct, wickedly catty. Practical, spontaneous."

In relation to her her work, Padukone is often described as an "actress" (Indian Express: 2014a), a "Bollywood actress"(Pacheco: 2014a), "the film's leading lady" (Goyal: 2013a) and also a "star" (Masand 2013:260). It is also worth noting that at

times Padukone is also described in relation to the lead actor of a film. Here she is described simply as a co-star (Press Trust of India: 2014e).

Less frequently, Padukone is described as a "certifiable workaholic" (Bollywoodhungamanewsnetwork: 2013a), a "Bollywood diva" (Pacheco: 2014b), Bollywood girlie (Pacheco: 2013c), a "bona fide screen goddess" (Gupta 2012: 120) as well as "arguably Bollywood's most sporty heroine" (Chopra 2009: 85). Director Homi Adajania (2013) describes Padukone as a "…steely eyed professional, someone perfectly aware of her qualities, attributes and failings."

However, more recently one often sees Padukone described in a way that reminds the audience about the box-office success and critical acclaim she has seen all through 2013. Here one sees descriptions like "number one heroine" (Press Trust of India: 2014b), "Bollywood's latest golden girl" (Nagpaul: 2014a), the "most sought-after actress" (Indian Express: 2014b) as well as "Bollywood's reigning queen" (Goyal: 2014b). Furthermore she is described as the "current box-office queen" (Press Trust of India: 2013g), as well as the "Number One superstar of 2013" (Bollywoodgungamanewsnetwork: 2014b).

Padukone is also described in relation to her appearance. At times this is linked to her work and at other times it is just about her appearance in general. Looking first at descriptions that combine her appearance and work one sees Padukone described as a "Bollywood stunner" (Khanna 2010:110), "Bollywood beauty" (Daswani 2007: 202), "glamorous actress" (Goyal: 2014b), "Bollywood's fittest star" (Gupta 2012: 114) as well as a "scorching Bollywood siren" (Subramanyam 2011: 178). Padukone was also described by Sunitra Pacheco (2014e) as "his beautiful co-star" as an introduction to the section of her article about the actress.

Beyond her work linking solely to appearance Padukone is described as a "beauty" (Pacheco: 2014b), a "pretty girl from Bangalore" (Daswani 2007: 202) "doe-eyed" (Khanna 2010:), a "statuesque beauty" (Chopra 2009: 79), "leggy" (Jha: 2013 See Article 52 in Appendix D) as well as "lanky" (Subramanyam 2011: 178). Sheree Gomes Gupta (2012: 114 and 120) of *Vogue India* also describes Padukone as "lean,

long legged yet somehow voluptuous" while also describing her as "Vogue's poster girl for healthy living."

It thus becomes clear that emphasis is placed on presenting and thereby framing Padukone in a good light while also emphasizing her body and appearance. It is thereby evident that the aim in the texts considered is to portray Padukone as likable. This highlights the fact that Padukone is seen and so presented as a positive example of someone who represents the gender ideals in relation to societal hegemony. While this argument is built throughout this chapter, the point to be noted here is that the foundations of framing Padukone positively have been laid. In introducing her in a good light and emphasizing her relatability, the audience are likely to respond accordingly.

Furthermore, in line with the generally positive introductions and descriptions Padukone receives, special mention must be given to the fact that attention is given to her body and appearances in these instances. Not only does this highlight the patriarchy of the context, this also exposes a post-feminist agenda. Here special emphasis is placed on a woman's appearance and a good, sexy body (Gill: 2007). The importance thereof is evident in the positive discussion of Padukone's appearance and body even in the introductions and descriptions she receives in the texts considered. These examples thus also demonstrate how the media further perpetuate this agenda.

Relatability

Through analysis of texts considered it is clear that the media emphasise Padukone's relatability with the audience. Here it must be noted that the issue of relatability in relation to media darlings links strongly to the theoretical discussions around celebrity culture. Holmes and Redmond (2006) argue that celebrities (and media darlings) serve as a point of reference for many in the audience who are trying to get a better understanding of how to negotiate modern day life. There is thus a link between the audience and the media darling. However, this link does not just emerge. The audience has to be able to relate to something(s) about the celebrity for the imagined relationship with the celebrity to take off. This is where the media plays an incredibly important role as the audience encounters with the celebrity are mostly through the media (Bonner: 2005). As a result there are often attempts made by the audience to understand the person behind the glitz and glamour for the purpose of better relating to them. The media thus also make efforts to display this relatability if they feel that the subject is worth promoting to the audience. This theme thus aims to look at how the media considered portray how relatable Padukone is. To further understand Padukone's relatability this section is thus broken down into three parts. These parts are, everyday Deepika Padukone, hardworking Deepika Padukone as well as Deepika Padukone in love.

Looking first at everyday Deepika Padukone, Padukone tells Anupama Chopra (2009: 85) that she wants to lead as normal a life as possible. She says,

> I don't want to live insulated, inside my little house and not know what is happening in the outside world. As you start getting more and more successful, it's very easy to lose touch with everyday things (2009:85).

Thus while some of the writers have expressed shock that Padukone is quite hands on in running her household, Padukone reiterates the personal importance thereof as part of maintaining her responsibilities. Padukone therefore explains to both Chopra (2009) and Masand (2013) that she is responsible for keeping track of and paying amenities bills as well as her staff's salaries. She also ensures that her household groceries are sorted out. Masand in disbelief further questions Padukone to authenticate her account (2013). He asks her the price of light bulbs as she also indicated that she sorts those out if they are out. She responds with the price indicating her knowledge thereof.

Socially, Padukone also indicates that she shares a cordial relationship with her neighbours. She suggests that she even knew all her neighbours at her previous apartment building (Masand: 2013). However, Padukone does express feeling lonely at times. She lives alone and like many people who live away from their family, is vocal about missing her family who live in a different city. She notes that even though they chat on the phone, she misses their physical presence and emotional support (Chopra: 2013). She thus sometimes turns to friends. She explains to Chopra (2009 E2) that if her evenings are free and she does not have an early morning call time the next day, she may meet up with friends and go to the movies.

Linking to film, Padukone is often asked about her favourites in Bollywood. This further emphasizes a sameness with the audience especially if she likes the same actors and/or films as they do. She tells Divya Thani Daswani (2007:201) about her favourite actresses Madhuri Dixit and Sridevi as well as her favourite movie, a Bollywood classic. She also tells Aishwariya Subramanyam (2011:178) about her love for Bollywood romances and the typical "chiffon saris and dancing in Switzerland."

Further elements of relatability to an everyday Padukone link to a number of issues. These include descriptions of her casual style when not on the red carpet or in front of cameras (Pacheco: 2014b&c), her sympathetic nature (Daswani 2007:201), her sense of humour (Indian Express: 2013) as well as her love for food. Daswani (2007) talks about Padukone eating prawn curry and rice in her interview while Chopra (2009: 80) recounts the emphasis Padukone places on having breakfast everyday.

Looking now at a hard working Padukone, a lot of emphasis is placed on Padukone's work ethic and determination, something most working people can relate to in some way. Subramanyam (2011:178) describes Padukone's journey at the start of her career. She notes that Padukone left home at 19, moved to Mumbai and lived with relatives until her earnings as a model were enough to support herself (2011). She notes that Padukone refused to accept financial help from her parents. Daswani (2007:201) further adds to this when she writes about Padukone's journey. Padukone tells her that her past as a badminton player (she played nationally) helped build her stamina and tolerance. She says, "I've travelled to tournaments by train, lived in dorms, eaten bad food. I've worked out, slept late, woken up early (Daswani 2007:201)."

Linking to this, in her feature on Padukone, Chopra (2009:85) notes that Padukone is a lot less fussy than many of her Bollywood colleagues. Using the example of food, Chopra notes that Padukone loves to eat and is of the view that one should eat whatever is on the table with gratitude (2009). Padukone attributes this outlook to her badminton years.

Daswani (2007:201) also reminds her readers that Padukone has worked all the more hard to achieve what she has as she has no connections to the modelling and Bollywood industry (famous for nepotism and so on). Sonam Nair (2013) places emphasis on the same point when she writes about Padukone's success. She says that she finds Padukone inspiring because of all the hard work she has put in to achieve the success she is currently experiencing (2013). She notes that this was not an overnight process and thus admires Padukone's diligence and dedication. She writes,

> It makes me hopeful. It makes me feel like my career is in my hands, and if I just give it my all, miracles can happen. No one would call her that now, but she was an underdog and now she's on top. That's a story I can never get enough of (Nair: 2013).

Finally, looking at Padukone in love, Padukone's openness about a relationship she was in at the start of her career has given room for her to discuss heartbreak somewhat openly. While she has since become a lot more private about her love life, Padukone does get asked about her initial relationship (that ended because of rumoured infidelity by the partner). This then shows a vulnerable side to Padukone that many are likely to relate to, often because of experiencing similar happenings in their love life.

Padukone has said that at the time she genuinely felt love for her partner and felt as though the relationship would be long term (Pacheco: 2014d). Pacheco, writing about an interview Padukone gave on a television show quotes Padukone, who says,

> It was very, very difficult for me because, I think, somewhere that relationship became my world. I was new to the city, so his friends became my friends and that life became my life. And I don't think I made the effort to have my own life. I think that relationship really taught me a lot, when it ended. It's made me a better person today and he says it himself (2014d).

She has further stated that despite the growth that occurred post the relationship, her approach to new relationships has been altered. She makes sure that more checks are in place before moving towards commitment, no matter how difficult that makes it (Pacheco: 2014d).

Thus when reflecting on Deepika Padukone's relatability as a whole, Rajeev Masand's (2013:265) description of Padukone fits well. He writes,

> That's the reason we're drawn to her. Her crown and sceptre are in place, she's the queen of all she surveys, yet, refreshingly, Deepika Padukone lives in the real world.

It can thus be seen that major effort is made to demonstrate and emphasize how relatable Padukone is. Furthermore, a narrative emerges that highlights Padukone's humble background while also celebrating her hardworking nature, determination and success. Padukone is thus portrayed as a success story that can happen to anyone. Emphasis is placed on determination and hard work paying off. Furthermore, despite her success Padukone is still shown as humble and everyday. This is portrayed as likable as it is shown that even though she is incredibly successful she is not conceited and snobbish.

Beyond this, it must be noted that the link to men is also an element of relatability that emerges. In line with Gill's (2007) post-feminist sensibility where importance is given to romantic relationships with men; Padukone's experience of heartbreak was presented as something that many could connect to. It highlights that while a woman is meant to date, she is not necessarily going to find the right guy immediately. Padukone's lesson thereof is packaged as a learning experience for any member of the audience going through the same angst. Furthermore, her reflections on this lesson are presented as good advice to any who are looking for it.

Content about Padukone is thus packaged in a way that emphasises her similarity to the audience thereby accentuating her relatability. This lays the foundation for a solid relationship between Padukone and the audience. With this foundation the media establish a clear and trusted channel between Padukone and the audience for the easy flow of lessons about gender.

What is celebrated

Once the audiences relate to a media darling they are then more likely to turn to that media darling for guidance on negotiating modern day life (Couldry and Markham: 2007). It is in this process that the audience is likely to note which of Deepika Padukone's actions are met positively and which of her actions are met negatively. In noting the positive and negative dichotomy, they are able to adopt the celebrated ideals in their own lives. One should thus look at what is celebrated about Padukone in the media considered to understand the ideals that are encouraged.

Padukone is on a professional high. Through 2013 she has seen great commercial and critical acclaim. It is because of this that a lot is celebrated about Padukone. Thus when looking closely at what is being celebrated about Padukone, it becomes clear that three categories emerge. The first is a general category that is home to a variety of less frequent but nonetheless poignant points that demonstrate what is celebrated about Padukone. The second links to Padukone's appearance and or beauty while the third links to Padukone's success.

In relation to the general category, issues that are celebrated link to Padukone's persona, her independence as well as her style. Looking first at elements of Padukone's persona that are appreciated, Sheree Gomes Gupta (2012:117) suggests that Padukone "exudes a lovely radiance." Rajeev Masand (2013) builds on this in noting that Padukone has a relaxed facet to her personality that often assists her in the fast paced industry like Bollywood. He suggests that she is "calm-as-Zen. (2013: 260 E7)." Aishwariya Subramanyam (2011:177) thus writes about Padukone,

> She's the good girl, the one who says all the right things, the one from an unpretentious background who came to Bollywood without the might of a film family behind her, who lives by herself, and stays very, very, private.

Anupama Chopra (2009) notes this personal journey to success that Padukone undertook, applauding the speed at which she achieved in Bollywood. Chopra nostalgically writes about how Padukone's realities have changed and how in just three years, Padukone went from travelling in auto-rickshaws to travelling in her own luxury vehicles (2009:80). Chopra places emphasis on the fact that Padukone bought her vehicles and her apartment herself. Masand builds on this in noting that independence

is very important to Padukone (2013). He writes, “It’s evident that Padukone savours her independence and enjoys fixing her conundrums herself. The star reveals that she’s always had the self-sufficient streak…(2013:265)” The celebration of this independence often features in texts considered from *Vogue India* and it is thus worth noting.

Beyond her independence, Gupta (2012) celebrates Padukone’s adventurous nature and natural athleticism. She notes how Padukone enjoys activities like shark cage diving as well as skydiving (2012 E5). But despite these attributes, Padukone’s femininity is not lost. Namrata Zakaria (2014) talks about Padukone’s style, focusing specifically on one incident where Padukone wore a pantsuit. Pacheco (2014d) describes the outfit as “stunning.” Zakaria however goes into greater detail. She suggests that a pantsuit is “so feminine and powerful at once,” thereby describing Padukone’s ensemble as very sexy (2014). She says of pantsuits, “I hate the word mannish, I prefer tough luxe (2014).” She also carefully uses adjectives like soft and sleek when describing the details of Padukone’s style thereby establishing a balance between perceived masculinity and femininity.

Still with femininity, linking to Padukone’s appearance one witnesses a lot of celebration and positivity. In quoting Atul Kasbekar, the photographer crediting with discovering a young Padukone, Divya Thani Daswani (2007) speaks about Padukone’s beauty. She describes Padukone’s beauty as classic, placing emphasis on Padukone’s engaging eyes. She explains, “It’s mainly her eyes: large, almond shaped, thickly-lashed, the lid always prominently lined- perfectly designed to express the melodrama that is an indispensable element of Bollywood plots (2007: 201).” Masand (2013) builds on this when he described Padukone’s eyes as he meets her for their interview. He describes her eyes as seductive and deep noting that they are her most striking feature.

Daswani then speaks to the director of Padukone’s debut film, Farah Khan, exploring what drew Khan to cast Padukone in her film (2007). Khan notes Padukone’s quintessential beauty, but also discusses Padukone’s poise and composure that Khan feels not many of Padukone’s contemporaries have (2007). Thus began Padukone’s journey in films. Subramanyam (2011: 178) notes that through this journey in

Bollywood, Padukone has transformed from a "sleepy Bangalorean tomboy to peppy girl-next-door to scorching Bollywood siren in a whirlwind of time."

With this transformation, further attention was given to Padukone's style, body and fitness. Priyanka Khanna (2010:110) describes Padukone's body as fantastic, noting that her body is "leaner than ever (a fact she attributed to religious workouts)." She also emphasizes that Padukone is having fun staying healthy and in shape. It is thus important to note the reminder that while Padukone's fitness is celebrated; the writers go into detail about how she achieves such.

Furthermore, in relation to appearance, Padukone has emerged as someone who is always presentable. When describing Padukone when they met for their interview, Subramanyam (2011: 177) explains Padukone's appearance as, "immaculately coiffed, not a hair out of place, lip-glossed to perfection…"

As a result of the importance given to Padukone's beauty and the fact that she takes pride in her appearance, she often features on lists of beautiful and/or sexy women in the world which is presented in the media texts positively. Pacheco (2014a) notes that Padukone was one of two Indian women to feature on a list of the most beautiful women in the world, compiled by an American publication. Similarly, The Press Trust of India (2013g) notes that Padukone featured fourth on the list of the 50 Sexiest Asian Women 2013 as compiled by a publication in the United Kingdom.

Thus as a whole, the positive attention given to Padukone's body and appearance must be noted. While greater attention to this topic will be given in a subsequent theme, the celebration and encouragement of such shows how the media clearly perpetuate a post-feminist agenda. Within such an agenda Gill (2007) notes that a sexy body and polished appearance are directly linked to modern day femininity. Gill further argues that the possession of such in turn links to attaining success and attracting men, something that is a central priority of a modern day woman. It can thus be seen that elements of such post-feminism is clearly encouraged by the media texts considered where audience members see the celebration of a taking pride in ones appearance, wearing the right amount of make up and exercising regularly. In so doing, the media use Padukone to reinforce the ideals of their post-feminist patriarchal agenda.

Beyond this, looking at the celebration of Padukone's career, it can be noted that here one is able to categorize the media coverage of the same into four parts. The first looks at Padukone's journey in Bollywood up until 2013. The next two parts look at the commercial and critical acclaim Padukone received through and after 2013 and then finally the fourth part looks at Padukone's career going forward.

In her interview with Padukone in 2007, just before Padukone's Bollywood debut released, Daswani (2007) notes that Padukone had dabbled in Kannada cinema where her film was met with flattering reviews. She notes, "few models have successfully transitioned into films. So the faith that directors are placing in Padukone is exceptional (2007:201)." The Indian Express (2014b) writes that despite the challenge to make it in Bollywood, Padukone has known success from a young age when she played national level badminton. However, as Atul Kasbekar notes, some people are just born for Bollywood and he argues that Padukone is one of them (Daswani: 2007).

Thus began what Anupama Chopra (2009: 85) calls Padukone's "fairy-tale journey into stardom." Chopra appreciates Padukone's meticulous organization and "single-minded focus" and attributes these factors towards Padukone achieving Bollywood stardom (2009: 80). Subramanyam (2011) further recognizes the fact that Padukone made it in Bollywood on her own, without the help of any family connection and so on thereby noting that Padukone can take pride in the same.

As her career progressed, so did Padukone as an actor. Director Homi Adajania (2013) who directed Padukone in *Cocktail*, the film that marked the start of the success Padukone is currently seeing, writes about this growth. He speaks about the potential he saw in her, while placing emphasis on her dedication. He notes Padukone's media savvy and thereby describes her as a professional who is deeply in touch with herself and her capabilities and limitations (2013). He writes,

> This is someone who lives her life smartly and glides effortlessly through the myriad of roles she has played as a top model, and now as a commercially successful actor. Behind and under everything, is that good, solid common sense rare in someone so young, or one who has tasted success early in life. In this dodgy showbiz world,

> fraught with stress, insecurities, and fragile egos, it is this earthy quality that lingers and cuts through all the crap (Adajania: 2013).

He further notes that an industry like the Bollywood film industry can easily take its toll on an individual. He nonetheless has full faith in Padukone's ability to manage the industry and emerge victorious all while remaining strong, composed and graceful (2013).

Director Sonam Nair (2013) feels the same way. She finds Padukone inspiring. For her, a major point of celebration links to the roles Padukone chooses for herself. She notes that Padukone always chooses "really strong, intelligent and independent characters to play. Even when her contemporaries were playing ditzy girls or the hero's arm candy… (2013)." Raja Sen (2013) feels the same way and suggests that Padukone went against the trends set by many of her contemporaries in carefully selecting each role that she chose. Ranjib Mazumder (2013) builds on this in noting that Padukone's roles are always meaty, calling her a star that the cameras are attracted to. Sen thus notes notes that Padukone has now emerged with a screen presence that is in no ways secondary to the male leads of a film she is in (2013). He argues that onscreen, she makes the "industry's most charismatic [male] stars (including her rumoured boyfriend) appear like they were around to hold her handbag while she dazzled (2013)."

Aishwariya Subramanyam (2011) links this to Padukone's approach. She feels that Padukone learnt discipline during her sporting days and this influences how she conducts herself in all the situations she finds herself in. She further notes that Padukone emphasizes the value in relationships and bonds, learns from her mistakes and constantly focuses on improving her own skills (2011: 178). Based on this Nair argues that no actress has seen such a sudden onscreen transformation as seen in Padukone. She writes,

> You can see that she's pushing herself in every frame and that every expression and every dance move is from her heart. She's doing films with amazing male actors and completely overshadows them in so many scenes.

As a result, Padukone saw a record year in 2013. 4 of her films released that year and all 4 were hits and each earned at least one Billion Rupees at the box office (Indian

Express: 2014b). In total, all 4 films earned more than 6 Billion Rupees in revenue (Bollywoodhungamanewsnetwork: 2014b). Priyanka Sinha Jha (2013) describes these earnings as magical. It is thus clear that Padukone achieved commercial success as a result of these films. Looking more closely at this commercial success, in many of the media texts considered for this study during the second half of, as well as post 2013, the audience is reminded of Padukone's 4 hit films. Often this success has nothing to do with the overall point of the article and is just included as a reminder to the audience.

Pacheco (2014b) thus described 2013 as a fabulous year for Padukone. Divya Goyal (2014b) describes Padukone as the reigning queen of Bollywood who has "achieved a new high in 2013 by featuring in four top grosser films." In another article, Goyal (2014a) notes that as a result of her films in 2013, Padukone has confirmed that she is indeed a leading actress in contemporary Indian cinema.

However, what further enhances Padukone's success is the fact that with commercial success she also saw critical acclaim. Critics loved her performances in her 3 most recent releases. The Press Trust of India (2014b) note that Padukone has been nominated for her performances as a lead actress at almost all award shows looking at the 2013 year in Bollywood cinema. Padukone also won awards for her performance in these films. These include the Life OK Screen Award for Best Actor (female) in both the jury and popular category (Nagpaul: 2014a) She also won Best actress in a comedy role, most entertaining actor (female) as well as the best romantic couple awards at the BIG Star Entertainment awards (Press Trust of India: 2013d). Furthermore at the Life OK Screen Awards Padukone was awarded the Life OK Screen Hero Award for all round success in 2013 (Indian Express: 2014s)).

Bearing a successful 2013 in mind, it is clear that Padukone is celebrated as a talented actor who is also a box office hero. When speaking about one of Padukone's upcoming projects, the producer of the film discussed how they plan to cash in on her stardom (BollywoodHungama.com: 2014). He says that the film will also be marketed as Padukone's film and not just that of the male lead who is a mega-star particularly in India. Expectations of Padukone have thus also increased. In discussing another of

Padukone's upcoming films, Bollywood Hungama News Network (2014b) writes, "Deepika is set to sparkle this year as well and that too, from the top."

It can thus be seen that Padukone's hard work and subsequent success is celebrated greatly. While most people are not likely to identify with the specific factors of the industry Padukone operates within, the core of this celebration is likely to resonate with most people who are working towards success in their respective fields. Through the coverage Padukone receives they encounter a story of hard work paying off which is likely to be inspirational for many. As a result, working hard to achieve success is promoted. Furthermore, while links to capitalism are not made within this study, such lessons clearly demonstrate the role media darlings play in representing societal hegemony as links here to a capitalistic agenda can also be drawn.

Deepika Padukone's body

Still linking to what is celebrated about Deepika Padukone, as a study focusing closely on gender it is important that specific focus must be given to how her body is discussed and represented in the media texts considered. Within the post-feminist agenda of the media Gill (2007) notes that femininity tends to be defined by having a sexy and/or girly body. She further argues, "a sleek, toned, controlled figure is today normatively essential for portraying success" (2007: 07). This in turn (directly and indirectly) links to being found attractive enough by men. Bearing this in mind, this section can consequently be broken into two categories, Padukone's features as well as Padukone's fit body.

As a whole, Padukone is often celebrated as a very beautiful woman. Divya Thani Daswani (2007) described Padukone's beauty as classic. Sunitra Pacheco (2014a) thereby notes that Padukone recently featured on an American publication's list that featured 30 of the world's most beautiful women. The Press Trust of India (2013g) also discusses Padukone recently ranking in fourth position on a British publications list of the 50 sexiest Asian women of 2013. Furthermore, Sheree Gomes Gupta (2012) notes that Padukone has a room in her home that houses the many awards she has earned through her career, some of which celebrate her body.

Beyond her body in general, specific features of Padukone that are celebrated in the texts considered are her hair, her eyes and her smile. Meenaskshi Iyer and Tabassum Barnagarwala (2014) describe Padukone's hair as sleek. Daswani (2007) writes that Padukone's hair is long and shiny while Masand (2013) describes her hair as Grecian.

Looking at her eyes and smile, Daswani notes that Padukone has large, distinct eyes with thick eyelashes and the right amount of eyeliner (2007). She argues that these attributes make Padukone's eyes perfect for the emoting required in Bollywood cinema. Furthermore, Khanna describes Padukone as "doe-eyed" (2010). Masand agrees, and explains that Padukone's eyes are her most pronounced feature (2013). He further describes them as deep, seductive and talented (linking to how they fare onscreen). Beyond Padukone's eyes, Daswani also writes about Padukone's smile. She refers to Padukone's experience as a model, noting that while her smile is practiced, it does not show too much teeth but is nonetheless "just wide enough to highlight her

perfect cheek-bones (2007:201).” Aishwariya Subramanyam (2011: 178) further describes Padukone’s smile as beaming while also noting that the “Colgate commercial did not lie.”

Looking now at Padukone’s fit body, Padukone comes from an athletic background and has played sport competitively for many years in her childhood. Pacheco (2014e) notes that upon deciding to join the glamour industry Padukone had to transform her naturally athletic body into a leaner figure. Gupta (2012) describes the industry as unforgiving, thereby reiterating the need for Padukone to slim down. Coming from an athletic home, this was not a challenge for Padukone who had athletic discipline instilled in her from a young age (Gupta: 2012).

Padukone eventually got fit and exercise eventually became an important part of her life. She tells Masand (2013) that she only feels well enough to face the world once she has had her morning workout. Masand writes, “since she’s always had the discipline of an athlete, Padukone actually enjoys her gym sessions – a mash-up of pilates, yoga, stretches and a smattering of cardio (2013: 260).” Padukone thus ensures that she makes time to exercise daily as far as possible. She says even when she travels for work, she always packs what she needs for when she visits the gym (Gupta: 2012). But Padukone is vocal about the fact that she also has achieved such fitness because she eats well. She explains that she practises discipline and moderation (2012).

Furthermore, Padukone emphasizes that she does not exercise regularly and eat well to get thin. She tells Gupta that she works with a trainer because she feels that it gives her definition but it also allows her to push her body’s fitness boundaries healthily (2012). She also says,

> While I believe that when you are in the glamour industry, you have to look your best, I also believe being skinny is not ‘hot and happening’, A really skinny person may not necessarily be fit. I endorse fitness, which combines a healthy lifestyle, diet and exercise (Gupta 2012:120).

Padukone thus explains to Gupta that she feels that her body is at its best place that it has ever been and she feels good about it (2012). This is thus recognized in the media. Actress Bipasha Basu feels that Deepika Padukone seems to be one of the fittest

actresses in Bollywood today (Press Trust of India: 2014f). Anupama Chopra (2009: 85) agrees, calling Padukone "Bollywood's most sporty heroine."

It can thus be seen that Padukone's body, beauty and fitness is strongly appreciated and celebrated in the media texts considered. While in relation to her beauty there are ideals that are celebrated and thereby encouraged (like the application of eyeliner and mascara as well as ensuring one's hair is well kept) the most fascinating observation within this theme links to fitness. It can be noted that at certain points in the coverage there are hints that place importance on being thin and so forth. However, Padukone uses her media savvy and steers clear of supporting such. She emphasizes the importance of a balanced lifestyle for the purpose of staying healthy. This in turn adds to Padukone's likability as she practises what she believes and does not allow trends to dictate how she leads her life.

While this may go against some of what the media perpetuate (popularizing thinness and so on), such a narrative suits the media, as Padukone's story is likely to inspire many members of the audience to attempt to lead a balanced life. While leading a balanced lifestyle is good for ones health, in relation to the patriarchal context within which this media operates the quest for replicating Padukone's fitness will likely yield some results that are in line with the beauty and body standard they stand for. It is thus argued that the promotion of a fit body and beautiful appearance links directly to the post-feminist agenda Gill (2007) talks about. The media considered thus further perpetuate the ideals of post-feminism by celebrating Padukone's body in the way that they do.

Men

The post-feminist agenda suggests that once a woman has a sexy, fit body she is likely to be seen as more attractive by men (Gill: 2007). Thus as a result of the importance given to men in a patriarchal society that exists today, it is important to look at how men feature in the discussion around Deepika Padukone in the texts considered. While the men in her life do not define Padukone, they certainly are mentioned and made reference to a lot more than necessary. To get a better and thorough understanding of the issues that emerge from looking at mentions of and references to men, 4 categories emerge. These categories are a descriptive category, a category about Padukone's father, a category about Padukone's male co-stars and colleagues and a category about Padukone's love life.

Looking at the link to men in descriptions of Padukone, one can recall that Padukone was celebrated for the hugely successful year she had in 2013. Interestingly, on two occasions speaking about this success, Padukone is referred to as an honorary man. The Indian Express (2014a) made reference to Vidya Balan and Padukone as two actresses who saw great critical and commercial success concurrently. They made reference to a label Balan saw when she had this success, suggesting that Padukone deserves the same. The label linked to being seen as "the real hero of Bollywood (2014)." (A lead actor in Bollywood is often referred to as a hero while a lead actress is referred to as a heroine.) Similarly, when discussing Padukone's success, Ranjib Mazumder (2013) described Padukone as "more than a Khan." In Bollywood currently, some of the biggest male actors today have the surname Khan. Producers tend to trust that with a Khan signed to a project, that film will perform well at the box office. Many of the Khans are also seen as good actors. So while Mazumder meant well and was complimenting Padukone, the reality is that his compliment was laden with problems because he chose to link her success to men.

Beyond this, in relation to Padukone's father, what must be noted here is that through discussions about this father daughter relationship it can be noted that again, efforts are made to show how relatable Padukone is. Through emphasizing her closeness to her father the media considered are further developing the idea that Padukone is just like the audience. It is thus often reiterated by the media as well as Padukone directly that she is extremely close to her father. She tells Anupama Chopra (2013) that her father is

the living person she most admires. Padukone's father is a respected Olympic Badminton player. Together with his wife, they raised Padukone to be athletic, disciplined and independent. As part of this independence Padukone entered her industry of choice as a newcomer with no high-powered connections (Daswani: 2007). Padukone therefore achieved what she has on her own, because of her own hard work. Sheree Gomes Gupta (2012: 117) thus writes, "it becomes apparent just how much her current success is a result of years of training and self-control instilled by her parents Ujjala and Prakash Padukone (the former World Badminton Champion)."

Beyond this, Padukone also talks about how her busy life keeps her away from her family and she therefore misses them. Of her father, she tells Chopra, she misses being able to sit down with him and have discussions at their table (2013). While she still chats to him on the phone she notes that this is not the same. Furthermore she states that she hopes to one-day settle down with a man who is just like her father (Bollywoodhungamanewsnetwork: 2013a). She says, "Isn't that the way it is for every girl? Doesn't every girl want her life partner to match up with her father (2013a)?"

Speaking of her love life, naturally, when looking at men in relation to a woman in a patriarchal post-feminist context the link to romance is bound to emerge. With Gill (2007) noting that attracting men and being attracted to men is very much central to the ideals of post-feminism, it is no surprise that a patriarchal media perpetuate these ideals. Padukone's love life is thus regularly discussed in the media texts considered. Linking to this, Padukone tells Chopra (2013) that while she used to have an idea of a dream man, she no longer does. She links this to expectations. Masand (2013) thus notes that through her years in the Bollywood industry Padukone has changed how she views relationships. He argues that there is no guard up when Padukone discusses men. Here he does not mean that Padukone openly talks about her personal life, he rather refers to the fact that Padukone appears to not let speculation stop her from living her life. He writes, "there is a confidence propelling the actor's approach to both love and career- she has found her groove (2013: 260)."

Focusing on her approach to love, Chopra notes that Padukone is adamant about staying single (2013). She tells both Chopra and Masand that she has no interest in having her heart broken again (2013 & 2013). Despite this, Padukone is still linked to

one of her co-stars romantically. Before looking at this rumoured relationship however, it is important to note Padukone's past relationships since stepping into Bollywood, one of which played out in the pages of the media.

In the early years of her career Padukone was open about her relationship with fellow newcomer actor Ranbir Kapoor. They eventually broke up with rumours suggesting that Kapoor had been unfaithful. The details of this relationship have been discussed in the Relatability theme as Padukone's discussion around her heartbreak was told to the audience through the channels of relatability. However, one must note in this theme that despite breaking up a few years ago their relationship is still discussed today. She is also shamed for showing anger at his alleged infidelity (See What is shamed theme). Nonetheless, since their breakup Padukone and Kapoor have remained friends. She tells Masand that Kapoor is one of the people in the film industry that she can call at any time should she need help (2013). Pacheco (2014d) notes that Padukone further emphasized this claim when making an appearance on a television talk show. Padukone says that they both understand the nature of their relationship thereby suggesting that it is purely platonic. She further tells Masand that there is no need for either her or Kapoor's present (or future) partners to feel threatened by their friendship as it is just that, a friendship (2013). Masand thus asks her the secret to an amicable break up to which she says, "well, Ranbir says it's closure. I hadn't thought of that. For me, it's more like a feeling. It's about accepting what life gives you. And not questioning it (2013: 260)."

Looking at her rumoured current boyfriend, actor Ranveer Singh it is important to note that neither Padukone nor Singh have gone on record to confirm their relationship. Much of the coverage of their rumoured relationship has received links to each of them denying their relationship. However, it cannot be denied that they are spotted together but Padukone is not bothered. When asked about publications publishing pictures of them together Padukone says, "It doesn't matter as it is part of what I do. When the issue releases I will buy the copy to read it" (Press Trust of India: 2014d). Furthermore Padukone maintains that she is single (2014d). She says, "there is absolutely no one in my life right now. Love and marriage would happen when it happens" (Bollywoodhungamanewsnetwork: 2013a). Singh too denies dating Padukone only noting that Padukone is special and someone he considers a good friend and with

whom he shares a healthy relationship (Pacheco: 2013). Padukone says the same of Singh, noting that she is close to him and that he is a person who has the ability to make someone feel special instantly (Masand: 2013).

It can thus be seen through the manner within which Padukone articulates her approach to her love life as well as through the speculation about this topic on the part of the media, Padukone is presented more broadly as an example of a modern women negotiating modern day life. The importance the media places on a woman being with a man should be noted. Even when Padukone suggests she is single, the media continue to speculate. Furthermore, the media considered package Padukone's discussions about previous heartbreaks as well as what she looks for in men in a manner that links strongly to her relatability with the audience. In so doing they are able to subtly guide the audience towards the post-feminist ideals they stand for.

Beyond her love life, when looking at Padukone's male co-stars and colleagues, one of the biggest issues that emerge from the texts considered is the male-centric nature of the coverage. One often sees a link being made to a male involved with the film being discussed (often but not always). An example of this follows. While many of the texts considered list Padukone's hit films of 2013 and leave it at that, The Press Trust of India (2014b) writes, "Last year, Deepika delivered four back-to-back hit films – Abbas Mustan's '*Race 2*', '*Yeh Jawaani Hai Deewani*' with Ranbir Kapoor, Shah Rukh Khan starrer '*Chennai Express*' and Sanjay Leela Bhansali's '*Ram Leela*.'" While in some of the cases the men being referred to are the directors/producers of the film, it cannot be a coincidence that a link to men is made.

Pacheco (2014b) reiterates this point when she writes about Padukone's acting nominations at an award show. Here she explains the nomination while also stating whom Padukone starred opposite in both of her nominated roles. Bollywoodhungama.com (2014) also does this when they discuss Padukone's upcoming film with South Indian Superstar Rajinikanth. In their article they note that based on the success Padukone has seen in 2013 the makers have decided to market the film as Rajnikanth's and Padukone's film. While Rajnikanth is indeed a Superstar and the title character in the film, the reality is that Padukone has been cast as the female lead.

One can thus note that (unless in very specific circumstances) an actress is never given the same importance. Furthermore one often sees an actress as being spoken about as secondary to the male lead. When talking about the nominations of film *Golliyon ki Rasleela Ram-Leela* (Padukone's performance in the film was highly appreciated and she won many awards for this role), The Press Trust of India (2014a) start by discussing the films male lead Ranveer Singh and then move to Padukone with the transition that notes that she is his co-star. While she is indeed a co-star in the film, her performance received more hype and awards and there is thus no reason why she should be discussed second to the male lead.

Noting this issue of the female lead standing second to the male lead, Bollywood Superstar Shah Rukh Khan has decided to give the female lead top billing with regards to the film's credits in his films. Bollywood Hungama News Network (2014b) writes about this in relation to Padukone and Khan's upcoming film together. They write,

> It is going to be Deepika's name coming before Shah Rukh's. This is in line with Shah Rukh's declaration during the days of 'Chennai Express.' At that time he had surprised many in the industry by insisting that Deepika gets a top billing over him (2014 b).

Still with the slightly progressive elements that emerge in the texts considered, Raja Sen (2013) emphasizes that Padukone's screen presence is so powerful that she shines on screen so much so that she makes the male actors she shares the screen with look like they were hired to "hold her handbag." Sonam Nair (2013) feels similarly about Padukone's on screen prowess. Referring to Padukone she writes,

> She's doing films with amazing male actors and completely overshadows them in so many scenes. I mean, I am a die-hard Ranbir Kapoor fan, but I was only looking at Deepika in Yeh Jawaani Hai Deewani. Same with Chenneai Express and Goliyon Ki Rasleela Ram-Leela.

What should thus be noted here is the patriarchal nature of the Bollywood industry and the coverage thereof. While Padukone and her acting talent were able to push the boundaries of this patriarchy, this was not enough. Despite appreciating her performances on screen where she was noticed independently of her male co-stars, links back to patriarchy were re-established. Here Padukone was made an honorary

man (or ‘hero’) because of her success. While this is presented as a compliment to her, the link to men and the implications therein should not be ignored. A man’s success is presented as superior to a woman’s success in some of the media texts considered and patriarchy is thereby further perpetuated.

What is shamed

Linking to the discussion around Deepika Padukone and men, one incident with regards to one of her ex-boyfriends led to the only instance where Padukone was subtly shamed in the texts considered. It is thus important to note that Padukone is rarely shamed in the media texts considered. This links to her career high, but also to the reality that Padukone is just not scandalous. Furthermore her media savvy translates into an awareness of how to conduct herself in the media and she rarely seems to skew from that conduct.

Looking at the incident of shaming more closely, at the start of her career, Padukone was in a relationship with another upcoming actor in the industry. This actor was from an illustrious film family. They were both open about their relationship and never denied dating each other in the media. Nonetheless, the relationship eventually ended amidst rumours of infidelity and so forth on the part of the young actor. Despite this, no official statement was made about the reasons for the relationship ending from either Padukone or the actor. A few years later however, Padukone was a guest on a Bollywood chat show. On this show, she was unusually candid about the relationship and made many implications about her ex-boyfriend. The media loved the drama but were tough on Padukone for coming off as embittered.

Picking up on this, as part of her introduction of Padukone in her cover feature for *Vogue India*, Subramanyam (2011: 177) asserts,

> And she's the bad girl, who had a relationship with one of the biggest players in the film industry, spoke openly about it, got his initials tattooed on her body, maintained a mostly dignified silence about his alleged infidelity, and then tore into him on national television.

Pacheco (2013c) described Padukone's comments on the said talk show as catty and bold. She further suggests that the statements "raised quite a few eyebrows" (2013c). In conversation with Padukone Subramanyam writes, "I suggest that she came off on the show as the resentful ex-girlfriend, catty and almost, well bitter (2011: 178)." Rajeev Masand (2013:260) also suggests that Padukone was bitter. Subramanyam thus concluded her feature on Padukone in writing, "Classic, cool. Politically correct,

wickedly catty. Practical, spontaneous. Good girl, bad girl. Which Deepika will she be today? Your guess is as good as mine."

Thus this subtle shaming can be linked to both patriarchy and elements of a post-feminism. While Gill (2007) argues that post-feminism places emphasis on the importance of being attractive as part of the process of attaining success and attracting a man, this example regarding Padukone highlights the conditions therein. While not promoting promiscuity, it is natural to note that a woman is not likely to settles down with every man she is romantic with. However, Padukone's conduct in the above situation seems to be a problem. Despite the observation that the relationship in question ended due to transgressions on the part of the male, Padukone expressing her aversion to the situation (even if it is in jest) is a problem with the hegemonic patriarchy. Padukone, who is generally a good example of the gender hegemonic patriarchal ideals celebrated by the mainstream media, pushed the boundaries and was therefore shamed. This sends a message to the audience where it is suggested that dwelling on (or even just mentioning) the negativities of a past relationship when a man is at fault is not appropriate or dignified. More broadly such shaming thus further demonstrate the boundaries within which modern women are expected to operate in.

Women

Beyond the link to men, looking at how Deepika Padukone is framed with regards to women in her life is necessary for the purpose of understanding how her relations with other women are presented to the audience. Through looking at what the texts surveyed say when linking to Padukone and women one is able to establish how the media considered contextualises and/or defines Padukone as a woman and in relation to other women. To better achieve this, this section has been divided into three categories. The first is a general category, the second is friends and family and the third is other actresses.

When looking at mainstream media, one often tends to see comparisons made between women who are famous. Early in her career, when Padukone is interviewed by *Vogue India* for the first time, one sees Divya Thani Daswani (2007) making a comparison between Padukone and notable tennis player Sania Mirza both of who are the same ages. Daswani refers to the fact that both Padukone and Mirza have many people's expectations to perform in their respective fields to live up to and Padukone's anxiety based on that. She quotes Padukone when discussing the expectations on Mirza, noting that, "there is so much pressure on [Mirza], it's impossible for her to live up to it, even though she's working so hard. But I think she's doing a very good job (2007: 202)." In the same article Daswani includes a mini feature on other Bollywood actresses who made impressive debuts in Bollywood thereby further emphasizing a comparison (2007).

Padukone eventually lived up to those expectations and established herself as a leading actress in Bollywood. Interestingly, the same director (Farah Khan) who directed Padukone's debut Bollywood film directed one of her recent projects. Speaking about this experience, Padukone reflects on her experience on the sets of her first film and her experience with the director years later on their more recent film (Jha: 2013). She notes that Khan is incredibly proud of the progress she has made as an actress. Retelling Khan's nostalgia on the topic Padukone explains that on their first film Khan had to guide Padukone through everything (Jha: 2013). Padukone notes that the difference now is that she needs a lot less guidance and understands exactly what Khan wants nonetheless. Padukone also notes that Khan also keeps a close eye on her career and often calls Padukone to congratulate her on her performances as new films release

(Jha: 2013). This then emphasises the nurturing role of Khan who introduced Padukone the actress (as opposed to the model) to Bollywood.

After working hard and constantly improving her acting skills Padukone eventually received much critical and commercial acclaim. At an award ceremony where Padukone was awarded the Life OK Screen Hero Award for her all round success (Hero refers to the male lead actors in Bollywood film) (Indian Express: 2014a). In her acceptance speech she acknowledged the privilege and honour she felt to receive such an award. Padukone appears to be making reference to the hegemonic patriarchy that dominates Bollywood. Furthermore, she dedicated the award to her female fans. She said, "to all women out there, who have been my strength, my support and encouraged me through all my ups and downs, and just being there for me. Thank you so much! (2014)"

Looking now at the friends and family category, links to Padukone's relatability must be noted throughout. Looking first at her friends, Padukone gives importance to them, many of whom are women. She tells Anupama Chopra (2009) that when she has free time she is likely to spend time with her friends. This group of women have grown up with Padukone in Bangalore. She tells Rajeev Masand (2013) that she appreciates the fact that her friends do not judge her. She notes, "they're close to me not because of who I am now. When we are together, I can put my feet up and chill (Masand 2013: 265)."

In relation to Padukone's family, Padukone continuously emphasises their importance in her life. She is also vocal about the fact that one of the cons of her career is that she never gets to spend enough time with her parents and sister (Bollywoodhungamanewsnetwork: 2013a). She tells Chopra (2013) that while they do chat on the phone she misses their physical presence. In terms of her relationship with her sister, Aishwariya Subramanyam (2011) notes that Padukone still looks out for her younger sister and is protective of her despite not living with her family.

In explaining an example of her family's supportiveness, Padukone recalls how her mother lent her money to compile her first modelling portfolio (Subramanyam: 2011). Padukone further recalls that she promptly paid her mother the money back as soon as

she could afford it as it linked to making it on her own and maintaining her independence (2011). In her feature about Padukone for *Vogue India,* Sheree Gomes Gupta (2012: 117) writes, "As our conversation continues, it becomes apparent just how much her current success is a result of years of training and self-control instilled by her parents…"

Linking to the influence her parents have had on her life, Padukone notes that one of the biggest influences links to leading a healthy lifestyle (2012). She describes her mother as her greatest inspiration. She says that her mother is diligent about exercising regularly and disciplined about eating right. She emphasizes the importance of a healthy, fit life (2012). She says of her mother, "her fitness levels are amazing so she can achieve anything she puts her mind to." Thus while Padukone's mother is caring she is also inspiring in Padukone's eyes. This emphasizes Padukone's family values thereby further highlighting how relatable she is to audience.

Looking now at discussions linking to Padukone and other actresses in Bollywood, the issue of competition between actresses in the industry is something that features in the media regularly. Constant comparisons between actresses as well as other women also perpetuate competition. This competition links to Tannenbaum's (2011) argument that there are strong links between femininity and competition. She further argues that often competition between women links to proving that one woman is capable and deserving in comparison to and often at the expense of another. Pogrebin (1993) thus links competition between women to issues of confidence and self-esteem. The media perpetuates these ideals through regularly presenting content about women within these parameters.

Specific to this study, Padukone is often compared to other actresses. Sometimes these comparisons link to her appearance, at other times they link to her work and while at other times they link to her success and whether other actresses can catch up to her. In her debut interview with *Vogue India* Daswani (2007) writes, "perhaps the last actress to generate this much buzz around her debut was Kareena Kapoor, and she had the legacy of her grandfather, parents and sister to justify it." Similarly, when introducing Padukone's successful 2013, Indian Express (2014b) began by recalling the success of actress Vidya Balan in 2011 and 2012. Likewise, when discussing Padukone's on-

screen chemistry with an actor ex-boyfriend, Rajeev Masand (2013) suggests that the actor's fans want to see him end up with Padukone and not his rumoured current girlfriend, Katrina Kaif. It is important to note that the Padukone-Kaif rivalry is something that many media houses often write about. Within the texts considered this was seen in relation to Padukone's hugely successful 2013. Bollywood Hungama News Network (2013c) writes, "in a year which has been dominated by Deepika Padukone, all eyes are now on Katrina Kaif to strike big before closing of the year." Despite the article being about Kaif, Padukone is brought up again in noting that her films earned over 6 Billion Rupees in one year (2013c).

As a result of this success, Padukone has been labelled by many as the number one actress in Bollywood (Jha: 2013 52D). While Padukone downplays such labels she does note that she appreciates the validations but hopes it links to her performances and not just to the box office success of her films (Press Trust of India: 2014b). While such labels are likely to be linked to both box office numbers and Padukone's performances, there has been emphatic appreciation for Padukone's performances while still bringing in comparisons with Padukone's contemporaries. Raja Sen (2013), Ranjib Mazumder (2013) and Sonam Nair (2013) all note that while many of her contemporaries choose roles in films that link to being arm candy for the lead actor, Padukone chooses roles with substance and depth. Mazumder writes of Padukone's recent roles, "she didn't have meatless roles that make her contemporary Barbie dolls very happy and cheery. Deepika is the star, and ready for those cameras that are incapable of looking away (2013)."

Looking beyond Padukone's work, comparisons are often made between Padukone and other actresses in terms of appearance. When describing Padukone's classic beauty and deep eyes Daswani (2007) identifies similarities between Padukone and actresses Madhubala, Madhuri Dixit and Rani Mukherji. When chatting to director Farah Khan about why she cast Padukone in her film, Khan also compares Padukone to other actresses (2007). She says she was tired of seeing the same actresses cast opposite the male lead of the film. But beyond that she needed a specific kind of beautiful woman to fit the character of the female lead. She says that Padukone "has a poise and composure lacking in girls today (2007: 201)."

Thus with the continuous comparisons being made between actresses, it is not surprising that Bollywood is extremely competitive, especially for women. Despite this, actresses are often asked which of their contemporaries do they consider friends and so on (often this links to scooping some scandal where the hope is that an actress will speak badly about her contemporaries). However, in response to this question Padukone tells Masand (2013: 257) frankly, "this is an extremely competitive field and it would be naïve to think two actresses can be best friends. But it's not difficult to be warm and cordial to each other." So while she is friendly with Priyanka Chopra and Vidya Balan, most of Padukone's industry friends are men.

It can thus be seen that the media considered suggest that the way in which women relate to each other is context specific. In a personal space women are likely to be nurturing and supportive and so on while a complete contrast exists in a professional space. One often sees links drawn between Padukone and other actresses. At times these links are comparative thereby taking advantage of the established link other actresses share with the audience thereby further emphasizing Padukone's relatability. While at other times these links speak to and perpetuate competition between women with constant reference to competitions between actresses thereby also pitting actresses against each other. Even if these tensions between actresses are not true, the message disseminated to the audience points to specific gender ideals about how women should get along with each other in a professional environment. It can thus be seen that Tannebaum's assertions are brought to life by the media considered thereby disseminating teachings of how women are likely to relate to each other.

Implications

Linking to what is disseminated to the audience, considering the implications in the texts surveyed is important when establishing how the selected media darlings are presented to the audience. It is through the deeper meanings, or reading between the lines of what is being said that one is able to understand the nuanced ways in which gender is shaped through the texts. Looking at the texts about Deepika Padukone it is clear that two categories emerge. The first links to Padukone's personality and the second to her career.

Looking first at Padukone's personality, it is clear that various elements of Padukone's personality are introduced to the audience as a way of further getting to know the actress. In a fictional piece where writer Anil Thakraney (2012) writes about an imaginary interview with Padukone according to how he feels it would play out, Padukone is characterized as flirtatious and feisty. He implies that Padukone knows how to use her sexuality to be provocative and flirtatious while also using her feistiness to fight against things like the ogling eyes of the male audiences in India (2012 E6). While this demonstrates how he perceives Padukone, his writing is fictional.

In reality, as a person, Padukone is said to be family oriented. Sheree Gomes Gupta (2012) notes that Padukone's parents and sister play an important role in her life. She notes that as a result of how she was raised Padukone is disciplined. Furthermore Rajeev Masand (2013) notes that Padukone is both humble and down to earth. While she is often praised for her beauty, Masand gets the impression that Padukone does not give too much importance to such observations. He further notes that while one expects celebrities to live a certain life, a down to earth Padukone runs her own household (2013). Chopra (2009) adds to this in noting that Padukone tends to start her day by dealing with the responsibilities of her household.

The implications around Padukone's personality thus further emphasise her relatability thereby nurturing the relationship Padukone shares with the audience. Padukone is presented as family oriented, disciplined and humble, all traits that are likely to be met positively in the audience. Padukone is thereby presented as someone very similar to the audience in that she has not let fame get to her head. The audience are thus likely to feel that they can relate to her all the better.

However, away from the implications linking to relatability, Padukone is also said to be self-aware. When speaking about the beautiful and engaging nature of Padukone's eyes, Masand writes, "she's in on the secret herself; no wonder she uses them to great effect on screen (2013: 260)." Linking to this self-awareness is the subtle implication that Padukone is media savvy. Various writers similarly note this savvy when they imply that Padukone knows exactly how to conduct herself in the media to get the desired message across to the audience successfully. Masand notes this ability of Padukone at a press conference for one of her films where journalists asked Padukone more about her love life and less about the film itself, which could leave many flustered. He writes, "Yet we watched as the calm-as-Zen actor let the probing questions float above her (2013: 260)."

Similarly, Divya Thani Daswani (2007) recalls an experience on a photo-shoot that was happening during a portion of her interview with Padukone. She notes that Padukone is a professional that is all about getting the job done. The photo shoot they were at was for a campaign Padukone was part of that paired Padukone with a young woman who was not a celebrity. Sensing the woman's apprehension Padukone (implications of Padukone being sympathetic and caring should also be noted), who Daswani says is "less talk and more action," took charge (2007: 202). Daswani writes, "As if to prove she's worth every rupee, Deepika, the professional, tilts her head towards the girl's in an intimate gesture, as if they've been friends for years, maybe sisters. It's perfect" (2007: 201). While it can be noted that Padukone was indeed a model before starting out as an actress, there is a skill that Padukone has that is being referred to in the text.

Linking to the same skill, the issue of privacy also comes up. With the media savvy that Padukone has, one is able to note that she only puts out information that she wants to while nonetheless getting the job done. In her feature on Padukone for *Vogue India*, Aishwariya Subramanyam (2011) complains about how despite being on the cover of the magazine various times one does not feel like one truly knows Padukone. She argues that Padukone doesn't let the media fully into her life when giving interviews. Padukone agrees, "I'm glad you feel like you don't know me, I want there to be some

mystery, I don't want to be so accessible to people, except through my films (2011:178)."

Padukone's media savvy is thus highlighted thereby reiterating her being seen as a media darling. With various writers picking up on Padukone's awareness which influences how she conducts herself in the media, it shows Padukone is indeed very media savvy. This links to both how to control how one comes across in the media (conduct, posing for pictures and so on) as well as what to say (Kepes: 2009). Her media savvy has also translated into her having the ability to not let shock tactics and prying journalist get under skin. She thus shows that she is very versed in handling the media.

Beyond this, looking at the implications about Padukone and her work, at the start of her career, the texts considered note that some people did not take her seriously in the industry. Sonam Nair (2013) explains that she thought Padukone was someone who was pretty, may sign a few commercial films (where performance isn't required) until someone else came into the picture. Similarly, Priyanka Sinha Jha (2013) writes, "… industry watchers were uncertain of how long the golden run would last. While she scored high on stardom, her acting chops were yet untested." So while Padukone was seen as beautiful, they imply that there was uncertainty around whether Padukone has talent. In her interview with Padukone, Jha asked Padukone about this criticism she saw at the start of her career (2013). She made reference to the fact that Padukone has gone on record to say that certain instances of harsh criticism has pushed her to improve her skill. Thus began Padukone's transformation into a respected actress.

Homi Adajania (2013) notes that Padukone worked very hard to develop her skills and improve her performances. Nair adds to this in discussing the fact that in her opinion such a sudden transformation is rare (2013). Masand (2013) described this process and the success Padukone saw in 2013 as a turnaround. He further describes this process as a metamorphosis, noting that she changed in various "tiny ways over her seven-year journey to the top" (2013: 260). The implications of such transformation link to the fact that Padukone needed to transform to see success while proving there is more to her than her good looks. While everyone aims to grow in their respective industry

through improving the skills they have to offer, one needs to note the emphasis placed on the transformation of Padukone.

Furthermore, what is important to note here is the manner in which a good-looking Padukone was initially dealt with. Linking to Gill's (2007) post-feminism, while emphasis is placed on appearance, having a good body and so on, coverage in this theme demonstrates the downside to this. While Padukone's beauty and appearance has been appreciated, it has been seen that in the early parts of her career many people wrote her off as just another beautiful, ornate model with a few film projects. She therefore had to work hard at demonstrating her skill and passion for acting. Through this example one is thus able to note that while appearance is appreciated, in a patriarchal context, it is not necessarily respected. A beautiful woman may eventually earn respect in the media but it is not a given. Thus the complexities of a post-feminism context emerge.

Questions asked

Looking now at the questions Deepika Padukone was asked, considering the questions posed to a person/subject when looking at media texts is important. Looking at the meanings of these questions allows one to sometimes get a better understanding of the interviewers intentions. In relation to this study, only a few media texts included or made mention of the questions posed to Deepika Padukone. So while there are limited sources linking to the clearly indicated questions Padukone is asked, the findings are nonetheless interesting. The questions that are included in the texts considered can be divided into four categories. These categories are general questions, questions linking to other actresses, questions about men and questions about Padukone's work.

In terms of the general questions posed to Padukone there are a variety. It appears as though they are asked to both get to know Padukone better by asking questions that are supposedly on many people's mind but also that are random enough to sometimes be unique. Looking at examples, starting with personal questions, Sheree Gomes Gupta (2012) asks Padukone how she has time to stay fit and healthy with such a busy schedule. In his feature for *Vogue India*, Rajeev Masand (2013:260) asks Padukone if she wakes up feeling like a million dollars, in reference to her beauty. The link to Padukone's fit body and beauty in both these questions must be noted. These links clearly demonstrate how the media considered perpetuate ideals of a post-feminism Gill (2007) describes where importance is placed on body and beauty as part of the process of achieving success in the modern day.

Linking to success, Priyanka Sinha Jha (2013) asks Padukone what the best thing about her success is. She also asks Padukone if her parents have any particular favourite Deepika Padukone film (2013 D52). Staying with her films, host of *The Front Row with Anupama Chopra,* Anupama Chopra (2013) talks about one of Padukone's characters, which Padukone has indicated she felt she was similar to. The film depicts the growth of Padukone's character and so Chopra asks her about her personal journey and what contributed to her growth as a person (2013). Beyond this, one sees Padukone being asked a variety of random questions by Chopra as part of a questionnaire that is a segment on her show (2013). Here Chopra asks the guest questions and encourages them to answer quickly. While many of these questions are random and fun (not serious), such questions further demonstrate Padukone's

relatability thereby further nurturing the relationship the audience shares with Padukone.

Moving away from the general questions, in terms of questions linking to other actresses, while initially the questions appear harmless, inter-actress competition is a notorious storyline that often plays out in articles. It is thus important to note how other actresses are brought up in texts about Padukone. Looking at the texts, post Padukone's professionally successful year in 2013, both The Press Trust of India (2014b) and Priyanka Sinha Jha (2013) ask Padukone about how it felt to be the number one heroine in Bollywood a title prescribed on Padukone by the media. Furthermore, Jha asks Padukone about other actresses in the industry and whom she has admired professionally.

While more attention to this discussion is given in the theme devoted to Padukone and women, the manner within which inter-actress competition is again perpetuated by the media must be noted. While celebrating Padukone's success, the direct and implied references to Padukone's colleagues are problematic. This links Tanenbaum's (2011) assertion about competition between women. She argues that as a result of this competition between women, one woman's success often tends to translate into another woman's failure (2011). While the way in which this competition is presented is not as direct, the manner within which Padukone's success is presented hints at the fact that it is at the expense of other actresses thereby perpetuating Tanenbaum's claims.

Beyond women and competition, in relation to men, many question Padukone about her past and present love life. This links directly to Gill's (2007) post-feminist sensibility that suggests that men and attracting men are central elements of a modern woman's life. Demonstrating this, the Press Trust of India (2014d) asks Padukone outright if she is currently single. Similarly, while making an appearance on an Indian talk show Padukone is asked about her rumoured boyfriend (Pacheco: 2014d). After avoiding the question, the host then asks Padukone why she keeps quiet about her relationships now when she was open about her relationships in the past (2014). The host then goes on to ask Padukone about her ex-boyfriend. Here the host asks about previous tensions as well as about a tattoo Padukone got of his initials when they were

still together. He also asks Padukone who she thought was a better actor, her ex-boyfriend or her rumoured current boyfriend (2014).

In her piece for *Vogue India*, Aishwariya Subramanyam (2011:178) also asks Padukone about her relationship status. When Padukone dodges the question, Subramanyam exposes her desperation for the scoop when she writes,

> I remind her that this issue of *Vogue* will be out at the end February, and wonder whether she would have publicly acknowledged her relationship by then. Would she like to, perchance, formalise it in this interview (2011: 178)?

In her interview with Padukone on her show, Anupama Chopra (2013) also asks Padukone about her love life. She however, believes Padukone when she said she was single. The angle she thus took for her questions on the topic links to her curiosity at how Padukone would have time to meet someone because of how busy she is. The subtlety of this question could be interpreted by some as a reminder of the dated trade-off that supposedly exists for a woman who divides her time between her career and her love life. She then asks Padukone about the qualities she likes in men and whether Padukone has a dream man.

Finally, looking at questions Padukone is asked about her work, one sees general work related questions as well as questions that link to Padukone's success in 2013. With regards to the general questions, in her interview with Padukone, Priyanka Sinha Jha (2013), asks Padukone about any particular method Padukone has established when tackling new film roles. She also asks her if she considers herself a workaholic (2013).

Furthermore, Jha enquires about a Hollywood project Padukone let go because of commitments made to Bollywood films she had already signed (2013 52D). The Press Trust of India (2013e) also asks Padukone about this matter, asking if she is fine with taking up a Hollywood film even if the role is small (no information was released about the role and so the size of the role was speculation on the part of The Press Trust of India).

Looking now, more specifically at questions linking to the success Padukone saw in 2013, Jha asks Padukone about her happiness coming out of 2013, a big year in

Padukone's career (2013 52D). In reflecting about Padukone in 2013, Sonam Nair (2013) simply asks, "What happened to you? And can it please happen to me too?" Building on this Jha asks Padukone about what changed because in her opinion everyone has noted a greater confidence in Padukone when she is on screen (2013). She also asks Padukone of her 5 consecutive hits, which was her favourite character to play. She further enquires if Padukone had increased her acting fee after seeing such success through 2013 (2013).

Still linking to Padukone's critical and commercial success in 2013, on *The Front Row with Anupama Chopra*, Chopra asks Padukone if she is able to rest now or if the current phase in her career is all about reaching greater professional heights (2013). She also expresses her fascination with Padukone's next film post her huge commercial success. She asks,

> Deepika here's what really intrigues me, that um right now I'm sure you're being offered sort of the juiciest, best projects, the biggest films in Bollywood and um you've chosen to go with a small independent movie like *Finding Fanny Fernandez,* um why (2013 F1)?

Nonetheless, looking to the future, Jha asks Padukone what's next for her career wise (2032 52D). Similarly, Chopra asks Padukone what she really wants to do now, focusing on Padukone's ideal film role (2013).

How Deepika Padukone's voice is used

Finally, how Deepika Padukone's voice is used in the media texts is important. While quotes can be taken out of context, if the quote is presented as it was said there is no room for the media producer to add meaning and/or implication. Furthermore it gives the subject an active role in the text. As a result, this theme emerges to consider the various ways in which Padukone's voice is used in the texts considered. It is important to note that various quotes are used when necessary in most of the themes considered. Nonetheless this theme exists for the purpose of considering those instances where Padukone's voice is used that have not been noted in depth in other themes. This section can thus be sorted into two categories, work and success.

Talking about her approach to work, Padukone tells Divya Thani Daswani (2007) that she has always wanted to do what she is currently doing. She tells Jha (Jha: 2013) while she had heard stories about how Bollywood was as an industry; she chose to experience it for herself. She placed emphasis on her own journey into the industry (2013). She did however come in with a set of personal principles and disciplines that influences how she approaches her work. She says that she does not throw tantrums on set as she respects people's time (Daswani: 2007). On set Padukone is also extremely focused. During her interview with Anupama Chopra (2009) for *Vogue India* she notes that her aim is to always give her all to her role. She prepares thoroughly and ensures that while shooting, she is not distracted in anyway. She links this to enjoying what she does (Jha: 2013). She says, "the day you stop enjoying your work, you have to stop or the boredom is going to show (Jha: 2013)."

Padukone is also presented as a professional and aims to always keep to her word. She was offered a part in a Hollywood film but she had to turn it down due to commitments to her already signed Bollywood films. Of this she says,

> Once I make a commitment I stick by it, no matter however exciting other opportunities might be. If I have started something, I have to see it through. And I believe in destiny. I believe that if despite trying everything, it still didn't work out, it means there is something else in store. Or may be this is not the right time (Jha: 2013).

In discussing how she selects her roles, Padukone tells Jha she goes with the story of the film and the connect she feels (2013). She notes the she never takes up or turns

down a role based on its challenge. She further tells Jha, “my mind is constantly working as to how I can make my role more exciting or interesting, but at the same time I am not scared to try something new and do something different (2013).” She emphasizes that the importance lies in approaching ones work with honesty, thereby being true to oneself and the character (Jha: 2013). She also tells Anupama Chopra (2013) that while she does look back at certain films with a feeling of wanting to have been a part of that film, she does not feel much angst about it. She says, she tends to feel that the person selected for that role was also good in it. It is thus Padukone’s honesty when it comes to her career that many appreciate. This honesty has furthermore translated on screen. Many have also noted that she has grown as an actress, and Padukone discusses this with Jha. She indicates that it links to an increased maturity that comes with age that has resulted in increased self-acceptance (2013).

As Padukone transformed on screen, she began working harder with many films coming her way. She tells Bollywood Hungama News Network (2013a) that she begun working so hard that she would feel guilty when she was not working. She thus described herself as a borderline workaholic. She tells Aishwaiya Subramanyam (2011: 178) that at times she feels like the industry is a constant race and she sometimes feels like she is the person at the centre of a storm. Nonetheless, while reflecting on her work, Padukone tells Subramanyam that work has allowed her to afford a variety of luxuries like vehicles and a home (2011). She further says, “but I still remember the high of buying my first car, an Accent, and how it felt to buy my home. My money, my hard work (2011: 178). ” The link to independence here must again be noted. Shifting away from the patriarchal notion that women are meant to depend on men, in specific *Vogue India* celebrates financial independence in women.

Beyond this, while Padukone has seen success, she is also open about the realities of negative criticism that she has experienced in her career. She tells Priyanka Khanna (2010) that she is lucky in that she has not had a lot of criticism through her career. She does however admit to Jha that of the criticism that she does receive there are times where she does get hurt with what people say about her (2013). But overall she says she does not allow the negativity to consumer her. She says, “I have remained a very positive person in spite of anything that I have gone through in my life (2013).” Nonetheless, Padukone feels that even when she saw bad days, she was never written

off. She says that the industry and her fans gave her the chance to continue (2013). She did carry on and eventually saw great critical and commercial success in 2013.

As a result of this success, Padukone was nominated for and won various awards for leading actress in film at a variety of award events that celebrate Bollywood film. She says that 2013 was a great year for her and she is really happy with how it unfolded (Indian Express: 2014b). She does however note that she would have preferred if her 4 releases in 2013 were spaced out a bit more so as to allow the audience a break in between her films so that they do not grow tired (Press Trust of India: 2014b). Nonetheless, Padukone states that she enjoyed making each of the films, all of which she worked hard on. She tells Jha that each film has lived up to far beyond her expectations (2013). She explains to Chopra that since her success there has been a good energy around her and people are giving her a lot of love, which she savours and appreciates (2013). She also tells Masand (2013) that she likes that people now look at her beyond her glamorous appearance.

Speaking about the box office success of her 4 films in 2013, Padukone says she appreciates that they were all commercially successful but she has explained to The Press Trust of India that how a film does at the box office does not matter hugely to her (2014b). She says,

> For me the sign of a successful film is that it should have repeat value even after 10 or 20 years. Like, how we refer to 'Sholay', 'Kabhie Kabhie', 'Mughal-E-Azam' today…they are iconic films. I hope the films that I have been part of end up becoming like that (2014b)."

Padukone also discusses various implications that have come with her success. She has explained to Jha that she has not raised the fee she charges to appear in a film (2013). Furthermore she does not let titles that describe her as the number one actress in Bollywood flatter her. She says she enjoys her success and feels overjoyed when a film of hers does well. But she explains that this is short lived as she returns to normal and goes back to work quickly. She explains,

> What I have learnt is to be happy with the smaller things in life. I'm really happy when I spend time with my family. I'm happy when I'm working. In this industry, the success is such that you can get carried away. But it's not necessarily permanent. You

> have it today; you may not have it tomorrow. So you have to be happy with the smaller things (Chopra 2009:85).

What this theme thus displays is Padukone's media savvy and this reiterates the reasoning behind describing her as a media darling. Through her responses in the various texts considered in this study, she displays a clear understanding of how the industry she operates within works. Thus in line with Kepe's (2009) point that media darlings know very well how to conduct themselves in the media, Padukone is conscious and precise about how she conducts herself and is very professional both within the Bollywood film industry and in the media. Furthermore, as a result of her understanding of the industry she displays an awareness of how to negotiate the attention she gets. She thus acknowledges that she never dwells on negative or positive attention thereby not allowing it to throw her of track from working hard and enjoying what she does. This attitude further adds to her relatability to the audience as it demonstrates a humility and likability.

Conclusion

It can thus be seen that the media considered often celebrate and normalise various attributes of media darling Deepika Padukone. In so doing the media make special effort to ensure that Padukone resonates with the audience. One thus sees major attempts by the media to emphasise Padukone's relatability. In presenting Padukone to the audience in a positive way the media subtly guide the audience's response to her. Furthermore, through stories about her journey to success, her subsequent success, her humble nature as well every day life the media encourage audiences to identify with Padukone thereby establishing some equation between Padukone and the audience. With this equation, audience members that do identify with Padukone are likely to further learn from the example the media present her as.

It can thereby be deduced that the lessons that emerge from this presentation of Padukone in the media texts considered suggest that avoiding scandal while working hard both professionally and in relation to fitness are important factors of a modern day women. Furthermore, it is also important and natural to dedicate some time towards maintaining a love life as dating in a modern context is also important. Padukone is thus framed and presented as an exemplar of a modern woman as per the ideals of post-feminism (Gill: 2007). These lessons thereby emerge on both micro and macro levels. On micro levels, assertions about appearance, makeup and fitness are made while on a macro level one sees assertions about a woman's love life, her competition with other women and so on. All this relates back to patriarchy and how such a role, as presented by the media, fits in with the established equation about gender norms. Within these lessons it also emerges that while a woman can push against patriarchal boundaries both intentionally and unintentionally, supposed intense push back (and thereby divergence from established gender norms) is problematised strongly. Despite this happening with Padukone, as a whole her media persona serves a clear purpose in relation to how the media considered articulate gender ideals through her story. Through the celebration and (limited) shame she does receive, audiences are given an indication as to how certain actions are met positively and negatively more broadly in society.

Chapter 7

Conclusion

This study has demonstrated that select media in South Africa and India do endeavor to disseminate lessons and thereby shape ideas of gender through the coverage of media darlings. Through centering the study within the theoretical fields of celebrity culture and gender, media darlings were framed as those celebrities that receive more (detailed) coverage in the media as compared to a normal celebrity. Building on this understanding, it is argued in this study that media darlings also serve an additional purpose as the media use them as representations (or lack thereof) of societal hegemonic ideals. It is thus through the coverage of media darlings like Khanyi Mbau and Deepika Padukone that one is able to see clear attempts at shaping discourse around gender. Furthermore, in noting that celebrities serve as a point of reference for many audience members in a post modern context, the power of influence that celebrities, and the media texts about them have must be emphasized. Bearing this in mind it is further assumed that as a result of their increased media attention and publicness, media darlings and media texts about them have even more influence in society. This influence can be both intentional (direct quotes and so on) as well as unintentional (texts about the said media darling). This study has thus explored certain elements of this publicness of media darlings Khanyi Mbau (South Africa) and Deepika Padukone (India) in relation to gender and how they are represented.

In order to do this, this study explored various mainstream texts from the South African and Indian media about Khanyi Mbau and Deepika Padukone respectively. Here it is important to note that in exploring the publicness of media darlings like Mbau and Padukone no focus was placed on questioning the validity of the texts considered. The reason for this links to the understanding that irrespective of the truth or lack thereof in a media text, once that text is published/aired the messages, ideas and inferences about gender are disseminated to the audience. This in turn is exactly what this study explores further. Through considerations drawn from the analysis of various media texts about both Mbau and Padukone this study has established that indeed various South African and Indian media considered do attempt to shape public discourse around gender. Mbau and Padukone and various details about their respective lives are presented in many ways as case studies of modern day life. Through these presentations it then also becomes clear that there are ideals (and the

antithesis thereof) about gender that the media indeed disseminate to the public. Clear emphasis is placed on feminine bodily property, men and independence. Noting the links made between media darlings and societal hegemony, this study concludes that in relation to gender, the media texts about Mbau and Padukone are centred within postfeminism. As a result of this, one can note a further streamline in the gender ideals that are perpetuated in the media contexts considered.

It is thereby noted that these postfeminist ideals are firmly embedded within the hegemonic ideologies of patriarchy. While the ideals of postfeminism are indeed problematized in this study, through analysis of the texts considered from both contexts it became clear that South Africa and India operate within a postfeminist media culture (Gill: 2007). It is thus argued in this study that it is through focusing on various elements of both Mbau and Padukone's lives (framed by patriarchy) that the media considered disseminate clear lessons about gender *do's and don'ts*. In so doing, dominant ideas about gender in both contexts are perpetuated. Here it must be noted that through the process of analysing texts considered, the study identified various similarities in both the South African and Indian contexts. While there are also major differences, both these contexts are rooted in patriarchal thoughts and ideals. Additionally, in both contexts, it was possible for strong links to postfeminism to be made in the analysis thereby further highlighting similarities in the contexts.

Furthermore, the clearly contrasting coverage Mbau and Padukone received allows this study to demonstrate the expectation of women in modern times within the contexts considered. The emulation of someone like Padukone for the purpose of navigating modern day life (Holmes & Redmond: 2006) is mostly encouraged. Within this encouragement however, one is able to note via the constant reminder that the media indeed indicate if there are some of her actions that are not in line with these ideals. Such behaviour should then be avoided in the emulation process. As a whole however, Padukone is presented positively. She is indeed a gender role model as per the Indian media considered.

Converse to this emerges Mbau. She is presented as the antithesis of a modern woman in the media considered. Large amounts of the coverage she receives demonstrates the negative reaction such counterhegemonic actions are likely to receive as per the

dominant portions of society who prescribe to the patriarchal hegemony. As a result, this study explicitly aligns itself with the idea that the media are purveyors of hegemonic ideologies (Rackow and Wackwitz: 2004), in this context patriarchy. Mbau's actions and character are thus constantly condemned and criticized in the media considered. Furthermore, this shaming of her nonconformity to the gender norm pauses when suggestions of her reform emerge. This then clearly informs the audience about the consequences of conforming and not. This is further emphasized when despite Mbau growing up and moving on from her controversial past, there is still constant reference to her *transgressions* as per societal hegemony.

It is thus through these case studies that one sees the nuances of how exactly gender is taught and shaped to the audience that consume stories about media darlings like Khanyi Mbau and Deepika Padukone. Furthermore, the clearly contrasting patterns in the selected texts demonstrate gender norms and values that operate on a similar gendered axis. It can thus be concluded that through a postfeminist media culture that operates in both contexts, the media definitely disseminate lessons about gender via the coverage of media darlings like Mbau and Padukone.

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