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“No Tits in the Pits!”: An Exploratory Analysis of the Experiences of Female Decision Makers in Motorsports in the United States

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**“NO TITS IN THE PITS!”: AN EXPLORATORY ANALYSIS OF THE
EXPERIENCES OF FEMALE DECISION MAKERS IN MOTORSPORTS
IN THE UNITED STATES**

by

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DEDICATION

“Se as coisas são inatingíveis... ora!

Não é motivo para não querê-las...

Que tristes os caminhos, se não fora

A presença distante das estrelas!”

Mario Quintana, *Das Utopias*

To my dear family who endured this journey – from far away - with me. To my friends and colleagues who were by my side throughout this process. And to all the kids out there with a big dream, especially the ones in developing countries: you can do it, I believe in you! ☺

“You are so young, so before all beginning, and I want to beg you, as much as I can, to be patient toward all that is unsolved in your heart and to try to love the questions themselves—like locked rooms and like books that are written in a very foreign tongue. Do not now seek the answers, which cannot be given to you because you would not be able to live them. The point is, to live everything. Live the questions now. Perhaps you will then gradually, without noticing it, live along some distant day into the answer.”

Rainer Maria Rilke, *Letters to a Young Poet*

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ABSTRACT

This study explored the lived experiences of sixteen women who have decision-making roles in motorsports in the United States. The purpose was to shed light on the experiences of women who broke the glass ceiling in this unexplored male-dominated industry (Glass & Cook, 2016). The challenges these women encountered along with the mechanisms they employed to navigate those, and finally their motivation to continue pursuing a career in this industry, were assessed via in-depth semi-structured interviews and then the data was analyzed following a constant comparison thematic analysis. Challenges and coping mechanisms were classified according to the four levels, namely individual, interpersonal, organizational, and societal, from the analytic framework advanced by Ragins and Sundstrom (1989) (similar to the approach in Peus et al., 2015).

Findings illuminated that challenges at the societal and individual levels were the most prominent in participants' careers. Societal level factors (e.g., gender stereotypes and lack-of-fit between women and motorsports) emerged as the strongest challenges in the beginning of participants' careers; whereas individual level factors (e.g., work-life balance and impostor phenomenon) characterize difficulties they still navigate today. Participants' coping mechanisms to navigate and overcome challenges were described as informal, which are mainly concentrated at the interpersonal (similar to Sarathchandra et al., 2018) and individual levels, and are particular to motorsports (e.g., close-knit community in racing and the overachiever personality of those working in motorsports).

Although numerous individual level challenges were associated with the racing lifestyle, this lifestyle was described by participants as the main incentive to continue pursuing a career in the industry despite difficulties. They stressed the people in racing, their shared bond, and an emotional attachment to motorsports, as the main components of this unique lifestyle. Sentiments and memories were used to express this relationship with motorsports which motivated them to pursue a career in the industry.

These findings prompted discussions about the experiences of women and gender issues on the management side of sports with a focus on motorsports, a topic which has received very limited academic attention. Contributions are therefore made to literature concerning women on the management side of sports, motorsports, and male-dominated fields. By illuminating the experiences of women who broke the glass ceiling, practical implications are offered to managers in sports and motorsports organizations.

The present findings shed light on the lived experiences of female decision makers in a male-dominated environment, and therefore provide insights that supplement depictions of women's reality in a field where they face increased difficulties in their careers. Revealing challenges and coping mechanisms can illuminate the path to welcome more women and then allow them to succeed in the field. The racing lifestyle was found to be a strong motivator keeping women on the management of motorsports, and which could be leveraged to attract more women to the field. Future studies could use similar research questions to the ones in this study to extend results employing a cross-country analysis with female decision makers across racing series (e.g., Formula 1 and W Series).

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

From 1950 to 2018, the workforce composition in the United States has shown an expressive growth of female representation rising from 32% to 57%, while men's participation decreased from 82% to 69% (Zhou & Gao, 2021). Women, who were 50.8% of the United States population in 2020 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2021), have been boosting their skills for the job market and earned more graduate degrees than men in 2019 and 2020, including 60.1% of master's degrees and 53.1% of doctorates in the United States (Zhou & Gao, 2021). Despite these figures and the shift in the workforce composition, along with legal mandates (e.g., Civil Rights Act 1964) and the social push for diversity across industries (Cunningham & Fink, 2006; Hood & Koberg, 1994), changes have not translated in an expressive number of women breaking the glass ceiling and making it to key decision-making roles (Eagly & Carli, 2007). To illustrate, in 2020, only 5.8% of the CEOs in S&P 500 firms were women (Catalyst, Inc., 2020).

Scholars have long investigated why and how “women leaders contribute positively to organizations yet remain significantly underrepresented in corporate leadership positions” (Glass & Cook, 2016, p. 51). Management research has extensively explored the potential women have to benefit organizations, such as contributions to innovation and profitability, enhancing and diversifying the consumer outreach, and in

accomplishing corporate social responsibility goals (Dezső & Ross, 2012; Glass, Cook, & Ingersoll, 2015). Studies have highlighted the significance of having women in top management increase the number of women in the pipeline and reduce the overall gender segregation in organizations (Gorman, 2005; Stainback & Kwon, 2012). Practical implications of diversity suggest that doing good *in* business adds value and does good *for* business (see Sheppard, 2018 for practical advice). The *business case for diversity* illuminates benefits of welcoming women and minorities in organizations, such as enhanced creativity, diverse views, and reach of novel and untapped markets, resulting in better organizational performance (DiTomaso, 2015; Singh & Vinnicombe, 2004).

Gender equality has been shown to relate to harmonious and efficient workplaces, where all employees are encouraged to contribute and participate in the growth of the organization (Wu & Cheng, 2016). Gender diversity therefore translates in competitive advantage for organizations (Cunningham & Fink, 2006), especially given the new generations' call for more diverse and democratic leadership. This generation demands decision makers, for instance managers and supervisors (Stamarski & Son Hing, 2015), who can incite the best in people and encourage teamwork. This assumption aligns with welcoming women in these roles since they are perceived to have enhanced social skills compared to men, who tend to be more task-oriented (Eagly & Carli, 2007).

The absence of gender diversity in male-dominated fields or industries (e.g., STEM and sports), is consequently a missed opportunity due to unheard perspectives and views of women, which could hinder growth and creativity in that industry, sector and specific organizations (Milgram, 2011). Particularly, the majority of sport organizations

in the United States follow a leadership pattern of similarity and exclusion, where white, able-bodied, cisgender, heterosexual men hold the majority of key managerial roles (Brassil & Lutz, 2020). This homogeneity means there are missed opportunities in these industries. For instance, untapped potential including different views and perspectives that could enhance decision-making. Besides, gender diversity at the top has been shown to reduce human resource (i.e., recruiting and retention) and financial (i.e., financial situation and costs of competitions) issues in sports organizations (Wicker et al., 2020). These missed opportunities agree with the information/decision-making theory (Williams & O'Reilly, 1998), which supports the benefits of diversity and richness of views in improving decision-making. Despite benefits of gender diversity in sport organizations, there is a dearth of examinations illuminating how women who broke the glass ceiling overcame challenges to reach decision-making roles (Welty Peachey et al., 2015).

Women still feel underserved as consumers, undervalued in the marketplace, and underestimated in the workplace (Silverstein & Sayre, 2009), which contradicts their potential, growth and influence in the market. As noted in the Harvard Business Review, “women now drive the world economy,” highlighting the significance of women in and for the marketplace (Silverstein & Sayre, 2009). Working married women contributed to 37.1% of the families’ income in 2017; and 29.4% of wives earned more than their husbands in 2018; and besides their increased consumption power, women direct and have influence on over 83% of all consumption and buying power in households in the United States (Catalyst, 2020). On the consumer-side of sports, women makeup almost half of the fans of the most popular league in the United States, the National Football League (NFL) (Hampton, 2017). They have been and are key fanbases of auto racing

series, including 42% of NASCAR (Howell & Miller, 2014) and 44% of Formula 1 fans (Roper, 2022). Contributing to the adversities stopping women from pursuing a career in sports, since women are discouraged to talk about and show interest in sports, they are assumed to not be interested or knowledgeable about it (Berri, 2017). Therefore, sport has been depicted as “a major cultural practice of gender inequality against females” (Sage & Eitzen, 2013, p. 315), appealing to men’s’ needs, interests and values (Coakley, 2017).

Due to the importance of female representation in decision-making positions with tactical and strategic decision-making power, such as management roles (Frisch, 2011; Rogers & Blenko, 2006), the present study examined the experiences of women who are decision makers in professional U.S. motorsports. Glass and Cook (2016) suggested that “by identifying challenges that limit female leaders’ success we can inform policy and practice in ways that limit bias and support women’s mobility and success” (p. 52). By identifying the challenges faced, the coping mechanisms employed, and their motivations to remain in the industry amidst adversities, the present study illuminated the path of women who broke the glass ceiling and are decision makers in U.S. motorsports.

This exploration adds to and extends scholarship on a population and context that have received limited attention in academia, such as female decision makers (e.g., those who have roles such as managers and supervisors, Stamarski & Son Hing, 2015) in motorsports in the United States. The interest in examining this field followed that several pro teams still do not have women in senior management roles (Kochanek et al., 2021), and data on gender diversity on the management side of motorsports is scarce. To illustrate, ESPN recently surveyed Formula 1 teams and only a few teams provided data

on diversity in senior roles. Mercedes, for instance, which is the largest team in the series, has 117 female (of 1000) employees, of which 31% are in senior management (Lewis, 2021). This study contributed to explore and shed light on this almost invisible population and context. The purpose of the study was to identify the main challenges women who are decision makers in motorsports encountered throughout their careers, the coping mechanisms they used to navigate and overcome those, in addition to uncovering their motivations to persist in the industry amidst challenges. Particularly, a dearth of studies emphasizing women in management roles have investigated how those who broke the glass ceiling reached their roles, important success factors, while accounting for nuances of the context, which are considered in the present research.

1.1 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Although legal mandates, social pressure, and shifting demographics anticipate an even greater focus on diversity, equity, and inclusion in the sports industry (Cunningham et al., 2021), along with the substantial changes in the participation rates of girls and women in sports led by Title IX, the management of the industry faces a different reality. The business-side of sports “fails to address discrimination in athletic leadership roles; therefore, many obstacles remain before women can attain true equal status” (Swaton, 2010, p. 8). Burton (2015) offered a comprehensive review on topics related to women in sports and echoed that “despite increased participation opportunities for girls and women in sport, they are underrepresented in leadership positions at all levels of sport” (p. 155).

To illustrate, according to the 2019-2020 Racial & Gender Reports led by The Institute for Diversity and Ethics in Sport (TIDES), women do not hold any CEO or

President positions in the Major League Baseball (MLB) or Major League Soccer (MLS), they represent only 9.1% of these roles in the National Football League (NFL), 12.5% in the National Basketball Association (NBA), and 58.3% in the Women's National Basketball Association (WNBA). Additionally, some male-dominated contexts do not have diversity data easily accessible, such as major motorsports series, which are among the major sports in the United States with the prominence of NASCAR. Nonetheless, these figures (or lack of them) illuminate that women remain underrepresented in important decision-making roles in sports, and the reality has not significantly changed since Burton's review (2015) to the present day (see Wells, 2021 for a recent analysis).

Despite the benefits of diversity which have been advanced by both management and sport management scholars (e.g., Cunningham & Fink, 2006; Fink et al., 2001, 2003; Wicker et al., 2012, 2020), the underrepresentation of women and the poor treatment they receive when in top levels (compared to men) are still a reality in sports (Cosentino et al. 2021; Cunningham & Sagas, 2008; Weight et al., in press; Wells, 2021). In this male-dominated industry, women are a minority and perceived as intruders or threats that could hinder benefits of men, who are part of the dominant group (Kanter, 1977). In general, employees who are different from the majority white, able-bodied, heterosexual, males, face a more negative work experiences compared to the dominant group (Fink et al., 2001). Consequently, women have been found to receive fewer opportunities (Stangl & Kane, 1991) and remain in lower-level roles because of sports' organizational culture favoring men (Weight et al., in press). Identifying these deterring attitudes towards minorities can be challenging given that discriminatory practices tend to be hidden in traditional structures and systems (i.e., informal networks) (Katz, et al., 2018). The need

to uncover challenges that may be hidden in traditional systems calls for novel qualitative studies that examine the lived experiences of minority groups (i.e., women) and offer a comprehensive depiction of their experiences in unexplored contexts (i.e., motorsports). The present study attended to this call.

Fink (2008) noted that “sport is still a powerful mechanism by which male hegemony is constructed and reconstructed” (p. 146), stressing that gendered experiences reflect difficulties faced at multiple and across levels (Shaw & Frisby 2006). The applicability of qualitative approaches to reveal gendered experiences follows that,

Many gendering practices are done unreflexively; they happen fast, are “in action,” and occur on many levels (...) harmful practices can be, if made visible and named, challenged (...) by bringing to the light of day the multifaceted and subtle practicing of gender, the cloak of gender’s naturalness, essentialism, and inevitability can be removed and gender’s negative effects on contemporary social and cultural life eliminated (Martin, 2003, p. 344).

Following the importance of gender representation in decision-making in sports (Evans & Pfister, 2021), this study focused on the lived experiences of female decision makers in motorsports. The purpose was to shed light on challenges they encountered in their careers, what was needed to overcome those, and why they decided to persist amidst these challenges. Considerations on the relevance of the study to the sport management field, alongside the choice of motorsports as the context, are proposed next.

1.2 RELEVANCE TO THE SPORT MANAGEMENT FIELD

The sports industry has an unparalleled social presence in the North American society and has shown a consistent growth in the last 50 years, with US\$80.3 billion projected in revenue for 2022 (Gough, 2019; Howell & Miller, 2014). There is a major

social value of sports in the United States as well, which is associated with the idea that sports are known as the “microcosm of the American society” (Frey & Eitzen, 1991). This label is illustrated by societal ills that are reflected in sports, such as the exclusion of women and minorities in positions of power, or discrimination based on race, disabilities, and sexuality (Frisby, 2005). Research shows that white, able-bodied, heterosexual men predominantly lead sport organizations across levels (i.e., professional, college, youth) (Fink et al., 2001; Welty Peachey et al., 2015), despite the numerous advantages of diversity (see Cunningham & Melton, 2011; Fink et al., 2001, 2003; Wicker et al., 2012, 2020). Minorities still face enhanced challenges in the industry, such as stereotypes, prejudice, and discrimination, which obstruct their ascent to higher-level positions (Lee & Cunningham, 2019). In particular, women are a minority group and underrepresented on the management side of professional sports in North America (Cosentino et al., 2021).

Most existent studies on gender disparities in sport management focus on issues on-the-field, largely ignoring the management side and women’s reality (Cosentino et al., 2021; Welty Peachey et al., 2015). Yet experiences of leaders on the field (e.g., coaches) do not reflect the experiences of managers on the business-side of sports (Weight et al., in press). For instance, coaches are mostly concerned with the team and on-the-field decisions and performance, whereas managers or decision makers on the management side are responsible for decisions off-the field and are mostly concerned with consumers and organizational performance (i.e., revenue generation). Furthermore, college athletics are heavily emphasized in literature, centering on gendered issues and experiences of coaches, athletic directors and administrators (e.g., Burton, 2015; Burton & Leberman, 2017; Darvin et al., 2019; Hancock et al., 2018; Norman, et al., 2018; Sartore &

Cunningham, 2007; Stangl & Kane, 1991; Taylor & Wells, 2017; Wells et al., 2020). However, the experiences of decision makers and leaders vary by sport and level, which means they do not translate to other contexts such as pro sports and motorsports (Cunningham & Sagas, 2008), thus calling for explorations in novel contexts beyond college athletics (e.g., Cosentino et al., 2021; Hindman & Walker, 2021). In sum, there is a need for studies centering on the management side of sports beyond college athletics, emphasizing experiences of minorities, such as women (which differs from men's, or the dominant group, Kanter 1977), given the prominence and benefits for organizations and the industry that stem from gender diversity in decision-making (e.g., Cunningham & Fink, 2006; Cunningham & Melton, 2011; Fink et al., 2001, 2003). Nonetheless, this investigation attended to these needs and explored the experiences of women who broke the glass ceiling in motorsports, and the emphasis was the main challenges they encountered in their careers, how they navigated and overcame those, in addition to their motivations to continue pursuing a career in the industry despite challenges.

Numerous studies featuring challenges women face in the workplace are found in the management and psychology literatures (e.g., Eagly & Carli, 2007). Sport management scholars have acknowledged the social construction of leadership, but comparisons between findings in the field to other fields are still needed (Billsberry et al., 2018; Ferkins et al., 2018). Thus, the effect of sports and its nuances as cultural and contextual boundaries to leadership and the reality of decision makers are yet to be explored in research (Costa, 2005; Hoye et al., 2018; Welty Peachy et al., 2015). Next, the uniqueness of motorsports and why it is a pertinent context to assess women's

experiences are explored. For instance, differently from most major competitions in the country, women compete alongside men in major auto racing series in the United States.

1.2.1 RESEARCH CONTEXT: MOTORSPORTS

Motorsport tend to be associated with well-known auto racing series (i.e., NASCAR, IndyCar and Formula 1) and characterize an industry with a number of features and particularities that are separate its environment from other sports. The small and tight racing community in the pits, the team aspect to get a car on the grid that goes well beyond the driver, the traveling circus that travels together to several races over the season all over the country, are a couple examples of these singularities. Furthermore, there is a strong family-orientation, both on the amateur-side, and on the professional-side with the establishments of an “extended family” or “racing family” industrywide.

The strong community-orientation is linked to a passion for the adrenaline and risk involved in racing, which is a bond across fans and teams in the industry. Besides, the team element in racing differs from other sports given the risk involved in racing, the need for several parts to come together for a car and the driver to be ready (e.g., mechanics, engineers, management, sponsors), the cost of motorsports, and consequently the dependence of the industry on sponsors (Young et al., 2013). Nevertheless, the emotional and financial investments of and in teams are helpful in building a community with a common goal, as previously mentioned. The long-hours, numerous race weekends, intensity, risk, and adrenaline in these sports, all contribute to the strong bond that is established between those who work in the industry. The racing community becomes an extended family (or a racing family) for those who work in racing, which goes beyond

one's team or organization, and also includes those who work in the field for a variety of organization types, such as sanctioning bodies, teams, tracks, sponsors, media, etc.

Motorsports and these racing communities are yet to be examined in literature (Anderson, 2018). It is a relevant context to examine gender issues and gendered experiences given that, unlike most professional sports, men and women compete in the same class in numerous prestigious auto racing series (i.e., NASCAR Cup Series, see Ferguson et al., 2019; Howell & Miller, 2014) and women make up a significant number of fans and consumers of motorsports (Howell & Miller, 2014). However, there is a “limited academic understanding of female involvement in the social world of motorsports” (Matthews & Pike, 2016, p. 1532), which is surprising given the singularity of competitions and the prominence and popularity of motorsports in the U.S (Howell & Miller, 2014; Kochanek et al., 2021). Although gender equality is implied, drivers (Kochanek et al., 2021) and decision makers are still mostly men (i.e., team owners and managers, Matthews & Pike, 2016) in the field. Nonetheless, this study explored and filled a knowledge gap with regards to the experiences of the almost invisible women on the management side of U.S. motorsports (Kochanek et al., 2021).

Auto racing fans in the United States have been depicted as a “socially and politically conservative, anti-intellectual NASCAR Dad, who sits in front of ‘the tube’” (Howell & Miller, 2014, p. 144), however, motorsports have a solid and diverse consumer base that has remained considerable over the years and is passed through generations (IEG, 2021). Women, for instance, make up 40-42% of NASCAR and 44% of Formula 1 fans (Howell & Miller, 2014; Roper, 2022; Townes, 2019). Besides, a

common theme found across interviews with female fans of motorsports and those working in the industry is the link between the introduction to racing and a family passion. For example, female Formula 1 fans suggested that their introduction and love for the series relates to memories of watching races with their fathers (Hampton, 2022). Susie Wolf, who competed in Formula 1 and is now a team CEO in Formula E, offered that her family was key in her introduction to the love for racing (Sinclair, 2014).

Nonetheless, motorsports organizations recognize the need to welcome diversity in its management to attend its current diverse fanbase and extend its reach (Townes, 2019). For instance, NASCAR added a Multicultural Development division and created the Driver's for Diversity program to target groups outside their traditional fans (Townes, 2019). Mercedes recently launched the Accelerate 25, which targets diversity through hiring at least 25% of new employees from underrepresented groups (Lewis, 2021).

1.2.1.1 THE BUSINESS OF MOTORSPORTS

Motorsports, or motor racing, are amongst the largest types of sports in the United States and internationally (Ross, Ridinger, & Cuneen, 2009) and comprise a set of competitive sporting events that involve the use of motorized vehicles (Market Data Forecast, 2021). The most famous and popular motorsport globally are car racing, or auto racing, competitions, promoted through different racing series (e.g., Formula 1 and NASCAR, Cobbs & Hylton, 2012; Market Data Forecast, 2021; Pflugfelder, 2009). In the United States, the competitions are run and depend on its operators and the teams in specific series (e.g., IndyCar). Different from the business model of other major leagues in the United States, (e.g., NBA), the NASCAR Series operates within a capitalistic

entrepreneurial system where teams enter and exit the series each year depending on their own capacity to get funding to go racing (Cobbs & Hylton, 2012). The viability of the current model is consequently highly dependent on the series operator and its respective teams consistently delivering sponsorship value both business-to-consumer and business-to-business (DeGaris, 2010; Lapio & Speter, 2000). Due to the importance of sponsorship and investments in the context, most studies concentrate in sport marketing (e.g., Cobbs & Hylton, 2012; Finn, 2021), largely disregarding the business- or management side of those organizations. Besides, teams are responsible for most investments in research and design efforts due to their interest on the series growth (Market Data Forecast, 2021).

Finn (2021) claimed that the cost of the highest level of motorsport competitions has been on an exponential rise with teams increasing their budgets to improve performance on the track. The funding of these extremely expensive competitions are a combination of sources, such as sponsors, corporate partners, and media rights (e.g., Formula 1 championship-winning team Mercedes had a budget of around US\$405 million in 2020, see Finn, 2021). In the United States, the NASCAR series included seventeen of the twenty most attended sporting events in 2009, and the series had the largest television audience other than football (Howell & Miller, 2014). A primary team sponsor in the series has been shown to cost around US\$25 million annually (Yost, 2007).

The growth of motorsports, its expenditures and market, are credited to enhanced advertisement and sponsorship deals (Market Data Forecast, 2021). Beyond the track, auto racing has important economic impacts for local economies. For example, Daytona 500 is one of the “(NASCAR)-sanctioned automobile races, which usually take place in

January, February and July and generate \$922 million in economic impact from nonresident visitors' expenditures in the state of Florida.” (Williams-Bryant, & Brown, 2020, p. 36). The next section advances the information/decision-making theory, which supports the benefits of welcoming women in male-dominated fields, along with the analytical framework used to organize the review of literature section.

1.3 FRAMEWORK

In their review, Williams and O'Reilly (1998) identified two main traditions used in academic investigations assessing the pros and cons of diversity in organizations. Firstly, social categorization focuses on the ingroup v. outgroup status of members and the differences in the experiences among those. Secondly, the information/decision-making theory stresses enhanced decision-making potential in diverse groups following the richness in backgrounds and views when approaching a problem or task. While the social categorization perspective advances that homogeneous groups reduce conflict and yield higher member commitment and group cohesion (van Knippenberg et al., 2004), the information/decision-making theory advances that enhanced creativity, decision quality and innovation stem from diverse views, especially in task-relevant decisions. Van Knippenberg et al. (2004) added that task-relevant decisions reflect the positive effects of diversity in performance, thus supporting that diversity is mainly beneficial at the decision-making level and to accomplish complex tasks (pp. 1011-1012). The present study agrees with the information/decision-making theory and its claims to justify the importance of welcoming more women on the management side of the male-dominated industry of motorsports in the United States.

Moreover, the career path that men and women encounter are different given that women are a minority group in upper-levels in motorsports (Ragins & Sundstrom, 1989). The numerous challenges women face in the workplace have been associated to an obstacle course (Kanter, 1977) or a career labyrinth (Eagly & Carli, 2007). Consequently, it is misleading to study male and female managers by focusing on career differences in a single point in time or to compare them. Women who do achieve high-level roles may represent exceptional cases of survivors (Ragins & Sundstrom, 1989). This study followed the analytical framework offered by Ragins and Sundstrom (1989) and the challenges and coping mechanisms offered by participants were organized across the four levels advanced by the authors (i.e., societal, organizational, interpersonal, and individual). Nonetheless, this study attended a call for multi-level analyses on the management side of sports (Burton, 2015; Welty Peachy et al., 2015).

The analytical framework directed the classification of factors advanced in the literature review and findings section, and served to organize the interpretation of findings and enhance trustworthiness as well (Guba & Lincoln, 1985). The literature review is therefore organized according to the four levels in the framework, and it contains the main challenges women face in their careers offered in management and psychology. The success factors, or coping mechanisms, women use to navigate difficulties in the workplace are scarce in literature (e.g., Peus et al., 2015) and those tend to be informal mechanisms that are harder to assess in research (Sarathchandra et al., 2018). In general, less is known about women who rose above the glass ceiling like the participants in the present study (Glass & Cook, 2016). Therefore, the literature review section focused on presenting the challenges that women tend to face on the management

side, which have been vastly reviewed across disciplines (e.g., Eagly & Carli, 2007). The next section discusses the purpose of the study and how the structure proposed will guide the analysis and address the research questions.

1.4 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

Almost 35 years ago, Bryon (1987) investigated the effect of sport on women's lives across the globe and noted that "sport is a powerful institution through which male hegemony is constructed and reconstructed and it is only through understanding and confronting these processes that we can hope to break this domination" (p. 349). This proposition still holds true and, due to its societal importance extending beyond the field (or racetrack) to the industry (Fink, 2008), calls for attention to the minority status and lack of female decision makers in sports organizations. This study focused on the almost invisible population of women on the management side of motorsports in the United States, which directed an exploratory nature for the study.

Agreeing with Glass and Cook (2016) that "while the challenges women face are well-documented, less understood are the factors that shape the experience and success of women who, against significant odds, rise above the glass ceiling." (p. 51), the purpose of the study was exploring the experiences of women who are decision makers in U.S. motorsports, emphasizing challenges they face, coping mechanisms, and motivators to continue pursuing a career in the industry despite challenges. This aim attends a call for research centering on women's experiences on the management side in a specific and novel context within the sport management field (Evans & Pfister, 2021; Knoppers & Anthonissen, 2008). By focusing on motorsports, it marked the path for other sport

management scholars to explore this new context, and move beyond the usual focus in college athletics (Burton, 2015; Evans & Pfister, 2021; Welty Peachy et al., 2015). Besides being a male-dominance industry, there are several unique contextual aspects in motorsports and its racing communities, also included in the so-called *racing lifestyle*, which deserve further scholarly attention (Anderson, 2018).

The majority of studies across disciplines underlying women's experiences on the management side discuss challenges they face as a minority group in higher-levels of organizations. Accordingly, the literature review section offers the main challenges that have been advanced in parent disciplines (i.e., management sciences and psychology), in addition to the limited research in sport management. The section is organized according to the analytical framework offered by Ragins and Sundstrom (1989). Additional reflections on the significance of the study are discussed next.

1.5 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Scholars have indicated a growing interest in understanding how specific settings, systems and structures, may explain the underrepresentation of women in decision-making positions despite the benefits they bring to sport organizations (Burton & Leberman, 2017; Burton, 2015; Evans & Pfister, 2021). For instance, proactive diversity management, which differs from a compliant strategy and focuses on actively promoting diversity to foster its benefits (Evans & Pfister, 2021), has been linked to “creating workplaces that are attractive to talented employees, where all employees can feel satisfied, be involved in decisions, exhibit creativity, and be extremely productive” (Fink et al., 2003, p. 43). In college athletics, a proactive strategy towards diversity has been

shown to yield positive outcomes at the individual level (e.g., satisfaction) that tend to lead to positive organizational outcomes (e.g., commitment) and prevent undesirable outcomes (i.e., intention to leave and turnover) (Fink et al., 2001). Nonetheless, these studies support the significance of exploring experiences of women in male-dominated industries, such as motorsports, given the importance of gender representation that reflect on organizational and individual benefits.

Diversity on the management side of sports has been found to attract potential employees and build customer loyalty (Cunningham & Melton, 2011). Other benefits that were found to stem from gender diversity in management and board membership in sports are employee satisfaction (Fink et al., 2001, 2003) and enhanced decision-making (Wicker et al., 2012, 2020). Cunningham and Melton (2011) used the categorization-elaboration model in their study (see van Knippenberg & Schippers, 2007) and found that diverse groups outperformed homogeneous groups via enhanced problem-solving and decision-making, resulting in competitive advantages for sport organizations.

The information/decision-making theory agrees offers that benefits of diversity stem from a combination of backgrounds, identities and views (Williams & O'Reilly, 1998). These different views are therefore absent in homogeneous and male-dominated fields, such as motorsports. Nonetheless, investigating women's experiences can help foster the inclusion of women and enhance gender diversity on the management side of the male-dominated field of motorsports promoting its advantages.

Besides, the significance of this investigation is supported by Cunningham's (2008b) findings, who offered that gender and racial diversity in athletic departments

helped attract diverse fanbases. For instance, NASCAR partnered with Ervin “Magic” Johnson, who is a former African American NBA All Star, to expand towards a diverse fanbase (Cunningham & Melton, 2011). Expanding the reach towards diverse consumer segments is primordial for revenue generation, given that “the cultural understanding needed to market to these demographic niches resides most naturally in marketers with the same cultural background” (Robinson & Dechant, 1997, p. 26). Julie Giese, currently the president of the Phoenix Raceway and one of the most influential women in the NASCAR Series, stresses the importance of targeting female consumers (Townes, 2019). Women make up over 40% of fans of prestigious auto racing series (Howell & Miller, 2014; Roper, 2022; Townes, 2019), suggesting the significance of women in motorsports’ fanbases and supporting the need for women in management who can attend their needs.

The present investigation therefore fulfills a need for research not simply on but *for* women, highlighting their reality and gendered experiences on the management side of motorsports. By moving women to the center of the research agenda, whilst attending sociocultural concerns, this study provided a case for welcoming women in this male-dominated industry (Harding, 2016; Messner, 2002). The study systematically explored the experiences of women who broke the glass ceiling in U.S. motorsports. The intent of this exploration was to offer a comprehensive depiction of the challenges women on the management side of motorsports encounter in the industry, how they navigate and overcome those, and their motivations to remain in the industry amidst challenges.

The significance of exploring sport-specific concerns in the present study agrees with the emergent status of the sport management discipline, which still tends to rely on

theories developed in parent disciplines (Andrew et al., 2019). However, in doing so, it fails to discuss its nuances, develop its theories and scholarship (Cunningham, 2013). According to Doherty (2013), “the strength of an academic discipline is its distinct body of knowledge that is not covered by another discipline” (p. 5). Hence, to develop its own body of knowledge, specific and contextualized sport management research should be developed and extended, along with advancing field-specific frameworks (Cunningham, 2013). Agreeing with the methods chosen for this study, such as the exploratory nature given the dearth of research in motorsports and the unexplored population emphasized, the author recognizes and clarifies limitations and delimitations of the study next.

1.6 LIMITATIONS AND DELIMITATIONS

Despite the significance of this study, it is not without limitations. The conceptualization of the study and recruitment happened towards the end of the COVID-19 pandemic, consequently, data collection was mindful of the “new normal.” Additionally, given time and location constraints (i.e., majority of participants are located on the West Coast of the United States, whereas the researcher is based on the East Coast), interviews were conducted via the online software Zoom. The sample was limited to women employed in decision-making positions in motorsports in the United States, which resulted in a limited population and limited sample of sixteen participants.

The specification and context boundary agreed that “context is crucial in determining the nature of diversity’s impact on performance” (Kochan et al., 2003, p. 17). Nevertheless, the sample was delimited to participants who are employed by motorsports organizations in the United States across different series (e.g., NASCAR,

IndyCar, drag racing) in a role that has decision-making power (similar to Mikkonen, 2019). In sum, participants were recruited based on their formal roles and the entitlement to (some form of) decision-making power (i.e., managers and supervisors are decision makers, see Stamarski & Son Hing, 2015). The sample therefore excluded women in lower-level roles (or non-managerial roles), volunteers and interns, and organizations in countries other than the United States. Due to the limited number of women in decision-making positions in the industry in the country, race, ethnicity, and other demographics of participants, will not be part of the analysis. Participants' demographics can be found in Table 3.1 (p. 81).

The collection of data by means of in-depth interviews was a delimitation too. Interviews relied on self-reported information, which may have compromised the data if participants did not record all factors that were relevant to phenomena or described their experiences in detail. Participants could hesitate to share information given their fear of being recognized as they are prominent women in the motorsports industry (Mikkonen, 2019). Pieces of information, experiences and specificities of organizations, series, or industry, may have been left out due to the sensitivity of the topics that challenge established and traditional structures. Nevertheless, several steps were taken to ensure trustworthiness of data collection and analysis (see Chapter 3). Next, the main terms used across the present research are revealed to enhance the readability of the study and the ideas advanced.

1.7 OPERATIONAL TERMS

The following definitions were used across the research to operationalize the main terms used, and are paramount for the reader to understand ideas conveyed in the present study:

Auto racing or car racing – Differences in car design define different competitions, with single-seater open-wheeled cars used for competitions in series such as Formula 1 (F1) and IndyCar; and multi-seated closed-wheeled in NASCAR (Waltemeyer, 2018).

Decision makers – Individuals who have the power to make decisions, such as tactical, organizational, operating, personal, programmed, and non-programmed. Decision-making positions depend on the size of the organization (Clevinger, 2021). To illustrate, top management and CEOs tend to be responsible for strategic decisions, whereas managers and supervisors for tactical decisions. The present research focuses on decision makers with tactical and strategic decision-making power (Frisch, 2011; Rogers & Blenko, 2006), such as managers and supervisors (see Stamarski & Son Hing, 2015).

Diversity – The concept refers to individuals with different backgrounds, such as in age, gender, nationality, to infinite dimensions that may be visibly unnoticeable, and which yield singular views and perceptions (van Knippenberg et al., 2004).

Gender – Refers to the traits that are time-bound, culturally and socially accepted of women (feminine characteristics/traits) and men (masculine characteristics/traits), such as norms, roles, and relationships of and between groups of women and men, in addition to

the role of the environment or context. While the term *sex* refers to biological differences (The World Health Organization, 2018, Vecchio, 2002; Wicker et al., 2020).

Gender stereotypes – Expectations and beliefs of gendered characteristics or abilities that are culture- and time-bound, typical for gender roles (Doyle & Paludi, 1991).

Glass ceiling – Metaphorical barriers established by organizational and attitudinal factors that make women's path to top roles harder than men's (Wirth, 1998).

Leader –It is “a person who exercises authority over other people” (Eagly & Carli, 2007, p. 8) and who is expected to be honest, forward-looking, inspiring, and competent (Reynolds & Warfield, 2010). A sense of direction, goals, and followers, tend to be added to the definition, comprising a “process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal” (Northouse, 2010, p. 3). In organizations, leaders tend to undertake management positions with some degree of decision-making power.

Manager— Managers administer *things*. “The fundamental difference between the two concepts is that leadership is about diverse interaction process between the leader and followers that focuses on human action, cooperation and processes, whereas management is about controlling and decision-making related to functions, action processes and structures.” (Kotter, 1990; Northouse, 2010, 10; Reynolds & Warfield, 2010).

Motorsports— Motorsports, or motor racing, are a wide range a group of competitive sporting events, which involve the use of motorized vehicles (e.g., auto racing), as well as two-wheel motor vehicles (i.e., motorcycle racing), off-road competitions (e.g., motocross, supercross and rally) (Market Data Forecast, 2021). It encompasses the

automotive racing industry, the engineering and service businesses that support the sporting discipline of automotive racing in its definition as well (Cobbs & Hylton, 2012).

National Association for Stock Car Auto Racing (NASCAR)— Sanctioning organization for stock car racing in the United States and other countries (Amato et al., 2005). Sprint Cup is its top series, with 36 races on paved tracks, where 43 drivers (from 18 to over 50 years old) compete. Each race takes between 3 to 4 hours covering between 200-600 hundred miles at 90-190 mph speed (Howlett & Milles, 2014).

Sport Organization – It is a structured goal-directed social entity operating in the sport industries (Sartore & Cunningham, 2007; Slack & Parent, 2006). A manager in a sports organization is an individual with decision-making power (Mikkonen, 2019).

Token status – A *token* group represents less than 15% of individuals in an environment, whereas the other 85% comprise the *dominant* group. Token group members are representative of their groups, or symbols, rather than recognized by their individual skills, reflecting in difficulties to exert power due to their status (Kanter, 1977).

1.8 STRUCTURE OF THE DISSERTATION

This research is structured in five main chapters. The first chapter outlined the introduction to the topic and the purpose of the study. The second chapter features the literature review and identified the challenges women face in management and relied mainly on previous studies from the disciplines of management and psychology. The limited research conducted in the sport management field was added as well. The main challenges women face in the workplace are organized in Table 2.1 and follow the four

levels in the analytical framework developed by Ragins and Sundstrom (1989). Given the scarcity of research regarding the success factors and coping mechanisms employed by women to reach decision-making roles (Peus et al., 2015), the literature review concentrated solely on the challenges women face, which are well-developed in research across disciplines. The exploratory nature chosen agrees with this notion and the “limited academic understanding of female involvement in the social world of motorsports” as well (Matthews & Pike, 2016, p. 1532).

The third chapter outlines the methodology, detailing the research design, data collection and analysis used in the process. Three research questions were offered and guided the research design. The fourth chapter comprises the findings. Agreeing with the organization of the literature review section, the first part of fourth chapter presents the challenges found in the present study according to the four levels advanced by Ragins and Sundrtrom (1989) as well. The coping mechanisms offered by participants were mostly informal mechanisms, and therefore were added to the respective challenges in the same section. The second section in the fourth chapter discloses participants’ motivations to continue pursuing a career in motorsports despite of challenges.

Lastly, the final chapter consists of a discussion of findings as they relate to previous literature. The discussion is organized according to the three research questions. The chapter presents suggestions for further investigations as well, and concludes with the author’s closing remarks.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter offers a review of the experiences of women in decision-making roles and their career path, drawing mostly from the management and psychology literatures regarding women in management. Next, a contextualized review of women on the management side of sports from the sport management scholarship is offered. In this section, Table 2.1 presents the main challenges women face on the management side of organizations and those are organized according to the framework advanced by Ragins and Sundstrom (1989), and amongst societal, organizational, interpersonal and individual levels. The aim of this chapter is to contextualize factors, inform research gaps and extend needed discussions on the experiences of women which lead to their underrepresentation in decision-making roles in sports, particularly, in motorsports.

2.1 MAIN CHALLENGES WOMEN ENCOUNTER ON THE MANAGEMENT SIDE

Leadership studies were visited as well, because, in practice, the study of leaders is the study of managers (Shen & Joseph, 2021). Similar to participants in the present study, leadership reflects a decision-making role of power and authority, which can be formal (e.g., manager) or informal. In practice, leaders oversee, motivate, influence, organize, coordinate, and enable individual work towards a shared goal. In sum, inspiring

and influencing individuals to foster group progress towards the achievement of organizational goals (Eagly & Carli, 2007).

Although women enter the labor force more than ever before and they do have the skills to achieve decision-making roles (e.g., earning more graduate degrees than men, Zhou & Gao, 2021), and despite the benefits of diversity in those roles (see Williams & O'Reilly, 1998), they still do not make up a significant number of decision makers in several sectors. Studies have heavily emphasized challenges in women's career paths as resulting in their underrepresentation at the top (e.g., Peus et al., 2015). Besides, women have been found to have similar work attitudes and managerial behaviors to men's (Hood & Koberg, 1994), which supports the larger gender gap in leader *emergence* rather than leader *effectiveness* studies. This issue motivates the continued investigations on why women are less likely to emerge as leaders, rather than questioning their effectiveness in such roles (Shen & Joseph, 2021). Hood and Koberg (1994) suggested that the issues go beyond women's acculturation, and suggests an unwillingness from the dominant group to accept women in decision-making. Moreover, when assimilated in organizations, women contribute to functional conflict, creativity and innovation (Hood & Kolberg, 1994). As this area of research evolved, the focus has shifted towards analyses of factors across multiple levels and contextualized studies of minorities' experiences by reviewing interactions in specific systems, aiming to welcome more diversity in decision-making and foster its benefits (Ragins & Sundstrom 1989; Yammarino, 2013).

Since women are a minority in decision-making roles, they face a reality with enhanced challenges compared to the dominant group (Kanter, 1977), or what has been

termed a “career labyrinth” (Eagly & Carli, 2007). This investigation agrees with a situation-centered analysis in which factors external to women are perceived to influence, obstruct and challenge their careers and shape the reality in the workplace (Hood & Koberg, 1994). Lent, Brown, and Hacket (2000) suggested environmental factors that may influence cognitive-person variables and help depict the reality of women in decision-making roles, outlining factors under one’s individual control (e.g., career choices, family, skills); organizational (e.g., hiring and promotion); interpersonal (e.g., mentors, networks); and factors beyond the control of individuals or organizations (e.g., stereotypes, leader prototype, socialization) (Ragins & Sundstrom, 1989).

Gender stereotypes are deemed to be the one of the most pertinent challenge hindering women’s professional advancement due to its effect across all levels (Heilman, 2012; Peus et al., 2015). DiTomaso (2015) offered that attitudes stemming from stereotypes, such as bias and discrimination, are hard to spot given that they tend to be hidden in organizational policies and structures. Work-life balance is a major challenge that has an effect across levels as well. Women still hold most domestic and family responsibilities, illuminated by data reflecting that family duties are the main reason for women to drop out of the workforce (Eagly & Carli, 2007). Table 2.1 that follows presents a summary of some of the main challenges that have been explored in parent disciplines (i.e., management sciences and psychology) regarding women in management. Coping mechanisms and success factors were not added given that much less research has been done on women who rose above the glass ceiling (see Glass & Cook, 2016). Then, sport management studies regarding women on the management side of sports are discussed.

Table 2.1 Summary of the main challenges women face on the management side

Level	Description	Studies
Societal		
Gender stereotypes	<p>Gender stereotypes concern the expectations on how one should be (descriptive) and behave (prescriptive) based on their gender (Heilman, 2001). In sum, the feminine stereotype, or the expectations for women, are to be caring and possess enhanced social skills (i.e., communion). Given beliefs that women lack agency, they need to work harder than men to prove their capabilities, be heard in meetings and to get the same perception of abilities and succeed in their careers, especially to reach high-level management (Eagly & Carli, 2007). Contrary, men are perceived as more competent and effective leaders because of their traits, such as task-orientation and agency, that align with the leader prototype (Heilman et al., 1989; McCarty Kilian et al., 2005). Hence, the gender segregation in workplaces and fields reinforces the female stereotype of low agency, high competence and communion, and the male stereotype too (Koenig et al., 2011).</p> <p>Gender norms and expectations are even more pertinent and visible in male-dominated fields (e.g., sport organizations), or masculine roles (e.g., management) (Eagly & Carli, 2007; Leslie et al., 2017). Hence, there is an expectation that women will perform poorly in certain fields and roles, defined as women's "lower ascribed competency" (Peus et al., 2015, p. 60), supporting that they are held to "higher performance standards due to prejudice and stereotypes" (Peus et al., 2015, p. 60). If women do not outperform, they may reinforce preconceived stereotypes (e.g., women are not emotionally tough enough, Eagly & Carli, 2007).</p>	Altman et al., 2005; Bartlett, 2009; Burke & McKeen, 1994; Crandall & Eshleman, 2003; Eagly, 1987; Eagly & Carli, 2007; Heilman, 2001, 2012; Hentschel et al., 2019; Koenig & Eagly, 2014; Koenig et al., 2011; Leslie et al., 2017; McCarty Kilian et al., 2005; Peus et al., 2015; Ragins et al., 1998; Wentling, 1996.
Hegemonic masculinity and homologous reproduction	Hegemonic masculinity is normative, context-specific, and "was understood as the pattern of practice [...] that allowed men's dominance over women to continue." (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005, p. 832). Power relations have been advanced to be embedded in and follow social beliefs and interactions (Ridgeway & Smith-Lovin, 1999), consequently, the level of power follows societal ideologies and gender stereotypes given men occupy disproportionately more powerful, high-status societal roles while women tend to undertake low-power and low-status societal and more domestic roles (Ridgeway & Smith-Lovin, 1999). In sum, masculinities are practices that agree with patriarchy but are also dependent on the gender norms in certain social settings.	Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005; Kanter, 1977; Ridgeway & Smith-Lovin, 1999; Singh & Vinnicombe, 2004.

	<i>Homologous reproduction</i> advances that ingroup members tend to favor the dominant group by granting them micro-advantages (e.g., superior evaluations and preferred tasks), thus maintaining hegemony.	
Sexism	<p>“A standard way of assessing sexist beliefs about women has been to measure the endorsement of traditional gender roles” (Swim & Cohen, 1997, p. 103), therefore alluding that sexism tends to be more prominent in contexts where gender stereotypes and norms prevail (e.g., male-dominated fields). Several forms of sexism have been identified. For instance, sexual harassment is a form of sexist behavior. And agreeing with the previous postulations, the risk of women being sexually harassed, or being offered rewards in exchange of sexual favors, has been shown to increase in male-dominated fields or in environments with a higher male percentage (Eagly & Carli, 2007). Currently, the most common sexist behaviors seen are hard to identify because they characterize what has been coined <i>subtle sexism</i>, or <i>implicit stereotype</i> (Greenwald & Banaji, 1995). Those are defined as unequal or harmful treatments towards women that go unnoticed because they are perceived to be customary or normal behaviors in a context (e.g., sexist jokes in male-dominated environments, Swim & Cohen, 1997). Ambivalent sexism contributes to the difficulty to identify these practices (e.g., women are perceived to be warmer, more sensitive of others’ needs and possess better social skills than men, but less competent and rational, and weaker, Barlett, 2009).</p>	Bartlett, 2009; Greenwald & Banaji, 1995; Eagly & Carli, 2007; Swim & Cohen, 1997.
Prejudice, bias and unconscious bias	<p>According to Bartlett (2009), <i>prejudice</i> and <i>bias</i> are “the positive or negative attitude that can attach to a stereotype” (p. 1908). Due to incompatible expectations for women and decision-making roles, or a perceived lack-of-fit, women face disadvantages (i.e., receive more negative ratings than men, Heilman 2001; Lyness & Heilman, 2006), which disrupt their career advancement given that ratings and evaluations are major predictors of career advancement.</p> <p>Barlett (2009) coined the term <i>unconscious bias</i> as well, which was named <i>implicit stereotypes</i> by Greenwald and Banaji (1995), and <i>subtle sexism</i> by Swim and Cohen (1997). These unconscious or unintended practices are described as unintentional behaviors, or involuntary, such associated to gendered expectations (e.g., when friends make a comment about women staying at home with children, rather than working, without the intention of being hurtful).</p>	Bartlett, 2009; Crandall & Eshleman, 2003; Greenwald & Banaji (1995); Heilman, 2001; Kanter, 1977; Lyness & Heilman, 2006; Lyness & Thompson, 2000; Morrison et al., 2010; Paustian-Underdahl et al., 2014; Swim & Cohen, 1997; Turban et al., 2018.
Lack-of-fit	The mismatch between expectations for women and traits supposedly required in certain environments (e.g., male-dominated fields such as the military and sport organizations), has been coined as a <i>lack-of-fit</i> (Heilman 2002; 2012). Thus, additional challenges women encounter in traditionally male-dominated or culturally masculine fields stem from this incompatibility between the perceived demands in these	Cheng, 1996; Eagly & Karau, 2002; Eagly & Carli, 2007; Eagly et al., 2020; Heilman, 2001, 2012; Heilman et al., 1989; Hovden, 2010; Levanon & Grusky, 2016; McCarty Kilian, et al., 2005;

	<p>environments (e.g., competitiveness, toughness) and the female stereotype (e.g., nurturing, caring, enhanced social skills) (Paustian-Underdahl et al., 2014). Given this incongruity, stereotypically masculine settings (e.g., sport organizations) view women as incompetent, the outgroup, the “other kind” (Kanter, 1977) or as interpersonally hostile (e.g., Eagly & Karau, 2002; Heilman, 2012).</p> <p>Similarly, decision-making roles are described as fitting for men, because of its task- and achievement-orientation, and emotional toughness needed, which agree with the male stereotype (Heilman, 2001). Thus, the greater perceived compatibility and fit with the leader prototype favors men to attain leadership roles (Eagly & Karau, 2002; Heilman, 2001), while women are in disadvantage due to their perceived lower agency traits (Eagly et al., 2020).</p>	Paustian-Underdahl et al., 2014; Nieva & Gutek, 1980; Oakley, 2000.
Roles in society	<p>As economy developed, men were responsible for valuable positions in society, while women were mostly responsible for childcaring and domestic responsibilities. These beliefs are the foundation to the roles we see in society today, for instance, women still bare most domestic and family responsibilities, and jobs/fields that are male-dominated are more valued than female-dominated ones (Eagly & Carli, 2007). And women are still expected to value family over their careers.</p>	Eagly & Carli, 2007; Ridgeway & Smith-Lovin, 1999; Wood & Eagly, 2002.
Organizational		
Sex segregated roles	<p>Horizontal segregation: Women’s representation is perceived to be predicted by occupations requiring social skills, opportunities for social contribution, and workplace flexibility; whereas men’s representation is predicted by roles requiring strength, competition, analytical, technical and mathematical skills (Levanon & Grusky, 2016). This explains the discriminatory expectations and tendency to place women at dead-end jobs (e.g., HR or marketing departments), which do not tend to lead to high-level roles, since those tend to come from line management positions (e.g., finance, strategy), which are oftentimes male-dominated (Kanter, 1977).</p> <p>Vertical segregation: Women tend to be concentrated in low- and mid-level management (Lyness & Heilman, 2006), which are positions of lower pay and lower authority compared to upper-management positions that men tend to occupy (Eagly & Carli, 2007; Eagly & Karau, 2002). Mid-management is perceived to require social skills, or roles that rely on relational skills, foster cooperation, and motivate and develop subordinates, agreeing with the female stereotype. Contrary, high-level management is defined as task- and achievement-orientation, agreeing with male traits (Eagly & Karau, 2002). Contrary, Paustian-Underdahl et al. (2014) only partially supported these assumptions, as women were more effective in middle management positions, but no gender difference was found in low or high-level roles.</p>	Eagly & Carli, 2007; Eagly & Karau, 2002; Kanter, 1977; Levanon & Grusky, 2016; Miller & Garrison, 1982; Mumford, Campion, & Morgeson, 2007; Paustian-Underdahl et al., 2014; Rosette & Tost, 2010.

Human capital	Human capital relates to the knowledge and skills one acquires through education and training, which is considered a personal investment that yields return to organizations as well (Schultz, 1961). Women tend to possess lower human capital than men, given their reduced access to challenging tasks, and fewer job experiences, since they tend to be located in staff positions (e.g., human resources) rather than line management positions, which tend to have more direct control over essential activities and strategic tasks (Lyness & Heilman, 2006). In male-dominated fields, women's human capital is even lower given that they are perceived as not fitting for the environment, their abilities and skills are more questioned, and consequently they are passed on challenging tasks and career opportunities that are more often given to the ingroup (i.e., men).	Glass & Cook, 2016; Eagly & Carli, 2007; Evans & Pfister, 2021; Hekman et al., 2017; Lyness & Heilman, 2006; Schultz, 1961.
Double standards and double bind	Women are held to higher standards than men in the workplace especially when the position is perceived to be male-typed (e.g., decision-making), which means that women need to outperform men to be perceived as competent as their male counterparts (Eagly & Carli, 2007; Foschi, 1996, 2000). Similarly, <i>double bind</i> refers to the balancing act between the prescriptive female stereotype, or how women <i>should</i> behave, and the required traits and behaviors to meet male-typed roles, such as in high-level management (Eagly & Karau, 2002).	Eagly & Carli, 2007; Eagly & Karau, 2002; Foschi, 1996, 2000; Peus et al., 2015.
Token status	Token group members, or minorities, need to outperform non-tokens in order to advance to higher organizational levels (Lyness & Thompson, 2000), concurring with the double standards theory (Foschi 1996, 2000). Besides, their incongruity, or lack of fit, in the setting is more salient. Members of minorities tend to be judged (or stereotyped) by group association, rather than individual traits and/or skills.	Hekman et al., 2017; Kanter, 1977; Leslie, et al., 2017.
Organizational culture	Biases against women may be rooted in social and cultural structures, which are “regular and predictable patterns of behaviors,” and the “shared beliefs, values, symbols and goals” in environments (Eagly & Carli, 2007, p. 137). For instance, expected long workhours (while women still bare most domestic and family responsibilities, Stone & Lovejoy, 2004); wage gap and lack of promotions (e.g., women earn roughly, 20% less than men, Frear et al., 2019). Promotions and wages are indicators of career advancement, and the “lower wages and slower promotion that women experience in the labor force as a whole and in managerial occupations have typically been ascribed in part to sex discrimination, because of the difficulty in fully accounting for these differentials in terms of human-capital variables.” (Eagly & Karau, 2002, p. 582). Moreover, micro-advantages, also referred to as “unequal opportunities” (e.g. inside information, DiTomaso, 2015), allude to the idea that having information is powerful and beneficial for career advancement (Lyness & Thompson, 2000). Similarly, lack of	DiTomaso, 2015; Eagly & Carli, 2007; Eagly & Karau, 2002; Frear et al., 2019; Ibarra et al., 2010; Lyness & Thompson, 2000; Mckeen & Burke, 1994; Morrison, et al., 2010; Nishii, 2013; Stone & Lovejoy, 2004; Ragins et al., 1998; Wirth, 2001

	access to challenging tasks, critical feedback, and sponsors, are also detrimental for women (Ibarra et al., 2010).	
Glass ceiling	The glass ceiling refers to a specific type of gender inequality. There are four items that must be met for inequalities to fit the definition of <i>glass ceiling</i> (according to Cotter et al., 2001): First, it should be an inequality unexplained by a one's past qualifications or achievements (i.e., human capital) reflecting a labor market discrimination (p. 657). Second, the inequality is more prominent at higher management (compared to lower) levels. Third, the inequality is more than a measure of proportions of group members at those levels. Fourthly, it is an impediment that increases over the course of one's career (i.e., gender gap in earnings or authority increase with increased work experience). Thus, the glass ceiling effects are more prominent at higher-levels in organizations, compared to lower (p. 661). The glass ceiling phenomenon agrees that structures and systems that seem invisible (e.g., bias and stereotypes) serve to stop women from reaching the top.	Carli & Eagly, 2001; Cotter et al., 2001; Whiteside & Hardin, 2012.
Selection and promotion biases	Experiments have shown that women are discriminated against in sex-types masculine jobs, such as decision-making and management roles, agreeing with presumptions in the Role Congruity Theory (RCT) (Eagly & Karau, 2002). For example, "it is easier for men to be perceived as possessing the task-relevant competence and leadership ability that are essential to emerging as a leader" (Eagly & Karau, 2002, p. 583). Women who are in leadership or decision-making roles may therefore receive lower evaluations given a perceived incongruity and lack-of-fit between the female stereotype and the position, and which may obstruct women's career advancement,(Heilman, 2001). In addition, the glass cliff phenomenon highlights that women tend to be selected for decision-making roles during specific circumstances, such as crises or high-risk, which, in turn, may harm their image as leaders if the firm performs poorly (Ryan et al., 2016).	Eagly & Carli, 2007; Eagly & Karau, 2002; Leslie et al., 2017; Pazy & Oron, 2001; Ryan et al., 2016.
Interpersonal		
Social capital	Social capital is associated with the "relationships between people and the feelings of mutual obligations and support" (Eagly & Carli, 2007, p. 144) and depict formal and informal networks in organizations and fields. Women have limited access to powerful sponsors, mentors and role models (Heilman, 2012; Ibarra et al., 2010), and those have been found to be significant beneficial support mechanisms for one's career and tenure (Glass & Cook, 2016). For instance, mentors protect mentees from discrimination, guide with organizational procedures and advice, and offer information through unofficial networks (Burke & McKeen, 1994; Wentling, 1996). Nonetheless, women	Burke & McKeen, 1994; Glass & Cook, 2016; Eagly & Carli, 2007; Evans & Pfister, 2021; Hekman et al., 2017; Ibarra et al., 2010; Kanter, 1977; Lyness & Heilman, 2006; Schultz, 1961; Oakley, 2000; Rosenthal et al., 2013; Wentling, 1996.

	<p>are at disadvantage given that men have been shown to have more access to these resources (i.e., possess higher social capital than women).</p> <p>Unofficial networks, friendships or alliances, are important sources of power and competitive advantage as well (Oakley, 2000). However, building personal ties demands extra hours dedicated to networking, which compromises balancing responsibilities (e.g., family) establishing a barrier especially for women negotiating their work-life balance given their enhanced family responsibilities compared to men (Eagly & Carli, 2007).</p> <p>In addition, their token or minority status makes it harder to establish relationships and networks due to the limited number of women in those environments (Kanter, 1977). In male-dominated settings, building networks and relationships is especially challenging for women given their minority status. The “old boys’ club” has been defined and described as limiting the mobility of women, by promoting homologous reproduction to maintain ingroup hegemony, while outgroups (e.g., women, minorities) are seen as intruders who intimidate the dominant group (Hekman et al., 2017). Hence, women’s social capital in male-dominated fields is even more compromised than in other environments.</p> <p>In settings where they are a minority, women have been shown to create groups amongst women. However, women’s pool is limited and narrow to establish valuable networks and relationships. Contrary to the establishment of communities of women, a “queen bee” syndrome has been reported as well. The syndrome reflects the instances when women in an industry or organization, especially in male-dominated fields, hinder or obstruct the access of more women into the space because they feel threatened. The idea is associated with “there is only room for so many of us here” premise. It agrees with an expectation to avoid being feminist, feminine, or vouch for other women to fit in the culture of male-dominated fields (Evans & Pfister, 2021).</p>	
Individual		
Career preferences, skills and experiences	<p>Women tend to underrate their abilities (i.e., impostor phenomenon) and be drawn to jobs and roles that emphasize social skills, social contributions and are intrinsically rewarding (e.g., in education, see Cortes & Pan, 2018; Eagly & Carli, 2007). These preferences reinforce the female stereotype given the departments and fields in which those features are typically found (e.g., support staff such as HR, or roles in health and education) (Eagly et al., 2020). Differently, men tend to prefer line roles, which carry important decisions and processes, such as producing or selling products or services, and traditionally positions that have held greater organizational power and influence compared to staff roles, where women tend to be (Lyness & Heilman, 2006).</p>	<p>Banerjee, Schenke, Lam, & Eccles, 2018; Cortes & Pan, 2018; Eagly & Carli, 2007; Eagly et al., 2020; Lyness & Heilman, 2006; Ma, 2011; MacPhee, Farro, & Canetto, 2013; McCarty Kilian et al., 2005; McKeen & Burke, 1994.</p>

Self-doubt and impostor phenomenon	<p>“The term impostor phenomenon is used to designate an internal experience of intellectual phonies, which appears to be particularly prevalent and intense among a select sample of high achieving women.” (Clance & Imes, 1978, p. 1). It relates to a self-critic, self-doubt, and a psychological fraudulence feeling. Women have been found to be more prone to this phenomenon than men, and certain roles have been found to be more prone to self-doubt, such as high-management positions. The impostor phenomenon is associated with gender stereotypes given the higher expectations women like feel they should meet to prove themselves, especially in male-dominated fields, where they are perceived not to fit.</p>	Clance & Imes, 1978; Kark et al., 2021; Leary et al., 2000; Mak et al., 2019; Palmer, 2021.
Work-life balance	<p>Gender stereotypes contribute to expectations imposed on women, who feel “high pressure to fulfill a caregiving role in private life” (Peus et al., 2015, p. 60). Unbalanced division of domestic responsibilities is still a reality (Eagly et al., 2020). Although men increasingly share housework and childcare, women are still generally responsible for most part of domestic work (Eagly & Carli, 2007), which means they spend more time on housework, children, and family responsibilities. Notably, work-life balance has been shown to be the primary reason for women to drop out of the workforce, prioritizing <i>family time</i> (Hewlett & Luce, 2005).</p>	Davey & Davidson, 1994; Eagly & Carli, 2007; Eagly et al., 2020; Guendouzi, 2006; Hewlett & Luce, 2005; Liff & Ward, 2001; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984; Peus et al., 2015; Powell & Maniero, 1992; Wirth, 2001.
Motherhood	<p>Difficult decisions regarding starting a family arise given that the prime years for women to have kids tend to coincide with the years to develop or fast-track their career, in addition to the difficulties of reestablishing career momentum after birth (Eagly & Carli, 2007). To illustrate, 25% of women who look for a job after birth cannot find one and employed mothers report lower income after having children (Hewlett & Luce, 2005). Differently, scholars have explored benefits of motherhood for women’s careers (Greenhaus & Powell, 2006; Ruderman et al., 2002).</p>	Bianchi, Robinson & Milkie, 2006; Eagly & Carli, 2007; Greenhaus & Powell, 2006; Hewlett & Luce, 2005; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984; Powell & Maniero, 1992; Ruderman, Ohlott, Panzer & King, 2002; Swanson & Johnson, 2003.

2.1.1 BENEFITS OF WELCOMING WOMEN ON THE MANAGEMENT SIDE

Contrary to numerous challenges, the “women-in-management” perspective moves beyond highlighting challenges faced by women to support the business case for their inclusion at the top, but reinforces that having women in leadership roles is beneficial as they add different perspectives (from men’s) in decision-making (Pesonen et al., 2009; Williams & O’Reilly, 1998). Thus, women with perceived high potential (i.e., perceived to possess abilities to reach high-level roles) face a different reality than other women in the pipeline due to their high diversity value (Leslie et al., 2017). For instance, those who make their way to the top in adverse conditions (i.e., male-dominated fields) with the willingness to take high risk roles to prove their value as leaders, reflect a solid reputation as capable change agents, crisis managers and turnaround specialists (Glass & Cook, 2016). Alongside, perceptions of competence, agency, warmth, and uniqueness produce a high-potential female premium, yielding ratings as more effective leaders than their male-counterparts in high-level roles (Paustian-Underdahl et al., 2014). Despite of the scarcity of women at high-level, high-potential women, who break the glass ceiling, may find a different reality and be perceived for their individual and unique attributes once they get there (Foschi, 1996, 2000). Thus, comprehensive examinations of women in decision-making roles are needed accounting for factors, challenges across levels, and nuances given the complexity of experiences of this unexplored group.

Research has underlined the importance of contextual contingencies in leadership and management studies (e.g., Eagly & Carli, 2007; Paustian-Underdahl et al., 2014), such as those factors related to the operational environment and culture, given that

leaders affect their leadership environment but simultaneously they are under the influence of the environment (Mikkonen, 2019). Given the significance of representation in decision-making and of sports as a context from the organizational, consumer, market and social perspectives, the present study stressed the context and its nuances in exploring how women's careers were specifically affected by the setting (Burton, 2015; Taylor & Wells, 2017). Particularly, the analysis focused on the lived experiences of women in decision-making in motorsports in the United States.

Due to scarce research done analyzing the context of motorsports, this chapter follows by offering challenges investigated in the field of sport management. The section organization parallels the levels in Table 2.1, but fewer studies that examine women's experiences on the management side of sports were found (Mikkonen, 2019). The very limited studies emphasizing motorsports are added to the following section as well.

2.2 WOMEN ON THE MANAGEMENT SIDE OF SPORTS

Male-dominated or culturally masculine fields pose additional challenges to women because of the incompatibility between the demands in the environments (e.g., competitiveness, toughness) and female expectations (e.g., feminine traits) (see Paustian-Underdahl et al., 2014). Stereotypically masculine environments tend to frame women as incompetent, the outgroup, the "other kind" (Kanter, 1977) or as interpersonally hostile (Eagly & Karau, 2002; Heilman, 2012), requiring additional efforts to balance expectations for decision-making roles (e.g., agency) and femininity (e.g., communion) (Eagly & Carli, 2007). The sports industry is male-dominated and echo these assumptions

that legitimizes the position of men as natural leaders to justify the underrepresentation of women at the top of organizations as “expected” (Walker & Bopp, 2010, p. 53). The next subsections outline factors that have been advanced in sport management to be part of the experiences of women on the management side of sports. Most sport management studies in this lineage have focused on the challenges women encounter in their careers that contribute to their underrepresentation on the management side of sports (Burton, 2015).

2.2.1 SOCIETAL FACTORS IN SPORTS

Societal barriers, such as stereotypes (Sartore & Cunningham, 2007) and beliefs that men are powerful and women compliant (Shaw & Frisby, 2006), have been found to shape the experiences of women in sports as well. A self-fulfilling prophecy or self-limiting behavior has advanced as a possible explanation, in which women incorporate outside beliefs of inadequacy both with the industry and decision-making roles (Sartore & Cunningham, 2007). Knoppers and Anthonissen (2008) relied on the token theory (Kanter, 1977) to explain the conservative gender order that masks inequality and stresses neutral meritocracy and individualism in sports, while decision-making positions remain mostly occupied by white males (Welty Peachey et al., 2015). Women’s potential is therefore widely unutilized in the sports industry (Mikkonen, 2019). However, homogeneity may be problematic especially in this context since the primary activity (i.e., sports) implies equal opportunity for all (Knoppers & Anthonissen 2008).

In addition to the double standard women face in decision-making (i.e., the need to outperform and have excellent skills to prove themselves), double standards in sport management also illuminate the greater opportunities men get in both men’s and

women's sports. To illustrate, women are underrepresented as male sport coaches (i.e., they were less than 3% of the head coaches in men's college basketball NCAA 2007-2008) and men are almost equally represented in women's sports coaching positions (i.e., women represent 42.6% of the head coaches in women's college basketball NCAA 2007-2008) (Walker & Bopp, 2010). This reality is further reinforced in motorsports, which are historically male dominated sports both at the management level (i.e., team owners and managers; Matthews & Pike, 2016) and racers (Kochanek et al., 2021). Women therefore face double standards *twice*, get fewer opportunities and face stronger challenges in traditionally men's sports, which is the case of motorsports.

2.2.2 ORGANIZATIONAL FACTORS IN SPORTS

The predominant organizational culture in the sports industry could be represented as “a male game where the rules favor men and where women either lack the necessary qualities or must constantly engage in a balancing act.” (Pesonen et al., 2009, p. 339). This culture reflects institutional sexism against women that is sustained by ongoing exclusion, devaluation, and marginalization of women in the workplace (Hindman and Walker, 2020). Women in decision-making roles in sports must overperform and possess excellent qualifications and competence; while men's skills are rarely questioned because they are assumed to hold the necessary job requirements in decision-making (Stangl & Kane, 1991). Unequal selection practices, access discrimination (Hoffman, 2010) and treatment discrimination, stem from this perception that women have lower capacity (Sartore & Cunningham, 2007) and further explain how and why women are discriminated against before being hired and denied resources when they reach high-level

positions (Sibson, 2010). Following that the reality of men and women are different in the context of sports, the present study emphasizes solely the experiences of women.

The glass ceiling in the context comprises numerous obstacles that inhibit the entrance of women and challenge their sustainment in sports (Darvin et al., 2021). For instance, the overrepresentation of men in higher status jobs and their higher pay (Burton, 2015) and men being perceived as powerful and women as compliant (Shaw & Frisby, 2006) exemplify pieces of the complex hegemonic masculinity culture. Bryon (1987) added that “negative evaluations of women’s capacities are implicit in the masculine hegemony in which sport is embedded” (p. 350). This culture extends beyond hiring and promoting men, to shaping women to assimilate to survive the system, while protecting dominant structures and traditional cultural norms.

This culture is therefore a puzzle composed and sustained by numerous pieces, such as treatment discrimination that denies resources to women when they are in high-level positions (Sibson, 2010), the negative evaluations of women’s capacities (e.g., questioned more than men, Sartore & Cunningham, 2007), stereotypes (Sartore & Cunningham, 2007), males’ influence on who is appointed to top-level decision-making roles (Burton, 2015; Walker et al., 2017), stigmatization (Wells, Sartore-Baldwin, Walker, & Gray, 2020), glass ceiling and glass cliff effects (Hancock et al., 2018), sexism and sexual harassment (Hindman & Walker, 2020; Taylor & Welch, 2018) in the setting. Scholars added that their marginalization could be a consequence of invisible micro-aggressions, such as lack of information about decision-making, or “inappropriate behavior such as telling sexist jokes during meetings or talking about male topics”

(Wicker et al., 2020, p. 4). Hovden (2012) added and called for more attention to the culture of favoritism of men, rather than the discrimination of women and minorities.

2.2.3 INTERPERSONAL FACTORS IN SPORTS

Katz, Walker and Hindman, (2018) analyzed gendered networks within Division I college teams in the NCAA, specifically informal networks of both senior woman administrators and athletic directors. They systematically investigated the “old boys’ club” and its informal effect on obstructing women’s career advancement. Walker and Bopp (2010) found that male-exclusive social networks, perceptions of gendered opportunities, and pressures to overcompensate for being a female, negatively influenced the perceived opportunities of women to sustain and pursue careers in male-dominated workplaces, particularly college athletics. Likewise, the time needed to network has been advanced as a significant challenge for women in sports (Pfister & Radtke, 2009).

Strittmatter and Skirstad (2017) investigated female representation in decision-making positions of national soccer associations in Germany and in Norway and found a beneficial effect of powerful mentors. A recent study named “She Needs to See it to be it: The Importance of Same-Gender Athletic Role Models” illustrated the importance of same-gender role models to create a perception of attainable future success for women in sports (Midgley et al., 2021). Women have few examples in decision-making roles in the industry as well, which could be limiting the pipeline and this sense of attainable future success. Similarly, Forsyth et al.’s (2019) findings support the importance of promoting positive role models for the professional success of women entering the industry. Even though support from sponsors and mentors have been found to be key for women’s career

advancement in sports (e.g., Wells & Hancock, 2017), a queen bee syndrome has been reported in the industry as well. The phenomenon is prevalent in male-dominated fields, where women have been found to obstruct the access of more women into the setting based on the idea that *there is room for only so many of us here* (Evans & Pfister, 2021).

2.2.4 INDIVIDUAL FACTORS IN SPORTS

Evans and Pfister (2021) added to the discussion by suggesting that women tend to gravitate towards certain departments (e.g., marketing and HR) and roles (e.g., staff and supporting roles), different from male's preferences. These preferences could be translating in a pipeline issue in sports given the status ascribed to different departments and roles - men tend to undertake task-oriented roles that more often lead to higher-level roles; contrary, women tend to select supporting or staff roles that do not typically lead them to decision-making positions (Burton, 2015). This pipeline issue is accentuated by an assumption that women actively seek senior positions to a lower degree than men (Pfister, 2010a), and that they are more interested and competent to deal with issues related to women's sport (Yiamouyiannis & Osborne, 2012). However, scholars have refuted these postulations and indicated that men and women apply for jobs at a similar rate in certain contexts and there is no clear evidence suggesting women are less likely than men to exhibit passion for sports (Evans & Pfister, 2021; Hancock et al., 2018).

Besides, decision makers in sports are expected to possess traits that serve to exclude women and fit the male prototype, such as result-orientation, cooperation, courage, determination, impartiality, and loyalty, (Hovden, 2000), whereas feminine-appropriate roles are perceived to coincide with entry and mid-level positions (Burton,

2015; Burton et al., 2009; Burton & Parker, 2010). Likewise, women who reach decision-making positions tend to adopt stereotypically masculine behaviors, avoid feminine and feminist traits, or vouch for other women, to fit into the organization culture (Evans & Pfister, 2021). This behavior follows the fear of being evaluated in terms of deviance from the dominant norms, which forces women to assimilate to the dominant culture and oftentimes suppress their personal abilities and skills (Nishii, 2013).

Career choices. Scholars in sport management have investigated the uniqueness of individuals who choose to work in the field of sports. The challenges and contradictions in the industry are illustrated by the study entitled: “‘Discrimination? Low pay? Long hours? I am still excited:’ female sport management students' perceptions of Barriers toward a Future Career in Sport’ (Harris, Grappendorf, Aicher & Veraldo, 2015). Scholars in this lineage have investigated whether individual factors, such as team identification, passion and pride, may attract individuals to work in sports and make up for the challenges (see Delia & James, 2017; Heere & James, 2007a, 2007b; Swanson and Kent, 2017). Todd and Kent (2009) suggested there is a psychological fulfillment of employment in sports and illuminated that “emotional significance of group membership to sport employees yields benefits in the form of heightened social prestige and socially gratifying opportunities” (p. 186). In sum, this idea helps illuminate motivators to work in sports amidst challenges (Hawzen et al., 2018). However, how these emotions are specifically valued by women is yet to be explored in sport management (Ratten, 2020).

Work-life (im)balance. The juggling between balancing work-and-life commitments is enhanced in sports given the increased workhours (i.e., game days) and

illustrated by increased and unpredictable time required for coaching (e.g., game days) clashing with time that would be dedicated to family or domestic responsibilities (Stangl & Kane, 1991). This idea has been described as female coaches being one-person with a dual career (Stangl & Kane, 1991). A recent study advanced the composition of the sport industry in the United States and supported these ideas (Weight et al., in press). The authors reviewed the gender and family composition of employees and indicated that the number of women employed in athletic departments decreased with increase in seniority, whilst the percentage of men and employees with children increased (Weight et al., in press). Entry-level positions were found to be mostly occupied by women (61%) and employees without children (96%); while senior leaders were mostly men (56%) and employees with children (76%), reinforcing the imbalance in work-life duties and domestic responsibilities, particularly in families with children (Weight et al., in press).

Similarly, the multiple identities undertaken by mothers was highlighted by Leberman and Palmer's (2009) study in which they interviewed women in leadership roles in sport organizations in New Zealand (i.e., managers and administrators) given that "mothers' voices are often silent in leisure and sport literature" (p. 305). Participants offered guilt, exhaustion, stress, social disapproval and organizational resistance to the presence of children as potential constraints in their roles. Notably, they pointed out mutual benefits of motherhood and leadership for themselves and those they influence. The authors offered the uniqueness of balancing work-life responsibilities in the sport industry given that games, for example, may happen late at night or on weekends, and compromise family time (Leberman & Palmer, 2009).

Extreme working conditions challenge employees' work-life balance, motivates workaholism, burnout and high levels of stress (DeFreese & Mihalik, 2016; Weight et al., in press). Sport employees report they live in a very competitive work environment, with extreme pressure to win, heavy travel schedules, and long hours, which may translate to harmful outcomes to their work-life balance (e.g., compromised well-being due to burnout and lack of engagement, see Darvin, 2020; Taylor et al., 2021). Women in sport organizations offered that placing a higher value on work-life balance led to voluntary exit from occupations and hesitancy to enter or remain in the industry based on perceptions of the work-centered culture (Darvin, 2020; Darvin et al., 2019). Notably, this idea clarifies the over-representation of single women without children in decision-making roles in sports, supporting that they need to choose between a family or climbing-the-ladder in their careers (Pfister & Radtke, 2009; Reade et al., 2009).

Family and the shared love for motorsports. Most studies in sport management have assessed family as an impediment to women's career success on the business-side of sports (e.g., Leberman & Palmer, 2009; Pfister & Radtke, 2009; Reade et al., 2009; Weight et al., in press). Contrary, and even though motorsports have received nearly no academic attention in the discipline and limited peer-reviewed research is found regarding the experiences of women on the management side of these sports, interviews with key women in the industry indicate that their initiation in sports and the development of attachment is deep-rooted in family traditions. To illustrate, Julie Giese, who leads the Phoenix Raceway and is a former driver, is one of the most influential women in NASCAR currently. She indicated that her introduction to the sport happened

at home as a fan: “I grew up in this sport...I was raised a race fan and I wanted to just do anything I could” to work in the sport (Phoenix Raceway, 2021).

A similar narrative is echoed by female drivers. A recent study by Kochanek et al. (2021) interviewed female drivers and found that the family support and, most importantly, the fatherly influence, was key in their introduction to motorsports. The prominent American driver Hailie Deegan, who is the only woman racing the Lucas Oil Off Road Pro series, suggested her first memories in the sport: “I was about to turn eight. I remember going to my dad's off-road truck races, and these little kids are racing in these mini off-road trucks.” (Women of Speed, 2021). Thus, the passion for racing is described as a family endeavor and a shared experience for these women.

Studies found similarities between being a member of a family and the love for sport or being part of the family entailing the love for a specific sport/team (Hampton, 2022; Ratten, 2020, p. 7). To illustrate, the idea that it is “the connection to family that makes us interested in sports” has been advanced in research (interviewee 4, in Ratten, 2020, p. 7). Despite the importance of family in introducing sports and this shared love that remains, further empirical examinations on the business-side of motorsports and how family may influence career decisions are needed (Ratten, 2020).

The generational love for sports and teams is maintained by its shared value (Ratten, 2020). This generational bond family-sport and/or family-team (Ratten, 2020) depicts “relational bonds and shared values” (Ratten, 2020, p. 3) that shed light on a shared passion for the same sport and/or team (Ratten, 2020, p. 4). Although these discussions are almost inexistent in literature, the family role in auto racing is further supported by interviews with female fans of Formula 1 who, for example, indicated that

missing a race: “is not an option, it would be like missing Christmas with the family, impossible.” These fans added that their fathers had a major role in introducing them to F1 at an early age as well (Roper, 2022). The social learning theory explains that we learn and develop through others via interactions, such as by watching role models (Dou et al., 2020). To illustrate, the driver Jenna Wagner shared that her “passion for motorsports sparked after watching her dad and uncle race” (Hudson, 2011).

Similarly, a sport marketing study compared male and female NFL fans and found that, for women, football and team fandom were heavily influenced by parents, who described watching football as a family event (Shane-Nichols, McCrohan & Chung, 2020). The attachment to sports, teams, and organizations is therefore key in the industry, both from the fan- and consumer-side, as well as for workers and producers, who accept suboptimal job conditions due to emotional attachment and personal significance of the job (Hawzen et al., 2018). Attachment often derived from participants’ memories, such as playing or watching sports with family. An illustration to this idea of shared purpose was offered by Liam: “I think about me and Dad going to a baseball game and just walking out and seeing that atmosphere...it gives me purpose” (in Hawzen et al. 2018, p. 200). Remarkably, these social and affective factors that compose attachment tend to be discussed within the team identity scholarship (e.g., Delia & James, 2017), in detriment of analyses of the role of family in the socialization process and introduction to sports. The ideas proposed concur with the need to extend investigations on the role of emotions for those working in sports (Todd & Kent, 2009), particularly focusing on whether the value of emotions towards sports may differ for women (Ratten, 2020).

The gaps in literature revealed in this chapter, such as a dearth of research on the experiences of female decision makers in sports, challenges they face in the industry, coping mechanisms they use to navigate and overcome difficulties, and their motivations to continue pursuing a career in the field despite challenges, informed the methodological choices in the present study, which are outlined in the following chapter. The research design, data collection and data analysis procedures are revealed. Remarks about the paradigm, positionality, research ethics, and the validation of the study are added as well.

In sum, the next chapter explains how the researcher designed the study, collected, and analyzed the data in order to fulfill the purpose of the study. The purpose was to explore the lived experiences of women who are decision makers in organizations in motorsports in the US. The focus of the analysis was on the challenges participants faced in their careers, the coping mechanisms to navigate and overcome these challenges, and their motivations to continue pursuing a career in the industry amidst challenges.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

This chapter introduces the methodological choices for the study. First, the research questions are examined, along with comments on the overall study rationale. Secondly, the design of the research is explained. Thirdly, the research design is reasoned. The research methods employed, such as the data collection, data analysis and validation of the study, are developed in several sub-sections at last.

3.1 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The purpose of the present study was to explore the lived experiences of women who broke the glass ceiling and are decision makers in motorsports in the United States. The focus was uncovering the challenges they faced throughout their careers in the industry, the coping mechanisms they used to navigate and overcome these difficulties, and their motivations to remain in the industry despite challenges. In order to guide the research methods and gain in-depth understanding of the experiences of the target population, while considering the nuances of the context (i.e., motorsports), the research questions below were proposed,

RQ1: What are the main challenges women encounter on the management side of motorsports in the United States?

RQ1.1: How do women navigate and overcome these challenges?

RQ2: Why do women continue pursuing decision-making roles in motorsports despite challenges?

The first question and sub-question focus on the challenges women encountered in their careers in motorsports and how they navigated and overcame those (RQ1, RQ1.1), and the second question emphasizes their motivations to continue pursuing a career in the field despite challenges, emphasizing their relationships with motorsports (RQ2). Next, comments on the study rationale, which introduce methodological choices, are presented.

3.2 COMMENTS ON THE STUDY RATIONALE

Welty Peachey et al. (2015) called sport management scholars to emphasize lived experiences of leaders on the management side of sports (in practice, managers, see Shen & Joseph, 2021) to address the existent multiplicity of discourses in the field, accounting for the singularities of the context, such as the present study assesses the experiences of women who are decision makers in motorsports (Yammarino, 2013). The authors added that the sport management field can benefit from interdisciplinary qualitative studies, rather than continuing to rely mostly on quantitative methods, allowing, for instance, in-depth descriptions, such as the role of family in the socialization into sports, to emerge (Hawzen et al, 2018). This idea heavily influenced the choices for the research methods used in the current study. They encouraged scholars to advance sport-focused models, accounting for the influence of the context, identities, history and place when suggesting narratives (Chalip, 2006; Fink, 2013; Yammarino, 2013). The present study attended to

this call and considered the nuances of motorsports in the United States in the research design and methods used. In particular, considering how the singularities of the racing industry (e.g., the lifestyle) may have affected the experiences of participants.

In regard to the context chosen, motorsports include a wide range of competitive sporting events that involve the use of motorized vehicles (e.g., auto and motorcycle racing). The definition extends to the whole racing industry, such as to include the engineering and service businesses that support racing (Cobbs & Hylton, 2012). In this study, all participants held decision-making roles within the auto racing industry and were involved with, amongst others, the NASCAR, IndyCar, and NHRA series. Their jobs were reported to be within teams, sanctioning bodies, and racetracks. Particularities of motorsports, such as the importance of family in the introduction to racing, the racing lifestyle and racing community, and how those may influence the experiences of women who have a career in the industry, were considered in the research development as well. The context of motorsports in the United States therefore set the boundary for the present study that explored the experiences of female decision makers in the field.

The review of literature was interdisciplinary and relied on studies from parent disciplines centering on the challenges faced by women in decision-making roles and management. This presentation concurred with the need in sport management, which is a relatively young field established around the mid-80s (Costa, 2005) but with an immense potential and amongst the fastest growing research fields in the world (Gillentine, Crow & Harris, 2009), to continue its development through explorations that elucidate comprehensive depictions of complex issues (Cunningham et al., 2021). Differently,

previous studies assessing women on the management side of sports tended to parallel research and theories from business management and social psychology (e.g., RCT, by Eagly & Karau, 2002), translating and applying concepts, frameworks, and principles to the context of sport (Welty Peachey et al., 2015). The tendency is borrowing frameworks and concepts from parent disciplines and applying those to sport organizations (e.g., Evans & Pfister, 2021; Hindman & Walker, 2020; Hovden, 2000), characterizing a derivative model of knowledge construction (Chalip, 2006). This line allowed scholars to confirm or disconfirm theories from parent disciplines establishing sport as a boundary. The present research was exploratory; thus, a different approach was employed in which theoretical foundations were not assumed or forced into the data collection or analysis.

However, the analytical framework designed by Ragins and Sundstrom (1989) was used to organize the literature review section (see Table 2.1, pp. 29-35) and part of the Results Chapter. The use of the framework highlighted the consideration of the present research for factors at multiple levels influencing women's experiences, which is the preferred path to produce knowledge in a young field such as sport management (Cunningham & Sagas, 2007). Employing the same framework to organize the review of literature and findings sections made clear the existent link between the outcomes in the present research and previous research with regards to the challenges women face as decision makers in a male-dominated field (i.e., findings related to Research Question 1).

Finally, given the purpose to draw a comprehensive picture from the experiences of an unexplored population within the sport management field, a qualitative approach was preferred and a phenomenological design was employed in the present research.

Particularly, the lived experiences of the target population were gathered via in-depth semi-structured interviews and then analyzed by the researcher using theoretical analysis. The results presented hence reflect participants' descriptions of their lived experiences. These lived experiences are rooted in personal stories, backgrounds, motivations, emotions, and sentiments, which were shared by participants and then reconstructed, yet never fully understood, by the researcher (Corbin & Strauss, 2015). This research approach agrees with the constructivist worldview, in which research findings are reproduced by the researcher but anchored on participants' views and perspectives. The paradigms that informed the approach and methods used to answer these research questions are further developed and discussed next.

3.3 RESEARCH PARADIGMS

Paradigms combine the epistemological, ontological, and methodological assumptions researchers make, and those guide their research projects (Frisby, 2005). Denzin and Lincoln (2005) define it as “a basic set of beliefs that guide action” (p. 183) that are influenced by discipline orientation, past experiences, research community, mentors and advisors (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Paradigms impact basic research assumptions, determine the nature of what is known about the topic, guide the rationale for data collection, enlighten the posture of the researcher, and speak to how the values of the researcher may impact results (Maitland et al., 2015, p. 504). It guides important choices, such as research questions, assumptions, and variables. Besides, the design of the study follows the paradigm where research questions are situated (Frear et al., 2019).

Paradigm describes a researcher's philosophical worldviews (Creswell & Creswell, 2018), which are key in directing the research agenda and project choices, since it guides epistemology and methodology and tends to agree with tendencies to conduct quantitative, qualitative, or mixed methods research (Andrew et al., 2019; Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Maitland et al., 2015). Frisby (2005) underlined the importance of combining paradigms in sport management to advance knowledge and its implications,

If we are to fully understand all dimensions of sport management, we need research to be conducted from multiple paradigms. The paradigms we operate from as researchers, whether it is positivism, pragmatism, interpretivism, critical social science, post modernism, or a combination of these paradigms, shape the questions we ask, the methods we use, and the degree to which our findings will have an impact on society (p. 2)

Cunningham et al. (2021) agreed with this assumption and added that sport management has a broad and interdisciplinary nature. However, if the discipline continues to solely rely on frameworks, theories, and approaches from other fields, it will replicate and merge paradigms and allow its own scholarship and research path to be influenced, rather than creating its own path and acknowledge its particularities and richness (e.g., link between industry and research) and social value (Andrew et al., 2019; Frisby, 2005).

Scholars have highlighted a need for sport-specific models accounting for particularities of sport management (e.g., Chaplin 2006; Costa, 2005; Fink, 2013). This study attended to this call and offered results (i.e., themes) that depict the lived experiences of women who are decision makers in motorsports in the United States, without making assumptions, and allowing themes to emerge from the descriptions offered by participants. The context of motorsports and how it may have influenced participants' experiences was considered in the research process as well. In sum, the data

collected included descriptions of challenges women who are in decision-making positions encountered, what was needed to overcome those and break the glass ceiling, and their motivation to remain in the industry amidst challenges.

3.3.1 FIELD ORIENTATIONS AND PARADIGMS

Management scientists tend to agree with positivist presumptions and assume that general laws of social behavior can be deduced or explained. Following this idea, studies are perceived as value-free, researcher's values and positionality are disregarded, and existent theories and laws inform the examinations of causes leading to an outcome or effect (Guba & Lincoln, 2005; Maitland et al., 2015). Sport management scholars tend to agree with positivism views (Frisby, 2005). Studies agreeing with the so-called scientific method, rely on objective measurements of constructs and tend to follow quantitative methods (e.g., questionnaires and surveys) prioritizing prediction, generalizability, and control (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Guba & Lincoln, 2005; Maitland et al., 2015). Contrary, constructivism follows premises that agree with qualitative approaches. The purpose is understanding the world in which an issue is inserted in, allowing subjective perceptions of reality and experiences to enlighten answers to complex issues (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Participants' views and their construction of meaning become the center of analysis, like in the present research, and the researcher recognizes her positionality and role in co-constructing data, acknowledging that her background shapes the research methods (Corbin & Strauss, 2015). The aim of constructivists is therefore understanding phenomena and building knowledge from multiple participants meanings (Creswell & Creswell, 2018), which is concurrent with the aim in the present study.

A third set of beliefs is transformative worldviews, which focuses on marginalized individuals who did not have their concerns addressed by developed theories or laws, adding novel topics to research agendas (e.g., feminism and critical race theory, see Creswell & Creswell, 2018). This set of beliefs agrees that research is not neutral and aims to promote social change, challenge the status quo and the dominance of certain groups in society (Frisby, 2005). Social issues (e.g., inequality, discrimination) through the lived experiences of unheard groups tend to be emphasized on this paradigm, which moves beyond investigations, towards questioning power relations and structures that maintain unequal and discriminatory systems. The focus is on the *why* a phenomenon happens, as well as questioning the reality and hoping to motivate change by uncovering the underlying reasons of these issues (Solorzano & Yosso, 2002). Contrary, positivist studies reflecting on the underrepresentation of women in decision-making roles in sports tend to fail to provide advice on how to change this reality. Thus, the transformative paradigm motivates reflections and changes that go beyond knowledge-building, and set a foundation that prompts social change by emphasizing the reality of minorities.

Different paradigms set the foundation for the present exploration, agreeing that knowledge flourishes in the intersection of different paradigms (Suddably, 2016, citing Thomas Kuhn, 1977). An additional motivation to combine paradigms is speaking to more fields and researchers, since scholars tend to trust studies that align with their own beliefs. Firstly, the present study followed a systematic thematic analysis and the review of literature relied on mostly positivist studies from parent disciplines (e.g., management sciences) and sport management. The data-driven inductive approach employed is systematic as well. Secondly, acknowledging the researcher's positionality in co-

constructing knowledge, the generation of themes and by allowing themes to emerge from the data without assumptions or forcing theories into data collection and analysis, the importance of the context, and the use of an inductive analysis (Corbin & Strauss, 2015; Creswell & Creswell, 2018), agreed with constructivist premises. The inductive approach entailed that the outcomes in the present study originated from participants' perspectives. Findings proposed reflect participants' voices, which started from specific experiences of participants towards general conclusions (i.e., themes) (Creswell, 2012).

3.3.2 PARADIGMS IN GENDER STUDIES

On one hand, positivist studies tend to interpret gender as a category or an opposition between men and women, presuming that the differences in organizations simply mirror societal differences. Gender differences are therefore a reality to be examined and which are sustained by societal structures and norms (e.g., social roles) (Koveshnikov, et al., 2019). Organizational behavior scholars tend to address gender differences via explanatory mechanisms (i.e., mediators) or exploring moderator effects (i.e., bias manifests as an interaction between gender and individual attributes) (Frear et al., 2019). Particularly, men are the norm and analyses determine how much women deviate from it, disregarding the context. Gender may be regarded as a control variable or a demographic factor (i.e., regarded for its moderator or mediator effect on the dependent variable), or as a variable explaining some of the variance in the outcome or that eliminates “noise” (Koveshnikov, et al., 2019). Another approach is reviewing gender as a cultural variable, in which masculinities and femininities are static and homogeneous and predict expectations for males and females (Koveshnikov, et al., 2019).

On the other hand, more in line with the research design in the present study, social constructivists enlighten the subjectivity of reality and issues by means of, for instance, observations and open-ended interviews, emphasizing symbolic relationships and meanings that construct the social world (Maitland et al., 2015). In investigating gender, studies move from the women-men distinction to analyze how practices and systems produce and maintain gender differences, for which lived discourses and narratives inform data analysis and outcomes (Koveshnikov et al., 2019). Interestingly, gender can be seen as fluid rather than static or a demographic category. Qualitative methods tend to be preferred to address the multiplicity of discourses in social construction (Guba, 1990). Some examples of social constructivist research in gender and leadership are Mills and Hoeber (2013), who followed critical research to review power relations in organizations, and Pfister and Radke's (2009), who examined constructivist gender theory. The present investigation agrees that scholarship should produce knowledge to promote discussions to facilitate change in social settings, such as welcoming more women on the management side of motorsports. The investigation supported this matter by having provided a foundation to why it is imperative to welcome more women in organizations. Besides, by highlighting experiences of women in a specific context, such as motorsports, factors that shape their career paths in the specific environment are illuminated (Eagly & Heilman, 2016).

Eagly and Sczesny (2019) recognized social roles to be a central and integrative concepts in gender studies, advising constructivist approaches in studies concentrating on gendered experiences, since social roles are not static, and are culturally and contextually bound (Eagly & Karau, 1991; Eagly et al., 2020). Rather than considering gender as a

demographic variable, to assess the female underrepresentation in decision-making, for example, research should be contextualized, context- and cultural-bound (Eagly & Heilman, 2016). They invited scholars to portray and question existing realities of women as well, in order to improve gender balance in decision-making across contexts (Eagly & Heilman, 2016). The present study concurred with these ideas and the constructivist paradigm, which aligns with the exploratory nature of the study as well. Next, further details on the approach used to accomplish the research purpose are offered.

3.4 RESEARCH APPROACH

A research approach describes the greater motivation behind a study, and reflects the intersection of the paradigm, research design, and research methods (see Creswell & Creswell, 2018, p. 43). On one hand, qualitative approaches agree with constructivist worldviews and assume that the social world is complex, and consequently research should center on multifaceted issues involving real-life scenarios (Creswell, 2007; Flick, 2009). To illustrate, given that the researcher is interested on participants' interpretations and views about phenomena (Creswell & Creswell, 2018), a common approach amongst qualitative studies is to advance the true representation of participants' perspectives in a certain context, which aims to assess social behavior and phenomena (Yin, 2016, p. 9). On the other hand, quantitative studies honor objectivity (Darvin et al., 2018).

Given the emphasis in understanding the lived experiences of women on the management side of US motorsports, and the interest to advance broad themes from specific observations, the present study employed a qualitative approach. Qualitative approaches allow researchers to gain insights about phenomena via participants'

perspectives and their descriptions of lived experiences (e.g., Darvin et al., 2018; Martin & Barnard, 2013). The focus of this study emphasized an in-depth understanding of phenomena from multiple participants' meanings rather than testing existing hypotheses (Creswell, 2012). Besides, the approach allowed particularities of the context (i.e., motivations to remain in the motorsports industry) to be examined.

Carton and Rosette (2011) underlined the importance of individualizing information through qualitative approaches to minimize the application of stereotypes, for example. The authors added that by emphasizing lived experiences, back stories, and distinct backgrounds, personal accomplishments and motivations are highlighted, which are key in reviewing stories of minority groups (e.g., women inserted in male-dominated fields). To enlighten current systems and how those are maintained in motorsports, it was key to consider the context and its nuances through the voice of participants (Hums & Sutton, 1999), such as how the racing lifestyle may affect career choices in the industry.

Although there is extensive academic work analyzing women in management, less is known about the experiences of women who passed beyond the glass ceiling and reached decision-making roles, such as descriptions of their motivations to keep pushing, and coping mechanisms needed to get there (Glass & Cook, 2016). Analogously, experiences of women on the management side of motorsports are almost invisible in academic literature (Matthews & Pike, 2016). The present research aimed to shed light on this population and offered an exploratory qualitative approach to uncover their lived experiences, while accounting for particularities in the industry of motorsports as well.

The dearth of research on women in motorsports (Waltemeyer, 2018) informed the choice for an exploratory study. This type of nature is employed in investigations of unexplored contexts, such as motorsports, and with underrepresented or uncommon populations, such as women on the management side of this field. May (1986) advanced particularities of the exploratory approach, which further guided the choice for this design in the present study:

1. The review of literature enlightens gaps in existing knowledge, indicating a rationale for a qualitative study, rather than suggest hypotheses;
2. The methodology evolves as the study progresses, but preliminary ideas about the sample and interview protocol are offered in the proposal, but changes may happen;
3. Quotes are added as supporting material and help the reader evaluate whether the theory is grounded on the data collected;
4. The discussion section suggests links between the theory and existing knowledge, in addition to indicating implications and future research.

Remarkably, Cunningham et al. (2021) noted in their review of sport management research that, similar to the present study's approach, scholars in the field have embraced novel research methods and much of this change is seen in the growth of qualitative studies. Despite this growth, limited statistical generalization is a criticism of qualitative research. This study provided analytic generalization; thus, findings can be applied to, or associated with, similar concrete situations to be judged on a case-to-case basis (Yin, 2018). Nonetheless, the chosen approach attended a call for studies portraying the experiences of underrepresented groups in sport management (Singer et al., 2019; Slack, 1996; Olafson, 1990), while paralleling methods previously used to assess women's

experiences on the management side of sports (e.g., Hovden, 2010). Building upon the research approach advanced, the particular choices for the study design are further discussed in the next section. Subsequently, the research methods are discussed, which includes remarks about the data collection, data analysis and validation of the study.

3.5 RESEARCH DESIGN

A phenomenological research design (Giorgi, 2009; Moustakas, 1994) was employed. Given the importance of accounting for the context in investigations centering on the reality of women's careers (Powell and Maniero, 1992), this design reflects the interest of the researcher to provide comprehensive descriptions of phenomena as described by participants. Data collection therefore aimed at gathering views, experiences, beliefs, reflections, motivations, emotions and sentiments, to answer the three research questions proposed. Participants shared their experiences as they wished, agreeing that knowledge-generation happens through human experience (Nowell et al., 2018). Their descriptions were then analyzed by the researcher and allowed for multiple and rich interpretations of the phenomena emphasized (Creswell & Poth, 2016).

Interviews assessed experiences from participants' introduction to motorsports, their career path in the industry, to their current role. A semi-structured interview protocol was employed as it prompted fruitful discussions and facilitated a conversational collection of participants' stories. While it allows for a certain flexibility, the protocol maintains consistency across interviews (Corbin & Strauss, 2015; Creswell & Poth, 2016). Besides, participants are still able to guide the discussion to some extent, such as by focusing on certain areas and developing more on topics that are important to them.

This was key given that women have different storylines in motorsports; for instance, some participants grew up in racing families and therefore spent a long time sharing their memories growing up at the racetrack, while others entered the industry later and briefly touched on their introduction to the sport. This flexibility was important to build trust in the research process as well, given that some stories touched on sensitive topics (e.g., sexual harassment at work). The structure allowed participants to ask questions, raise concerns, and add their views as they wished to, which helped building trust in the research process and the researcher as well. The research methods (i.e., data collection and analysis), and the validation of the study, are examined in the following sections.

3.6 RESEARCH METHODS

Creswell and Creswell (2018) suggest that research methods define the several steps, which are informed by the paradigm and the research approach chosen, in a study. These steps include the data collection, data analysis, interpretation of findings and validation of the study. The next sections expose each of these steps in the present study.

3.7 DATA COLLECTION

Data was collected via in-depth semi-structure interviews with sixteen women who are decision makers in US motorsports. The interview protocol that guided data collection is found in Appendix A. Details about the recruitment of participants are offered first, followed by a section detailing the interview protocol employed. Next, the process and details about the pilot interviews conducted are advanced. The data collection step is then summarized, before moving to the sections exposing the data

analysis. The chapter concludes with discussions regarding the positionality of the researcher, research ethics and the steps taken to ensure validation of the study.

3.7.1 PARTICIPANTS

Participants were recruited for the study based on gender (women), country where they work (United States), role (i.e., decision-making), and industry (motorsports), characterizing a purposeful sample. Like in Glass and Cook's (2016) study, the sample comprised women who broke the glass ceiling. The sample comprised women who hold positions with decision-making power, such as managers, directors and team owners. Participants work across diverse types of organizations within the motorsports industry, such as racing teams, sanctioning bodies, and racetracks, and among different series in the United States, such as IndyCar and NASCAR. The population was chosen to enlighten challenges women faced on the management side of this field, along with what was needed to navigate and overcome those challenges to reach their current roles, and their motivations to keep pushing amidst difficulties in this industry.

Finding participants that fulfilled all criteria was challenging given the small number of women on the management side of motorsports. Recruitment started with connections of the researcher and LinkedIn searches. An initial list with ten names was created. The researcher reached out to all of them and six of these women replied and agreed to participate in the study. Then, a snowball sampling was employed (Creswell & Creswell, 2018), when the first participants identified additional women who fit the criteria in their personal networks and provided their contacts to the investigator (Woodley & Lockard, 2016). From these names, the researcher reached out and invited

22 of these women to take part in the study via email. In total, 16 women agreed to participate in the study.

Participants interviewed were 16 of the highest ranking women on the management side of motorsports in the United States, with the average of 22 years of work experience in the field. These women are prominent names in the industry and currently hold key decision-making roles amongst different organizations (i.e., team and track owners). Detailed information about participants is found in Table 3.1 at the end of this chapter. Some participants did not disclose their exact roles because of the sensitive information shared (e.g., sexual harassment) given their notoriety in the field and that most people know each other in motorsports. Besides, participants felt they would be easily identified because of the sparse number of female decision makers in the industry.

3.7.2 INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

The interview protocol used for data collection was semi-structured. The structure allowed open dialogues between the researcher and participants, while still focusing on the purpose of the study and maintaining consistency across interviews (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The questions in the interview protocol (see Appendix A) were anchored on previous studies across disciplines presented in the literature review chapter and were first tested for efficacy in the pilot study.

The interview questions were developed prior to data collection and checked for efficacy with two pilot interviews, which is discussed in the next sub-section. The questions prompted discussions of participants' lived experiences, emphasizing

challenges, coping mechanisms, and motivations to continue pursuing a career amidst difficulties. Hence, they prompted descriptions of experiences centering on the three research questions proposed. Questions offered were open-ended, and broadly stated, agreeing with phenomenology premises, in which questions do not necessarily reference literature (Creswell & Creswell, 2018) (e.g., “tell me about your decision to pursue a career in motorsports...”), allowing participants to reflect and describe their experiences in detail and as they wished to tell their stories. Follow up questions were added if there was a need to clarify ideas (i.e., “could you develop on your previous comment about...”), and additional questions were included if further detailing was desired, (i.e., “could you tell me more about your family’s involvement in racing when you were a kid...”). Interviews started with questions about participants’ introduction and early relationship with motorsports (e.g., family involvement). Next, they were asked to describe their career path, from their first job to their current role in the industry. This part of the interview centered on the challenges they faced during their careers, and what was needed to navigate and overcome those (Darvin et al., 2021). Then, participants were asked to develop on their motivation to remain in the industry amidst challenges.

Participants who had an early socialization into motorsports, (e.g., those who grew up in racing families), spent more time describing their memories and introduction to motorsports than those participants who had entered the industry later. Some participants responded that they did *not* face challenges (e.g., Bia and Diana). However, as the dialog progressed and confidence in the researcher was established, challenges were revealed in all interviews. Perhaps those participants assumed that challenges meant

obstructions in their careers, which they did not perceive to encounter. As interviews progressed, all participants disclosed facing challenges.

Coping mechanisms to navigate challenges were offered as informal, and those emerged as the conversation progressed and confidence was built with the researcher. Motivations to continue pursuing a career in motorsports were clearly related to the connection participants have with motorsports, such as memories growing up and family, and were described with sentiments and emotions. The researcher's background in motorsports was beneficial in building trust with participants as they were aware that the researcher could comprehend the lingo and relate to their stories, such as when they depicted experiences growing up at the track, the traveling circus and the racing lifestyle.

3.7.3 PILOT INTERVIEWS

Two pilot interviews were conducted with women who have decision-making roles in sport organizations to check for efficacy of the interview protocol before the data collection step started. Data collected in the pilot interviews were not included in the data analysis. Given the limited number of women on the management side of motorsports, the researcher conducted the pilot interviews with women on the management side of sport organizations, since motorsports fall under the sports field umbrella. Pilot interviewees were recruited based on their gender, extensive experience in sports, and current decision-making roles (i.e., director and VP) in reputable sports organizations.

The initial protocol developed by the researcher prompted fruitful conversations and discussions during the pilot interviews. Interviewees were encouraged to describe

their lived experiences, focusing on the challenges they encountered in their career paths in sports, coping mechanisms used to overcome those, and motivations to remain in sports despite of difficulties. Since the questions prompted enough discussions and aligned with the research purpose, following a peer-debriefing session with a more experienced qualitative researcher, the questions in the initial protocol were judged appropriate and kept the same for the data collection. The number of questions proposed resulted in interviews that lasted, on average, one hour. Thus, the protocol included a suitable amount of questions to prompt in-depth discussions, while still respecting participants' busy schedules.

3.7.4 GENERAL OVERVIEW OF THE DATA COLLECTION

All interviews, and pilot interviews, were conducted via the online software Zoom given time and travel constraints. The platform was chosen given its user friendliness and accessible interface (i.e., all participants were familiar with the platform), its cost- and time-effectiveness, and the data and security management options (Archibald et al., 2019; Gray et al., 2020). Studies have reported positive attitudes from participants towards the software when it's used for qualitative data collection, with some participants rating it higher than face-to-face interviews (Archibald et al., 2019; Gray et al., 2020). The online meetings were held from the researcher's office with a closed door to ensure privacy and limited distractions and interruptions.

A week prior to each interview, participants were sent an email with the link for the online meeting and a summary of the main topics to be discussed in the interview. The note granted participants some time to reflect on their experiences and offer more

complete and well-thought depictions of their experiences (similar to Glass & Cook, 2016). At the start of each interview, the researcher reminded participants of the confidentiality procedures (i.e., non-disclosures of organization or participants' names), reminded them that the meeting was going to be recorded, and allowed questions to be asked before the recorder was started. These steps enhanced transparency, openness and trust between the researcher and respondents, encouraging interviewees to offer complete descriptions of their experiences (Gibbert & Ruigrok, 2010). The day after interviews, an email valuing participants' cooperation with the study was sent. This appreciation email contained demographic questions, which are included in Table 3.1 (p. 81).

3.7.5 FINAL REMARKS ABOUT THE DATA COLLECTION

Interviews, which were all conducted by the researcher herself and held over a three-week period, lasted between 45-75min. Meetings were scheduled to last around one hour, and they were adjusted according to participants' needs (e.g., traveling schedule). The timing of the data collection coincided with an extremely busy time in the racing season, with the Indy 500 2022 happening during those weeks, which limited the time participants had for meetings, and made the recruitment of participants harder.

When all 16 participants had been interviewed, interviews transcribed, and the data analyzed, no new themes or phenomenon were emerging; therefore, it was determined that no new participants had to be added to the study. The researcher had a peer-debriefing session with a more experienced qualitative researcher, and together it was concluded that saturation of information had been reached as major categories and themes were well-supported and developed, and all the research questions proposed had

been fully addressed by the data collected (Corbin & Strauss, 2015; Creswell & Poth, 2016). The data analysis (i.e., how the data collected was analyzed) is presented next.

3.8 DATA ANALYSIS

3.8.1 TRANSCRIPTION OF THE DATA

Interviews were recorded and transcribed verbatim to ensure that participant's intended language and speech was preserved (Giorgi, 2009). Each interview was transcribed right after the meeting concluded. The first four interviews were transcribed by the researcher and cross-checked with a more experienced qualitative researcher to ensure that the content of the interviews was garnering the information needed to answer the research questions (Yin, 2016). The questions in the protocol were reassessed and judged appropriate given that the data collected answered the research questions.

The last twelve interviews then proceeded. The researcher led the interviews, and transcription was done via the online software otter.ai. Transcripts were reviewed twice and checked for accuracy by the main investigator, and peer-debriefing sessions were held as needed throughout the data analysis stage. As previously offered, data collection stopped when saturation was reached, research questions were addressed, and themes were well-supported by the data collected. Data files (both audio and transcriptions) were safely kept in a university drive and locked in a desk in the researcher's secure office.

3.8.2 THEMATIC ANALYSIS

Braun and Clark (2006) suggested that a "thematic analysis involves the searching across a data set – be that a number of interviews or focus groups, or a range of texts – to

find repeated patterns of meanings.” (p. 86). Thematic analysis is a systematic approach in which meaning is assigned to qualitative data by evaluating and then organizing information from interviews in categories (Cho & Lee, 2014). Themes are patterns emergent from the data collected, therefore they are true to participants’ voices and experiences (Boyatzis, 1998). In sum, the researcher conducts a thematic analysis to advance themes that allude to the research question proposed in the study. The findings are therefore themes that represent patterns across interviews and depict participants’ descriptions of their lived experiences.

In the present study, a thematic analysis with constant comparison was followed and the steps suggested by Percy et al. (2015) (pp. 83 – 84) guided this analysis. The constant comparison feature meant that interconnections were established between concepts and themes after each interview was coded, and codes were compared to previously coded interview(s). This procedure is iterative and the researcher “goes back and forth between sections to rethink, revise, and sometimes recast and rewrite” patterns (Charmaz, 2014, p. 285). Besides, the analysis was inductive (i.e., started with specific observations towards grouping those into broader themes, see Creswell, 2012).

In order to offer themes, which represent patterns across interviews (Boyatzis, 1998), each interview was examined by means of in vivo and descriptive coding. The coding step was conducted in Microsoft Word and each interview was a unit of analysis. Coding in sum helps the researcher make sense of the text data and narrow down information that is relevant for the study from interviews (Creswell, 2012). Direct quotes from participants (i.e., in vivo codes) that related to the research questions being investigated (e.g., quotes depicting challenges, coping mechanisms, or motivations to

pursue a career in motorsports) were highlighted. Similarly, sentiments and emotions (i.e., descriptive codes), attendant to the research questions were highlighted.

Once data from all participants had been coded, the patterns that emerged across interviews were combined into themes that answered the research questions (Percy et al., 2015). Each theme was supported by multiple perspectives, meaning that several participants suggested lived experiences related to the same theme and thus offered different viewpoints that fit that same theme (Creswell, 2012). In sum, themes are clusters of codes from participants' descriptions of their lived experiences.

The purpose of the data analysis was to make sense of the data collected and answer the three research questions proposed (Creswell, 2012). Thus, key words and phrases that satisfied the three research questions were identified during coding (Creswell, 2013), agreeing with a postmodern emic approach where the main source of information to answer the research questions come from participants' lived experiences (Seidman, 1998). While priori codes were not forced into the analysis, previously developed concepts and ideas helped guide the emic codes that emerged.

To develop themes that answered Research Question 1, during the coding of interviews, experiences described by participants as a difficulty encountered in their careers were first coded broadly as a *challenge* under RQ1. Once all interviews had been coded, challenges that followed a similar pattern were grouped together. Since challenges that women face in the workplace have been vastly researched in the disciplines of management sciences and psychology, as evidenced in Chapter 2, the researcher evaluated whether each of the challenges identified aligned with ideas presented in Table

2.1 (pp. 29-35). Hence, Table 2.1 served as a guide during data analysis. For instance, if the emergent pattern evidenced the enactment of *gender stereotypes*, the theme was named after this concept, and so on. Notably, all challenges identified in the present study aligned with findings in previous research regarding women in management. To ensure readability of findings, the concepts and ideas used to cluster themes and delimit emergent patterns are defined at the beginning of each sub-section in the Results Chapter. These definitions mirror those found in previous studies. Besides, each theme is accompanied by a quote from a participant in the study that helps illustrate how the concept or idea manifested in the context of motorsports.

For Research Question 1, emergent themes therefore associated with concepts that had been previously identified in studies in management and psychology, and which are presented in Table 2.1. In addition to serving as a guide, Table 2.1 was the foundation used to extend on *how* some of these challenges manifest differently in sports and motorsports. Thus, the Results and Findings Chapters advance how challenges identified align with findings in previous studies, in addition to how they may manifest differently in sports and motorsports organizations. This contextualization aims at offering managers in these fields practical implications to help women succeed in the workplace.

Lastly, themes that answered RQ1 were classified according to the grouping found in previous studies that analyzed the experiences of women in management (e.g., Peus et al., 2015), which coincides with the arrangement of Table 2.1 as well. The arrangement illuminates that women face challenges at multiple levels in the workplace and follows the four levels proposed by Ragins and Sundstrom (1989), and those are societal, organizational, interpersonal, and individual. The structure enhanced readability

of findings, and allows the present findings to be compared and associated with results from previous studies. The sections in the Results Chapter that answer RQ1 (and its sub-question RQ1.1) are organized according to these four levels.

Each challenge that answered RQ1 is accompanied by sub-themes that reflect the coping mechanisms used to navigate the specific challenge. These sub-themes answered the sub-question RQ1.1 and emerged as informal mechanisms (similar to Sarathchandra et al., 2018). These sub-themes shed light on patterns across interviews that reflected how participants navigated and overcame each of the challenges. Given the lack of research emphasizing coping mechanisms and success factors that benefit women in the workplace, coping mechanisms were broadly defined and pre-determined terminology was not used. Several of these mechanisms were described as particular to motorsports as well, such as the community in racing, which are mechanisms that are yet to be explored in academia. These ideas are further explored in the Discussion Chapter.

Research Question 2 focused on the motivations participants have to continue pursuing a career in motorsports amidst challenges. Descriptions that reflected their motivation expressed an emotional attachment to motorsports. Participants articulated this link to motorsports as a personal relationship which is deeply rooted in lived experiences. Participants' expanded on this idea by discussing it in regards to *memories with their families at the track, bond with the racing community, racing family, the highs and lows of racing, the team element, the adrenaline in racing and the risks involved*. Words such as *soothing* and *a constant in life* were used to describe their relationship with the industry too. Thus, nuances of the motorsports industry emerged as an overarching theme that answered Research Question 2, which is entitled *Racing Lifestyle*.

Finally, during data analysis, the researcher created memos describing her thought process, making the analysis an evolving process that was constantly revisited, with meanings reassigned based on the constant comparison of the data (Corbin & Strauss, 2015, p. 77). After each interview was transcribed and coded, analytic memos were revisited and new analytic memos comparing ideas between already-coded interviews and the newly transcribed/coded were developed. Themes, repetitions, and variance in the data were noted. Peer-debriefing with a more experienced qualitative researcher was conducted as needed to check the data collection and data analysis stages. The next sections conclude this chapter. In several sub-sections, the positionality of the researcher, research ethics, and the steps taken to ensure validation of the study, are explored.

3.9 POSITIONALITY, RESEARCH ETHICS AND VALIDATION OF THE STUDY

3.9.1 POSITIONALITY

The researcher conducted all interviews herself, which required preparation and steps to build confidence between participants and researcher, so participants were encouraged to share in-depth information and description of their experiences (Creswell & Poth, 2016). The role of the interviewer in generating stories and meanings during interviews and data analysis were recognized (Sparkes & Smith, 2007). The data analysis was eidetic, data was assessed with an open mind, and no judgements (Moustakas, 1994).

Social construction believes that knowledge is situated historically and culturally, relying on both participants' and researchers' values, needs, and relational interactions, which cannot be objectively observed or discovered (Burr, 2015; Gergen, 2015). Accordingly, the positionality of the researcher as a research and interpretation tool was

acknowledged, such as her role in co-constructing stories during data collection and analysis, her influence in the research process and how she was influenced by it (see Corbin & Strauss, 2015). Both the context and the topic chosen for the research came from the first author's personal interest and industry connections in motorsports. The first author grew up in a family with a professional motocross athlete, and she identifies as a woman interested in investigating gender issues in sport management to foster gender diversity in the industry. The researcher is Latina, which echoes her interest in producing knowledge through voices of underrepresented groups via qualitative approaches. These disclosures outline the researcher's background, worldviews, identities, commitments, biography, cultural, and social values, which characterize her positionality (Yin, 2018).

3.9.2 RESEARCH ETHICS

Confidentiality is regarded as a major concern in interview research to ensure research ethics and rapport. To build confidence and trust in the researcher and the research process, participants were contacted via email prior to their scheduled interview and informed about the aim and procedures of the research, background information about the researcher, and confidentiality steps (e.g., nondisclosure of participants and organization names). This step established rapport (Giorgi, 2009).

At the start of each interview, the researcher restated the aim of the study, the interview steps and its focus, how confidentiality was ensured, and participants were allowed to ask questions as they pleased. All interviews' main sections started with the same questions (i.e., "please tell me about your introduction to motorsports..."), so the interviewer remained neutral and nondirective, and participants were able to share

personal stories without interference. Several additional steps were followed to ensure the validation of the study, which are examined in the next section.

3.9.3 VALIDATION OF THE STUDY

The validation of qualitative research comprises processes that attempt to reach accuracy and trustworthiness of findings (Creswell & Poth, 2016). Trustworthiness is concerned with the acceptability and usefulness of the research findings presented (Nowell et al., 2017), replacing validity and reliability regarded in quantitative research, and can be achieved through credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability considerations, as suggested by Lincoln and Guba (1985). An adequate interview process was proposed, and research data was carefully handled, to ensure trustworthiness of the results (Creswell & Poth, 2016). For instance, analytic memos with researcher's thoughts, reactions, and insights with regards to the data collected were developed alongside the coding process and were used in the data analysis process (i.e., development of themes, Corbin & Strauss, 2015; Nowell et al., 2017); and the data collected, both recordings and transcripts, were safely kept in the university drive (Yin, 2018).

Particularly, prior to each interview, an email was sent to participants and gave them a chance to reflect on the topics to be discussed in the interviews, which ensured that they shared complete descriptions of their experiences and helped establish trust with the researcher. The semi-structured approach allowed interviewees to partly drive the interviews, which enhanced the trust on the researcher and boosted credibility and confirmability of findings too (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Authenticity was met given that participants' experiences guided the interview rather than authors' perspectives (Lincoln

et al., 2011). The steps taken to ensure that the data was truthfully represented in its multiple constructions, which relied upon participants' perspectives, are detailed next and agree with recommendations by Lincoln and Guba (1985) to ensure trustworthiness.

Credibility. Rigorous data collection and analysis processes were followed to ensure credibility of the study (replacing internal validity that is regarded in quantitative studies). Credibility is supported by the complete descriptions of choices and methods used throughout the manuscript. The analytical framework used to organize factors in the literature review and findings sections contributed to and improved rigor of the study by coinciding with other studies that used the same framework (Collins & Stockton, 2018).

The interview content and findings were checked with participants as needed to assure clarity and accuracy of their voices. Peer-debriefing sessions with a more experienced qualitative researcher were conducted throughout data collection and data analysis phases as needed to ensure for accuracy of the data collected and analyzed as well. The researcher had prolonged engagement with the data (i.e., she read transcripts twice and coded each interview multiple times), in addition to developing analytic memos alongside the coding step (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Transferability. This concern guides the application of the findings to contexts beyond the environment of the study, or a case-to-case transfer, similar to external validity in quantitative research (Nowell et al., 2017). Since “the sample is transparently and fairly representative of the target population or is clearly information-rich about the topic, readers may be persuaded to apply the findings to similar people or situations outside the sample itself.” (Percy et al., 2015, p. 79). In-depth and rich descriptions of the

findings were therefore offered to help other researchers judge transferability of the present findings on a case-to-case basis (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Comprehensive descriptions of themes and several direct quotes are provided in the results and discussion sections and allow the reader to develop their own interpretations of the findings and judge transferability as well. Besides, the analytical framework used to organize the Literature Review and Results chapters is a transferability path (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Dependability. Dependability is achieved by ensuring credibility (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) since it is a reliability concern and refers to how the research was conducted (i.e., if it can be traced, if used applicable instructions and protocols, if ethical and logical research practices were followed, if thick discussions and documentation during the process were developed, if analytic memos were kept, Nowell et al., 2017). The tracing and paralleling of the research process was enhanced by the structured and systematic procedures followed. These steps were detailed across sections in the manuscript, such as the coding process and thematic analysis used (Creswell & Poth, 2016).

Consistency during data collection was maintained as interviews started with the same question and a semi-structured interview guide was used (see Appendix A). Pilot interviews were used prior to data collection to ensure dependability of the protocol. During data collection, interviews were recorded and transcribed verbatim, certifying that participants' words and language were preserved (Giorgi, 2009). Thus, findings reflect participants' experiences as they wished to describe them (Corbin & Strauss, 2015). Data collection steps ensured that good quality recording and thick documentation were kept. The main investigator also developed analytic memos during data collection and analysis.

Confirmability. Confirmability replaces the idea of objective results and supports that “researcher’s interpretations and findings are clearly derived from the data, requiring the researcher to demonstrate how conclusions and interpretations have been reached” (Norwell et al., 2017, p. 3). Since the other three criteria are fulfilled, confirmability is satisfied in the present study as well (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) as it relates to the ability of other researchers to confirm results (Forero et al., 2018). Particularly, the themes that reflected challenges offered by participants relied on definitions from previous studies, which were explored in the literature review section. Differently, the sub-themes related to RQ1.1 were defined as informal mechanisms, while the themes that addressed RQ2 reflected factors particular to motorsports, which were not explored in previous studies and thus were not defined by previously explored phenomena (as themes in RQ1).

To enhance confirmability, the research process was reinstated several times from its multiple sides so the reader can understand how and why each of the steps were followed, for instance, methodological and analytical choices (Norwell et al., 2017). The research process was thoroughly described, in addition to the acknowledgment of the researcher’s positionality. Additional quotes supporting each of the themes that answer RQ1 and RQ1.1 are suggested in Tables B.1 and B.2 (Appendix B).

The next chapter presents the results. Findings are organized in themes, which are “well-developed categories (themes, concepts) that are systematically developed in terms of their properties and dimensions [...] that explains something about a phenomenon” (Hage, 1972, p.80, cited by Corbin & Strauss, 2015). RQ1 and RQ1.1 are presented together in the first section, followed by RQ2 in the subsequent section.

Table 3.1 Participants

Participant	Age	Marital Status	# of Kids	Former driver	Racing family	Highest Degree	Years in motorsports	Current Role	Interview duration (minutes)
Ayla	51	divorced	1	No	No (early intro)	Associate Business	22	Director Business Development	62
Bia	62	separated	1	No	No (early intro)	Masters in Kinesiology	30	CE	45
Diana	48	single (in a relationship)	0	No	No (early intro)	MBA	12	Upper Management	45
Ella	42	single (in a relationship)	0	No	No (early intro)	BA Psychology	13	VP, Business Development	55
Gianna	55	single	1	No	No (early intro)	BAS	35	Sponsorship Consultant	52
Heidi	44	married	1	No	Yes	Doctorate	25	Director of Marketing	56
Joy	52	married	4	No	No	BSBA	13	CFO and Co-owner	48
Kia	42	divorced	3	No	Yes	Bachelors	2	President and founder	45
Lola	46	married	2	Hobby	Yes	BBA Marketing	25	Owner/President	60
Maria	47	married	0	Yes	Yes	BA Communications	30	COO	45
Nina	32	single	0	No	No	BS Sports Management	10	Director, Partnership Marketing	60
Paige	44	single	0	No	No	BS	21	President/VP	45
Rosie	60	single	0	No	Yes	Incomplete college	40	CEO	60
Sofia	65	widow	1	Yes	No (early intro)	Incomplete college	51	Mid/Upper Management	60
Yara	36	married	0	No	Yes	Bachelor of Arts	16	VP, Events Operation	75
Zaya	52	married	6	No	No (early intro)	BBA	7	Product Manager	60

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

The purpose of the study was to identify the challenges women who are in decision-making positions faced throughout their careers in motorsports (RQ1), in addition to uncovering how they navigated and overcame these challenges (RQ1.1), and their motivations to continue pursuing careers in the industry amidst challenges (RQ2). Building upon the research questions proposed, an interview protocol was developed, and sixteen women were interviewed. This chapter provides the main findings of the study. Tables B.1 and B.2 (Appendix B) include additional quotes from interviews that further support each of the themes advanced in this chapter.

This chapter has been structured as follows: the first section contains the challenges participants have faced throughout their careers in motorsports (RQ1) and those are organized according to the four levels in the framework offered by Ragins and Sundstrom (1989). Each challenge is accompanied by sub-themes reflecting the coping mechanisms (RQ1.1) participants used to navigate/overcome the specific challenge. Thus, results for RQ 1 (i.e., challenges) and RQ1.1 (i.e., coping mechanisms) are presented jointly. Next, results associated with RQ2 are present in a separate section (i.e., motivations to continue pursuing a career amidst challenges), and describe a fifth level of analysis depicting the nuances of the motorsports industry as key motivators for participants to continue pursuing a career in the field.

4.1 FINDINGS: CHALLENGES AND COPING MECHANISMS (RQ 1 AND RQ1.1)

RQ1: What are the main challenges women encounter on the management side of motorsports in the United States?

RQ1.1: How do women navigate and overcome these challenges?

Results of Research Question 1 evidenced that the most prominent challenges faced by participants were at the societal and individual levels. Notably, most challenges were an enactment of gender stereotypes, or associated with this societal phenomenon. Coping mechanisms, which answered Research Question 1.1 were mostly described as informal interpersonal factors and individual traits. These coping mechanisms are found under each of the main themes (i.e., challenges) as sub-themes. Nonetheless, the next sections include results that answer both RQ1 and RQ1.1.

4.1.1 SOCIETAL LEVEL CHALLENGES

4.1.1.1 *Stereotypes* – “I mean, no question that it’s a man’s world... There’s no questioning that because when you’re in this garage area with all these guys, there’s always rumors, there’s always battling the: “Is she really here because she wants to work? Or is she here to marry a rich driver?”” Heidi

The strongest pattern supported across interviews evidenced that women who are decision makers in motorsports experience gender stereotyping, which challenge their career success given that these societal expectations do not align with expectations for those working in the motorsports industry. Stereotypes are preconceived societal

expectations of how women are expected to behave. For instance, they are expected to be caring, nurturing, and prioritize social skills, which explains why they are assumed to fit and thrive in environments and roles that require such skills, such as in education and mid-management roles. Differently, men are perceived to be task- and achievement-oriented, aggressive and emotionally tough, which is why they are expected to thrive in fields that align with those traits, such as motorsports (Koenig et al., 2011).

This theme included participants' descriptions of a perceived need women have to prove themselves more than men given that feminine traits are not expected to fit a career in motorsports or for decision making roles (i.e., high-management is assumed to be male-typed, Heilman, 2012). Thus, their abilities and skills were largely underestimated in organizations because they are women. The underestimation resulted in limited career opportunities and led to career stagnation at times. The underestimation happened more at the beginning of participants' careers or until they established a reputation in the field.

Thirteen participants reported facing challenges related to gender stereotypes and gender norms in their careers in motorsports. Most participants shared episodes in which stereotyping was evident, such as when they were not acknowledged in meetings, their ideas were not listened to, and how their skills and capabilities were largely underestimated in the field. Rosie believes that these attitudes, such as doubting women's skills, tend to be subtle, "the majority of men wouldn't necessarily put you down to your face. I was just invisible. And, you know, "okay, little lady. Come on. You can write with me," like I wasn't capable of writing on my own." According to Sofia, "it was most evident that they looked at me as a woman incapable of making decisions." Kia added

that these attitudes oftentimes stem from a perceived misfit between expectations for women and motorsports. She stressed that motorsports tend to be linked to traits such as toughness and risk-taking, which are more often associated with men than women. She revealed clear difference between expectations for boys and girls with regards to risk-taking and toughness, when she talked about the expectations when she was growing up at the racetrack compared to how she sees her three sons in that same environment.

Bia highlighted that most women who are decision makers in motorsports in the United States become super achievers. Women tend to overperform because they feel the need to overcompensate at work to counter stereotypes and prove themselves. Diana talked about the “chip on the shoulder” that we women carry in the space and justified her reason to overcompensate and give 120% at work, “I don’t want you to think that I don’t know the answer because I’m a woman. [...] Or be perceived as stupid. We don’t want to be perceived as not enough and [...] I don’t want to be asked a question that I don’t know the answer to.” Similarly, Lola offered her frustrations with the need to prove herself when making decisions in the environment,

I don’t feel like you get that same [credibility as men], but you have to prove yourself a little bit more. And I try especially hard if I’m making a decision on rules or something like that to make sure that I am right before I say anything. I double check my facts and make sure that so that I feel confident going into it that I know exactly what I’m talking about.

Ayla shared that since her voice was not heard, she had to flow her ideas through her boss and he would share her ideas with others, which meant that she did not receive credit for her ideas. Zaya went through similar situations and shared the frustration when others received credit and monetary compensation, and she did not, based off her ideas

and work. Given that they did not receive credit for their ideas and accomplishments, earning respect and building a reputation took even longer. Building their work reputation was associated with building their brand in the industry, as offered by Paige.

To build their reputation, participants said they needed to prove their intentions in the industry, and this need was enhanced for participants who did not grow up in racing, while Lola, Maria, and Rosie did, for example. Joy, who had no background in motorsports and joined the industry as a consultant later in her career, mentioned that it took some time for the team to recognize her intentions and that she was their biggest advocate. Ayla, Gianna and Heidi, talked about detrimental rumors and gossips about women's intentions in racing, especially in the beginning of their careers and before they had established their reputation and personal brands. Heidi illustrated this stereotype with regards to the intentions of women in racing with an episode she faced early in her career,

I got the opportunity to go out to a speedway and the owner of the racetrack was out there, and I was this kid writing for my school newspaper, and I thought I was the coolest kid ever. And I walked up because I was going to interview him. And he literally looks at me and he goes, "Oh, honey, Jeff Gordon's already married." And that's all he said. And I was like, "I'm here reporting from our school newspaper," and he just walked away.

Participants evidenced the stereotype of women as more "emotional" and "difficult" than men. Heidi voiced an episode that made the existence of those labels clear to her, "my boss said he was trying to get me to tone down my attitude a little bit. And he said, "You got to understand that you're a woman. So you come across as a bitch. If you are a man, you'd be considered assertive.'" The next three challenges discussed result from the enactment of gender stereotypes – *sexism*, *unconscious bias* and *hegemonic masculinity*.

Type A Personalities. Participants disclosed that not only are women in motorsports are overachievers and overcompensate at work, but most people in the industry are. Heidi represented her overachiever personality when she offered that, although she grew up in a racing family and had an extensive network in the space, she intentionally built her own brand through hard work, “I always worked really hard to earn the respect.” Rosie echoed this idea and said that she chose to not mention her last name given that her parents were known in racing, and she wanted to build her own career in the space.

Diana represented the like-minded personalities that tend to characterize those who work in the environment by saying that “when you get to motorsports, everyone up and down that paddock, usually we’re all type A personalities, we’re all overachievers. You don’t get to be in the Indy 500 unless you’re an overachiever. So, then it’s like the overachiever group gets together..” This stems from the premise that those who work in motorsports are passionate about these sports and their lifestyle, which was what every participant in the study suggested. The passion had positive factors, such as the like-minded personalities coming together in the field with a common passion, and forming “extended families” and the “traveling circus.” Contrary, this shared passion had negative effects and characterized a challenge at the individual level for some participants. Zaya illustrated this side, “I wish that I could turn it off sometimes. [...] But here I am because this is important to me.” These ideas associated with the passion for their careers are examined later under the individual level challenges section.

Focus on the supportive people. Most people in the industry (men and women) were described as supportive and who focus on a personality-fit rather than gender expectations and gender fit. Gianna echoed what several participants alluded to by reinforcing that in order to thrive in the industry the focus should be on the majority of people who are supportive: “Why do I care what one person thinks because I’ve got 20 other people that I’m dealing with that don’t think that way? [...] if I was the kind of person who focused on a negative comment, I could never do what I do.”

Men as allies. Like the previous idea, all of the participants mentioned men as important allies in their career path in motorsports, especially given that motorsports are male-dominated sports. To illustrate, Rosie talked about men who elevated her and included her in conversations and meetings. Ella offered that she had important male leaders who were fundamental for her professional growth. Paige described an important mentor who supported her through uncertain moments and important decisions in her career when she needed support from someone with more experience than her,

he really helped me navigate the team and when needed, to set the tone if I was not making any headway. But then, I mean, he also, there was a little bit of tough love, where he was like, “just suck it up,” like, “what are you gonna do about it?,” and I learned a lot from him in in those two years, door was always open.

Confidence building. Even when you are not acknowledged in a room, according to Ayla, claiming your chair at the table and voicing your opinions comes with confidence-building. Participants discussed personal ways to gain confidence, which are discussed subsequently under the individual level factors. Ella talked about gaining confidence with professional maturity. Rosie seemingly talked about how early in her career she concentrated her efforts in being present in meetings and being an active

listener to absorb information and to gain knowledge from those with more experience. She offered that she learned the room and, gradually, she started introducing her opinions and ideas, and she was heard. She avoided taking the stereotypes personally and she stayed in the room, until people “saw” her, and she was not invisible anymore.

Risk-taking and accepting opportunities, even when you were unsure you can accomplish them, was offered by Bia, Paige, Joy and Sofia, to help them build confidence and their personal brands. Earning respect becomes part of one’s brand and reflects in confidence. Reframing failure as learning and an opportunity for growth and change, as advanced by Joy and Paige, and understanding that failure does not define success, as offered by Nina, were key ideas to build confidence and accept challenges. Interestingly, Sofia and Maria offered that having been a driver helped them build trust from others, since they had that extra perspective that translated into credibility on the business-side.

4.1.1.2 Sexism – “So I will tell you one thing that I don’t like, I don’t like to be called a lady. There is no F* lady in motorsport. You have to be tough.” Sofia

Participants reported experiences of sexism in motorsports, such as receiving worse treatment in the workplace compared to male colleagues, offensive language towards women, catcalling, and sexual harassment in the workplace. These descriptions align with the *sexism*, which defines detrimental attitudes and oppression that women face that are based on gender and tend to reflect the endorsement of gender stereotypes (Shorter-Gooden, 2004; Swim & Cohen, 1997). Sexist attitudes towards women include misinterpretations and misconceptions about their intentions as well. In motorsports, this misconception is evident as participants described that women are perceived to join the

industry to marry a driver. Contrary to previous studies that classified sexism at the organizational level (e.g., Hindman & Walker, 2002), in this research, sexist behaviors and language were reported as an industry-wide phenomenon and were classified at the societal level given that they reflected the endorsement of gender stereotypes in the field.

Six participants described challenges that illuminated sexist behaviors and language, which enacted feelings of disrespect towards them. Several women suggested that comments about their looks and catcalling are common in motorsports. Kia shared her frustration, “I got cat called the other day when I was at the track, I was like, “really? 40 years old, this is the best you’ve got right now?!.”” Lola added that being a woman may be helpful to get some things done in a male-dominated field, but she evidenced the fine line between a compliment and a comment that is inappropriate.

Gianna depicted a scene when she faced sexual harassment and she said that it happened multiple times while she worked as a consultant in the space: “sometimes people would say things like, “Well, yeah, we can talk about it, why don’t you come back to my hotel room, and we can have a conversation?.” Or “why don’t we go out to dinner, and then we’ll talk about it.” I did have that happen to me from time to time.” Most participants did suggest that these episodes happened in the early years of their careers in the industry, and before they had established their reputation and earned respect in the space. Zaya added that another difficulty is that these behaviors and comments are usually not repressed in the industry, and are almost expected in this male-dominated space,

it's completely different now, but in my 20s, sexual harassment was all the time. I say sexual harassment, but it was just very inappropriate talk. Behavior was just very much accepted, very tolerated and expected, like, "Okay, you want to be in this man's world? Well, you're just gonna have to hear this. You're just gonna have to listen to this, you're just gonna have to deal with this."

Rosie said that she would simply pretend she did not see it, or laugh it off, pretending she did not care about it. Zaya expressed that those attitudes are even more prominent for women in male-dominated roles, such as sales, in the field "now companies will still stand up for you, but before, as a woman, you had to stand up for herself. And I think, if you're going to work in a male-dominated role, you need to learn how to do that."

As previously mentioned, women tend to be stereotyped as emotional in the industry. Participants said that showing emotion, regardless of what happened, was not an option and perceived as a weakness. Since some sexist behaviors and language are not repressed in motorsports, Lola and Zaya said that keeping it together and crying somewhere else where no one could see them was a better option. The racing community was described as a "small industry" by all participants as well. Nonetheless, calling out someone for a comment or behavior could be complicated and result in problems.

Societal wave. Joy pointed to the societal momentum, which is broader than motorsports, that is giving incentive to women to speak up when they are uncomfortable. Participants evidenced the importance of not only developing thick skin, but also standing up for yourself, as Paige offered. Organizational cultures have more clear boundaries of acceptable behaviors as well, as highlighted by Zaya.

Allyship. In a community-based industry, especially early in one's career, finding leaders and mentors to ask for advice from, share issues with, and role models to look up

to, was offered as a key resource to navigate delicate and demanding situations. For instance, Ayla stated that she worked for a leader who set clear boundaries and expectations in the company with regards to women, which meant that she felt safer,

What I love about [my boss] so much is that he made it clear everyone, “treat this woman like she’s your sister.” [...] He set the tone right away for me. [...] And I remember years later, a crew guy from one of the other teams came over to my boss’ office at the racetrack, and he said, “Ayla is so nice. And I’ve been friendly with her for years. I wanted to come over to ask if it’d be okay if I asked her out on the date.” And my boss looked at him, and said, “no.”

Alongside, participants offered that female mentors and role models who also worked in motorsports were unique resources because they may have experienced the same issues in their careers. Zaya said that for those reasons she would seek mentors and role models who also work in the field, “especially other women that had manager roles or VP roles and so forth, and just really pay close attention to how they handled situation.”

4.1.1.3 *Unconscious bias* – “there were definitely times when people underestimated me and that manifested in people being condescending or mansplaining” Diana

Another pattern across interviews that reflected the enactment of gender stereotypes in motorsports, and for that reason classified at the societal level, included participants’ descriptions of unintended attitudes and comments that they encountered in the space, which evidenced existent unconscious bias built upon societal beliefs and expectations about women. For example, when friends and loved ones made comments about participants’ careers, such as how women should put their family above their careers. Unconscious bias defines unintended attitudes and language rooted in gender expectations and stereotypes (Bartlett, 2009; Greenwald & Banaji, 1995). Swim and

Cohen (1997) evidenced the connection between these biases and sexism by using *subtle sexism* to define “openly unequal and harmful treatment of women that goes unnoticed because it is perceived to be customary or normal behavior” (p. 104).

Four participants reported shared descriptions of such unconscious bias. Ayla explained that these biases are rooted in societal beliefs, and are unconscious because they some comments are made, for example, by friends and co-workers she trusts, and who have no bad intentions, “I think it was a lot of unconscious bias. [...] And I still get that to this day. There’s still a lot of bias. There’s people I’m friends with, who I work with, that will do things, say things that are biased and they don’t even realize it.” Joy and Lola shared their frustration when people assume that men are in charge, or when the question “where is your husband” is posed. Lola revealed that this happens to her to this day, “when I go to trade shows, even now still a lot of times people are like, “Where’s your husband?” Or “where’s the man that’s in charge?.”” The assumption is that men are in charge in the field, revealing that the authority of women is still questioned.

Assertive communication and without confrontation. Joy highlighted that it is hard to decide how to respond to such a situation at the moment without much time to think it through and in a short reaction time. All four women mentioned they wanted to address the situation and clearly communicate their roles without making the other party uncomfortable. Joy mentioned that she discussed with a mentor and her response was to hand out her business card respectfully and inform her role to the other party, and that she would be the best point of contact for such communications. According to Ayla, oftentimes when you clearly communicate your role to the other party, they respond that

they were not aware of their mistakes and apologize for it, and they do not make the mistake again. Thus, participants used communication as an avenue to inform and highlight the unconscious bias and educate the other party.

4.1.1.4 Hegemonic Masculinity – “On the starting grid of the Indy 500, we had a quiet moment, the two of us, and she said, “I can’t believe I’m seeing this in my lifetime. I used to feel so alone.”” Diana

None of the participants questioned the male hegemony in motorsports, and they all underlined that the industry “is the way it is” rather than describing this male dominance in the space as a challenge. The hegemonic masculinity theme combined comments that evidenced that “motorsports is still a men’s world.” The theme includes descriptions of implicit systems and mechanisms that maintain men’s status in the field. For instance, participants described that they have been unfairly passed over for job opportunities that were unfairly given to men because masculine traits are more valued (than women’s) in the field. These descriptions fit the idea of masculine hegemony, which terms power relations built through culture and institutions and sustain the higher status of men in certain fields (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). Men therefore succeed in careers in these fields more than women, such as in motorsports, given the preferred promotions and career opportunities they receive. Participants stressed that since male dominance is perceived as “normal” in racing, women feel like they do not belong and are allegedly trying to enter an industry and roles they have traditionally not been part of.

Ella shed light to this idea by saying that, “Motorsport has been traditionally known as a male dominated sport, period. And it’s still the case. All you got to do is walk

around the paddock and you see that.” Zaya mentioned that, in practice, the male-hegemony means that women who want a career in the industry must be comfortable working with men and in an environment where women are a minority, and all the consequences that come with that. For instance, Joy stated that it can feel unsettling and unwelcoming at times, because women can feel like they do not belong or fit the masculine culture that is overarching.

Speak the language. Ayla evidenced the importance of communicating clearly and learning the lingo to belong, especially as a minority group member, and have her voice heard. She mentioned that is one of her tools to get a message across,

I’ve learned to speak their language. One of my mentors said that to me. I said, “I’m having a real hard time breaking through ideas to this team,” she goes “just go in there and speak their language, you know speak: their language.” I’m like, “what do you mean?.” I tried a few things that worked. But I am just trying to speak their language, and still trying to figure that out. [...] But you gotta know how to lead a room, that’s masculine energy. As a woman in a room full of men, you’ve got to learn the room.

Gianna and Sofia added that they see it as a room full of people, rather than full of men. Paige and Rosie, similarly, advised to learn the room, be an active listener to absorb information, conduct research, and gradually introduce ideas and back those up with data. These steps help reputation-building. Next, the lack-of-fit challenge is explored.

4.1.1.5 Lack-of-fit – “I’m not thinking racing, because to me, that was also such a different level. And I didn’t see women doing it.” Diana

The lack-of-fit theme includes participants’ observations about a perceived incompatibility between feminine traits and motorsports. The sense women have of not

belonging in the field contributes to a lack of awareness of possible career paths and possible successful future for women in the field. This idea concurs with the premise that women face enhanced challenges to enter and thrive in male-dominated fields, such as motorsports, because of a perceived incompatibility between the demands in these fields (e.g., toughness) and feminine traits (e.g., social skills, nurturing, caring) (Paustian-Underdahl et al., 2014). Likewise, certain roles, such as high-level management, are assumed to be male-typed since those are assumed to require masculine traits (i.e., task- and achievement-orientation, and emotional toughness, Eagly et al., 2020). The present theme therefore aligns with ideas advanced in the *lack-of-fit* model (Heilman, 2001; 2012), which defined the perceived misfit between women and certain roles and fields.

Nine of the sixteen participants agreed that this perceived lack-of-fit helps explain that women do not even consider decision-making careers in motorsports as possible career paths. Additionally, the lack of women means there is a lack of role models on the management side of motorsports. Their underrepresentation sustains the presumed misfit and lowers the perceptions of potential future selves for women in the field.

Despite women's passion for racing and fandom for different racing series, the assumed lack-of-fit was described as a strong barrier given that it prevents women from even considering a career in motorsports as a feasible path for them. Yara clarified that even women who follow and are motorsports fans do not see possible future career paths in racing, given that, "if you watch it from a spectator perspective, you don't see all of the behind-the-scenes jobs and you still don't see everything, you see what's involved with drivers and teams because those are visible to the camera."

Nina stressed that the issue is the lack of awareness of different careers on the business of motorsports, since certain departments, such as administration, marketing and PR, have female representation, “we are already here, you just can't see us! We're doing all the tasks that you can't see but are fundamental to the organization and the success of these series.” Likewise, Lola depicted what Paige defined as “unsung heroes,”

[women's] stories aren't being told. [...] We're out there doing stuff, and we're not going “hey, look, what I did,” you know. And there are women in motorsports, we're just not celebrating them, I guess. Or we're not noticing them because they're busy getting stuff done.

The participants who grew up in racing families and those who had an early introduction to motorsports (Table 3.1, p. 81) did perceive the business side of racing to be a possible career path. Rosie grew up in a racing family, but she recognized that it “probably didn't even cross the mind of the majority of women over the past few decades to go into motorsports. And it was only if you had a background of some kind of association.”

Making themselves visible and being part of the change. In order to be more inviting for women on the management side of motorsports, Lola offered that, “by highlighting some of the women that are doing stuff like this, by me being a strong female leader at my track, I am encouraging all little girls that are there to become whatever the hell it is that they want to be.” Alongside, the change starts early on, and families are important socialization mechanisms, as Yara offered, “I meet guys and they talk about their little girls and I'm like, ‘if you got questions, just call. I'm more than happy to share my experience and to share the opportunity, to show them around’.” All participants suggested that they are actively trying to make a difference and be part of the change. They described themselves as a point of reference to women who need, for

example, advice or any type of support coming into the industry. Their role as mentors, advocates, and their willingness to help was made evident in all interviews.

Enabling change through their roles. Women who are in ownership positions, or have some type of authority, such as Lola, are purposefully making decisions that will allow changes to happen, “I actually tend to hire a lot more women. Our track has, in addition to me, is at least 50% staffed by women. And it’s not just in the ancillary roles.” Similarly, Joy discusses that success on the track may be an avenue to raise awareness to the business-side of motorsports, “I can take that success and I can use that as an opportunity to raise awareness.” Moreover, as previously mentioned, some departments within organizations in the industry do have female representation and could serve as examples and an avenue to incite broader change in the field, as Diana offered:

It is definitely easier now than it was because we’re making ourselves more visible. [...] we can’t scare that next generation off, we need to make things even easier and more accessible for women to understand how they can approach these types of roles, especially within motorsport on the business-side, and we’ve done an excellent job in PR marketing.

Kia added that change requires thinking outside-the-box. She acknowledged that making changes to the status quo in a male-dominated field is uncomfortable, but she is devoted and became part of the change by opening a nonprofit organization to help women enter and succeed in careers at the track and on the business of racing. She invited everyone in the industry to embrace change, “We have to be committed to being uncomfortable [...] change really comes when you’re uncomfortable. So let’s get uncomfortable.” Her commitment to being part of the change was echoed by all participants, who have various strategies to help the industry flourish. Organizational level challenges are explored next.

4.1.2 ORGANIZATIONAL LEVEL CHALLENGES

4.1.2.1 *Token Status* – “at the beginning of my career, I hoped that you didn’t notice that I was a woman, [...] because there weren’t any of us, I was the only one in the room” Diana

The present theme included participants’ descriptions that evidence that being a minority group member negatively affects the experiences of women in motorsports. To illustrate, they shared that they feel a need to constantly prove wrong judgments about women in management (e.g., women are assumed to be too difficult and emotional for such roles), which follow social beliefs. In order to avoid being perceived based on general expectations about women (or the female stereotype), women need to outperform men (i.e., non-tokens) to prove their individual value when they are a minority group in a space, such as in motorsports (Kanter, 1977; Lyness & Thompson, 2000). In sum, the pattern that emerged across interviews included in this theme evidenced that women’s path in racing is tougher than men’s, particularly in the early years, since they need to prove their abilities and intentions more to earn respect, build a reputation, and receive job opportunities, which follows their minority status.

Nine of the sixteen participants discussed challenges that were a consequence of women’s minority status in motorsports and the organizations they worked for. Ella illustrated the feeling that women need to prove themselves more than men early in their careers in the industry to gain space by saying that, “everybody kind of like tiptoes around or kind of walks on eggshells for a while, but I do think it takes a little bit longer

[than for men] to prove yourself, for sure.” Ella and Zaya added that being in male-dominated roles in motorsports adds a layer of difficulty. Zaya said that,

when you are at race events, men tend to be doubtful of your knowledge. And it is a male dominated sport. I don’t care what type of racing it is – car, boat, motorcycle. And I’ve always kind of had nontraditional roles, being a stockbroker, typically, which is a male-dominated position as well.

Joy and Nina, who did not grow up in racing families, suggested that it took even longer to prove themselves and gain space both in their organizations and in the industry since they did not have known last names or networks built in racing, like Heidi and Rosie did. Nina expressed that her intentions were misinterpreted in the organization at times, “no one would ever see that I’m genuine, and I care for the organization, the genuine care for my coworkers, they all see it as personal gain.” Likewise, Joy added that, there was “a fair amount of me trying to prove myself before there was full buy in from the staff for sure. [...] it was definitely a challenge to show them that I was absolutely their biggest advocate.”

Differently, Heidi, Lola, Maria and Rosie, who grew up in racing families, had a different challenge to prove their intentions. These participants felt that they needed to prove their abilities and that they earned their roles in motorsports, and were not gifted their positions because of their families, either because their family had connections or because the family owned a business. Maria illustrated the issues she encountered in the beginning of her career: “they just automatically didn’t respect me because I was young, because I was female, and because I was there working with my father.”

Building a resourceful portfolio. Participants mentioned that building a well-rounded portfolio helped them prove their worth as individuals rather than being perceived as a representative of a minority group, and stand out as resourceful and valuable in their organizations. Maria and Rosie expressed that gaining experiences in different skills enhanced their value in organizations. They highlighted the importance of branching out and acquiring applicable skills outside motorsports, such as in marketing.

Heidi claimed that she was granted several professional opportunities because of her multiple skills and job experiences in racing. Particularly, she worked for a racetrack, a team, a sanctioning body, and when, later in her career, she joined the sponsorship-side, she had a comprehensive overview of the industry. Diana illustrated the value of knowing different tasks as it relates to the unique team element in motorsports,

you have to know and be an expert on a group of tasks, because racing is so intense, and so many things can happen. [...] You kind of have to know a little bit about this and a little bit about that, because if all of a sudden this person next to you is dealing with a challenge and they kind of need you to help them and so you really have to learn how to be flexible. And because there's this common goal of getting the car on the grid, or, whatever, you're up against the clock.

Volunteering was advanced as an imperative tool to get one's foot in the door and gain experience in the industry. Maria mentioned that interns are expensive for organizations in motorsports due to the amount of traveling required, which is why several participants offered that they had volunteered across different roles and organizations in the industry to build a portfolio and a network in racing. Volunteering was used by some participants as means to prove themselves, and build their reputation (e.g., as hard workers). An extreme example is Yara, who volunteered for 10 years, alongside her job, before she got

opportunities that resulted from it. Giana suggested some accomplishments of her volunteer work and why she would still volunteers today,

My first job in the industry was a volunteer position, with a truck team. [...] I learned early on, [...] to volunteer my time. I still do that at times. I'm gaining that advantage. Because I'm able to see things and start to pull in information about what might a sanctioning organization or a particular sport, but then also, it allows me then to take the information I've had from other sports and help solve the problem in the new sport that I might be in, because I've already seen it being addressed somewhere else [...] certainly just to get experience to hear the language. Language is critical. You have to have the terminology down. If you don't have the terminology down, you can't communicate, and that that requires immersion.

Participants expressed that volunteering helped them build a network as well, which was evidenced as a major resource in such a close-knit industry, or to "get your name out" as Sofia defined it. According to Heidi, the main resources to succeed in the industry are "who you know, not what you know. So I collected every business card followed up with every person I met.." Networking is key given Lola's definition of the racing community as "a very tight group. It is a very small industry. And everybody knows everybody, that is a good and a bad thing. But I think that just makes it like it's almost local."

Finally, Joy said that in addition to building a portfolio that is resourceful, women need to keep track of their accomplishments, backup ideas with data, and be able to communicate clearly their value to organizations, "Be very clear about what value you bring and keep track of the value that you bring so that you can articulate that value [...] be super aware of what your role is and bring your best [...] tenacity always outweigh skill." Joy and Ella added that being confident in your capabilities and skills, especially in male-dominated roles, such as sales, is key to build a powerful self and reputation.

4.1.2.2 *Glass Cliff* – “I looked at the job as a kamikaze job” Sofia

The glass cliff phenomenon refers to the tendency to see women selected to lead organizations in high-risk situations or when those are performing poorly (Ryan et al., 2016). Sofia was the only participant who shared descriptions that aligned with this idea. She shared that she was hired for a “kamikaze job.” This description refers to when she was hired to lead a change management project in a traditional motorsports organization that was performing poorly. The glass cliff is a challenge because decision makers tend to be blamed if organizations perform poorly. Hence, if a woman leads such a project, her image could be harmed if the organizational outcome is not ideal, which could reinforce the presumed misfit between the leader and female stereotypes too (Ryan et al., 2016).

Social Skills. Although Sofia understood the risks in the kamikaze job she was hired for, she relied on her social skills to build teams and inspire them to accomplish tasks. She added that she created new departments, and hired new teams, to create allow change to happen from. In the next section, interpersonal level challenges are proposed.

4.1.3 INTERPERSONAL LEVEL CHALLENGES

4.1.3.1 *Old boys’ club* – “I definitely think there’s just sometimes a little bit of an easier path for the good old boys’ club” Ella

The old boys’ club refers to the ingroup and higher status that men have in male dominated or culturally masculine fields, such as motorsports. The present theme therefore included a pattern of quotes across interviews that evidenced the disadvantages women encounter in motorsports because they are not part of the old boys’ club, or given

the lower status of women in the space. This ingroup/outgroup dynamic compromises women's human and social capital in the workplace as they are granted limited career opportunities to advance professionally or to build resources (i.e., not part of the elite group). Disadvantages were described across interviews as, for instance, limited career, task, and promotion opportunities. Moreover, participants shared experiences that reflected women's frustration with the advantages granted unfairly to the old boys' club, such as job promotions. This system and the advantages given to ingroup members have been shown to help maintain men's status in most positions of power in sports (Walker & Bopp, 2011), such as management roles, and obstruct women's career path in the field.

Seven of the sixteen participants faced challenges linked to the advantages that old boys' club members received in their organizations. Ella, Kia, Lola and Yara clearly exposed feelings of frustration with the easier path members of the old boys' club have in motorsports, compared to women. Ella shared her annoyance with the lack of opportunities she received in a team she worked for, due to the unfair advantages granted to the old boys' club, which led her to step away from the industry for some time,

I left [the industry], quite frankly, because I kept getting passed up for jobs that guys in the good old boys' club were getting. [...] I was really frustrated, that's the bottom line, I was very frustrated. [...] I was kind of tapped out [...] I had lost the spirit, I lost the fun of it. [...] I loved my boss, I loved the team that I was part of, but my role was not providing any fulfillment for me, which is difficult, right?

Women's outgroup status in the field contributes to them feeling like they do not belong in the industry. This happens because masculine traits are considered the norm, (e.g., competitiveness and toughness) while feminine traits are considered deviant. Thus, the sense women have of not belonging in this industry is reinforced as the ingroup has

established a dominant masculine culture in the space (Hekman et al., 2017). To illustrate, Rosie observed that in the beginning of her career she assumed that she needed to fit into the existent culture and belong to the ingroup, such as by “learning to drink.” Similarly, Nina thought she had to speak louder and with body language to be heard in meetings. These comments were mostly expressed as part of the early years of their careers, while they were still navigating the systems and trying to fit into the culture and the old boys’ club. Ella clearly described this premise, “I found myself falling into that in my earlier years, trying to keep up play with the old boys’ club. [...] But I don’t think that gets you any more credit. Quite frankly, female to female, I hate seeing that.”

Lola added that these advantages grant an easier path for men to get things done and build human capital in the field (i.e., given their higher-status and being the majority group). Being part of the ingroup is helpful given that all participants depicted the racing industry as small, consequently getting opportunities, especially early in one’s career, is more about *who you know* than *what you know*, as Heidi stated. Participants described ingroup members’ advantages in getting opportunities resulting from their network in the industry, which was described as harder to build for women as outgroup members.

Kia enlightened mechanisms that maintain the male-dominance and their higher status in motorsports, including the homologous reproduction in the old boys’ club. She recognized that organizations tend to hire who they know, rather than the most talented candidates in the field, which is why the industry continues to follow a traditional path,

a lot of times people will hire who they know. [...] It has been a pretty small group of people that have been making decisions [...] and if you only have that: “my grandfather raced, and then my father raced, and so now I race and I’m a

billionaire. So my dad can buy a team.” I mean, what is that? You’re not ever going to make space for people with real talent, and you’re never going to make space for real change.

Likewise, Sofia highlighted that these traditional norms continue to stop real changes in organizations in this industry, “it was all very much entrenched in tradition and the way that they did things. [...] managing change in such an old and conservative organization, there are a lot of factions that don’t want to see that and don’t see the reason for it.”

Nonetheless, participants disclosed difficulties to get opportunities in the industry given the status of the old boys’ club and mechanisms that maintain men’s ingroup advantages.

Look for organizations that value diversity. Although the old boys’ club is still a reality in motorsports, Kia mentioned that several organizations in the space are embracing the societal wave of change and thoroughly value diversity. She added that those organizations are more welcoming for women and are more friendly environments for females to succeed in their careers in the field. She suggested that rather than trying to fit into organizations with unwelcoming practices, women and minorities should look for organizations that are intentional and value diversity. This would help these organizations get the pool of most talented candidates, motivating a movement towards more diversity across organizations, and change that would benefit minorities in the industry.

4.1.3.2 *Queen Bee* – “I did not always have females in my corner that I feel like saw me as a coworker or a peer, but more so a threat” Nina

The queen bee theme included quotes from interviews that reflected episodes when other women were harmful to the experiences and careers of participants. For example, some participants shared experiences in which women avoided making business

deals with them because those women felt that their positions could be threatened if more women succeeded in motorsports. The queen bee phenomenon aligns with this example and has been used to refer to the detrimental attitudes women have towards other women because they feel that their positions, both professional and personal, could be threatened if more women entered the same male-dominated field or organization. Women may obstruct the access or advancement of women in a space based on the belief that *there is only room for so many of us here* (Evans & Pfister, 2021).

Three participants suggested experiences in which other women harmed their careers because those women felt threatened personally or professionally by their presence in the space. Gianna shared episodes that clearly supported experiences that are related to the queen bee phenomenon, such as when women felt threatened by her presence and business deals were cancelled with her consultancy because she is a woman. This feeling of threat from other women therefore compromised, at times, the success of her business. Nina added that she did not always feel that her female colleagues were supportive of her professional growth. She presumed that they felt threatened by her presence. She believes that women choose to prioritize themselves and their space in racing because they assume there is not enough space for more women in the field,

There's so few of us it's so easy to get pitted against each other. [...] Some women have got their elbows out, just trying to make room for themselves. And they want to make sure that there's room at the table for themselves first before they kind of push to make sure that you're in for everybody.

Nina added that her way of communicating enhanced differences between her and other female colleagues, because she was perceived as not as personable enough, and failed to fulfill expectations of the female stereotype (i.e., enhanced social skills). She explained

that she focused on getting her job by being direct in her communications, such as emails and calls. However, she was expected to be more socially pleasant when communicating with other women.

Community of women in motorsports. Fifteen participants emphasized the supportive community of women in motorsports, which include women on the business of racing and athletes. Even two of the three participants who experienced the queen bee phenomenon and agree it is pertinent in motorsports, agreed that the community of women in racing is stronger than the negative stigma. Zaya believes in both narratives, but she added that the community of women is currently a stronger movement. She added that this is happening because women have realized that their voices are stronger as a group advocating for change in the space, rather than fighting alone for your own space.

Interestingly, women joining forces is a change to the norms, given what Ayla offered that she saw in her early days, “They wanted to keep us apart. If there was another woman there, they wanted to keep the women separate. Almost like they didn’t want us to collaborate, they didn’t want us to have too much power. But women have come together and built coalition.” Diana portrayed this coalition, “I hugged her and I said, “you’re not alone anymore.” We’re doing this together. We are better together.” The community of women in motorsports was described as a supportive one, and in positive terms by most participants, contrary to previous studies with regards to interpersonal relations between women in motorsports (Waltemeyer, 2018). The queen bee theme was not nearly as well-supported across interviews as the supportive community of women in racing was. Individual level challenges are explored next.

4.1.4 INDIVIDUAL LEVEL CHALLENGES

4.1.4.1 *Work-life balance* – “That is my biggest challenge. I only work, I have no balance.” Bia

The present theme included quotes in which participants described their time allocation between work and life demands in interviews, in addition to descriptions of the responsibilities and loads present in each of those domains. Time management between the two spheres emerged as a strong pattern across interviews, and it was described as one of the hardest challenges mainly resulting from participants’ decision-making role in motorsports, the racing lifestyle, and the female stereotype (i.e., societal expectations that women should be nurturing and put family above career). Participants stressed that the intense career demands in motorsports reduced their time dedicated to personal and family activities and consequently they felt that they did not succeed in maintaining work-life balance. The main career demands supported across interviews were the constant traveling to races, work-related relocations, and the nonstop work mentality. These demands were linked to the racing lifestyle, which means that they have persisted throughout participants’ careers, and will be present as long as they work in racing.

Eleven participants expressed difficulties in maintaining work-life balance given the demands of a career in motorsports. Firstly, Rosie shared that traveling to the NASCAR series’ races alone may add to 38 weekends a year, which was why she decided not to take a job that would require her to go to all races in that specific series, as she was trying to set boundaries and prioritize her personal time. All participants described intense traveling schedules, which require them to adapt their personal lives,

such as by having motorhomes to be able to include dogs, such as Yara, or children, such as Joy and Heidi, in their travel plans more comfortably. The traveling aspect was associated with the *traveling circus*, which is later explored and described positively as one of the main features of the racing lifestyle.

Secondly, relocations were often mentioned given that teams, sanctioning bodies, and racetracks, which are the types of organizations that participants work or have worked for, are in certain locations of the country. For instance, key locations for motorsports in the United States that emerged across interviews were Charlotte, Indianapolis, and Phoenix. Heidi illustrated the numerous work-related relocations her career in racing demanded, which started early on in her professional life,

it was a lot of moving. [...] I was a die-hard Texan and was terrified of moving to Las Vegas by myself when I didn't know anybody. And I decided I just had to take a leap of faith and do it. So I went to Vegas. I was only at Vegas about a year and a half when I got a call from Indianapolis Motor Speedway, for IndyCar, and they were recruiting me to come be their manager of media relations for IndyCar and oversee crisis communication. I knew them because IndyCar had raced at Texas and in Vegas. I was from Texas and snow was not in my vocabulary. So I flew up, I did the interview, I got the job offer and I declined it. And the day after I declined it, I got a call from a mentor of mine. [...] He basically told me I was an arrogant punk kid because I was 23 years old and the Holy Grail of motorsports Indianapolis Motor Speedway was offering me an opportunity to come work for them. And that would include the Indy 500, it would include, at that time, the Formula 1 race was coming back. So it would have been Formula 1 and IndyCar and he's like, "you're going to be the youngest manager in the history of the IndyCar Series. You're going to travel internationally, you don't say no to this, pack your bags and come up here." And he's the best advice I've ever received. Because he was right. I needed to do that.

In addition to these relocations, Heidi later moved to Charlotte to follow her husband, who worked in motorsports as well, as he got a job opportunity with a NASCAR team

there. Given that their jobs were based in separate locations for years, it meant that for a long time they had a long-distance relationship. Nonetheless, her work-related endeavors strongly impacted her personal life. Moving to Charlotte was described as one of the hardest relocations for her, and the main challenge there was that for the first time in her adult life she was not defined by her career or motorsports, which was her identity.

Thirdly, participants commented that work in the industry never stops, which is why maintaining work-life balance was perceived as most participant's biggest current challenge. Yara talked about the expectation to be available 24/7, and the need to set boundaries, such as not reading emails or answering calls after a certain hour or weekends off. According to Joy, the nonstop mentality reflects that it is a lifestyle, not work (which is why it may not be for everyone). She described her balance,

It's really hard to be exceptional at anything and have a good work life balance. For me, I get up between 3 and 3:30am, 7 days a week. [...] I can get a block of like 4 or 5 hours done before my kids want to get out of bed. On weekends, in the middle of the day, I grab an hour or two and have a nice chunk of work under control. It's not as visible to my kids, and I am 100% willing to do that 7 days a week so that I do get some time with them. It just matters to me. It's not really achieving balance. But again, racing is a lifestyle [...] you make your choices, it fills me up. I love what I do.

Paige and Nina mentioned that their careers represent their identity, which is why setting boundaries is challenging for them, especially since they do not have children or spouses. These participants added that they do not call it "balance," but they see it as "work-life fit" that changes over time as responsibilities change. Paige summarized this idea, "it's not a balance, it's a fit. It has to fit together. [...] Because I'm single, I do not have a family out here with me. I'm me, myself and I so the only person I'm cheating on time

with is myself.” Participants who do not have a family admitted that their answers would certainly change with a change of priorities, such as if they decided to start a family.

Zaya offered an analogy describing that work can be an extra child for women, which is associated with the idea that women are nurturers, and care too much about their responsibilities. These ideas were associated with the difficulty participants have to say no to more tasks even when their plate is full, as advanced by Paige, because they care about their work (or this extra child) and they are passionate about what they do, and the motorsports industry. Paige evidenced the importance of her job in her life and claimed that, “my work defines me and I’m totally okay with that.” Remarkably, work-life balance was the only challenge that some of the participants stated that they did not have “tools” to navigate, or that they felt that they were failing at. To illustrate, Bia, Lola and Heidi, said that they had yet to find a good balance for themselves. Joy and Lola added that prioritizing work-life balance was one of their main goals moving forward.

There was a dark side of this passion for the job described by seven of the participants. The passion for the job was described as detrimental to maintaining work-life balance. For instance, they confessed to undertaking too many tasks and taking failure personally because they care too much about their job. Ella described this feeling,

I don’t know why I take these things so personally, because this has happened a million times before, right? I get told no, if you’re in this role [sales] you hear the word no more than anything else and it shouldn’t bother you as much. But I take it personally because I love it.

Participants added that they always wanted to do more at work, take more projects, travel more, but this disregard with their personal lives outside motorsports resulted in some of

their biggest regrets later in life, as highlighted by Bia, “It’s my biggest regret [not being a present mother]. [...] I just loved what I was doing and I was making good money. [...] It’s a matter of choice: what’s most important to you. And I chose my work to be the most important.” Nevertheless, they alluded to a contradiction between a passion for their careers, and a regret later on given the limited time allocated to personal life and family.

Separating professional and personal lives. Juggling balance between work-life demands is especially difficult for those who work in sports given the increased amount of time demanded by work (e.g., travel schedules and long work hours, see Darwin, 2020; Taylor et al., 2021; Weight et al., in press). The topic has been in the spotlight lately given that jobs are increasingly demanding in current society. Ayla, Gianna, Ella, Kia and Rosie, said that their way of managing it is separating their work and life personas. Gianna illustrates her motivation to have different personas and how she perceives them,

It [motorsports] has nothing to do with my personal life. [...] Motorsports has nothing to do with being a mother [...] those are different levels of concentration, where you’re shutting all the rest of that out, and what becomes your focus and your key, things that you care about, and that you’re that you’re driven to do are totally different. It’s making sure everything’s clean, and people are well fed, and everybody’s happy and content, and you’re entertaining people. When in motorsports, it’s getting things organized and finished and making contacts and fueling big dreams.

Rosie extended this idea by claiming that keeping personal and professional lives separate also meant that she decided not to date people that also work or are involved with motorsports. This decision is supposed to counter the reputation women have in racing described earlier. Nonetheless, to counter the stereotypes of women in the field, not dating people who work in racing was judged necessary by several of the participants.

Family endeavor and support systems. All participants who have children and significant others who talked about work-life balance mentioned that their careers, or the lifestyle, becomes a family endeavor. And in order to keep themselves more comfortable, Yara mentioned that she has a motorhome and she brings her dogs with her to races. Heidi also talked about traveling with her family, “when our daughter was born, we just brought her with us on the road, she traveled the NASCAR Cup Circuit, she stayed in the motorhome and she was on the road until she started kindergarten because we were both at the racetrack. We had a nanny with us.” Ayla and Zaya evidenced the importance of a support system (e.g., family) to manage work-life balance and the lifestyle as mothers.

Give back. All of the participants talked about their passion for the sport, the people in the sport, and/or lifestyle as reasons to want to give back and be advocates for the growth of the sport and industry. Kia and Ayla are examples of this principle: they started organizations because they wanted to see a change in the industry they love: motorsports. Diana added that the feeling of responsibility to change the environment, help it flourish and grow, which is shared by all of the participants, relates to how much racing has meant in her life, “I want to do more. I want to almost give back to everything that racing did for me. It’s been this joy. It’s been this constant. It’s been this comfort. It’s now been my extended family. And so I feel like I’m almost paying it back.” Moreover, Joy commented that she believes that *giving back* is a feeling not singular to women in motorsports, “I believe that most of the women that I have contact with get to a certain point in life, in their careers, and many men as well, but women typically find themselves reinvigorated by causes and doing things that are bigger than themselves.”

4.1.4.2 *Motherhood* – “Mom guilt is real” Kia

The motherhood theme combined quotes from interviews in which participants described how being a mother was affected by or affected their careers. For instance, descriptions of how they accommodated the numerous trips to races a year and relocations having children. Related to the previous work-life balance theme, several participants disclosed having mom guilt due to the high demands of their careers, which means that they have more limited time for family demands than they wished they had. Thus, motherhood was described as added responsibilities on their personal life, which made keeping a balance extra challenging for participants who have children. From the nine participants who are mothers, seven emphasized that motherhood combined with an already-demanding career in motorsports strongly challenged their work-life balance.

Seven participants who are mothers in the study shared experiences that reflected that they feel *mom guilt*. They used this term to express that they feel like they *fail to meet expectations of good motherhood*. These mothers felt that they did not have enough time to meet family expectations because of their demanding careers. These unmet expectations reflect the stereotype and societal belief that women should put family above their careers as well. Bia illustrated mom guilt and expressed that, although she always loved her job and motorsports, her absence at home is her biggest life regret,

I was always gone. [...] I missed a lot of my son's firsts: first boy scouts, or his first baseball games. I remember I was traveling so much I bought a little teddy bear. And it had my little boy's recording. And my son would go "I love you, mommy. I love you, mommy" when I was on the road. That's what kept me going. But that's my biggest regret: work-life balance. I sacrificed a lot for my family. [...] I justified it with my income to give him a better life. That's how I justified it.

She added that the lack of partner support made her endeavor even harder. Heidi, who described her numerous job-related relocations far from her home state, commented that moving away gave her excellent job opportunities but it also meant that she was moving away from her support system of relatives and friends that could have helped with her children. She added that her friends were all over the country as part of the traveling circus, which she thoroughly enjoyed, but the traveling and relocations made the establishment of connections in local communities/neighborhoods more difficult, and raising a child without local support systems was described as hard at times.

Support system. Ayla and Zaya stressed the importance of having a support system to be able to combine their work and mom personas and be able to perform tasks on both ends. And, although participants were not able to rely on the local community, according to Lola, the extended family at the track is a support system as well, which helped her raise her children. She described their “local community” as a close-knit community that is spread all over the country, and added that: “when they talk about it takes a village, we have our huge village, it’s just a racing village.”

Being a role model for their children. Kia enlightened that, just like work-life balance may be described as *work-life fit* for those in racing, parenting may look different from “normal parenting,” because “there’s a million different ways that you can be a parent.” When she talked about thinking-outside-the-box, she referred to parenting as a businesswoman in racing as well. For instance, participants talked about incorporating different personas as a coping mechanism that allowed them to be fully present at home as mom or as a girlfriend, and at work as a businesswoman, as Gianna and Kia explained.

Interestingly, Kia added that, “being a woman who is pursuing her passion, and something that’s really important to her, is really important for me to model for them. [...] if I cannot be fulfilled, and if I can’t be happy, then I’m not going to model that for them.” Nonetheless, being a role model to their children by being a woman following her passion was a justification participants used for the chosen lifestyle for them and for their families. As Ayla, Kia and Lola mentioned, motorsports became a passion for their children as well. Ayla and Kia mentioned that they watch races with their children, and Lola said that her children come to their racetrack and compete at the amateur level too.

4.1.4.4 *Impostor phenomenon* – “I think we are our biggest obstacles to success”

Zaya

The present theme included participants’ quotes that expressed feelings of self-doubt, assumptions of intellectual and professional fraudulence, and undervaluation of their own capabilities, intelligence, and skills. While it was evident in interviews that some participants experienced the phenomenon when they acknowledged being their biggest critics, having a fear of failure, and lack confidence, other participants made it clear when they shared that they feel lucky for their accomplishments (rather than proud), and hold on and internalize mistakes. The impostor phenomenon was depicted as a challenge to their career advancement given that these feelings led these women to question their potential at times and stopped them from taking career opportunities that could have resulted in career advancement.

Ten participants shared feelings that related to the impostorism, which manifested in different ways and at different times in their careers (i.e., the phenomenon has endured

throughout the entire career of some participants, but it was prominent only at the beginning for others). For instance, Joy believes that women who have decision-making power, and not men, struggle to let go of mistakes in such roles, “I think that the ability to let go, and just let it go, is easier for men [...] so mildly feminine trait to take full responsibility for it even above the people that are actually responsible.” Nina illustrated this with a practical example, “If I send an email with a spelling mistake yesterday, I put an apostrophe or didn’t delete something, well, I’m still thinking about it.” Participants offered that the feeling is enhanced in a male-dominated fields and is related to their token status, because they do not feel welcomed in the space. Likewise, Diana added that a feeling of “not belonging” might be keeping women out of motorsports,

I think one of the biggest things that keeps us out of places or holds us back is ourselves. Because we might think that we’re not welcome. And but that’s a societal thing that’s happened for years and years. So it’s not completely our fault, per se, because that’s the way it is.

The impostor phenomenon was emergent in comments in several of the interviews, such as when Paige said, “I’m like, “Well, I’m not sure I’m ready for that”, or Nina, “I didn’t feel I was that strong in comparison to others. [...] I never thought I would make it this far.” Remarkably, the feeling of not belonging, feeling lucky, and feeling like a fraud was stronger for the women who did not grow up in a racing family. Nina stressed feelings and difficulties in believing in her potential several times, which happens to this day,

you get to a certain point in your career, and you are like, “Okay, I should know that already.” If I ask this question, are they gonna think I’m stupid? And the fraud feeling is something I deal with on a daily basis, like “did I fool all these people into thinking that I deserve to be here? Do I actually know what I’m talking about? Am I just regurgitating stuff? Am I confident in my decision? Or am I gonna get second guessed for it?.” I think that it’s all in my head.

The women who grew up in racing families talked about being raised as equals to other children in motorsports, both boys and girls, and they were raised amongst mostly adults and started working in the industry early on. On the positive side, they matured and developed thick skin and confidence earlier. On the negative side, they talked about having to mature very young, instead of “enjoying being a kid,” as described by Heidi.

Confidence through professional maturity. Accepting failures and realizing that errors do not define success, as observed by Nina, were described as easy reminders to counter the impostor feelings. Confidence building was portrayed as a result of acquiring experience in the industry, or what Yara named *professional maturity*. Maria summarized these ideas, “the older you get, the more you realize ‘I am going to make mistakes.’ The more experience you get the less mistakes you make in that area. I think as you build confidence in anything it feeds your ability to forgive yourself and learn from it.”

Nina, who was the participant who more strongly emphasized feelings related to the impostor phenomenon, said that to cope with this “mental thing,” as she described, she reminded herself that she owned her seat at the table. She added that she is working on prioritizing herself and her thoughts, rather than focusing on what she believes others may be thinking about her and her work. She added that having female mentors to brainstorm ideas and get reaffirmation of her steps is helpful to navigate moments when personal confidence is lacking. Lastly, she talked about advocating and mentoring other women as a tool to boost her own confidence, besides building her network.

Reframing challenges as positive. Several participants mentioned that they enjoy challenges, and described unpredictable situations as part of the racing lifestyle. For

instance, Zaya said, “I like a challenge. I think that I don’t necessarily always take the easiest path.” According to Joy, the perception of what a challenge is, and choosing to be fueled by hardship is necessary to thrive in an environment with the highest of the highs and lowest of the lows, such as racing the industry,

My belief system on failure is that you really can’t fail if you’re always looking for the positive and learning and moving forward. So it didn’t scare me to go in and ask for a really big raise from a boss, it also didn’t ever occur to me to be fearful of starting my own business. Businesses don’t fail as long as you learn and grow from your experiences. [...] I take more risks fundamentally than most. Because I don’t have fear. Any type of failure scenario that might come out of it, including debt, or to take over an enormous race team, I don’t fear failure.

The racing lifestyle, and in particular the team element, required participants to be fueled by challenges and reframe failure given that those are part of working in this field that embraces risk and the unpredictable. The unpredictability is unique to this field and not reflected in a “normal job,” as pointed out by Heidi. Risk-taking was added as necessary in building confidence and moving forward in their careers in the industry as well. The subsequent section further develops on the factors associated with the racing lifestyle that motivates women to continue pursuing a career in motorsports despite challenges.

4.2 FINDINGS: MOTIVATORS TO PERSIST IN MOTORSPORTS DESPITE CHALLENGES

RQ2: Why do women continue pursuing decision-making roles in motorsports despite challenges?

Findings that answered Research Question 2 revealed a fifth level of analysis that was not part of the original analytical framework used in the study (developed by Ragins &

Sundstrom, 1989). Participants evidenced that their motivation to continue pursuing a career in motorsports was associated to the motorsports industry and its nuances. Descriptions that answered this research question were compiled under the theme *racing lifestyle*, which illuminated the additional level *motorsports industry* added to the analytical framework. This theme emerged as the motivations to remain in the industry amidst difficulties shared by participants were related to the unique lifestyle of those who work in racing, along with the sense of community and family-orientation in the field. Additional quotes that support this theme are found on Table B.2 (Appendix B).

***Racing lifestyle* – “There’s a quote by Steve McQueen that says: racing is life, everything else is just waiting. When you’re in racing, it really kind of takes over your life.” Zaya**

The *racing lifestyle* theme combined quotes that expressed unique nuances of the motorsports industry and community. All participants discussed the racing lifestyle as the main feature of working in motorsports and as the foundation where the motivation to continue pursuing a career in the industry resulted from. The relationship participants have with motorsports, or this bond, was described as emotional, rather than rational, and articulated in interviews as sentiments, emotions and memories, such as *memories growing up at the racetrack*, *excitement*, and *high-risk*. Words such as *soothing* and a *constant in life* were used by participants to describe the emotional bond established with the industry as well. To illustrate, Gianna claimed that her passion for racing is rooted in the intensity, adrenaline, and the high-risks involved (e.g., driver’s safety and financial risks for team and sponsors). All participants claimed that their motivation and eagerness

to continue pursuing a career in motorsports was not to get to a particular level or role in organizations, but they were attracted to features of the racing industry and its lifestyle. Despite its influence on work-life balance, all participants asserted that living the racing lifestyle was their choice and described it in positive terms. Nonetheless, the racing lifestyle was pronounced to be the foundation where the motivation to pursuing a career in the industry, despite enhanced challenges in a male-dominated field, stemmed from.

Ella and Heidi compared a career in racing to a “normal” job and highlighted the nonstop mentality in motorsports, which echoes Zaya’s quote that describes this theme added in the theme title. Joy included these ideas in her portrayal of the racing lifestyle,

I appreciate all the highs and lows that happen with it. I mean, it’s so intense. I love the fact that you have to have the lifestyle, it’s not a job, it’s a lifestyle. And when you work that hard, and those long hours, and there’s so much invested in what’s happening [...] then we come together, and it’s this huge family. The things that happen when you go through those highs and lows of emotion, during the states of deprivation, make you bond tighter than you do in most normal workplaces in such a short period of time [...]. In all of the places that I’ve worked at, I was close with the people I worked with, but again, adding that flavor of first of all, there’s genuine risk involved, which means that there’s really high emotions, which means you have to work really hard to be perfect to keep people safe. And so there’s just a lot of these pressure factors that again, make for this incredible bonding experience that happens, it’s completely unique.

The people in the industry stand out with their overachiever personalities and were described as a key part of the racing lifestyle and in motivating participants to continue pursuing a career in motorsports. Besides, the women in the study highlighted the shared bond that is established between those working in motorsports. Paige summarized the shared bond that connects the racing community, and said that “[what] I love about our sport, especially now, after the time that I’ve spent in it is just how great the people are,

and how much passion there is from anyone you come in contact with.” Maria’s takeover of the family business in racing exemplifies the strength of this shared bond and care for the racing community. In particular, she decided to run the family racetrack because she wanted to preserve the environment for the local community and allow them to have access to racing as she did growing up. In sum, racing was important in her development, and she wanted others to have access to the environment too.

Given that the people working in motorsports meet several weekends in a year in races, a bond is established. This bond and the relationships at the track tend to be the main friendships of those involved with the industry, because they do not have many weekends off races to spend at home building relationships. The idea of community reveals the family-orientation in racing as well. Lola and Rosie mentioned that the family-orientation is one of their favorite aspects in racing. Not only those who grew up in racing shared the importance of the family-orientation of the field, but all participants revealed that they are emotionally connected to people in the industry and consider the community an extended family, a racing family, or a racing village. Diana illustrated this idea when she said that she has spent several holidays with her extended family in races.

People who are involved in racing (i.e., work in racing) and who travel to races all year around become part of a traveling circus. In this circus, everyone knows everyone. The traveling circus is therefore another concept that defines the close-knit racing community. This circus symbolizes the closeness of the exciting and chaotic group of people in racing who have common interests and who meet all year around in races across the country. Heidi explains that:

A traveling circus means you pick up the same cohort of people, and they go from city to city together. And when they're in those cities together, they're in the same paddock or same garage area together. So they pass each other for four days straight every weekend or three days, whatever. And they just know everyone, everybody knows everybody, you go to dinner together, you stay in the same hotel together. [...] And that really impacts getting work done. I never appreciated how much knowing everybody makes your job so much easier, you can just pick up the phone and get things done because our world is relationship driven.

Heidi offered that the circus is a uniqueness of racing as she compared the industry to other sports, such as when she worked with the MLB later in her career as a sponsor.

Besides, those who work in motorsports tend to relocate a lot for work, further restricting rooting themselves in certain places and building relationships in the local community. These relocations are usually to key locations in the United States where tracks, teams or sanctioning bodies are located, such as Charlotte and Indianapolis. In sum, besides work, motorsports becomes where family and friends are, and where leisure time is spent. Most of the leisure for those who work in this industry tends to be at race weekends, and it could be, for example, at the pit area with friends from other teams, or getting to know the city where they are for a race. The industry is considered one big team or family, where people know and support each other.

Ella noted that, "motorsport truly has a team element to it [...] a next level of team that comes into play when you look at motorsports and what goes into everything for that driver to be able to get in the car, and go fast and perform." Her comment also explains the need for a broad set of skills to succeed in the industry offered earlier. Diana stressed the key role of each team member in racing, both on the business-side and on-the-track, "I like to say my team is 30 people. One of them is a driver, 29 are not drivers."

Joy underlined the unique team aspect in racing numerous times, “We refer to it [team] as family, because to the rest of the world, when they hear team, they think we mean our drivers. And when I say team, I’m talking about the staff. So my definition of team are all of us that lean on each other to build something better.”

Although participants did not talk about specific roles they aspired to get to as motivations to succeed in their careers in motorsports, being decision makers allowed them to be active part of the change they wanted to see in the space, and helped the industry flourish and grow. This connects to participants’ desire to pursue intrinsically rewarding careers, and give back. These ideas conclude the Results chapter. These findings are further discussed in the next chapter as well.

Additional quotes from participants that support each of the themes presented in this chapter can be found in Appendix B (Tables B.1 and B.2). Furthermore, results presented in this chapter, along with how the findings that answer each research question relate to previous studies, are further discussed in the next chapter. Author’s concluding thoughts and suggestions for future studies are then suggested in the last chapter.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

5.1 OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

The purpose of the study was to explore the challenges women who are decision makers in motorsports in the United States have faced throughout their careers, how they overcame these challenges to get to where they are today, in addition to their motivations to continue pursuing a career in the industry amidst challenges. The researcher conducted in-depth interviews with sixteen women who are on the management side of motorsports in the United States to explore their lived experiences in this male-dominated industry.

The analytical framework developed by Ragins and Sundstrom (1989) informed the classification of challenges amongst four levels: societal, organizational, interpersonal, and individual. A fifth level of analysis –*motorsports industry* – emerged as an additional level that enlightened the motivations participants had to remain in the industry despite the challenges. The following sections present a discussion of the main findings organized amongst the three research questions, followed by the implications of the study, and lastly, suggestions for future studies and concluding thoughts are proposed.

5.2 RESEARCH QUESTION 1: CHALLENGES

RQ1: What are the main challenges women encounter on the management side of motorsports in the United States?

Research Question 1 drew upon previous management studies and aimed to uncover difficulties encountered by women on the management side of motorsports. Findings evidenced that most challenges were at the societal (i.e., gender stereotypes, sexism, hegemonic masculinity, unconscious bias, lack-of-fit); and individual levels, (i.e., work-life balance, motherhood, impostor phenomenon). Most challenges resulted from or were the enactment of gender stereotypes, agreeing with results in previous studies.

At the organizational level, the main difficulties women encountered were associated with their token status in motorsports. Women's minority status reflects their underrepresentation in the field and in decision-making. Similarly, interpersonal level challenges alluded to participants compromised social and human capital given the advantages granted unfairly to the old boys' club. Since the old boys' club and the token status of women are enactments of gender stereotypes, these factors were included in the discussion of gender stereotypes in this chapter.

Results for this research question aligned especially with previous research that concentrated on the increased challenges women face in male-dominated fields (Paustian-Underdahl et al., 2014), where sports management falls under (Sartore & Cunningham, 2007; Walker & Bopp, 2010), and which contribute to maintenance of women's underrepresentation at the decision-making level (see Burton, 2015). Some examples of

increased challenges in such fields found in previous studies and that coincide with emergent findings in this research are the lack of mentors and development opportunities (Campuzano, 2019); scarce female role models, gender norms (Blickenstaff, 2005); sexist behavior and language (Chamberlain et al., 2008); unconscious bias (Bartlett, 2009) and the systems that maintain men's higher status (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005).

More specifically, studies in sport management focusing on the experiences of women on the management side of the field applied theories from parent disciplines to sports (e.g., sexism, see Hindman & Walker, 2020). However, limited discussions are found with regards to *how* challenges women face in the workplace may be experienced or manifested differently on the management side of sports compared to the management of other fields or industries, given particularities of sports. Nonetheless, the next sections extend unique and novel ideas that evidence *how* the challenges found, although they are in part similar to what has been found in parent disciplines, are experienced differently in sports, and in some even more specific cases, in motorsports.

Societal level challenges are discussed first in this chapter. Then, individual level barriers are reviewed. Although most individual level challenges result from the demanding racing lifestyle, the lifestyle was described as the main motivator to continue pursuing a career in the field, which is further discussed last in this chapter.

5.2.1 GENDER STEREOTYPES

The most supported challenges in this study were associated with gender stereotypes and a perceived lack-of-fit between women and motorsports, agreeing with

well-developed ideas from studies in parent disciplines (Eagly, 1987; Eagly et al., 2020; Heilman, 2001; 2012; Koenig et al., 2011). Similar to the current findings, Peus et al. (2015) evidenced that the majority of barriers faced by female managers across countries result from the enactment of gender stereotypes. Participants in both studies perceived societal level barriers to be the most obstructive to women's career advancement towards management since those are ingrained in society and harder to tackle.

As in previous studies, participants in the present research felt that they struggled to build their reputation given that they needed to prove themselves much more than men to be perceived for their individual skills and abilities, gain space, be acknowledged in meetings, and have their ideas heard. This concurs with previous authors who advanced that women are constantly questioned in environments where they are a minority group, especially in the beginning of their careers (Beilock, 2019). Gender stereotypes result in unaligned expectations between women's abilities and what is needed in management in motorsports; thus, they encounter a *double standard*, which means that they have to prove themselves more than men to succeed in such roles (Foschi, 1996). Gendered expectations negatively impact the beliefs about women's capabilities and skills, resulting in biased decisions and limited opportunities for them (Heilman, 2012; Hentschel et al., 2019). Limited opportunities result in women's lower human capital compared to men (Lyness & Heilman, 2006). The opportunities and tasks women are given are very limited in motorsports given that their abilities are deviant from the norm. For instance, one participant indicated that she left the industry at one point given that she was passed on opportunities unfairly that were offered to men who were less qualified than her. These unequal opportunities (DiTomaso, 2015) both maintain and are

maintained by the status quo (i.e., men's higher and ingroup status) in motorsports, restricting opportunities and the career growth of women (Katz, et al., 2018; Ibarra et al., 2010; Walker & Bopp, 2010).

Challenges for women go beyond showing competency and building trust in their abilities in motorsports, they need to learn to enact masculine norms of attitudes to be heard (McIlwee & Robinson, 1992 cited by Dryburgh, 1999). To illustrate, one participant said that she had to learn to lean on masculine energy to have her ideas heard. Learning to read the room and be able to work and be confident in environments where women are a minority, were crucial success factors in the industry. For instance, knowing the lingo and the nuts and bolts of motorsports to gain trust from others in the industry was key. Besides, gaining confidence from others requires patience and hard work. Participants offered that they had to learn to be active listeners for some time, find data to backup information, do research, before they spoke up and had their ideas heard at work.

In motorsports, there is a perceived lack-of-fit between feminine traits (Heilman 2001) and expectations for more stereotypically masculine traits, such as aggressiveness, toughness, and competitiveness (Bligh & Kohles, 2008). For that reason, participants indicated that they notice more men leaning towards careers in motorsports than women. Some participants believe that this happens because men are socialized to be competitive and risk-takers, which was illustrated by a participant who portrayed differences in the socialization of her three sons to how she was brought up. Hence, these masculine traits are perceived as a better fit for motorsports than women's perceived traits (e.g., nurturers and caretakers, Heilman, 2001). Heilman (2001) described prescriptive biases as expected

behaviors for environments, such as the expectation to be emotionally tough to fit motorsports. Participants described showing emotions (e.g., crying) as a weakness. Crying in public was unacceptable and repressed due to the negative perception that “women are emotional” and participants wanted to counter this stereotype. On the surface, women are not expected to be assertive. Some participants believe that women face a fine line between being considered assertive or “being difficult.” Participants agreed with the need to find a balance between being “tough and authoritative (like men) to be taken seriously, but they will be perceived as ‘bitches’ if they act too aggressively” (Oakley, 2000, p. 324). They acknowledged that finding the right balance to navigate these expectations, while countering existent stereotypes of how they should and were expected to behave (Heilman, 2001, 2012), was challenging. They said that they aim to find the balance to counter negative stereotypes, e.g., women are difficult and emotional, while building a positive reputation and personal brand for themselves.

Gendered expectations and stereotypes are learned, and people behave in gender-appropriate ways based on the environment around them and the media (Deaux & LaFrance, 1998). Findings illuminated different patterns of stereotypes experienced by women who grew up in racing versus those who entered the field later. On one hand, participants who started working in the field later felt like they needed to prove their intentions more given that women in racing are perceived as emotional, difficult, or expected to be in the industry to marry a driver. On the other hand, participants who grew up in racing and had families who owned businesses in the field, felt the need to prove that they earned their roles. Participants who have a well-known family name in racing

confessed not disclosing their last name early in their careers to prevent expectations associated with the family from being created, so they could build their own reputations.

Participants who grew up in racing families reported being “raised as equals,” to their brothers and other boys in the pits. For instance, one participant illustrated this idea by saying that she wore her brother’s clothes, and a second participant shared that she was raised as “the son her father never had.” Nonetheless, an early socialization into racing, through families or close peers, led some participants to develop thick skin early on. These participants reported less challenges especially at the societal level, (i.e., gender stereotypes), given that they were not socialized to perceive differences based on gender. Findings evidenced that experiences of women are therefore highly impacted by contexts and relationships (Powell and Maniero, 1992).

Remarkably, a novel finding and added difficulty encountered by women working on the management side of sports, which is unique to the field and not seen in other industries, is that gender stereotyping reflects judgements that women are incompetent for decision-making roles when they have not competed in the certain sport they work in. This idea that *she is not competent and does not understand enough about a sport that she has never competed in to manage it* is a misinterpretation women hear in American football, for example. Participants shared that women in motorsports hear this judgement as well. Several participants indicated that they were fans of racing and interested in the business of it, but never aspired to compete in it. However, not having experience competing may have made their career paths on the management side of the industry more difficult.

Despite impressive credentials, such as doctoral and master's degrees, not having competed in auto racing fueled backlash against participants and their abilities to manage organizations in motorsports. Among participants in the study, only two had experience competing in auto racing, while some others had driven for fun or as a hobby before. One of the participants who had competed indicated that this experience helped her gain trust from others on the management side of the industry. The other participant who had competed, and who now owns a racetrack, indicated that racing allowed her to understand participants' views on the racing business. Lola, who races cars as a hobby, shared that racing helps her develop business ideas that better attend drivers' needs.

In sum, findings underlined that although women may have respectable business and educational backgrounds, not having been a driver may be used against them when their abilities to manage organizations in motorsports are evaluated. This idea is key to understanding why women may have impressive backgrounds, and still suffer to land a career on the management side of sports (i.e., experiences competing in these sports may be regarded above education and job experiences). The next section explores how the lack of representation and awareness may be barriers for women in the field.

5.2.2 PERCEIVED LACK-OF-FIT BETWEEN WOMEN AND MOTORSPORTS

Resulting from a perceived lack-of-fit between women and motorsports (see Heilman, 2001; 2012), participants believed that women feel unwelcome to enter the male-dominated industry of motorsports. Agreeing with Beilock (2019), who described that is due to gender stereotypes women feel like they do not belong in male-dominated fields, several participants feel that women do not even consider a career in motorsports

given the perceived lack-of-fit for women in racing. Although women are a remarkable share of auto racing fans, in addition to the perceived misfit between women and racing, there is lack of awareness of women who *are* in roles in the field (i.e., lack of role models), making it difficult for women to see a possible future career in the space.

The lack of role models is partly due to the demanding lifestyle in motorsports. Participants suggested that they have been too busy working and immersed in the lifestyle and, for a long time, failed to look around and notice the lack of diversity in the industry. Likewise, they failed to tell their stories, make themselves visible, and serve as role models to other women. Participants acknowledge that successful role models on the management side of the industry would be key to personify to attainable future selves in the industry for other women, in addition to help counteract the perceived misfit of women in racing (Cheryan et al., 2013; Hill & Wheat, 2017; Midgley et al., 2021).

A novel finding that emerged in this study is the idea that participants who had an early socialization into racing and were introduced to the business-side of the industry early on did not assume a lack-of-fit for women in racing. Some of these participants started working in racing as children with their families and friends, and they acknowledged several benefits from their early socialization towards building their career in the field, such as having a network built, knowing the lingo, understanding the nuts and bolts of these sports and the lifestyle working in racing entailed. These participants reported facing less challenges than those who entered the industry later in their careers, because they were raised as equals to boys and their brothers at the racetrack and consequently did not see differences based on gender. *Advantages* of the early

socialization into racing are unique to motorsports (and not applicable to other sports), given that those were linked to *understanding the racing lifestyle* early on.

Furthermore, although scholars have seemingly ignored socialization agents, support systems, and how they may affect women's careers in sports (Hampton, 2022; Ratten, 2020), "socialization agents are important because they influence people and in turn they are drawn to certain activities and away from others" (Mercado, 2008, p. 179). Most participants in this study shared that their fathers or male friends were their main socialization agents into sports, and motorsports became a shared passion and bond between participants and their loved ones (similar to findings in Mercado, 2008). Likewise, Waltemeyer (2018) found that the introduction to motorsports through family and peers was a principal factor that influenced women to pursue a career in the field. Participants shared that their multifaceted emotional attachment to motorsports was key in motivating them to pursue a career in the field and to keep pushing amidst challenges throughout their careers in the field. This emotional aspect of the job is particular to sports and further discussed under the motivators section later in the chapter.

Some participants resonated with the idea that women end up in certain roles because of their personal preferences. Thus, the lack of women in decision-making positions would simply be due to the lack of interest women have in motorsports. Participants suggested that there is substantial female representation in administrative roles, PR and marketing in motorsports. This occupational concentration supports that women end up in roles and departments that fit the female stereotype (Bentley & Oh, 2019; Eagly, 1987; Levanon & Grusky, 2016), but those are dead end and do not lead to

decision-making roles (Kanter, 1977). Nevertheless, there was no consensus amongst participants whether personal choices or occupational segregation explained women's decision to not pursue careers in motorsports or decision-making roles in the field. However, the latter argument was less supported given that the high number of female motorsports' fans enlightens that women are interested in auto racing. Next, individual level challenges are discussed.

5.2.3 IMPOSTOR PHENOMENON

Participants who joined the industry later in their careers reported lower self-confidence compared to those who were socialized into motorsports as children. The impostor phenomenon is highly associated with gender stereotypes and defines a self-doubt or a psychological fraudulence feeling that has been reported to be especially prominent for high-achieving women, such as the profile of participants in the present study (Clance & Imes, 1978, p. 1). The phenomenon follows gendered norms and is characterized by the internalization that a misfit between women's capabilities and the environments exists, resulting in women expressing a lack of confidence in themselves and a perceived need to prove their value to belong (Mak et al., 2019).

Findings illuminated that the early socialization of women into sports may help prevent the self-doubt and self-confidence related that characterize the phenomenon given that they reported developing thick skin and confidence early on. Preventing feelings that are associated with the phenomenon from happening is important given that negative outcomes have been associated with it, both at work and in the personal spheres, such as lower performance, anxiety, and depression (Palmer, 2021). Although well-being

variables were not discussed in the present study, some participants felt that self-doubt and the underestimation of their potential led them to decline job opportunities, which hindered their career advancement (similar to Chen et al., 2021, who found that lack of self-confidence obstructed females' career advancement in hospitality).

Interestingly, participants who grew up in racing revealed a different facet of the impostor phenomenon: instead of internalizing their success, they tended to designate accomplishments to peers or family members. This reflects an aspect of the female socialization that complicates confidence building and agrees with results in Sarathchandra et al. (2018). For example, one participant used terms, such as *lucky* and *grateful* to describe her role, even though she indicated her hard-work and how she improved the family business. Nonetheless, the phenomenon includes confidence issues that may be different and may happen even to those with an early socialization into sports. The next section continues discussions on individual level challenges and presents reflections on work-life balance and motherhood.

5.2.4 WORK-LIFE BALANCE AND MOTHERHOOD

Most participants revealed difficulties throughout their whole careers to manage and establish work-life balance, agreeing with previous authors who advanced that women's personal and professional lives are highly permeable (Powell and Maniero, 1992). "Managing both domestic and professional responsibilities is a difficult task that places stressful demands on the women's time" (Guendouzi, 2006, p. 907) as is. Particular to sports management, those working in the field report added work demands

that put extra pressure on the work-life balance, such as demanding traveling schedules to competitions and a competitive mentality to win at the racetrack and on the business-side.

Present findings agree with premises in the stress, coping and adaptation model (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984), which describes that women with multiple roles (e.g., mother and businesswoman) evaluate how their resources may allow them to handle different situations. The point where the demands for a situation exceed resources characterizes a stressful situation. However, the model was extended to fit the context of sports in which those who work in the field tend to have a competitive personality, with a drive to win (on and off the track), which represented an added stress that is not seen in other industries. These lofty expectations reflect the mentality that *we are here to win* in sports and are embraced by those who work in the industry. Moreover, participants suggested that those who work in motorsports are overachievers, or type A personalities, which elucidates that these women set elevated expectations to excel in both their personal and professional lives; consequently, adding extra pressure on top of societal expectations women face to put their personal lives and families above their careers.

Most participants with children reported a stress factor associated with the lack of time for family activities given the demands of the racing lifestyle. They named this stress factor *mom guilt*. Agreeing with Lazarus and Folkman's (1984) model, the stress factor was stronger for women without a support system. Support systems were therefore described as key in managing stress. Participants without a support system justified the focus on work as means to provide a better future for their children, concurrent with an economic justification (Swanson & Johnson, 2003). Besides, the stress is enhanced given

the societal expectation that women should be caregivers first and prioritize family over work (Hewlett & Luce, 2005; Ladge & Little, 2019). The female stereotype suggests that women should be nurturing and caring, advancing that “Good mothering ... is a cultural invention” (Thurer, 1995, p. 300). Several participants reported feeling guilty for not meeting social norms and expectations of the expected good mothering (Heilman, 2001; 2012), which is a model that does not fit the racing lifestyle. Not checking the box for “perfect mom” resulted in mom guilt. Participants who are mothers expressed increased work-life tensions (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984).

Women who are decision makers in sports therefore have very exceedingly ambitious standards and a competitive mentality that seeks to excel and win in all arenas. These challenges compound across levels (societal, organizational, interpersonal, individual), while the strongest difficulties women face in motorsports agreed with previous studies and were reported to be at the societal and individual levels. The next section summarizes these discussions that reflected upon the first research question.

5.2.5 RESEARCH QUESTION 1: DISCUSSION SUMMARY

Women on the management side of motorsports face similar challenges to those advanced in previous studies from parent disciplines, agreeing that those are enhanced in male-dominated fields. Most challenges found in the present study were reported at the societal and individual levels, which is concurrent with previous authors that followed a similar multi-level analysis (e.g., Peus et al., 2015). Present findings agreed that the majority of challenges women face in the workplace result from or are affected by the endorsement of gender stereotypes.

Furthermore, the present research extended on *how* some challenges may be experienced or manifested when the context of sports is considered. Remarkably, the early socialization of women into sports reduced the challenges they faced if they followed a career on the management side of that sport (compared to women who entered the industry later). This happened because the women who grew up at the racetrack were treated like equals to boys in the environment as kids, and therefore were socialized to not perceive differences based on gender. This conclusion is pertinent to an environment where all children play together, such as reported on the racetracks at the amateur side of motorsports, where all the kids ride bicycles and play together as a group (not boys and girls separately). The early introduction to sports helped women develop thick skin and prevented insecurities as well, such as those that relate to the impostor phenomenon. Finally, a nuance of motorsports, and not seen in other sports, is that women who have an early socialization into the industry report *advantages* associated with *understanding the racing lifestyle* early on, which was described as helpful in building a career on the management side of the field later in their lives. The next section discusses the coping mechanisms participants used to navigate the challenges proposed.

5.3 RESEARCH QUESTION 1.1: COPING MECHANISMS

RQ 1.1: How do women navigate and overcome these challenges?

Several studies have concentrated on the challenges women face on the management side of male-dominated industries and roles, but less is known about success factors and coping mechanisms that were important in navigating difficulties to get to the top of organizations (e.g., Peus et al., 2015). Research Question 1.1 was proposed to fill

this gap and aimed to identify coping mechanisms women in motorsports use to navigate and overcome challenges in the workplace. Sarathchandra et al. (2018) found that informal measures of success were important for women to navigate challenges in male-dominated environments (e.g., STEM), which was similar to the findings in the current study. None of the participants talked about formal mechanisms or tools (e.g., training) that helped them succeed in organizations or the industry.

The majority of mechanisms participants relied on to navigate challenges in their careers were associated to topics discussed in previous studies. However, mechanisms stressed a key feature of the motorsports industry: close-knit racing community and interpersonal relationships. In addition, individual characteristics typical of those who work in sports were important to survive in the environment (e.g., thick skin and risk-taker). The next sections discuss the main coping mechanisms shared by participants.

Creativity, empowerment, and authenticity. Amongst the findings in Campuzano (2019), two of the subthemes on *how women's leadership can influence male-dominated organizational cultures in the United States* were supported in the current study as coping mechanisms. Women offered that they use *creativity*, or novel and innovative ways that are a shift to the status quo; and *empowerment*, which evidences that women promote others through empowerment and advocacy, enabling colleagues and subordinates to succeed (p. 447). Participants revealed that rather than fitting into the existing norms and status quo in the industry, they see authenticity as an important benefit to welcoming more women into motorsports and help the industry move away from traditional structures and systems (Milgram, 2011). Especially, given the expressive

number of motorsports female fans, a shift from the traditional masculine hegemony would help the industry speak to and move closer to its already diverse fanbase.

Personalities & traits needed in motorsports. To counter stereotypes, women who get to high positions in male-dominated fields have been found to be over performers (see Leslie et al., 2017). This idea was supported in the present study, where women on the management side of motorsports were described and described themselves as *super achievers*. Participants suggested that it is needed to be an overachiever in the field in order to prove one's skills and build a reputation (e.g., hard-worker) and counter existent stereotypes of women in racing (Leslie et al., 2017). This idea is associated with the token theory in which minority group members need to prove their abilities and intentions more than the majority, or those who are part of the old boys' club (Kanter, 1977). Similarly, Peus et al. (2015) found that a success factor for female managers across countries was *achievement-orientation*, characterized by quotes such as working hard and "not being afraid of work." Contrary to results in Peus et al. (2015), participants in this study did not talk about learning orientation as a success factor in motorsports.

Several participants mentioned risk-taking as an important success factor to advance in their careers. This finding agrees with results in Peus et al. (2015), who found risk-taking to be a well-supported success factor exceptionally for US female managers. Connected to risk-taking and taking opportunities, which some participants described as "raising your hand to opportunities" and "saying yes and then figuring out how to accomplish the task later," building confidence was added as a necessary trait to advance professionally in motorsports (similar to Waltemeyer, 2018). Participants agreed that

women need to build self-confidence and overcome the impostor syndrome to succeed in a male-dominated field (Sax et al., 2015). Participants with an early socialization into the industry revealed benefits in building self-efficacy as well, or, as they called it, *thick skin*. Likewise, the social cognitive career theory advances that women benefit from enhanced career self-efficacy when introduced to a field at an early age (Flores & O'Brien, 2002).

Different personas at home and at work. Powell and Mainiero (1992) suggested that women's careers cannot be fully understood if their nonwork lives are disregarded. Interestingly, participants in the present study who are mothers said that they needed to define separate identities at home and at work (e.g., mom and businesswoman), which is different from mothers in other fields, e.g., academia, who found difficult to separate personal and professional lives (Swanson & Johnson, 2003). Participants found it difficult to integrate those spheres because of the unique lifestyle in racing, which was described as completely different from "mom life" or their "personal life." Establishing separate identities was the informal tool found to fulfill the desire to be fully present at work and immersed in motorsports, and at home, as a mom or a girlfriend, for example. This mechanism does not completely align with previous studies that defined a complete permeability of work-life spheres for women (Powell & Mainiero, 1992).

Mentors. All participants in the study highlighted the major importance of mentoring relationships as part of their professional lives (Sarathchandra et al., 2018) agreeing that "understanding oneself as increasingly connected to others in more complex and sophisticated ways" (in O'Neil & Bilimoria, 2005, citing Kram, 1996, p. 114). Interestingly, even women who did not receive mentorship or support from other women

in the field, reported that they saw the importance and became mentors for women entering the industry (Waltemeyer, 2018). Besides, they shared that advocating for other women was important because it contributed to confidence- and network-building.

Similarly, most participants positively referenced the existent community of women in motorsports, with comments of how supportive and important this community was in helping them navigate challenges in the industry. This finding is contradictory to what Waltemeyer (2018) found and the queen bee phenomenon offered in previous sport management studies (e.g., Evans & Pfister, 2021), which suggested that “there is only room for so many women in a male-dominated field.” Participants stated that women in racing have realized that combining forces and voices is more beneficial to changing the status quo (e.g., welcome more diversity into racing) than competing against each other.

Male allies Due to the lack of women in motorsports, participants highlighted important male leaders who they looked up to and received support from. Melton (2012) evidenced the importance of allyship from majority-group members to help minority-group members succeed in sport organizations. For example, some participants offered examples of male leaders that were key in their career growth and who trusted their skills, provided opportunities and professional advice, and defended them from sexist behaviors.

Role models. Peus et al. (2015) found that interpersonal level factors, such as role models, were important success factor for female managers across cultures. Particularly for the US female managers, their study advanced that female role models were important to women in the workplace, for example, allowing to observe their actions and ask for advice (p.61). This study found parallel positive attitudes towards female role models.

Dasgupta and Asgari (2004) supported benefits of women being exposed to strong female role models (e.g., female leaders), such as seeing possible future selves. Seemingly, Forsyth et al. (2019) found evidence to the importance of role models for the professional success of women entering the sports industry; and Midgley et al. (2021) advanced that same gender role models were key for female athletes to perceive a successful future self in sports. Participants in the study agreed with these premises and offered that they want to be role models. For instance, some participants commented that they are using the success of their teams at the track to raise awareness to the possibilities of working in motorsports, especially for women, and to make themselves more visible.

5.3.1 RESEARCH QUESTION 1.1: DISCUSSION SUMMARY

The mechanisms used by women to navigate challenges in their career paths in motorsports were depicted as informal, and mostly reliant on their interpersonal relationships. This idea illuminates the sense of belonging and community existent in sports. These sentiments are shared by fans of sports as well, such as group and team identification, which have been previously investigated in sport marketing literature (Delia & James, 2017; Heere & James, 2007a, 2007b). Thus, success factors for women to remain in sports are different from those in other industries (e.g., see Peus et al., 2015) given singularities of the field (e.g., sense of belonging and community).

The racing community that meets every race weekend, or the traveling circus, which is unique to motorsports, emerged as one of the most important mechanisms to navigate difficulties throughout participants' careers. This factor is tied to the racing lifestyle, and consequently is not seen in other sports. Given the close-knit community in

racing, cultivating interpersonal relationships, and building a strong network were regarded as essential for a successful career in the field.

In addition to coping mechanisms and success factors, underlying motivators to continue pursuing a career despite challenges are key and should not be disregarded when considering sports, given the emotional attachment to sports. The next section discusses the motivators participants offered in the present study. This discussion regards factors at an additional level (i.e., the motorsports industry), which was not included in the original analytical framework (Ragins & Sundstrom, 1989). Figure 5.1 at the end of the chapter offers a summary of the findings, combining the themes and sub-themes from all research questions, and is organized amongst the five levels in the extended framework.

5.4 RESEARCH QUESTION 2: MOTIVATORS

RQ 2: Why do women continue pursuing decision-making roles in motorsports despite challenges?

Research Question 2 explored particularities of motorsports that motivated women to continue pursuing a career in the industry amidst difficulties. Findings, or motivators, alluded to the emotional attachment to sports, which is similar to sentiments fans of sports have, and has been investigated in sport management literature before. This attachment to motorsports was described as being linked to the racing lifestyle, which enlightened that motivators in this industry are slightly different from other sports.

Agreeing with the emotional attachment existent in sports management (Stewart & Smith, 1999), participants described their *why* to work in motorsports using words

such as, *adrenaline, excitement, unpredictability, freedom, and risk involved*. Feelings, emotions, and memories were the main motivators to pursue a career in motorsports despite challenges. Terms such as *comfort, soothing, safeness, belonging, a constant in life, memories growing up and with loved ones, shared feelings, connection to fathers*, were used several times by participants to express the meaning of motorsports to them. Mercado (2008) detected a similar sense of security (i.e., familism) to be a value found in sports. The author added that sports serve to reinforce personal values too. Contrary, the “psychological retirement” that has been described as a moment when, usually in mid-life, women are not psychologically motivated at work anymore (Levinson, 1997) was not supported in this study. All participants shared positive sentiments, such as a sense of purpose and excitement, when describing their careers in motorsports. Therefore, the emotional bond existent in sports is a unique factor shaping the career phases of women who work in the field (different from the phases in O'Neil & Bilimoria, 2005).

Participants believe that to succeed in on the management side of motorsports women need “an all-encompassing passion for just about everything that revolves around” it (Jenkins et al., 2005, p. 52). Participants clearly pointed out that one cannot fake a passion for motorsports to work in the industry because the racing lifestyle takes over all aspects of your life, which is an extreme case of the permeability between personal and professional in women’s lives (Powell & Maniero, 1992). This lifestyle is particular to motorsports, and consequently, the motivation resulting from it is singular to motorsports (and not seen in other sports). To illustrate, the lifestyle entails many work-related relocations and trips all over the country for races, nonexistent holidays, and a nonstop-work mentality, suggesting a completely different lifestyle than a “normal”

career. Moreover, friends and loved ones are in the travelling circus, and people who work in motorsports tend to be strangers in their local community because they are almost never home. Their main social bonds are therefore established in the industry. Several participants referred to the travelling circus to be their second or extended family, which reflects the feeling of belonging to something bigger. This bond goes beyond one's team, to encompass the whole industry. People in motorsports meet most weekends in a year, spend holidays together, and are barely at home. Nonetheless, both their work and personal lives happen at races. Participants described their social life as walking the pits and stopping in a garage to have a beer or going for dinner at the city where the race is happening with people from the industry. Racing becomes their social environment too.

Different to the findings in Doherty (2004), who found that working long hours and weekends was a major issue for women in the workplace, participants did not complain about the demanding racing lifestyle. The lifestyle, which was mostly linked to the racing community, was described as a positive aspect of their careers. The emotional attachment to sports explains why participants suggested that they enjoy the lifestyle, which is a lifestyle shared with people who have similar interests to theirs and who are part of the racing community, rather than perceiving the demands it entails as a burden.

The racing community was described as constituted of one-of-a-kind personalities (i.e., overachievers, type A), a family-orientation (i.e., extended family, racing family, racing village), and the feeling of being part of something bigger than oneself (i.e., team). Similarly, one of the research questions in Waltemeyer (2018) inquired *how women's lived experiences impacted their decision to pursue a career in motorsports*. The

emergent themes shed light on the importance of interpersonal relationships. Her findings enlightened us that the culture in motorsports (i.e., family-orientation) was important in women's decision to work in the industry as well. Moreover, the *traveling circus* was depicted as one of the main peculiarities of motorsports and its close-knit community and not seen in other pro sports. This phenomenon has not been discussed by previous studies and illuminates aspects that are unique in the racing lifestyle and the racing community.

The lifestyle permeated participants' own families as well. They exposed that their families join at races, and they watch races as a family activity. Thus, the emotional attachment for racing included their own families and children. Participants who grew up in racing families reported that motorsports is a shared bond that they have with their parents, siblings, and loved ones, as well. Working in the industry consequently kept these childhood memories and feelings alive. One participant described the intrinsic value of her career by saying that leaving racing would be extremely hard since for her it meant *letting go of childhood memories at the track and a shared bond with her family*.

Interestingly, mothers in the study offered a contrast between perceived benefits of motherhood to their careers (Greenhaus & Powell, 2006; Ruderman et al., 2002) and mom guilt. Participants claimed that being a role model for their children (i.e., strong woman pursuing her dreams) was an important motivator to follow a path that they are passionate about. Swanson and Johnson (2003) advanced a motherhood model focusing on faculty moms in which participants suggested that mothers' personal fulfillment was important in promoting the well-being of children. Participants in their study discussed similar challenges to those in the present study with regards to high work and mothering

expectations, but in both studies participants reported a passion for their careers and the lifestyle that those entail, which motivated them to combine multiple identities.

In sum, present findings evidenced the importance of interpersonal relationships and the lifestyle in motivating women to continue pursuing a career in motorsports, agreeing that women's experiences in the workplace are strongly impacted by relationships and the context (Powell & Maniero, 1992). Although the context was not reflected in the analytical framework used in the present, similar to Mikkonen (2019), who used the framework to assess the experiences of female leaders in soccer in Finland and Norway, an additional level representing the *motorsports industry* was added to the original framework (Ragins & Sundstrom, 1989). The addition of this level elucidates the importance of considering the emotional attachment existent in sports, which differs from other fields, such as general management, where the framework was created and widely used for investigations (e.g., Peus et al., 2015). In sum, success factors and coping mechanisms may not be sufficient to explain *why* women continue pursuing a career in sports amidst challenges since those may fail to reflect underlying emotional aspects.

5.4.1 RESEARCH QUESTION 2: DISCUSSION SUMMARY

The motivators for women to continue pursuing a career despite challenges do not mirror previous studies from parent disciplines that centered on male-dominated fields, but they do agree with phenomena previously investigated in the sport management literature with regards to the emotional attachment to sports. For instance, Todd and Kent (2009) examined the emotional significance of group membership that sport employees have, which motivates them to remain working in the field despite difficulties (Hawzen et

al., 2018). Despite highly demanding careers in sports (e.g., long hours and games on weekends), and disadvantages of the field (e.g., lower pay and highly competitive job market), employees have an emotional attachment to sports (i.e., generally to a sport or to a team), which helps explain their desire to continue pursuing (or enter) a career in the field. In the present study, this desire women have to continue building a career in motorsports was enhanced by strong bonds between some participants' memories growing up and racing as a shared bond with loved ones. Working in sports kept these memories and feelings alive. From memories growing up, to a current extended family, racing was described as a *constant in life* by several participants. Moreover, and particular to motorsports, the attachment was mostly to the racing lifestyle.

The emotional bond participants have with motorsports, and how important it was for their development, enlightened their motivation to *give back to the industry through their careers*. Participants want to see motorsports grow and flourish because they have an emotional attachment to racing. Thus, they use their careers as avenues for change and improvement. This agrees with the idea that women lean towards intrinsically rewarding careers, and the social aspect of being part of something bigger than oneself, that has been vastly discussed in management literature. Interestingly, the emotional attachment, sense of belonging, and shared bond, existent and particular to sports, reveal intrinsically motivating aspects in women's careers, which inspires them to do more and give back to the industry or organization. In turn, this benefits organizations and industry.

The main motivators discussed particularly relate to an emotional attachment to the racing lifestyle, and what it entails. Findings therefore extend to the idea of the

emotional bond existent in sports, which has been previously investigated in the sport management literature (e.g., passion and pride, Swanson & Kent. 2017), shared passion and bond with loved ones through sports (Mercado, 2008), and women's preference for intrinsically rewarding careers (Cortes & Pan, 2018); and contribute to the extremely limited academic discussions about particularities of motorsports as well. In the following section, theoretical and practical implications of the findings are suggested.

5.5 IMPLICATIONS

5.5.1 THEORETICAL IMPLICATIONS

Similar to Mikkonen (2019), the present study extended Ragins and Sundstrom's (1989) analytical framework to account for the features of the sport management field. By incorporating the industry of motorsports as a level of analysis, a more comprehensive understanding of the motivators women have to continue pursuing a career in the field amidst challenges was advanced. The fifth level considered nuances of sport management, such as the emotional aspect (Stewart & Smith, 1999) and socialization particularities (e.g., Mercado, 2008), agreeing that experiences of women are influenced by the context and relationships (Powell and Maniero, 1992). Sport has field-specific factors that differentiate sport management from management; hence, the framework was adjusted appropriately for the analysis (Babiak & Wolfe, 2009; Slack, 1998).

According to O'Neil and Bilimoria (2005), women's careers are unique and distinctive to male's careers due to three main mechanisms (see p.169): a) the impact of family responsibilities in their careers; b) female's developmental psychology and the

focus on relationships; and c) women's relative underrepresentation and token status at higher organizational levels (Kanter, 1977). The present results supported those in women's careers. Interestingly, they also characterize two of the most supported challenges (i.e., work-life balance and the lack of women in the space); and one major coping mechanism (i.e., emphasis on relationships, reflected on the reliance on mentors, role models, and the community of women in racing). O'Neil and Bilimoria (2005) developed a model that depicts the career phases of women. However, the model was not applicable to the careers of women in motorsports. Nonetheless, extending considerations to ponder particularities of the context women are inserted in (e.g., motorsports or sports organizations), would be an interesting and supplemental reflection to the model.

5.5.2 IMPLICATIONS FOR MANAGERS

Some of the participants considered their love for cars as their first introduction to motorsports, and their proposition informed the connection between motorsports and automotive that follows (i.e., no empirical data was found about the motorsports industry; thus, automotive was used as a proxy male-dominated field). According to the Catalyst (2022), women avoided working in automotive in the United States in 2020 mainly due to a lack of diversity, equity, and inclusion in the industry (64%) and the lack of work-life balance (53%). Interestingly, these insights are consistent with the findings in the present research with regards to the main challenges pointed out by women in decision-making roles in motorsports being at the societal and individual levels.

Firstly, one of the most supported themes evidenced that participants did not perceive working in motorsports as a viable career option due to the underrepresentation

and lack-of-fit between women and motorsports resulting from gender stereotypes. By taking advantage of the momentum in society towards welcoming more gender diversity across industries and roles, finding creative ways to expose opportunities and female role models in motorsports would be beneficial for the industry to attract a more diverse pool of candidates and to help women succeed through the pipeline. Given the numerous advantages of early socialization into male-dominated fields previously discussed, exposing young girls to motorsports and the possibilities of working in racing would be an avenue to attract more women to the management side of the industry. For example, teams and racetracks could partner with schools and allow girls to spend the day at the track or with a team and explain the possible career paths that are available in racing.

The popularity of the *Drive to Survive* series on Netflix is a good example that exemplifies the growth of motorsports' consumption in the media in the American market. Moreover, the series presents an avenue for further growth of these sports across new market segments (Richards, 2022). Additionally, the series could help expose fans to possible careers on the management side the industry, and it could highlight women who hold key management positions in the industry. Nonetheless, media outlets, such as social media as well, could help normalize seeing women on the management side of motorsports. Women's underrepresentation on the management side of the field indicates a lack of awareness of possible career paths since they report being racing fans already.

Secondly, managing work-life balance given the racing lifestyle was highlighted as a major difficulty that has been a problem throughout the whole career of participants and is still a difficulty to this day. Contrary, labor-market research suggests that fields

that saw an increase on the representation of women from 1970 to 2017 reported work flexibility as a crucial factor to attract this demographic (Bentlet & Oh, 2019). Even though work flexibility could be compromised due to the amount of traveling in the racing schedule, organizations could be more welcoming and transition to a more family-friendly industry. According to participants, the environment on race days is not welcoming to family members. Nonetheless, providing family-oriented solutions, both for the office and for race days, could lessen the work-life balance burden.

Parenting is still more heavily levied on mothers. Although the number of hours that fathers spent on childcare has more than tripled in the last 40 years, and the majority of fathers perceive parenting as major in their identity (Hentshel et al., 2019), mothers still report significantly higher work-family guilt and work-interfering-with-family guilt compared to fathers in the United States (Borelli et al., 2017). Researchers have found that even though fathers' support gender equity, mothers are the ones who adapt their professional life to meet children's needs (Elvin-Nowak & Thomsson, 2001). One of the challenges is finding ways that women can normalize parenting as it is suitable to them and their careers, deconstructing the “good mothering” and normalize parenting that is consistent with the racing lifestyle (Guendouzi, 2006). Establishing communities of mothers could be an avenue for mutual support. This suggestion follows that informal community-based mechanisms emerged as important success factors in motorsports both in the present study and in Waltemeyer (2018). A better work-life balance has been shown to have positive spillovers on women's professional lives (Greenhaus & Powell, 2006); hence, organizations should prioritize women's well-being for productivity too.

Combining these two notions, participants noted that if more women joined the industry, or if the first challenge was successfully tackled, the second challenge would likely see improvement in practice as well. If more women were on the management side of motorsports, participants believe that a more family-inclusive environment for those working in racing would be seen. One participant who owns a racetrack is an example of that. She talked about ongoing projects to make the track more welcoming to everyone, not just racers. For instance, her renovations include planting apple trees and developing more comfortable accommodations in the area. A participant summarized these ideas,

separate from the racing, there isn't really an environment or much to do for people that are there just to support the drivers. And I think if there were more women, innately they would be bringing in other things for people in the families to do, in ways that would make it more of a family situation. Now it seems like a kind of exclusive thing where men don't want women there because there's not that much to do and then they feel like they have to entertain their wives. And then I hear that as a team owner, a fair amount, it is difficult [...] So I think that one of the changes could be women making that whole environment something that is more family-friendly.

Participants alluded to several other benefits of welcoming women and feminine traits in the industry. Instead of requiring women to fit into the existent traditional norms and status quo, highlight the value of feminine traits and authenticity because to “continually build momentum in dominant organizational cultures, women leaders must be able to fully, rather than just strategically, engage in their unique, feminine, creative, and innate approaches to leadership” (Campuzano, 2019, p. 457). All participants mentioned that they feel part of the change that is happening in welcoming more women in the industry.

When women have an emotional attachment to their careers or the environment they are working in, they are more likely than men to go the extra mile, and will work to

not only excel in their jobs, but to help others (social orientation) and give back, such as through voluntary work, improve the sport for all, advocate for women, and go so far as opening a non-profit organization to help more women enter and succeed in the industry. Hence, women see their careers as avenues for the change they want to see. The importance of *giving back* and making a difference for others was described as a key factor for women's own personal happiness (O'Neil & Bilimoria, 2005). This intrinsic motivation could be used in practice by offering female employees chances to get involved in social projects and give back, for example. By giving women intrinsically rewarding opportunities in the workplace, their happiness and well-being would be boosted, and therefore retention in the workplace would be positively affected too.

The women in the study are currently the most influential females in US motorsports. In addition to advocating for and hiring more women and minorities, they are using their authority and their business success to show the possibilities and what a career in motorsports looks like. Moreover, they are making changes to the culture of their organizations and the industry as a whole given their influence. However, women are still a minority in the field. Several motorsports' organizations still do not have women in roles and departments that have decision-making power to make real change. More women in such positions are needed for expressive change to happen and for the industry to grow beyond its traditional reach and fanbase. And women are already motorsports fans. Thinking broadly and outside-the-box would allow marketers to better approach this major market segment as well, for example. Thus, in order for motorsports to grow, the strategy has to go beyond simply considering racers or existing racing fans, towards welcoming families, or new fans that may not be as interested in the traditional

racing format. And women may be the key to unlock big-picture-thinking strategies. This shift in the organization culture towards focusing more than only on those interested in racing is a fitting example of a skill that women would bring to the table.

These discussions enlighten the need to educate managers on inclusion practices, stressing the benefits of diversity to help maintain women in the pipeline beyond hiring (Bower et al., 2015; Martin & Barnard, 2013). “A better awareness of structural factors that shape women’s success might be especially pertinent in fields that are male-dominated.” (Sarathchandra et al., 2018, p. 12). The next section presents the author’s closing thoughts, followed by suggestions for future studies.

5.6 CLOSING THOUGHTS

The present study advanced an exploration of the almost invisible women who are decision makers in motorsports in the United States. The focus was uncovering challenges they faced in their careers in the industry, how they overcame them, and their motivations to continue pursuing a career in the industry despite challenges. The most prominent challenges were at the societal (i.e., gender stereotypes, lack-of-fit); and individual levels (i.e., work-life balance, motherhood, and impostor phenomenon). The coping mechanisms to navigate those were informal mechanisms mainly at the interpersonal level, such as the community of women in racing, support systems, mentors, and role models. The motivation to continue pursuing a career in the industry amidst challenges was associated with the motorsports industry itself and its singularities, (i.e., racing lifestyle, team aspect, and a family-orientation). Figure 5.1 presents the summary of the main findings, which are organized according to the four levels in the

analytical framework developed by Ragins and Sundstrom (1989), in addition to a fifth level characterizing the singularities of the motorsports industry. Suggestions for further research that could follow and add to the current findings are explored in the next section.

5.7 FURTHER RESEARCH

The present study conducted interviews with 16 women who are decision makers in motorsports in the United States. Applying the same research methods used in this analysis in different contexts, for instance, given the current success of Formula 1 around the globe and nuances of the all-female W Series, studies examining women on the management side of motorsports in other countries and other series are advised.

Extending this study towards a cross-country analysis with more participants would allow for a more comprehensive picture of the lived experiences of women in motorsports globally as well. Similar to Peus et al. (2015), gathering challenges and success factors that are prominent in different countries could inform how challenges have been tackled and evidenced coping mechanisms used in different countries in order to inform possible change across the board. Moreover, extending the analysis and consider other motorsports, such as boat and motorcycle racing, could yield interesting results as well.

Similar to O'Neil and Bilimoria (2005), assessing women across different age groups to advance the career development phases in sports would be helpful in allowing practitioners to better support women's needs in each career phase and keep women in the pipeline. For example, getting access early in their careers to successful female role models helps them see concrete evidence that organizations are supportive of women's career and growth (O'Neil & Bilimoria, 2005). The career phases in O'Neil and Bilimoria

(2005) were not supported in the current study mainly given the motivators to continue pursuing a career in motorsports, such as the racing lifestyle, which was a constant across age groups, and is perhaps not widely seen across fields. Nonetheless, developing a model examining the career phases of women in sports would be interesting.

Agreeing that women's career cannot be understood if their nonwork lives are disregarded (Powell & Mainiero, 1992), especially given the importance of the racing lifestyle, combining participants' perspectives with the perspective of the organization-side and how they value the work-life balance of female employees in motorsports would be an interesting perspective (Ruderman et al., 2002). Researchers could conduct case studies including sanctioning bodies, teams, and racetracks, for example, in order to assess the industry from multiple sides. Furthermore, assessments from the organization-side could inform practices that may be enabling the impostor phenomenon and perhaps enlighten ways to reduce this mentality through organization practices.

Sport management scholars have investigated issues related to work-life balance and motherhood, such as long hours (Leberman & Palmer, 2009), and how the choice to have a family may influence women's career path (Weight et al., in press). However, the positive spillover of motherhood in mothers' happiness and well-being, in addition to their children's, has yet to be explored in sport management. For example, in this study participants who are mothers mentioned that, despite mom guilt, they perceive the combination of multiple roles with motherhood as positive for their children (i.e., they are role models of women pursuing their dreams). An avenue for future studies in sport management would be to analyze the spillovers of motherhood in women's well-being.

5.8 FINAL STATEMENT

In conclusion, women's potential is still widely unutilized in the sports industry, motorsports being an extreme case and unexplored industry within the sport management literature (Mikkonen, 2019). Women on the management side of motorsports are an almost invisible population both in academia and in practice, as suggested by participants in the present study and the lack of research that emphasizes the field. Nevertheless, in order for the industry to benefit from the advantages of gender diversity and welcome more women on the management side, there is a need for further investigations of the lived experiences of women who are working in motorsports. Nuances of the industry, such as the racing lifestyle, should be further considered with regards to how those shape and associate with women's career paths in the field.

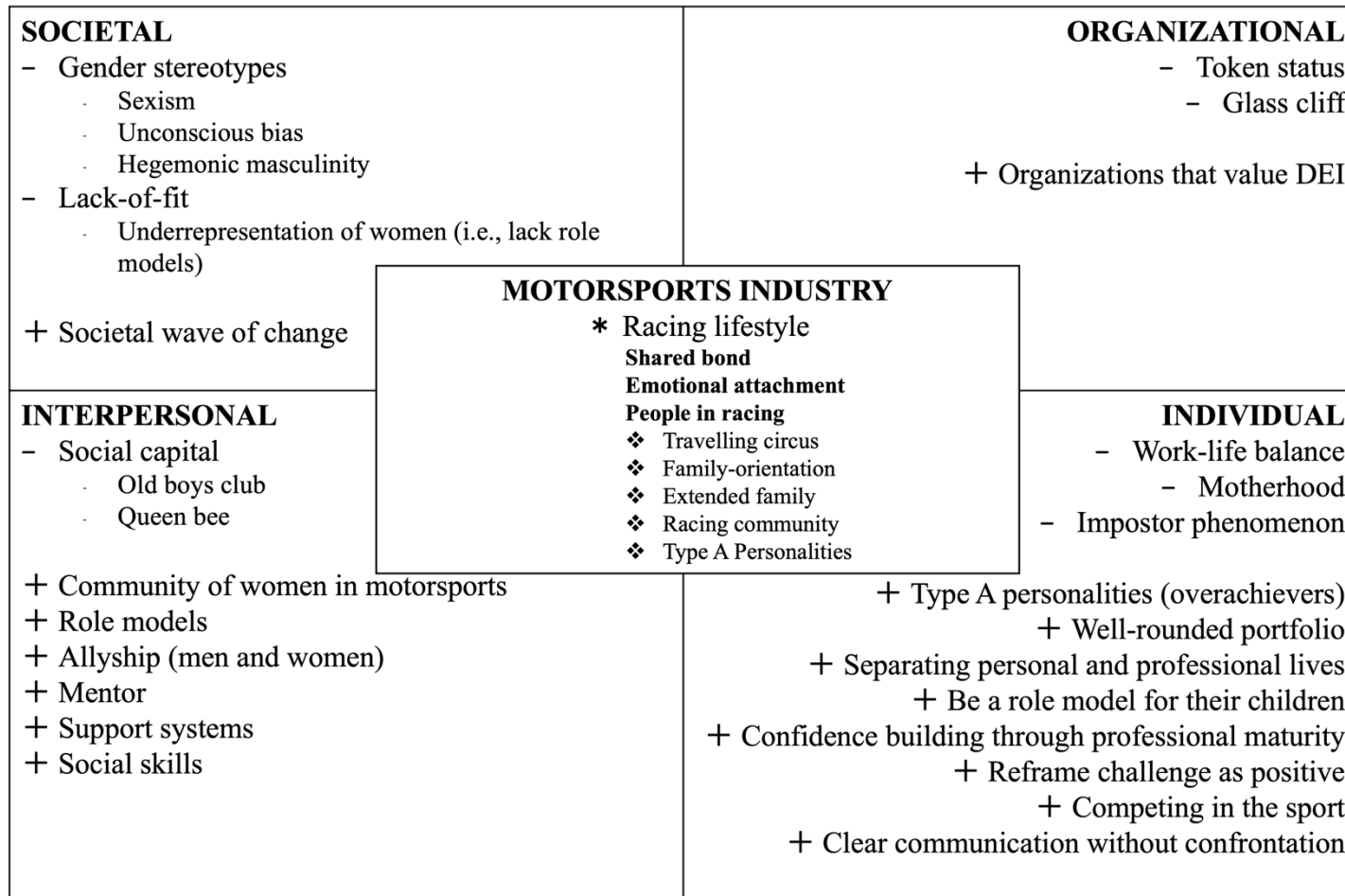


Figure 5.1 Summary: challenges (-), coping mechanisms (+) and motivators (*)

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APPENDIX A

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

The researcher started each interview by introducing herself and the purpose of the study. Participants were reminded of the confidentiality measures that would be followed to ensure their anonymity (i.e., use of pseudonyms and non-disclosure of organization names) and that the interview would be audio-recorded. Interviewees were informed prior to the start of interviews that questions would emphasize their introduction to motorsports, career path in the industry, challenges they encountered throughout their career, and how they navigated and overcame those, in addition to reflections on their motivations to continue pursuing a career in the industry despite challenges.

Each main section of the interview started with the same broad question (e.g., *please reflect on...; please tell me about...*), and more specific prompt questions were also suggested in the protocol and were used as needed to continue the dialog and to maintain the focus of the interview emphasizing the three research questions. Additional lead questions were added in the protocol to follow up if there were minutes of silence or if clarification was needed from participants (e.g., *could you please develop on that idea...; I am not sure I understood it correctly, did you mean...*). The interviews were conducted online via the software Zoom due to time and travel restrictions.

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Recording starts after the introduction to the study, and briefing provided to participants.

PART I: INTRODUCTION TO MOTORSPORTS (RQ2)

I would like to start our conversation with your first experiences in motorsports.

1. Could you please describe early memories or how you were introduced to motorsports (similar to Waltemeyer, 2018).

Prompts:

- + When you think about your early memories with motorsports, were those related to someone?
 - If so, tell me about those memories and experiences.
 - Who introduced you to motorsports?
 - Who did you watch/go to races with?
 - When was that, or around what age?
 - Was your family a part of/influence your connection to the industry?
- + If you ever competed in motorsports, tell me about those experiences.
- + Does anyone you know work in motorsports, if so, could you tell me who?

2. What impact would you say motorsports has had in your life?

Prompts:

- + What made you stay connected to motorsports from your introduction to today?
 - Did you ever disconnect from the industry at any point in your life?
- + What makes you interested in motorsports or what is unique about it?
- + What would you say the meaning of motorsports is for you?

PART II: CAREER TRAJECTORY AND CHALLENGES

We will now focus our conversation on your experiences and career in motorsports. I would like to hear more about your career trajectory, such as, challenges encountered in the industry and how you overcame those and got to your current role as a (insert role).

Important decisions and people, any turning points, in your career path in the industry.

3. Could you talk about what led to your decision to work on the business-side of the industry? (Oja et al, 2015) (RQ2)
4. Tell me more about when you first got into the business-side of the industry and your early experiences working in motorsports. (RQ2)

Prompts:

- + What first attracted you to work in the industry? (Waltemeyer, 2018)
 - When did the interest in working in motorsports start? (Waltemeyer, 2018)
5. What were some challenges you faced early in your career as a woman working in the motorsports industry? (RQ1)
 6. How did you overcome those challenges or obstacles? (Park, 2021) (RQ 1.1)

Prompts:

- + Could you describe what helped you or what was needed to succeed to get to your current role? (Park, 2021) (RQ 1.1)

Interpersonal:

- + Could you tell me about important people who helped you succeed along the way and get through challenging moments? (RQ 1.1)

- Did you have any mentors in the industry that were important in your career? (allies, see Melton, 2012; Wells & Hancock, 2017; Katz, et al., 2018; Walker & Bopp, 2010). (RQ 1.1)
- If so, could you describe how your mentor(s) helped you in the industry?
- What about role models in motorsports? Can you tell me about anyone who inspired you in the industry or you looked up to? (RQ 1.1)

If they do not mention women, follow:

- + Were there women who were mentors or role models for you in the industry? (e.g., Midgley et al., 2021) (RQ 1.1)

7. Why did you decide to continue pursuing a career in the industry given the challenges encountered along the way? (RQ2)

Prompts:

- + What “kept you going” on difficult days or challenging moments? (RQ 1.1/RQ2)
- + What career decisions in motorsports would you say affected your family and your work-life balance? (RQ1/RQ1.1)
- + Could you tell me more about why you decided to pursue a (insert current role) position in motorsports. (RQ2)

8. How would you describe your career in motorsports, from your first jobs in the industry to your current role. (RQ1;RQ1.1)

9. What words would you use to describe your career path in motorsports? (all RQ)

Prompts:

- + What would you say is unique about working in the motorsports industry? (RQ2)

10. What would you say that keeps you going in motorsport now (e.g., maintain commitments)? (RQ1.1;2)

11. Have ever considered leaving motorsports? (RQ1)

+ If so, tell me why and around when that happened. (RQ1)

12. Tell me about your future career aspirations in the industry. (RQ2)

Prompts:

+ What is your personal definition of “success”? (RQ2)

13. Could you reflect on the meaning of being a woman who is a (insert role) in motorsports in the United States? (Waltemeyer, 2018) (RQ2)

14. What are some of the challenges you face currently as a woman who is a (insert role) in motorsports. (RQ1)

15. Could you tell me how you navigate and deal with these challenges in your current role? (RQ1.1)

16. And how would you say your experiences compares to men who have the same role as yours in the industry? (Sartore & Cunningham, 2007) (RQ1)

Prompts:

Societal:

+ Could you elaborate on how being a woman may have influenced your career path in the industry? (RQ1)

Organization (Mikkonen, 2019):

+ How would you describe the culture in the industry of motorsports? (RQ1)

+ What would you say is important for someone to thrive as a decision-maker in the motorsports industry (e.g., skills, experience)? (RQ1; 1.1)

- + What does the organization you work for value (e.g., experience, skills)? (RQ1;1.1)
- 17.** To end our conversation, if you could give advice to a woman who wants to work in motorsports and aspires to become a (insert role), what would you tell her? (RQ1.1)
- 18.** What suggestions would you give her to get through challenges along her career? (RQ1.1)

Prompts:

- + Would the U.S. motorsports industry be different if more women were decision makers? If so, how?
- + And what do you think that could be done to help more women reach (insert role) in motorsports in the U.S.?

APPENDIX B

ADDITIONAL QUOTES (RQ1, RQ 1.1, RQ2)

The next two tables (Table B.1 and B.2) offer additional quotes that support the findings advanced and discussed in previous chapters. Table B.1 relates to RQ 1 and RQ 1.1 and proposes descriptions of challenges and coping mechanisms offered by participants. The table is organized analogous to Table 2.1 and follows the levels in the analytical framework suggested by Ragins and Sundstrom (1989). Table B.2 is associated with RQ2, and it advances descriptions of motorsports and its particularities, which emerged as motivators to continue pursuing a career in racing despite challenges.

Table B.1 Additional quotes (RQ 1 & RQ 1.1)

Societal		
Codes	Challenge	Navigating
<p>Gender stereotypes - “I mean, no question - It's a man's world. And there's no questioning that because you're in this garage area with all these young guys all the time. There's always the rumors, there was always battling the, “Is she really here because she wants to work? Or is she here to marry a rich driver?”” Heidi</p>	<p>- Invisible Maria - I left a meeting and say to my father, “why didn't that guy talk to me? That guy was really not cool.” And my dad said, “Oh, can you not tell he's a sexist?” And I'm like, “Oh, I didn't know.” Paige - they talked around me, they talked through me like there was, and there were so many acronyms being thrown out. [...] that was amplified by the fact that I was a female, in my opinion, and because I was new.</p> <p>- Underestimated Capabilities in Racing/Motorsports Kia - There were always whispers and rumors, and jokes about a woman's capability. [...] There are always going to be people who think that women aren't smart enough, that they're not fast enough, that they're not savvy enough, that they don't understand cars, or that the only reason they're into this is because their dad did this, or something like that. Ayla - I would flow these ideas through my boss, and then he would flow them to the leadership [...] So I never really got the one-on-one respect. So if I wanted to see something change in motorsport, I wanted to bring my own ideas, I would bring those ideas through my boss. So they would actually listen. [...] The greatest accomplishment is just sticking around, and not allowing them or shy you away as not as powerful.</p> <p>- Need to prove oneself Sofia - It took a lot of years for people, for customers, for drivers to realize that they could talk to me, and that I knew what the hell I was talking about. And to be accepted on the</p>	<p>- Like-minded personalities in the pits Ella – I feel like I'm on gas all the time. Zaya - Specially in these types of environments, where you have not only men, but you have very type A personalities, very strong personalities. I mean, that just goes with racing, right? Where you have this very, very competitive, dangerous sport, when you think about it, it is not everyone that has the personalities that go with that, which makes sense, right?</p> <p>- Focus on the people who are supportive and on the positive (rather than detrimental comments) Lola - You got to remember that if you've got one racer or whatever, who's kind of being a jerk, or, like a thorn in your side, you also have 100 other racers that are not, and those are the ones that you're working for. Zaya - I never really tried to be offensive about it, or offended by it, I really kind of turned around, and usually, within five minutes of talking to me, they knew I knew what I was talking about. Zaya - You try and compose yourself as much as you can, hold it together. And, if you have to go sit in your car and cry, go do it. Get yourself back together and just go right back in there. Don't let them defeat you.</p> <p>- Men as Allies Rosie - I do remember having men that did elevate me, or include me in a conversation when there were, you know, six men in the room and me. And they're all talking and ignoring me, I'm invisible. And there would usually be</p>

	<p>mechanical engineering side of the engine business and the race business.</p> <p>- Female stereotype: “Emotional” Lola - if I'm gonna cry over a situation, or whatever, I try to make sure I'm in my car or somewhere that I'm not letting my emotions get the best of me.</p> <p>- Female stereotype: “Difficult” Ayla – but as years went on, then just the the lack of acknowledgement kind of wears on you and then I would push back and when I would push back they would push me even further away because I said something, or I was being assertive which can be misconstrued as, you know, what's the word. that you hear a lot... difficult, being difficult. [...] I would push back a little bit, then I'd get frustrated. Then I would go back to the old way of doing things. It was kind of a cycle.</p> <p>Yara - I'm sure I've been called bitch multiple times. Nobody's ever called it to my face.</p> <p>- Assumptions about the intentions of women Ayla - I would come upon the bias or the stereotypes of, “Oh, just a cute blonde girl.” Or “Can we date,” that was I think one of the big things.</p> <p>Heidi - a lot of my friends were accused of sleeping around with a lot of people when they aren't that kind of person at all. But if they were an attractive woman around all these guys, “why wouldn't they be,” is the assumption. But my husband was always around with me so I never got accused of anything like that but a lot of my colleagues and my friends did. Also there is a lot of gossip and things like that going on.</p>	<p>one that would say, “well, Rosie, what do you think?” Or “Rosie, could you help us with that?.”</p> <p>Joy – there are a lot of men that are absolutely willing to help.</p> <p>- Absorb information Rosie - when I was a little bit younger, I would say I just made sure I was there. I was in the room.</p> <p>Rosie - I was gaining all this knowledge from people that had good experience. So I didn't look at it in a negative way. I looked at it as I'm gonna suck all this knowledge in use that to be better at my job. And take this information from these decades of experience from these older man and use it to be better at my job.</p> <p>Zaya - I would just let them go and let them talk. I always feel: listen more. It usually works. You should, it always works.</p> <p>Rosie - I learned to be a really good listener. And if nothing else, I could say back sometimes some of the conversations. And that there became a level of respect because most of the time people don't listen. So if I said, “Oh, well, earlier, Bob mentioned that at their track, they did such and such, what about if we do this and that,” and just by listening and sometimes zoning back in on discussion points, it helped me gain a little more respect. [...] throwing out some fresh ideas helped too.</p> <p>Bia - you really have to rise above the noise and be a little bit different.</p> <p>- Backup your case with data and facts Paige - When there were opportunities, just starting to insert my opinion, do it with the right tone and style, but then also be able to back it up with data or hard facts that I knew they were going to look for.</p> <p>Paige - With the right style, I did not want to be seen as somebody who was emotional, or somebody that was being really just difficult to be difficult. I made sure I did my homework, I had my facts. And I laid out my case, if I felt like I needed to state it.</p>
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		<p>now. You gotta claim it, you gotta claim that chair. You've got to come prepared, just like everybody else in the room, and you go in and you get what you came there for, or get the follow up for whatever. Do not leave that room without what you set to accomplish there. Your intention. set the intention before you get into a meeting, [...] what your objectives are, ask the questions, have the roadmap, make the plan, and lead into that. [...] Always be conscious of that because never you should leave a meeting feeling defeated or that you are like, "I didn't do that because I didn't have the confidence at the time." Work on your confidence. Get the mentors around you that will boost you up and help you build that confidence.</p>
<p>Sexism - "So I will tell you one thing that I don't like, I don't like to be called a lady. There is no F* lady in motorsport. You have to be tough." Sofia</p>	<p>- Sexual Harassment Heidi - I had an issue pretty early on where a reporter was talking to me and he was like, "Hey, I'm sitting in my computer naked while we're talking" [...] at the time, I didn't really take it as sexual harassment. I didn't even realize that it was a big deal.</p> <p>- Inappropriate behavior/language Lola - And there's a fine line, I guess, between getting compliments and then it being rude as far as, you know... Nina - one time I was at a partner function early on in my career. There were CEOs, or mid level managers in this room, and not a whole lot of women, I think there were four women in the room, including myself. And I remember this one president of the company looked at me and said, "You're so lucky to be surrounded by all these really smart and intelligent men." And he was dead serious. And I said, "Well, you're right. But imagine how lucky you are to be to be in a room with four really smart and beautiful women that will ultimately tell you how to run your business one day." Rosie - You learn to laugh and shrug it off the comments from the man and you had to be really strong. Because you were ignored and overlooked. You were put down, you weren't respected.</p>	<p>- Societal wave of change Kia - I just think that there's overall sort of a larger societal wave of change that's coming. [...] We're finally at a point where we're starting to call people out men particularly have really bad behavior.</p> <p>- Stand up for yourself Yara - I think along the way, you just learn that you can either shut down or keep going. Paige - I was not afraid to stand up for myself if needed. Zaya - there's nothing wrong in saying, right that in there, "I'm not comfortable with this conversation, let's change this," or you just need to speak to someone there who's running the event or someone in authority like this, the situation made me uncomfortable. Gianna - I just would cut all communication [...] I would just say no. I would say, "I don't see what that has to do with business." [...] And I just never fell for it. So maybe we lost money somewhere. But who cares?</p> <p>- Leaders who are allies Ella - I've been super fortunate with the male leadership that I've had through the years that saw my potential, and supported me through, and ensured that I had a great experience and made sure that I was respected and I was sitting at the table. But again, I was very fortunate to have</p>

	<p>Rosie - I wasn't respected for my role. My looks, what I was wearing, those were things that people paid attention to and man made inappropriate comments, of course, regularly. And back then, you couldn't really call them out on it. You just had to take it. And walk away.</p>	<p>very highly respected men in these various leadership roles that I was able to, I say, grow up under, in the early years of my career, and even now.</p>
<p>Unconscious bias - “there were definitely times when people underestimated me and that manifested in people being condescending or mansplaining” Diana</p>	<p>Diana - And then of course, the old white guy doesn't necessarily know that because and it's not even his fault, because he just sees himself. He doesn't see the other people, don't see themselves. [...] So it doesn't just occur to him that we would hesitate. It doesn't occur to him, that a black man would hesitate to want to walk through the door like, “am I welcome there?”. Because a white man just walks right through it.</p> <p>- Tendency to assume men are in charge</p> <p>Joy - it's sometimes very difficult to have people respect my position. And every once in a while it pisses me off... I'll walk into an event and people will be like, “Oh, who's your husband?”. I have a husband. It shouldn't tick me off that people are saying, who's my husband? But I know that so often, it's fueled by the fact that the assumption is that I don't have anything to do with motorsports.</p> <p>Lola - if you want to sell us stuff or whatever, you need to cater to us a little bit, or at least, at least not assume that just because the lady is coming into your booth at a trade show that she's, you know, I don't know, what would it be like an accessory I guess instead of the decision-maker.</p> <p>Lola - I still have problems with some of the older generation of racers, who don't respect women being in charge. And it's not just a generation of racers, it's a whole generation of men. [...] I've been told that I was at a disadvantage for this business because I was a woman, because I didn't have any experience, and because I wasn't a racer.</p>	<p>- Communicate without being confrontational</p> <p>Joy - I was debating in my head the best way to keep him comfortable and address the situation. And, my mentor, she was brilliant, her response was, “you just hand them a business card, say on the better point of contact,” which makes all the sense in the world. In the moment, I was so busy processing the scenario that I didn't think it through. I was disappointed in myself in that, but, she's wonderful, because she understands, [...] just having conversations with the other women that are in motorsports and saying, “have you run into this? And how are you navigating this?”</p> <p>Ayla – “Can I share something,” or” Can I point something out,” and then I'll point it out, and they'll go, “Oh, my God, I didn't even realize.” I think for me, that is an effective way to approach it. Because you want good outcomes. you don't want to beat on somebody for doing something. It's just going to persist. We need to have conversations about this.</p>
<p>Hegemonic Masculinity – “On the starting grid of the Indy 500, we had a quiet moment, the two of us, and she said, “I can't believe I'm seeing this in my</p>	<p>Women don't feel as comfortable in the environment, because there's fewer women there. So it's kind of an unsettling environment to walk into.</p> <p>Zaya - you've got to be comfortable with working with men, I mean, it's always going to be a male dominated sport. It just</p>	<p>- Speak the language</p> <p>- Focus on the supportive people</p> <p>Sofia - when I first started, I really focused on the fact that I was a woman and that I was being distributed, discriminated against, and that those challenges were</p>

lifetime. I used to feel so alone.” Diana	<p>is. And you are going to have to navigate, it still happens that you are going to sometimes be doubted, your abilities.</p> <p>- Keeping women as singles rather than a community</p> <p>Ayla - When I first started, and I would go out to the racetrack and I would see one other woman there. So back in 2000, there were no women around. It was set up that way. They wanted to keep us apart. If there was another woman there, they wanted to keep the women separate. Almost like they didn't want us to collaborate, they didn't want us to have too much power.</p>	<p>there. And I just remember talking to a pal of mine, on my race team. And he, he looked at me and said, “Forget that, do your job, do what you're supposed to do.” And so I did. And while I recognize that women need, that some women need, ways to step into the sport, they need encouragement, they need mentoring, they need coaching, that that those things are will be a value to them. Some of them don't.</p> <p>Heidi - “just look at it as a room full of people. Don't worry about if they're male or female. It's just a roomful of people” [...]. I focused on my job, always focus on what's the what's the objective of the company, or the product, whatever it is, it's about the job in the end, the result. It's not about me, not about my name, not about my ego, or me growing my career that will absolutely come with me being focused on the results.</p>
<p>Lack-of-fit - “I'm not thinking racing, because to me, that was also such a different level. And I didn't see women doing it.” Diana</p>	<p>Ayla - I always loved motorsports and fast cars, but I never once thought that that was something I could have a job at, or, you know I never once thought that I had an opportunity to be in motorsport at any level. It just never occurred to me that I can do anything in motor sports, and I didn't know anybody in professional motorsports. But I loved watching it.</p> <p>Kia - I just don't know if motorsports is sort of widespread enough for people to really even understand that this is a possibility. You have lots of women who are interested in finance and lots of women who are interested in engineering and all of these things. And they're very good at these careers. But I just don't know, if there's been enough awareness.</p> <p>Maria - I never had a clue that racing could even be a career. I think you don't think about it. It's like doctor, lawyer, whatever, checkboxes, but you don't think of this as something you're not taught that there is even an opportunity.</p>	<p>- Making themselves visible</p> <p>Rosie - As we say - if you see it, you can be it. And that helped me. I saw my mom, right?</p> <p>Kia – the idea is that we can show these young women that whatever you're interested in, whether that is driving or communications or marketing or finance or development or engineering, there could be a place for you in motorsports.</p> <p>- Use success on the track to raise awareness to the business-side</p> <p>Joy - My biggest role is to manage the culture of our company and make sure that people are happy, empowered and fulfilled. And again, it's all very much in supporting our staff as much as I possibly can.</p>
Organizational		
Codes	Challenge	Navigating
Token Status – “at the beginning of my career, I hoped that you didn't notice that I was a	- Need to prove oneself more to gain respect and space	- Develop a wide set of skills to build portfolio and standout in the as a value asset

<p>woman, [...] because there weren't any of us, I was the only one in the room” Diana</p>	<p>Ella - it's the reality that we've got to work a little bit harder to get acceptance, you know, especially in my role in a sales and revenue generating role.</p> <p>Sofia - boards in general have a lot of difficulty managing themselves and staying in their lane. Boards in general can be a contentious and political bunch, as I said, everybody thinks they can do the job better than the other than the person that's doing the job. And in my case, magnify that by being a woman, and having those challenges in an all-male room.</p> <p>Zaya - I think sometimes I used to try to do too much. And try hard because you're afraid you wouldn't get credit. [...] I think that was the other big part too for women in history especially, a lot of men would take credit for what you're doing.</p> <p>- Need to prove your intention within the organization and industry to gain credibility</p> <p>Nina - They have this perception of how I am, that I'm actually bad, like I'm not in it for my own personal gain. [...] it's challenging because it's the politics behind it.</p> <p>Sofia - takes time to build a resume that puts you there. And so as these people, not just women, but these people that haven't had the opportunity to step into those positions, build their resumes, then I am certain that we'll see more and more of them in the in the upper echelons. Of course, there are of course prejudices against women. Right across the board. I'm not trying to whitewash that.</p> <p>- Male-dominated roles within a male-dominated environment</p> <p>Ella - being a woman in the sales revenue generating side of our business there's not a ton of us out there, if you will, it just seems it's a lot more desirable for males. [...] there are not other female executives in this role.</p>	<p>Maria - Because of the experiences I've had in a variety of sides of the motorsports not just one thing, we started running a series, we ran teams, I drove, I had the family side of it - I was a sister, I was a driver. All the different perspectives that you could have in motorsports, I think I've gotten a lot of them.</p> <p>Heidi – I had now worked for a track, a sanctioning body and a team and now I was a sponsor, so I had a really well-rounded portfolio that early.</p> <p>Rosie - the more variety and experience you have, the greater your chances are of working in it, and staying in it and growing in it. Because if you just have one skill, like anything in life, that path is very narrow. So the more broad your background and experience, the better it is. And I think that's an important business advice, period.</p> <p>- Build network</p> <p>Sofia - Don't apply for a job, go talk to somebody, step in the door. Walk into the door of organizations. They'll look at you like, “what the hell do you want?.” Tell them you want to talk to the boss.[...] Go find people go talk to them, Go to the trade show, find out where they're going to be and put in put yourself in their way. Make sure that they have a face to relate to who they're talking with.</p> <p>Ella - If you ever want to grow anybody that sits back and says, “I can do this all by myself,” recheck yourself because that's not the case.</p> <p>- Position yourself with confidence in your role</p> <p>Ella - I think that goes to how you carry yourself, how you position yourself. [...] Bring that professional maturity to the table and speak with authority and confidence. Especially within sales.</p>
<p>Glass Cliff – “I looked at the job as a kamikaze job” Sofia</p>	<p>- Hire women when organization is performing poorly</p> <p>Sofia - I knew I could not last, I knew what we were doing. All I could do was set up the partnerships, the business relationships, the programs that my team and I felt would grow the sport.</p>	<p>- Social skills</p> <p>Sofia - One of my talents, I believe, is to find the right team, the right people, the right staff, and in the end to be able to energize them, and to allow them to do what</p>

	Sofia - I knew that I needed to get in, set things in place, cross my fingers that they would survive. And look back on a career that I could be very proud of.	they're capable of. [...] I found some people that I knew in my heart could help me with this change management.
Interpersonal		
Codes	Challenge	Navigating
Old Boys' Club – “I definitely think there's just sometimes a little bit of an easier path for the good old boys' club” Ella	<p>Yara - all of the volunteers are all white guys with white hair. [...] I was definitely an outlier multiple ways: young and female.</p> <p>- Trying to fit in with the old boys' club</p> <p>Rosie - I did have to learn, or I thought I had to learn how to drink properly. Instead of having girly drinks, I'd go, “Alright, give me a scotch and water.” When I was young, whether I liked it or not, I'd sip it for three hours.</p> <p>Nina - I had to make sure I was heard amongst all these men, I thought for that I had to speak loud, use my hands.</p> <p>- Ingroup advantages</p> <p>Lola - if I was a dude and ran the racetrack, when I went to a business conference, or something, the guys would already have some level of credibility because I would already relate to them.</p> <p>Yara – It is definitely there. There have been guys that I've worked with that treated me differently than they treat other guys.</p> <p>- Resistance to changes to the status quo</p> <p>Ella - [men felt] challenged with the fact that there was some fresh perspective coming in. And I think it probably didn't help that I was also a female and he didn't like that.</p>	<p>- Set (personal/professional) boundaries</p> <p>Sofia - I stood up and took it, I took the criticism I tried to be open minded about it. I did my best to bring those factions in.</p> <p>Kia - I have a “no asshole policy,” that's my zone, I don't work with anybody that I don't like. If I can help it, right, obviously. There are going to be times I have to engage... But I really have gotten to a place in my life where, whether it's personal or professional, I just have a “no asshole policy,” I cannot do it.</p> <p>Yara - I just don't take shit from people.</p> <p>- Look for organizations that value diversity</p> <p>Kia - Seek out the sort of organizations that have proven that they are looking for diversity, and they're looking to change the mold and support those organizations.</p> <p>- Authenticity</p> <p>Ella - The skillset that I bring to the table is the authenticity, being genuine, being exactly who I am being able to connect and then your reputation. Because that's all you have, at the end of the day, especially being a female, especially being in a male dominated industry.</p>
Queen bee - “I did not always have females in my corner that I feel like saw me as a coworker or a peer, but more so a threat” Nina	<p>- Threat feeling of more women in the space</p> <p>Zaya - Women tend to be extremely competitive with each other, which is unfortunate [...] when you're not sure of yourself, you tend to be a little bit more competitive.</p> <p>Nina – You hit some obstacles as a woman in motorsports not so much with male counterparts, but females. Because we're so underrepresented here, the ones that have made it want to make sure they can, they're still at the top. You will hear there are people that say “no, I'm here to open the door for other women,” but actions speak louder than words.</p>	<p>- Community of women in the space</p> <p>Kia – The women at the track on a weekend are really aware of each other, and they're all really supportive. I've had lots of women that work for a variety of teams come up to me or email me and just say, this is so needed, I'm here, happy to have a call with you for lunch, let me know what I can do [...] they are complimentary of one another and supportive [...] we are all working together [...], we're all just trying to make connections so that we can, you know, do what we do [...] and we've also learned that</p>

	<p>- Threat feeling of more women in the space: partners Gianna - I think the biggest resistance to be honest with you, the biggest resistance that I had in motorsports as a woman wasn't from men, it was from women. Women felt that I was going to take their boyfriends or their husbands and they didn't want me doing business with their boyfriends and husbands because they thought that their boyfriends and husbands would want to have an affair. That is the biggest that I faced. It wasn't man, it was women.</p>	<p>if we band together, then we can make more change. And we're more efficient that way[...] these days of women against women, and there's not enough room at the top. There's only room for White. I think we're kind of done with that.</p> <p>- How you communicate Nina - It's really about understanding how you communicate with people. [...] I had to back down from being so direct and focused on the job, and really be a lot more personable.</p>
Individual		
Codes	Challenge	Navigating
<p>Work-life balance – “That is my biggest challenge. I only work, I have no balance.” Bia</p>	<p>- Difficulty to say no Zaya - I think for women, saying no is the hardest [both at home and at work]. especially in your career like you when you're trying to make a name for yourself. And especially in a more male dominated role. [...] So you just to say yes a lot when you probably shouldn't. I think what happens is you just you're working more and more and definitely takes away from your personal time. for women, I think it takes away from your time, right? Still doing stuff with your family, but you as a person that just goes away. You have work, and children, and family, and there's no other personal time. That's what I think is lost a lot for women. Paige - I am not afraid of long hours, I'm not afraid of putting in the hard work, I'm going to be the first to raise my hand if something's intriguing to me, even if my plate is full. Because I feel like that's a learning opportunity.</p> <p>- Relocations and traveling - It is not work, it is a lifestyle - It never stops Yara - there's this expectation that you're available all the time [...] I don't want people to feel like they can contact me 24/7 [...] your poor planning is not my emergency. Zaya - Women are very good about nurturing and caring for things. That's who we are. And somethings can become your baby, right? You're very protective of it, and you're not afraid</p>	<p>- Balancing family and career decisions Nina - By choosing to adjust my lifestyle and become a mom could potentially plateau my career.</p> <p>- Separating personal and professional life Ella - I try now in these years not to let my career define me. [...] I try to keep things separate so I can decompress and come into, you know, each day reenergized, but it's a lot easier said than done.</p> <p>- Separate persons and not dating in motorsports Rosie - Well, I was never one to date in racing. As when I was young, my parents said, “you better not date anybody. Because you develop a reputation.” And for sure, in the early years, you start dating, then you break up with this guy, and then you're with that guy, and then everybody knows everybody, and you get a reputation, especially when there weren't many women in racing, you didn't want to be somebody that had a lot of boyfriends in the paddock. So from an early age, I tried to keep my personal life outside of motorsport. but I really loved my work. And a lot of men were intimidated as I got older, because, you know, I was constantly around men. And you have to be a pretty secure guy, to be with a woman that everybody comes up and kisses her and hugs her all the time [...] I also took care of drivers, especially once I started my own business and worked with a lot of teams</p>

	<p>to put the work into it. So I think, we tend to do that. And sometimes it is hard for us to separate [work and life] because [work] is this other child that you want to make sure you've taken care of.</p> <p>- Undertake too many tasks or asked to do so</p> <p>Paige - I am guilty of raising my hand probably way too much.</p> <p>Yara - I basically became the race chair by someone asking me to volunteer for it, which is we call that voluntold [...] I volunteered as the race chair for I think like 10 years [...] I was basically number two to the director of operations.</p>	<p>and had to work with a lot of drivers. Drivers need a lot of care. And managing and, you know, I would become the work wife for a lot of drivers. "Okay, you got your helmet, you got your fire suit, you know, got a photoshoot at 9am" I spent so much time looking after men in my job, I thought, "Hmm, do I really want a man at home that I have to take care of?"</p> <p>- Family endeavor: travels and relocating</p> <p>Yara - we have a motorhome. And so we bring a dog and it's like home away from home. So it's a little bit better.</p> <p>- It can be a fit (rather than a balance)</p> <p>Nina - There are times when it's a 80% work and 20% life and that just that means you have time to shower and pay your bills. And that's it. And then there's times where it gets to be more 50/50. But that's part of that lifestyle, it's understanding that work life balance will not be consistent.</p> <p>Yara - I think everybody's balance looks different. [...] I'm trying to really focus on being productive for the first few hours of the day, and then taking the afternoon to just kind of take the dog for a walk or go see a movie or, something besides just solid working.</p> <p>- Give back</p> <p>Paige - I want to make sure that I am contributing to our sport and leaving it better than it was yesterday.</p> <p>Nina - I am on our women in NASCAR board and it's part of my reasoning for being there so that I can make it different for somebody else.</p> <p>- Passion is needed because it is a lifestyle (not a normal job)</p> <p>Sofia – You need a passion for the sport. I don't think that you can fake it. I think you have to be genuine. You have to have a heart for it.</p> <p>- Being confident to say no</p> <p>Zaya - to have true confidence, there's a big difference: confidence versus arrogance, right. But it's being comfortable in your own skin to say yes and to say no.</p>
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<p>Motherhood – “Mom guilt is real” Kia</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Traveling and time away from family Lola - I have a lot of mom guilt. I work a lot and I work a lot in the summertime. - Lack of support system: relocation away from family Heidi - I don't know how we did it [work-life balance]. You know, and even today, we struggle.[...] should have, and I wished I had, if I could do it again, I really should have. But I didn't do a good job of having two personas [mom and work]. So I was still the work mom when I was here with her. I was still serious. The focus, the businesswoman can't turn it off, I was physically with her, I was taking her places and doing things. But wasn't that fun loving laugh let's cuddle up you know. [...] She's probably the most mature kid in her entire class. [...] I went and I physically watched her activities, but I didn't go volunteer my time for them, and have the time to volunteer for them. [...] It's a huge struggle, because you just add a layer of complexity to your life of having childcare [...] we moved away from family [...] and we were relying on nannies and childcare. - Lack of partner support Bia - That's kind of why I'm separated. [...] he didn't [support my career]. One of the things I do a lot of is give my time away. I do a lot of charity work and he would get really frustrated with me that I would put my charity work, let's say, or my work, over family. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Be present at work and at home Kia - when I'm home, I am really present. And I pick up my kids from school, and I make dinner and I sit down with them. And when I go to work, I go to work. - Support system Ayla - I have a great support system around me [...], I just have people around me that support what I'm doing with my career. I have a good network of people around me, and I think that is crucial for a female in motorsport, because we need that. We need that more than a more than our male counterparts. [...] And I try to schedule my trips so I won't be gone for too long, no more than you know 2 or 3 days. But when I do trips, my daughter thinks it's exciting. Zaya - you have to have support. - Extended family at the racetrack - Parenting can look multiple ways - Being a role model to their children Ayla - if that's the choice that you make for your career, and that's your passion. I believe it's good for children to see that, and see what it takes, the sacrifices you do for what you're passionate about.
<p>Impostor phenomenon – “I think we are our biggest obstacles to success” Zaya</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Hard to let go of mistakes Maria - I think I'm my biggest critic. [...] When I did make mistakes, I beat myself up way, way too much. I mean, I couldn't get over that. [...] I've noticed that with the boy drivers, they get out the car, they make a mistake and they go, “whatever,” and they get back and then they don't think about it. And they have to be like that, otherwise they wouldn't succeed. - Considered oneself lucky rather than proud Zaya - And I would say I was lucky enough to have, in my 20s several people to just take notice of my hard work, being 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Confidence building through professional maturity Ella - it's just all about your professionalism, the professional maturity that you bring to the table. So me going in a room with a bunch of men sitting around the table, it doesn't faze me, I'm going to prove to them very quickly that I am sitting there at that table because I've earned the right to sit at that table. - Advocating for others Nina - How nice you feel after you've done something nice for somebody else. Ensuring that I'm a sponsor advocate for somebody else has been so helpful in my

	<p>there and working 110% all the time, asking for more responsibility.</p> <p>Nina - I was fortunate to come in where there were people in the industry that saw me and saw my pitch.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Doubting own abilities and capabilities <p>Paige - They made me prove myself every single day [...] I had proved probably more to myself than anybody else that I could do something that was different, but that I could still do it my way.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Feeling like a fraud 	<p>growth and development. Because I can be somebody that person may need or can trust, to help guide them along the path that I have made, avoid the same pitfalls, or same challenges that I went through.</p> <p>Nina - you do have to get comfortable with, and kind of talk yourself out of the bullshit and be your own cheerleader. Because it's kind of like wearing lipstick, right? You got to be confident to wear the lipstick. And once you do, once you have the competence to put on the lipstick, you'll rock it. But if you're not confident that you can wear lipstick, you just start freaking out the entire time, like the it is on your teeth, so that's kind of how I compare being in the workforce was like, "Okay, I gotta be pumped that I do know what I'm talking about. I wouldn't be here today, if they didn't think I was."</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reframe challenges as opportunities <p>Joy - I feel like the limitation of the challenges is only because I have a unique outlook on what a challenge is, and I don't see it as something that's negative. [...] it fuels you, or it defeats you, right. And so you have to choose to be fueled [...]</p> <p>Joy - it never dawned on me to be fearful of failure.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Take risks <p>Yara - Whether it was gender or age is, people would say, "oh, we can't do that." And I'm like, "Well, why?." "Well, it's never been done before." That's not an excuse that I will accept, and I was the first to say, "you can totally blame this on me."</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Mentors <p>Nina - having her to bounce ideas off, or having her to give me the confidence, and also say, "Hey, you're wrong in this situation," because you also need someone that can be honest, but also not have their personal gain. I think that's hugely important is having somebody in your corner, that can tell you that you needed to take that blow, or, "Hey, you need to navigate this differently."</p>
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Table B.2 Additional quotes (RQ 2)

Motorsports – the context - “I always say: there's a quote by Steve McQueen that says: racing is life and everything else is just waiting. I mean, it's, when you're into racing, it really kind of takes over your life. It really does” Zaya	
Racing Lifestyle	Ella - I don't care how long you've been in the industry or how little - it's a lifestyle. The thing is you don't sign up for it to be like a 9 to 5. If that's the case, go work at a bank. Because working in live entertainment and sports, and especially motorsports, it's 365, 24/7.
1. Community & traveling circus: professional racing	Heidi - Our friends are all over the country. We don't have a lot of friends in our local community. [...] We traveled a lot, we got to see a lot of the country together. So our dates were, a Saturday afternoon, the garage would close and we'd go see the city that we were in and it was on someone else's dime. And it was just a different lifestyle. But I will tell you, ask us what restaurants were in our neighborhood, we couldn't even tell you because we weren't home long enough to go to any of them. [dating someone in motorsports]. Diana - it's a traveling circus and they become this extended friends and family. I mean, I've had Thanksgivings with these people.
2. Team element	Ella - there's so many things on the back end that have to come together. I think it's just the uniqueness of there are so many different opportunities within motorsport, to play a role in in the success of what's going on with it, whether you're on the team side, like I am, whether you're on the property side, at a racetrack, you're getting the experience to the fan, you have all of these different careers from being an engineer to it to on the business side, PR and marketing sales. There's just so many different elements that come into play that really ultimately drives the success of motorsports. Gianna - I'm in the thick of it. I'm part of their teams, I'm part of their success and part of their failures. [...] I'm this person that's hidden in the background that's driving the business side of it.
3. Family-orientation: amateur racing	Rosie - There were always lots of other kids to play with and all the parents helped each other and we cook out and there'd be parties and the kids would play and we'd ride mini bikes and bicycles, and it was just always a fun and friendly, nice loving community. Yara - I think my parents never let me feel like I wasn't allowed to do something because I was a girl or I was a kid. [...] t was never because, “oh, you're a girl, you can't do that because that's not for girls.” I wore my brothers clothes. My brother and I shared like shoes and clothes.
Motorsports versus. other sports	Heidi - I'm working the MLB All Star game because we were title sponsor of the T Mobile, Home Run Derby. And I get there and I discover, in baseball you've got all these teams, they all play in different cities at different times, when you're actually at a game as like, the players are in their locker room. And the sponsors are all in a different suite, there is no garage area per se, where everybody's just mingling around the media center is about as close as you get or the press box is about as close as you get to it. And all the journalists know each other, but they don't then interact with players in the sponsors versus like in a garage area and motorsports just all those different career paths mingled together, you know, the nurses, you know, the safety team, you know everybody, that was a big, big difference. [...] the second thing that was a big, big eye opener for me was being on the sponsor side. I always knew it, but I didn't really appreciate it. Motorsports truly is built on sponsors. And motorsports groups truly know that

	<p>they cannot fund their company without sponsor dollars. So they treat sponsors really, really well. Go to like baseball or football or even venues and stuff. They can, they can live without sponsors, right? And like sponsors are nice to have, but that's just the icing on the cake. And so they actually don't, I don't want to be disrespectful, but they don't actually treat their sponsors great. They're still learning how to treat their sponsors. So it was an eye opener for me being like you're the top dog, if you're a sponsor at a NASCAR event. Then you walk into any of these other sports and they're like, you don't really belong here. You're not actually in sports. You're a sponsor. So that was interesting.</p>
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APPENDIX C

IRB APPROVAL LETTER



OFFICE OF RESEARCH COMPLIANCE

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD FOR HUMAN RESEARCH APPROVAL LETTER for EXEMPT REVIEW

Alexia Pado Lopes
1705 College Street
Columbia, SC 29208

Re: **Pro00116649**

Dear Alexia Pado Lopes:

This is to certify that the research study **"NO TITS IN THE PITS!": AN EXPLORATORY ANALYSIS OF THE LIVED EXPERIENCES OF FEMALE LEADERS IN MOTORSPORTS** was reviewed in accordance with 45 CFR 46.104(d)(2) and 45 CFR 46.111(a)(7), the study received an exemption from Human Research Subject Regulations on **12/17/2021**. No further action or Institutional Review Board (IRB) oversight is required, as long as the study remains the same. However, the Principal Investigator must inform the Office of Research Compliance of any changes in procedures involving human subjects. Changes to the current research study could result in a reclassification of the study and further review by the IRB.

Because this study was determined to be exempt from further IRB oversight, consent document(s), if applicable, are not stamped with an expiration date.

All research related records are to be retained for at least three (3) years after termination of the study.

The Office of Research Compliance is an administrative office that supports the University of South Carolina Institutional Review Board (USC IRB). If you have questions, contact Lisa Johnson at lisa.j@mailbox.sc.edu or (803) 777-6670.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Lisa M. Johnson".

Lisa M. Johnson
ORC Assistant Director and IRB Manager