



# Sports, Media and Stereotypes

## Women and Men in Sports and Media



**Research report**

Sports, Media and Stereotypes – Women and Men in Sports and Media  
European project funded by the Community Framework Strategy on Gender Equality (2001-2005)



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# Sports, Media and Stereotypes Women and Men in Sports and Media

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## INTRODUCTION

The media plays an influential role in creating images of both women and men. Sports coverage in the media is in many ways dominated by coverage of men's rather than women's participation, which can be mirrored in the traditional public perception that men are active and athletic, and women, by exclusion, are not. To name just one example for the importance of the matter, studies have shown that girls frequently drop out of organized sports as teenagers and this has, at least to some extent, been explained by the absence of women as role models in the sports media. In 2003 for example the Austrian Sports Ministry funded a study under the title "Mädchen bleiben am Ball" with the aim to evaluate the situation and possibilities of girls to engage in sports clubs. Some 260 Austrian girls who were members of sports clubs were included in the study which included both quantitative and qualitative data. One important finding was that 73% of girls to whom sports meant a lot in life have a mother who is active in sports. This shows clearly the importance, and also lack, of female role models for girls to get into organised and regular sports activities. This study proved again, that boys are more emotionally supported in their athletic ability to begin with, and sport is more likely to be included into their gender identity.

At the end of the year 2004 partners from five countries, Austria, Lithuania, Norway, Italy and Iceland, started a project which was given the title Sports, media and stereotypes – women and men in sports and media (SMS). The project was promoted and coordinated by the Centre for Gender Equality in Iceland, the national authority for gender equality issues in Iceland and received substantial financial support from the European Union. The purpose of this project was to contribute to the knowledge of representation of women and men in the sports media in Europe and to promote change in the stereotypes presented of both genders in this field.

The first goal of contributing to the knowledge of representations of women and men in sports media was reached by performing a study aimed at exploring similarities and variations in representations of women and men in sports by analysing the images created through national and/or regional media coverage of women's and men's sports participation in all the participating countries; and by collecting and analysing existing information on the participation of women and men in sports in each country. The purpose of this was to draw up a picture of the sports culture in each country, as it is necessary background information for the project and to compare the reality of the mediated world to the reality of statistical information. This summary report states the main findings of the study.

The second goal of promoting change in stereotypes presented of both genders in this field was addressed by attempting to inform the most influential target groups in this area about the impact of their representation of male and female athletes, particularly in the media, and how it creates and maintains traditional images of women and men. This was done in a threefold manner. Firstly by developing a multimedia material aimed to educate sport reporters as well as sports instructors and coaches on the representation of women and men in sports and thus to give them a practical tool to analyse their daily work. Secondly by establishing an expert advisory group on the issue which provided expert knowledge and assisted in developing the multimedia material. Thirdly by stimulating discussion on the subject on a European level by holding an international conference.

The project began officially on the 1<sup>st</sup> of November 2004 and finished at a final conference in Reykjavík, Iceland the 20<sup>th</sup> of January 2006. The first eight months focused on the research part of the project while the latter half focused on developing and producing the multimedia material aimed for sports writers, instructors and coaches. Five trans-national meetings were held during the project period, one in each country partaking in the project.

The total budget of the project was 325.910 Euro of which 80% funding came from the European Union (the Community Framework Strategy on Gender Equality (2001-2005)). The remaining 20% were funded by the project promoter the Centre for Gender Equality in Iceland and several other Icelandic sources.

The project promoter, the Centre for Gender Equality in Iceland joined up with both national and trans-national partners. These were:

- Ministry of Children and Family Affairs, Norway and the University of Telemark, Norway
- Center for Equality Advancement, Lithuania
- Austrian Federal Chancellery - Sports division and the Ludwig Boltzmann Research Foundation for Politics and Interpersonal Relations (LBRF), Austria
- University of Genoa, Italy.
- The University of Akureyri Research Institute, Iceland
- University of Akureyri Faculty of Social Sciences and Law (Media Studies Program), Iceland
- Centre for Women's and Gender Studies, University of Iceland, Iceland (Project evaluator).

The Centre for Gender Equality in Iceland was the project promoter. The Centre coordinated the project which involved managing and planning all major organisational matters and was therefore responsible for the overall organization and realization of the project. The trans-national partners were responsible for realisation of the project within their countries. This included conducting the research within their countries and finding and communicating with two National Experts from their countries to take part in the Expert Advisory Group. Each partner also had to organise the trans-national meetings which took place in their respective countries. The University of Akureyri Research

Institute was responsible for the coordination of the research work in the project and for collecting and analysing the research material for Iceland. The Institute was also responsible for writing the final research report. The University of Akureyri Faculty of Social Sciences and Law (Media Studies Program) was responsible for developing the multimedia material. The Centre for Women's and Gender Studies responsibility was to evaluate the project and write an evaluation report at the end of the project period.

This report is the outcome of the research part of the SMS project. The report is edited by the research coordinator of the SMS project, Mr. Kjartan Ólafsson researcher at the University of Akureyri Research Institute, and based on contributions from the members of the SMS research team. Contributing to this report have been the following:

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## **SPORTS, MEDIA AND GENDER**

Sport has probably existed almost as long as mankind and is most certainly a central phenomena in modern society. Sport is a popular recreational activity, has an important part to play in the educational system and is an enormously popular entertainment. Moreover, sport is growing as an important economic activity.

It is not the purpose of this report to present a detailed overview on theories and relevant research on sports, media and gender. An attempt will be made, however, to mention some of the main ideas that provide the theoretical background of the SMS project. Each of these concepts; sport, media and gender, are related to a vast range of theories and ideas which of course can not be adequately summarised in one short chapter.

### ***Sex and gender***

Ideas about human nature and about the difference between men and women have prevailed since the dawn of mankind. These ideas have a common thread in that there is a basic biological difference in the nature of men and women. Some of the ideas put forward even assume that the two sexes are so alike that it is almost as if the two sexes are two different species! These ideas can be traced back to Plato and his writings on biological difference of the sexes. Thinking along these lines has characterised Western thinking up until this century and has traditionally been used to justify male predominance in the light of their alleged superiority (Andersen, 1993, 22). The practice of distinguishing different characteristics for the two sexes is in fact a premise for the hierarchy of the sexes and their characteristics (Sigríður Þorgeirsdóttir, 2002). Traces of this attitude are to be found in every aspect of our culture and language is a very illustrating example, e.g. “man” and “mankind”. This essentialist thinking has in years past led to men being credited among other things to having a bigger brain than women, as they were assumed to monopolize reason and sensibility. Women on the other hand were thought to be controlled more by emotions and whims. They were also supposed to have a more caring nature and therefore upbringing and housekeeping were thought to be intrinsic for them. Reciprocally the analytical and masculine nature of men made governance and power a natural part of masculinity.

These ideas presented above and similar ones about the different nature of men and women have been used to justify the different status and roles of men and women. Even today there are people in the West who believe that there is an inherent difference in the capabilities of the sexes. What's more most of these people believe that women's status

is biologically based and see women's inferior status as inevitable (Andersen, 1993, 22). This attitude has been termed sexism and is the ideology that one sex is superior to the other and defends the "status quo". As all the major institutions of society are controlled by men sexism manifests itself in most cases in male prejudice and discrimination against women (Schaefer, 2004, 168-169). However, sexism has been on the decline for the last couple of decades as the battle for equal rights and equal opportunities for men and women has gained steam at least in daily discussions. People differ, however, on the issue and many think that although the sexes have gained equal legal status in most of the western world other forces, such as stereotypes of what women are capable of doing, still hold them down and are even growing stronger as the legislation loosens up.

There are two key words in this popular debate that should be thrown in to the mix: sex and gender. Sex as most of us know refers to the biological distinction of being male or female and is under normal circumstances established at the moment of conception. Gender on the other hand refers to the culture bound understanding that society puts in to the biological sex, i.e. expectations regarding femininity and masculinity. That way every society has certain ideas about what it means to be a man or a woman, what duties it entails and how men and women are supposed to look and act. Gender is then a historically, socially and culturally constructed difference between the sexes as society "moulds" individuals in accordance to society's gender expectations. The bottom line is that being male or female is a biological fact but becoming a man or woman is a cultural process (Andersen, 1993, 31).

It wasn't until the 1950s and 1960s that feminists rejected in a decisive way prevailing ideas about the inherent biological nature of the sexes. Instead they redirected the attention to the cultural- and social moulding of the sexes. Those who adhere to these ideas of moulding say that gender difference is not something natural but a social creation upheld in society. Anthropologists paved the way for the "moulding theory" by pointing out that gender roles and what has been perceived as the nature of the sexes varies from one society to the next. There of course exist ideas about the difference between the sexes and desirable gender roles in every society but they vary between different societies. Even the dualism we know from western ideas about the sexes, where only two genders exists as oppositions to each other, is not present in some societies where there exist three or more types of gender one can choose from (Svansson, 1998, 127-130) This is a strong argument against the notion that there is an inherent difference in the nature of the sexes. Despite well-grounded arguments from anthropologists regarding this issue there still persist all kinds of resilient and unfounded ideas about difference in the nature of the sexes.

There is no doubt that gender has great implications in society and largely affects our life chances as it is the primary category of social relations. It is therefore our society and culture to where we can attribute most differences between men and women. If we come to think of it if it were just for biological differences alone, then we would not find the vast diversity that exists in gender relations as the majority of human traits are shared

by both men and women. Therefore you have to wonder why biological differences are so often used to explain inequality between the sexes (Andersen, 1993, 28).

## ***The media and stereotypes***

The media plays a central role in the discrimination of women as it is one of the biggest factors when it comes to socialization (Schaefer, 2004, 56). This is because the media strongly influences our beliefs, attitudes and the values we have of ourselves and others as well as the world around us (Koivala, 1999, 1). The media's impact is especially evident in the light that the media constructs the reality as much as reflecting. This means that when media people select what topic they think is important enough to air or publish, they thereby portray a reality of their own choice. The media also doesn't just offer us something to see, read or hear, it also shapes the way we sense things by creating shared perceptual modes (Koivala, 1999, 1). Too often this "reality" is a "world" where it is natural for men to rein over women (Elueze and Jones, 1998). One of the biggest deciding factors in this process is marketability, that is the topics that are the most likely to sell are more likely to be aired and/or published. Tabloidisation processes like simplification, polarization, conflict, scandals, personification, and sexualisation are elements which are supposed to give newspapers and television more readers and viewers (Hernes, 1984, Lippe, 2005). This shouldn't be too hard to understand as media are usually commercial companies with the purpose of making an economic profit. They of course have a societal function but it is the economical aspect that affects the companies the most. As it is commonly acknowledged that men's sports sell more the media generally favours them and pushes them more than women's sports. Media sport is called the dominating masculine exposure industry, in which the triangle of male sport leaders, male editors and male sponsors are central agents of power (Lippe, 2005).

Walter Lippmann is supposed to have introduced the concept of stereotypes within the social sciences with his book *Public Opinion* of 1922. According to him direct knowledge from the "real world" is too complex for most of us. Therefore we construct simplifications like stereotypes (Bartley, 1996, 1). Media is (by the way) the form that most stereotypes are transmitted through. Media stereotypes are, however, almost inevitable because the media needs as wide an audience as possible to quickly understand information. Stereotypes quickly give the audiences a common understanding of a person or group of people. However, stereotypes build on generalization, i.e. a person is not seen on an individual level but as a member of a specified social group that certain characteristics are attributed to (Schaefer, 2004, 142). Stereotypes therefore don't give the audience a realistic view of the world as they reduce a wide range of different people to simplistic categories, perpetuate prejudice and inequality etc.

Men and women are no exception to media stereotyping and gender stereotypes are probably the most well known category of this sort. Gender portrayal in the media is an especially powerful way of stereotyping and thereby creating and maintaining gender

difference (Macrae, Stangor and Hewstone, 1996, 12). The media does this concerning sports by portraying it as a male hegemony but gender role stereotyping is particularly apparent in sports (Murray, 1991, 45). Another thing it does is create and perpetuate a division between the sexes concerning what is appropriate in sports for males on one hand and females on the other. Researchers have even shown that the sexual difference described here, i.e. where difference between males and females is portrayed as natural, is often perpetuated in sport images through the framing of women as suitable only for individual sports or sports with an aesthetic element (Lynn etc., 2002, 1). In some cases the media even portrays sports as something that is appropriate for men but not for women. Trivialisation of women athletes of this sort is done through exclusion, little and/or selected coverage and minimization through gendered commentary of women sports (Elueze and Jones, 1998, 2). Note this highly gendered commentary by one Al Trautwig during the telecast of the opening ceremonies for the Olympic winter games in Calgary: "...At some point these women were all normal little girls; somewhere along the line they got sidetracked". This is just one, albeit extreme, example of how the media trivializes women athletes and their performance instead of showing them the same respect awarded to men. Reciprocally the media has traditionally promoted women athletes as "overglamorised"/"overfeminised", too emotional to deal with their success, or as only biding time in sport until their "real lives" begin (Murray, 1991, 46)". Men are better off when it comes to this as the groups that are ranked higher in society are less subject to negative stereotyping. In this respect stereotypes act as a subtle form of power distribution and exclude some groups from highly valued qualities and characteristics. Women athletes are for example for the most part excluded from being powerful, aggressive and focused. Likewise they are portrayed in the media, whether in sports or in other activities, as helpless, passive and incompetent. Men are on the other hand portrayed as strong, decisive and competent (Schaefer, 2004, 163).

The notion of male superiority is very evident in the language of sports reporters which is characterised by gendered hierarchy naming, e.g. by referring to female athletes as girls or ladies. This infantilises women athletes and their performances as the term "girl" implies immaturity and incompetence, while the term "lady" implies helplessness, elegance and lack of athletic ability. On the other hand the term "man" implies competence, maturity and completeness. Also by referring more formally to male athletes and more informally to female athletes men are granted a higher status (Elueze and Jones, 1998, 1). It's the same when it comes to pictures and television material. There women are more likely than men to be portrayed as passive and are often in traditionally feminine poses. Images like this in the media reinforce gender stereotypes and although they are distorted and false they deeply influence our understanding of ourselves and the society we live in (Schaefer, 2004, 142). This is because the media "educates" its viewers on appropriate gender behaviour and interaction by its coverage (Lynn etc., 2002, 2). It does not matter all that much whether the coverage is skewed or not it still has noticeable impact.



The above corresponds to one of the functions proposed for sport in society, i.e. „that sport is the construction and validation of masculinity and male superiority, both inside and outside the realm of sport. “One thing that supports this notion is that when boys become aware that they will grow up to be men it is said that their interest in sports programs since they portray men acting differently from women. However, it has also been reported that if girls watch television programs where men and women are portrayed in non-traditional ways, the girls are more willing to participate in traditionally masculine activities. It has been proposed that the same may apply to the sports coverage of women, especially in traditionally masculine sports (Koivula, 1999, 2). This clearly shows the impact the media as the messages and images it portrays may reinforce socially imposed gender-appropriate behaviours and encourage people to feel rewarded if they imitate certain behaviours (Cuneen and Claussen, 1999, 73).

Many researches show that the power of the media is great and especially in providing young people with role models as the media’s coverage of athletes and their achievements reporters they are in a way encouraging others to follow in the athletes’ footsteps. As the coverage of sports favours males both in quantity and quality it should therefore come as no surprise that boys don’t have any trouble in finding male role models among athletes. The same can’t be said of girls who have more trouble finding female role models as they are not covered nor touted as much in the media as males. This is troubling if not but for the fact that according to Bandura (Kaplan, 1990) the motivation to achieve is learned by imitating and children imitate older children and adults and mostly people they think act similar to them. They therefore more often than not choose role models of the same sex. On top of this women’s sport is often treated in the media as less important than the men’s sport and this among other things makes it difficult to motivate and encourage women to be physically active (Pfister, 1994, 86). This is especially evident among adolescent girls but they are very prone to quit sports around the age of 15 and 16 years while most boys continue up until their twenties. These are just a few examples to illustrate the ethical responsibility of the media has to report fairly and treat women and men equally, without reinforcing gender-role stereotypes. If not, the status or typical gender ideology will be reinforced with unforeseen consequences (Murray, 1991, 46).

The stereotypical and furthermore sexist gender ideas presented before in this text are remains from a patriarchal history and tradition. Our society has changed a lot since these ideas were generally accepted but you only have to look to the media to see that the gender stereotypes have obviously not changed as much. These facts are not unknown to media people since there are many researches that show that women are slighted when it comes to sports coverage. Still, the results of such researches are mostly ignored or failed to act upon by the media people. How else can we explain the continued low percentage of and often gendered coverage of women sports (Elueze and Jones, 1998, 2)?

## **Sports**

Sports are a good example of a sphere in society where women are discriminated against and have been for as long as there have been sports. This is a very influential aspect with serious consequences since sports are very highly valued in society and are important on the individual, national and international level. One has to wonder if sports being so highly valued and the fact that it has been more of a man's thing to do is somehow related. If we look at the fact that, as stated before, men have been dominant in society for centuries it is no wonder that their interests and hobbies become the valued ones in our culture. In any case it is obvious that sports are for some reason a very central thing in many people's lives and there is pressure on people, males especially, to participate in sports. This pressure comes from a variety of sources, media and peers, and can at times take on crude forms. Males for example who are not active in and/or do not follow sports are often labelled deviant sometimes even homosexuals. Likewise are women who engage in sports often looked upon as being lesbians or butch. This is related to the Victorian idea that men and boys do while women and girls watch but still has implications in our modern society (Murray, 1991, 45).

Despite still being a male-dominated affair, women are participating far more in sports than in the past (Lynn et. al., 2002, 4). This rise in women's involvement in sports can mostly be accredited to a change in the general attitude in society towards women as athletes, the equal rights movement and increased opportunities. This is a far cry from the situation few decades ago. It is in fact not that long ago that women's participation in sports was still generally considered abnormal or at least inappropriate. At the time women were more often than not detracted from participation as it wasn't thought of as proper for them to engage in sporting activities as the "weaker" sex. This was especially the case before the turn of the 20th century when sports was virtually a secluded men's domain. Even the rapid rise of organized sports can in part be attributed to the attempt to provide a venue where true manliness could be instilled in boys by men and to hold back the feminization of society. Even to this day the sports world is male-dominated although women have been gaining foothold in it or in the words of Messner: "Both on a personal/existential level for athletes and on a symbolic/ideological level for spectators and fans, sports has become one of the last bastions of male power and superiority over – and separation – from the feminisation of society (Messner, 1978, 54)." This is corresponding to the arguments of many feminist scholars that sports in the last century and the beginning of this century has provided men with a homosocial sphere where they have bolstered the sagging ideology of man superiority (Elueze and Jones, 1998). According to Kane (1990, 52) modern sport is therefore mostly a male preserve and many women have tended to accept this hegemonic definition of sports just like a big part of women has traditionally conformed to the traditional definitions of femininity by not engaging in "masculine activities".

Media sport has, as a central strategy the creation of more spectators, readers and listeners. Thus, sport is seen as an important point of departure for constructing and

reconstructing ideas of femininities and masculinities (Craig, 1992; Eide, 2000; Casmore, 2002; Lippe, von der, 2002, 2004). The sports coverage is called a ghetto of male sports, both in the press and in television. Women were and are often presented as décor. Several researches on the issue have found that there is less focus on their sporting results as more attention is paid to their male coaches. Greater stereotyping as the other sporting sex with emotional vulnerability as explanatory to account for sporting failures. Sexualisation, i.e. more attention paid to body image, dress, leisure-time practices and sexual partners (Duncan, 1990; Duncan and Messner, 1998; Fasting and Tangen, 1982; Hargreaves, 1982, 1994; Kane and Lensky, 1998; Lippe, 2001). A worldwide study (70 countries) done by Erin Research and the Global Media Monitoring Project (GMMP) on the 1<sup>st</sup> of February 2000 is documenting some 16.000 news stories (Spears and Seydergat, 2000). These stories were divided into topics as well as media. Generally, 78 percent of the news- subjects<sup>1</sup> on television worldwide were men. Since it was only one day of research, it should be mentioned that this result might have been influenced by special events happening that day. However, the results revealed are based on an enormous amount of data and should reveal some trends in the media coverage of sports. Moreover, sports made up 8 percent of news stories screened on television worldwide. Overall, only 7 percent of the stories within sports had a main focus on women, while 93 percent had a focus on men. The representation of women differed from country to country. Estonia had the highest representation of females in sports- news with 33 percent. Besides, Norway had more sports- news (17 percent) than any other category. This fact indicates the importance of sport in Norwegian broadcasting. Additionally, in all media 12 percent of the news subjects (sources) in sports globally were women, while 88 percent were men. Compared with the results from 1995, when 18 percent females spoke or were central in the story, the trend is that women are less visible in the story and less interviewed. In stories with a central focus on women, 51 percent men were interviewed, whereas 87 percent men were interviewed in stories with men in focus.

The only problem with discarding figures like the ones found by Erin research as being a mere coincidence is that similar figures seem to appear in almost every research aimed at sports and gender. Take Iceland as an example: In February 2001 a research was done on the sports coverage of three television networks where sports programs and live broadcasts were analysed. The results yielded that 87% of the coverage was devoted to men, 7% to women and 6% to both men and women (Nefnd um konur og fjölmiðla, 2001, 13). In March 1991 a similar research was conducted on the sports coverage of the two biggest television networks. The results were that men got 80.6% of the coverage, women 9.8% and coverage of both men and women got 9.6% (Félagsvísindastofnun, 1991). These two studies could of course be criticized for focusing on a too limited period but then a study on the sports coverage of three newspapers was done over a 12 month period ranging from the 1<sup>st</sup> of May 1999 to the 30<sup>th</sup> of April 2000. A total of 2.310 news reports were analyzed. The results state that 85% of the news reports were on men, 7% on women and 8% independent of gender (Bjarnason, Hilmar Th. and

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<sup>1</sup> Those who speak or are central in the story (sources).

Bjarnadóttir, Jódís, 2000). A similar research on the sports coverage of three newspapers was conducted in 1997. The research yielded the results that men receive 72% of the coverage, women 10.3% and both genders 17.7% (Nefnd um stefnumótun í íþróttum stúlkna og kvenna, 1997, 8). By rounding up it can be stated that on the grounds of the aforementioned results that women get between 7.7% and 9.8% of the sports coverage of the television networks and between 7% and 10.3% in newspapers.

Before the 1960s, amateur athletics and gymnastics were important media sports together with men's football (Lippe, von der, 2003a). With the advent of television in the mid 20<sup>th</sup> century, the mediation slowly started to change. In Norway studies have shown that text and pictures of male football players dominate the sport media in Norway (and the rest of Scandinavia for that matter) (Monday Morning, 2002). In this research 3.196 articles from nine leading daily newspapers, among them the Norwegian *Aftenposten* and *VG*, were analysed from the 8<sup>th</sup> of April, 2001 to the 27<sup>th</sup> of August, 2002. The easily televised and sponsor-friendly types of sport received most attention: Football got more than 50% of the coverage, while handball, the number two sport, got only 8%. Further, 80% of all articles have exclusively male subjects. Female-only sports make up a mere 8%, which also featured mostly domestic sports and domestic stars playing abroad. Some 85% of sports reporting use top athletes and their coaches as sources, mostly males. Six out of 10 sports articles have a national focus. Some 40% of international articles spotlight a national athlete, who is partaking. In the Norwegian project: "Tabloidisation of sport and culture in the media: 1930s-2004" the mediation from the European Football Cup of 2004 consisted of 50 percent of the total of sport in the tabloid, *VG*, from the 12<sup>th</sup> of June to the 27<sup>th</sup> of June, although no national team from Norway took part in the competition (Lippe, von der, 2004). Further, 41% was about men's sport in general and only 4% about female sports. (5% consisted of sports from both sexes). When female athletes really excel, they might get a lot of attention. When Norway won the European Women's Championship in handball in 1998, mediation from this event dominated the press during that event in the second biggest tabloid paper, *Dagbladet* with 40% of the coverage, whereas men's football only made up of mere 11% (Ibid, 2002). In 2003 the Norwegian team ranked 6<sup>th</sup> in the World Cup. However, only 18% of the total coverage in that paper mediated the competition. All sports editors in the biggest national papers and television channels are males. In addition 95% of the sports journalists were males in 2002.

The situation described above manifests itself among other things in a male-dominated prestige hierarchy of sports and the correspondingly low exposure of female sports in the media. Parallel to this top women athletes receive relatively low rewards compared to men and participation of women in big international sporting events such as the Olympics is still not where it should be except for tennis where women have been dominant. But outside of the media things are moving in the right direction, cf.: "Still sports status as a locus of masculinity experiences is threatened by the growing power, and correlatively, self-confidence, assertiveness and independence of women in sports in general (Dunning, 1999, 231)". This is just one sign of the fact that the balance of power

between the sexes is changing, albeit slowly. This positive development has been advanced by the equal rights movement, more sophisticated forms of birth control, lowering of the family size, modern forms of household technology etc. Women have in light of this succeeded in gaining entry to a greater range of sports (Dunning, 1999, 231)".

Society's retention in regard to women's participation in sports is a classic manifestation of society's gender expectations but they are the biggest threshold to women's sports. The main thing is that sports haven't traditionally fit society's ideas of femininity as the thought of sweaty, muscular and competitive women clashes with what has been considered "normal". Because of this women haven't been looked upon as athletes. Therefore women's forays into this male-dominated sphere have been met with great, although slowly declining, resistance. This means more than anything else that women have to overcome many obstacles with respect to participation in sports that are not experienced by men (239). Often these obstacles are subjective and influenced by the myths that women are not interested in sports and their performance isn't good enough for them to be taken seriously (Eitzen og Sage, 1992).

It is true that women have through the years been quite far behind men when it comes to absolute athletic performance as the frame of reference has been set by men. One can well imagine things that are more suitable for the woman's body than men's to accomplish such as activities demanding one to be limber and small. But as sports have been developed by men these are seldom valuable traits. Due to this women have been making a great effort to meet the challenges of every sport. In recent years, women have been closing the gap on men in various sports, parallel to better training conditions. Women are even coming "dangerously" close to matching the best performance of men in some sports. What is more, they are even making strides in "male sports", sports that rely on power, speed and aggressiveness and have traditionally been viewed by many as unacceptable for women, e.g. football and boxing. Here the issue of power comes into the picture as the notion of women controlling, dominating and physically over-powering someone is threatening to some men (Elueze and Jones, 1998). In this context the case of shooting competition is interesting. As in equestrian sports shooting had been sex mixed in competition, including at the Olympics. At the games in Seoul 1988 a Chinese woman, Zhang Shan became Olympic skeet champion. Without stating that women were better shooters nor claiming that men's chances needed to be defended by separating the sexes the International Shooting Sport Federation (ISSF) eliminated mixed-sex competitions<sup>2</sup>.

There still is a gap between the general performance of female and male athletes in many sports, a gap that promises not to close any time soon. For example in the Olympics in 1976 the women's times in swimming and track events were around 90% of the men's times and in the 2004 Olympics in Athens almost thirty years later the percentage was

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<sup>2</sup> [http://multimedia.olympic.org/pdf/en\\_report\\_700.pdf](http://multimedia.olympic.org/pdf/en_report_700.pdf)

around the same. Still we are moving in the right direction but the playing field for women has to become the same as men as the sexes are too similar in both physical characteristics and performance to explain their vastly different experiences with sport (Henry, Alice, 1978, 2).

There is, however, little or no chance for women to surpass men when it comes to athletic performance in general. This is because of the simple fact that there is too much of a difference between the bodies of men and women for this to become a reality. Men are for example bigger any way you look at it as they are on average taller and heavier, traits that in most sports are very valuable as opposed to being light and small. They are also more powerful than women, a trait that's very important in many sports, as they have a different muscle build and a lower percentage of fat. These biological differences in question start with puberty but up until then there is a very little difference in the athletic ability of the sexes. When males hit puberty their bodies start to produce a lot of the male hormone testosterone that among other things stimulates muscle growth and gives men the edge in sports where strength is important. The power difference between the sexes, and the fact that most sports have been developed to suit the bodies of men, increases the possibility of men dominating women and partly explains why there hasn't existed a society we know of where women have more political power than men. It is important though to bear in mind the standards of sports as set by men. Many physical activities are just as well suited to women as men such as the one's where it is better to be light, for example gymnastics. In gymnastics it is a known fact that women are more capable of fluency and are in general smaller, which is a good quality in gymnastics. Men respond to this by not competing in the areas of gymnastics where these features are most important, such as at the balance beam. Instead they have their own way of doing gymnastics, for example the rings. Men simply do not compete in an environment not fitting to them whereas women in many sports make an effort of pushing themselves to fit the system created by men (Hargreaves, 1993, 1983)

In light of the above it should be noted that although women's performance in sports doesn't generally match those of men that doesn't mean that it makes them any less worthy as athletes. The thing is that the sexes shouldn't be judged purely on results. To quote Simone de Beauvoir: "A women ski champ is no less of a champion than a male counterpart although his time is better because the sexes fall into different categories" (Eitzen and Sage, 1992). This means that we should judge men and women athletes on their own terms and although women don't show the same performance as men in many sports that shouldn't stand in the way of them getting as much recognition as the men. That, however, isn't generally the case. People are too often comparing the athletic prominence of the sexes and making value judgments when it comes to male and female athletes. These comparisons most often favours the men and are often used to justify discrimination against women's sports. Discrimination like this comes in many forms. For example males in sports generally get much more money, resources, publicity and general recognition than their female counterparts. Because of this men get so much

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more recognition, encouragement and motivation, very important ingredients for most athletes.

## ***Conclusion***

The combination of sports and media creates in many ways an interesting situation when it is looked at in a gender perspective. This has to do with the importance of the body in all competitive sports which in turn puts the biological difference between men and women in focus. It is, however, questionable to what extent the differences which can be found in our society between men and women can be linked to simple biology. In fact if that was the case there would be limited value in projects such as this. It could just as well be stated that it is the constant making and remaking of certain images of men and women that has created in society an idea of a "natural" division between men and women in sports. Thus gender-related sports images have evolved, portraying women as fit only for certain sports but not others. In addition, media companies and editorial decision-makers tend to assess male sports as commercially more viable than female sports, so that they publish no lack of sports role models for boys, while the opposite tends to be true for girls. While studies show that the news world is male-dominated overall, the world of sports news proves even more starkly so.





## THE FIVE COUNTRIES AT A GLANCE

It is not the purpose of this research project to focus on the situation in each of the five countries participating in the project. However, it is both necessary and useful to take a quick look at the sports- and media landscape in the five participating countries. Also it is thought to be of interest to provide some basic information about the five countries.

### **Austria**

#### **Austria at a glance**

Austria is an affluent Central European country with just over 8 million inhabitants. The most popular sports are football and winter sports. The media landscape is characterised by a relatively strong state broadcasting company, operating ORF1 and ORF2, while the print media, though lively, is dominated by the huge market share of the *Neue Kronen Zeitung*.

Located in Central Europe, Austria is a predominantly mountainous country with an area of 83,855 km<sup>2</sup>. Eight other countries line the Austrian border: Italy, Switzerland, the Principality of Liechtenstein, Germany, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary and Slovenia. Lying on the Danube River, the Austrian capital of Vienna is partly surrounded by the hills of the Vienna Woods.

Austria's population, which has just surpassed eight million, is 93% German-speaking, and twenty percent of the total population resides in Vienna. Still, the country has a diverse ethnic mix that includes six officially recognised ethnic groups: Croats, Czechs, Hungarians, Roma/Sinti, Slovaks and Slovenes.

While about 73% of the Austrian population is Roman Catholic, there are eleven other officially recognised religions.

Since Austria has a relatively stable economy and generally strong rates of growth, its citizens enjoy a high standard of living, comparable to that of the other countries in Western Europe.

#### **Sports in Austria**

To draw an accurate picture of the Austrian sports landscape, it is essential to mention the outstanding significance of football and skiing. Alpine skiing and football became a generator of a national identity after the Second World War. Their heroes ascended to

representatives of the sporting nation. In contrast to other prominent people in the media, they are still seen as authentic and real. For decades, the skiers have been perceived as national legends and have served as influential role models. Even today, the young athletes' performances are compared to and referred back to their predecessors. Annemarie Moser-Pröll, who won the gold medal in the Olympic Games of 1980, is still, 25 years after her resignation, remembered with pride and was awarded the World Sports Awards of the Century in 1999. Austrians understand themselves as the number one in alpine skiing and call themselves a skiing nation. Men and women are indeed among the best of the world. Winter sport is generally very popular in Austria and serves as a trademark. Skiing and snowboarding belong to the most popular and widespread sports in Austria among young and old people. Even in the east of Austria, where there are no mountains, skiing has asserted itself as a dominant sport during the 1950's. As a matter of fact, almost all schools organise obligatory skiing courses for the pupils.

Being very successful in skiing, this is not true for football. Although the men's football national team performs badly in the world ranking (83), the media coverage, especially on TV and in the papers, focuses un-proportionally often on football. Even local, unimportant events are widely reported on. Football players are well known to the public and popular interview partners for sport reporters. This stands in contrast to the relatively low numbers of spectators of even important football games. The Austrian Football Federation has more members than any other sports association in the country, comprising 2,317 clubs with 387,300 active players. In addition to football, however, a number of other sporting disciplines have seen Austrians reach the forefront in international competitions, for instance judo, handball, canoeing, rowing, shooting, tennis, sailing and table tennis.

### **Austrian media**

An important characteristic of the country's print media environment is the strong market share of a small number of papers. Since the merger of two leading publishing groups, News and Mediaprint, in 2001, almost 60 percent of Austria's daily newspapers and 100 percent of the country's magazines have been in the hands of a single company.

The Austrian newspaper with the greatest circulation is the *Neue Kronen Zeitung*. In a competitive environment of sixteen daily newspapers, the *Neue Kronen Zeitung* manages to achieve a daily distribution of 43.3%, and up to 80% on weekends. The founder and publisher, Hans Dichand, is also the chief editor. Now aged 83, he is a very well known, influential person in Austria, purported to have reliable, far-reaching political contacts. Sensational chronicles and articles characterise this newspaper, and sports reports are also an important aspect.

Another important daily newspaper is *Der Kurier*, which is called a "better boulevard paper". It also belongs to the above-mentioned company, Mediaprint. *Der Standard* is regarded as the quality newspaper that is most liberal. Its main focus is politics, culture

and the economy. Finally, Die Presse deserves mention, as a conservative, influential, quality paper with a Catholic background.

TV broadcasting is largely dominated by the state-run ORF, the Austrian Broadcasting Corporation. With its two channels, ORF 1 and ORF 2, ORF is under public law and financed by broadcast fees and commercials. Coverage of sporting events plays an important part in ORF operations.

While pluralistic, open TV arrangements have long established themselves throughout most of Europe, land-based broadcasting has not been allowed in Austria. In the recent past, however, significant changes have taken place towards liberalisation, as a small number of private, mostly local channels have gained a foothold, with ATV+ being the most important. Today, Austria's media landscape has reached a point of uncertainty as to the direction of its further development.

## ***Lithuania***

### **Lithuania at a glance**

Lithuania, a Baltic country, has recently joined the European Union and enjoys considerable economic prosperity. Basketball could be called the national sport; in fact, the country's men's team has won the European Championship several times. The diverse landscape of Lithuanian media includes numerous smaller TV channels along with three relatively large stations. Of the five daily national newspapers, the one with the greatest circulation is Lietuvos rytas.

The Republic of Lithuania lies in the centre of geographical Europe, along the south-eastern shore of the Baltic Sea, and shares its borders with Latvia in the north, Belarus in the east and southeast, Poland in the southwest, and Kaliningrad, a region administered by Russia, in the southwest. The population of approximately 3.7 million people inhabits a total area of 65,300 km<sup>2</sup> – slightly smaller than Ireland and twice the size of Belgium. In 2003, prior to joining the European Union, Lithuania recorded the highest economic growth rate of any candidate or member country. Despite the undoubted growth of Lithuania's economy, many people still live in abject poverty. While the urban elite have become highly visible, little seems to have changed for the country's poor. Some 83% of the population are ethnic Lithuanians who speak Lithuanian, the official language of the country. Several sizeable minorities exist, such as Poles, Russians and Belarusians. Lithuania's predominant religion is Roman Catholicism.

### **Sports in Lithuania**

With the restoration of Lithuanian independence and re-establishment of the national government, a multitude of promising opportunities presented themselves for developing sports. The system of sports administration was reconstructed, and new state and public

sports organisations appeared. The Physical Education and Sports Department, a governmental institution, was founded in 1990 for the national administration of physical education and sports.

The main sport in Lithuania is basketball (it could even be compared with religion or obsession), despite the fact that Lithuania has strong athletes in many other sports, both men and women. In 2003 from some 43.300 school pupils attending Olympic sports almost 10.000 chose basketball. Already early in the 20<sup>th</sup> century basketball had attracted considerable popularity amongst both men and women. For example the Lithuanian men's team won the 1937 European Championship in basketball held in Riga (capital of Latvia). And in 1938 the women took second place. In 1939 the men's team won the European championship again. During Soviet time games involving the Lithuanian and Russian men's basketball teams were for many Lithuanians the closest thing to resistance against Russian power. So despite successful historical start both of men and women, they were men basketball players who became national legends, influential role models and still are. Having always been the most popular sport this popularity has not diminished and basketball can easily be considered the true national sport of Lithuania. The men's national team has won the European Championship several times, including the recent Championship of 2003, and is currently ranked sixth in the world by FIBA. Other popular activities are football, bodybuilding, track and field, dance, and tennis. More than 52,000 people of every age group attend their sports clubs on a regular basis.

### **Lithuanian media**

Seen generally, Lithuania's printed media may be divided into two distinct groups. On the one hand there are the official dailies, magazines, and many regional newspapers that were established in the Soviet era and have now been privatised. The more recent media, on the other hand, came into existence during or after the overall change in the system.

Today Lithuania has five daily papers: *Lietuvos rytas*, *Vakaro žinios*, *Respublika*, *Lietuvos žinios*, and *Kauno diena*. Their circulation, excluding the Sunday editions, totals 300,000. *Lietuvos rytas* is the largest newspaper in the country, with the tabloid *Vakaro žinios* coming next in line. *Respublika*, which for a long period was the second largest daily, follows close behind. Apart from *Kauno diena*, every newspaper is published in Vilnius, the capital of Lithuania, and each of them has a sports section.

*Lietuvos rytas*, established during the Soviet era and owned at that time by the Communist youth organisation, became in 1989 the first daily to undergo privatisation. Now it circulates to 23.2% of the nation's daily newspaper readers. In addition, *Lietuvos rytas* publishes two regional newspapers, *Panevėžio rytas* and *Laikinoji sostinė*, as well as the weekly magazines *Kompiuterija*, *Ekstra*, and *Stilius*. This company not only has its own subscription and delivery service, but on the 1<sup>st</sup> of December 1994 it also opened a printing house, which offers printing services to other publishers as well.

Vakaro žinios, a tabloid that may be classified as a wide-circulation newspaper for a mass audience, was founded in 2001. It is the cheapest daily newspaper in Lithuania and has acquired a 15.7% share of the market.

All in all there are 31 television stations in Lithuania, of which thirty are commercial. The only public station - Lithuanian Television - broadcasts two national channels, LTV1 and LTV2. As the more or less established stations, only they are authorised to broadcast the Olympic Games. Lithuanian Television is the company with the largest sports department under a special head, and it shows many international sports events.

Unlike the press, the Lithuanian audiovisual media market relies to a considerable extent on foreign capital, mostly from the Nordic countries of Norway and Sweden. The beginnings of privatisation among the country's television stations occurred in 1993. The first Lithuanian commercial channel was Tele-3, which at the end of 1995 was bought by the Swedish concern MTG and renamed TV3. MTG International is a media subdivision of Swedish Kinnevik, the owner not only of ten television and radio stations, but also of advertising agencies, manufacturing brands and other enterprises in Scandinavia and the Baltic countries. Upon joining Viasat Broadcasting Group over three years ago, TV3 became part of a gigantic international television network in Scandinavia and the other Baltic countries. TV3 has a special sports division employing three journalists, and has in recent years succeeded in becoming Lithuania's most popular channel.

LNK is another private station of importance. Having started its broadcasts in the spring of 1995, LNK ceased to transmit news programmes from Russian television in 1996 and launched its own news programme, including a sports segment. Though owned for some years by a Swedish company, this station is now owned by MG Baltic Corporation, one of the leading business groups of Lithuania.

## **Norway**

### **Norway at a glance**

The Kingdom of Norway includes the western and northern regions of the Scandinavian Peninsula. As Europe's sixth largest country in terms of area, Norway is sparsely populated, with about 4.6 million inhabitants. The length of Norway's mainland coast, including fjords and bays, exceeds 20,000 km. To the east, Norway has common borders with Sweden, Finland and Russia, and to the north, west and south the country is bounded by the sea. Although only a small percentage of Norway's land is arable or suitable for commercial forestry, the country is greatly endowed with such natural resources as petroleum, natural gas, various minerals, fish, timber and hydropower. These resources, particularly offshore, have helped Norway develop into one of the world's richest countries per capita. An active policy of social distribution has been

implemented to share the national wealth, which has led to an overall equalisation of income and helped create a financially and socially cohesive society.

## **Sports in Norway**

The most popular sports in Norway include football, handball, skiing, skating, track and field, sailing, shooting, volleyball, golfing, water sports, cycling and hiking. Primarily, however, Norway is renowned for its long tradition in winter sports, in which it has over the years remained the world's second most successful nation. Only the former Soviet Union has won more Olympic medals in these fields. After all, what is it that Norwegians do in winter when snow and ice cover whole expanses of their country? They go cross-country skiing, ski-jumping and downhill skiing. When the snow melts in the lowlands in spring, they can move up into the mountains. And if there really is no snow anywhere to be had, skating is always an option.

The Norwegian Olympic Committee and Confederation of Sports (NIF) was founded in 1860. NIF is an umbrella organisation of national sports federations. Around 62% of members of NIF are men. The biggest federation is the Football Federation where 75% of the members are men. Despite of the number of members in the football federation, most persons in Norway aged 16 and above named "hiking in woods and fields" as their most popular activity, whereas football came number nine for both sexes (MMI, 2002).

In May 1984 NIF appointed a committee that among other tasks should "appraise and draw up proposals or short - and long - term objectives and action plans to boost participation by women in organised sport". From then on, gender questions were on the agenda of several sports federations. A Central Women's Committee was set up in 1985. The project was named "More physical activity for more women" and continued until 1990.

## **Norwegian media**

In 1999, Norway had 223 newspapers and at that time was one of the world's leading countries in terms of the number of papers sold per capita (NOU, 2000). Norwegian newspapers receive financial support from the state and over the past decade sales have increased by about 40 percent. The three leading newspaper corporations in Norway, Schibsted, Orkla and A-pressen, control the majority of the newspaper market, with Schibsted in the forefront. Since it has only a few significant agents, Norwegian media ownership must be considered highly concentrated.

The largest Norwegian newspapers are VG and Aftenposten, both owned by Schibsted. Schibsted also owns the country's foremost privately owned television channel, TV2, in addition to publishing enterprises and film distribution and television production firms. Orkla Media owns Dagbladet, weekly magazines, and some other newspapers, while A-pressen is the principal owner of local papers. The conservative Aftenposten is the oldest of the three dailies, founded in 1859, whereas the liberal Dagbladet dates from

1869. The conservative VG - first named Verdens Gang - was established in 1945 by the Anti-Nazis of World War II and was the first paper aimed at independence from every political party. Aftenposten was related to the conservative party (Høyre), while Dagbladet was connected with the liberal party (Venstre). All three might be viewed as bourgeois papers. VG was the first to change to a tabloid format, in 1963, whereas Dagbladet altered its form in 1983 and Aftenposten in 2005. Until the 1970s, the most important national newspapers were in reality related to political parties, and only the independent VG appeared as a tabloid.

It was in 1960 that NRK originated as a television channel, and it faced no competition until 1992, when the commercial TV2 was formed. These two channels dominate the sector today, with NRK1 in the lead. Currently, Norway has three major media blocks: Schibsted, with 26% of the total press circulation, A-pressen, with 17%, and Orkla, with 12%. The state-owned NRK1 still serves the biggest Norwegian audience. Whereas all of the country's viewers can tune in to NRK1, no other station reaches everywhere.

## ***Italy***

### **Italy at a glance**

Italy is a Southern European country whose regions are quite diverse in regard to economy, politics and culture. Despite this, football interests most Italians everywhere, as do several other sports including basketball and cycling. The print media, as well as the state broadcasting company RAI, nurture a political tradition. A further aspect of the Italian media is the concentration of ownership within the three main private broadcasting companies. In the southern part of Europe, the peninsula of Italy stretches far into the Mediterranean Sea, besides bordering Austria, France, Switzerland, and Slovenia. The large islands of Sicily and Sardinia are also part of Italy, together with a number of smaller islands lying in the Mediterranean Sea.

Though largely homogeneous in its language and religion, with Roman Catholicism professed by the majority, Italy is diverse culturally, economically, and politically. The population of around 58 million makes the country's population density the fifth-highest in Europe, at 194 persons per square kilometre. Italian is the language of the majority of the population, although minorities speak German, French, Slovene and Ladino.

The northern part of the country is far more industrialised than the south, but industrialisation arrived relatively late in Italy as a whole, even if the country has now become one of the world's major industrial nations, despite a meagre supply of raw materials. Italian design is especially renowned in the fields of luxury cars, fashion, and furniture. Also, Italy has a notable artistic heritage, particularly in painting, sculpture and music.

## Sports in Italy

Football is by far the most popular sport among Italians, occupying without a doubt a major place in Italian culture. Should two Italians be heard having a lively discussion there is a fair chance that is football the topic. The Italian national team won the World Cup in 1982, and the major clubs such as Juventus, AC Milan and Inter Milan are among the world's best. Basketball is also quite popular. Cycle racing is extremely common, with the Giro d'Italia being considered one of the sport's main events. Skiing and other winter sports are a major source of tourist revenue, and Italy regularly produces medallists in the Olympics and other championships. Windsurfing and other water sports are much enjoyed on the northern lakes and along the seacoast.

Traditionally the football league and the Italian bicycle tour interest mainly male spectators. Men also outnumber women among football players and cyclists, both at professional and amateur level. A popular stereotype is that every man is a sportsman and a football expert in Italy. It is not so far from the truth and at Sunday football matches are a popular topic of discussion on Mondays.

## Italian media

Italy has a total of 58 daily newspapers; some, like *La Gazzetta di Mantova*, are over 300 years old. Ever since the 19th century, newspapers have been founded as political organs, rather than business ventures, a heritage which still affects the Italian papers of today. Of the two Italian newspapers having the largest circulation, *La Repubblica*, a "young" newspaper, is only thirty years old. While its topics were originally politics, economics, culture, cinema and drama, without any sport or metropolitan news, it has now become a more popular "omnibus" publication. In addition, it contains some local pages for individual cities as well as an online edition. The second of the two largest is *Il Corriere della Sera*, a conservative-moderate newspaper published in Milan since the 19th century. The above two are independent newspapers, but political parties publish still others, for instance *L'unità*, *Liberazione*, *Il Secolo d'Italia*, and the Catholic *L'avvenire*. It might be added that *La Repubblica* is leftist-oriented, while *Il Corriere* voices the interests and ideas of moderate groups. The third most circulated paper is *La Gazzetta dello Sport*, which is the cult daily for Italian football enthusiasts and is almost entirely devoted to league-level football matches. This is true also for the other sports paper, *Tuttosport*. The distribution of the *Gazzetta* is atypical: its readers are mostly men, spanning nearly all social origins.

In 1954 Italian TV Broadcasting (RAI) started its first channel, but later developed three national channels: RAI 1, RAI 2 and RAI 3, which each include regional broadcasting. From the beginning, RAI set itself the goal of informing and educating the residents of Italy. From the very first years, however, the sport news in the daily programmes and especially the Sunday telecast of football matches became a steady point of rendezvous for Italians. In the late seventies, some small local channels started to spring up. They called themselves "independent" in order to underline that they were privately owned



and thus free of influences from the political establishment. During the last 10-15 years the situation has changed drastically once more. Instead of a proliferation of small private companies, three major commercial channels have gained the upper hand: Italia 1, Rete 4, and Canale 5. All three commercial channels have a common owner, the Italian Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi.

## ***Iceland***

### **Iceland at a glance**

Iceland, an island in the North Atlantic, has a landscape distinguished by volcanoes, glaciers and hot springs. Along with political and economic stability, Icelandic society is characterised by near-universal literacy and globally high living standards, allowing for an active media which includes four daily newspapers, half a dozen TV stations and a number of radio stations. While football is the most popular sport in terms of the number of practitioners, team handball is considered by some the true national sport, because Icelanders have long had an internationally strong male national handball team.

After Britain, Iceland is the second largest island in Europe. Since it is located at Europe's western frontier, the Norsemen and Celts who settled it did not arrive until the ninth and tenth centuries. After a long period of Danish rule, Iceland became a sovereign republic in 1944, with a parliamentary democratic government.

Located at a so-called "hot spot" on the mostly underwater Atlantic ridge, Iceland has numerous active volcanoes and an abundance of hot springs, which provide the inhabitants with warm water for bathing and heating their buildings. About 11% of the landscape is covered by lava and another 12% by glaciers. Most of the people live in towns and villages by the fjords and bays along the seacoast. In the 19th and 20th centuries, the population increased considerably, and today numbers almost 300,000, of whom around 115,000 live in the capital city, Reykjavík, and its vicinity.

The native language, Icelandic, is spoken by the whole population and has remained very similar to the Old Norse that was spoken in Viking times. The vast majority of Icelanders belong to the state church, which is evangelical Lutheran.

### **Sports in Iceland**

With respect to specific sports and their popularity, football is the game that Icelanders play most. About 17,000 people are registered as football practitioners, although Icelandic male football team ranks only 94<sup>th</sup> on the international FIFA list. Golf has gained popularity in recent years, so that the registered practitioners presently number around 12,000. Other sports have far fewer players than football and golf. Handball and basketball have between 5,000 and 6,000 practitioners each, followed by gymnastics and track and field. Riding horses is an important family sport in Iceland and has become

quite popular. The unique qualities of the Icelandic horse have helped expand equestrian competition into an international sport whose best riders are not surprisingly often Icelanders. The country's registered horseback riders number around 9,000.

In group sports, Icelandic national teams seldom excel in the international arena and rarely qualify for European or world championships, although team handball is an exception, since the male national team regularly qualifies for such events and generally ranks among the fifteen best in the world. It is for this reason that handball is sometimes said to be the true national sport of Iceland, and the male national team enjoys enormous popularity. Direct broadcasts of their games have received massive attention and have sparked lively discussion and debates in the media.

### **Icelandic media**

In spite of how tiny the population is in relation to that of other countries, Iceland's media market is comparatively lively. Icelanders are by and large keen media consumers, elevating the daily circulation of newspapers per capita to among the highest in Europe. About 80% of the population read a newspaper every day, and almost everyone reads a newspaper sometime during the week. Of the four daily newspapers published in Iceland, two are delivered free door-to-door in Reykjavík and its vicinity, as well as in some major towns elsewhere. The other two newspapers are purchased by subscription or as single copies. Three of the papers, *Fréttablaðið*, *Morgunblaðið* and *Blaðið*, are classical morning papers, while the fourth one, *DV*, is a tabloid appearing later in the day. *Fréttablaðið*, which is one of the two free-of-cost papers, is by far the most widely read, with a daily average readership of almost 68% (autumn 2005). The subscription paper *Morgunblaðið* is second largest, with an average readership of 51%. Third in line is the other free paper, *Blaðið*, with an average daily readership of just over 32%. Smallest of the daily papers is the tabloid *DV*, whose average daily readership lies just under 17%.

The number of newspapers in Iceland has decreased in the last twenty years or so and the newspaper market has changed dramatically with the introduction of *Fréttablaðið* which has the distinct position of being the only known newspaper that is circulated free of charge and delivered to people's homes and nation wide (Birgir Guðmundsson, 2003). Despite a decrease in the number of newspapers published the combined distribution of newspapers has increased not least with the coming of *Fréttablaðið* and its door to door delivery (Greinargerð nefndar menntamálaráðherra um eignarhald á fjölmiðlum á Íslandi, 2004).

The broadcast media are also relatively powerful in Iceland, including half a dozen TV stations and an assortment of radio stations. Viewers also have the option of choosing among several foreign TV stations that are on offer through special broadcast packages. Besides the state-owned public television station, RÚV, which broadcasts on a single channel, there are a number of private stations broadcasting on a range of channels and achieving more or less national coverage, most importantly the stations *Stöð 2*, *Stöð 2-*

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bíó, Sýn, Skjár 1 and Sirkus. Two stations are geared towards special focus groups, with Sýn featuring primarily sports and Stöð 2-bíó basically operating as a movie channel. The other stations, of which Stöð 2 and RÚV are most important, transmit general content. According to Statistics Iceland over a half of Icelandic households have a subscription to a domestic subscription television channel (Greinargerð nefndar menntamálaráðherra um eignarhald á fjölmiðlum á Íslandi, 2004).



## DATA AND METHODS

### *Research objectives*

The purpose of the SMS project was to contribute to the knowledge of representation of women and men in the sports media in Europe and to promote change in the stereotypes presented of both genders in this field and in general to increase gender awareness. The first goal was reached by performing a study aimed at exploring similarities and variations in representations of women and men in sports. This was done by analysing the images created through national media coverage of women's and men's sports activities in all the participating countries; and by collecting and analysing existing information on the participation of women and men in sports in each country. The purpose of this was to draw up a picture of the sports culture in each country, as it is necessary background information for the project and to compare the reality of the mediated world to the reality represented by statistical information.

The frame of the research part of the SMS project as set in the project application stated that the research part of the project should consist of two fairly independent studies. Firstly there should be a study focusing on the volume and type of coverage that women's sports participation gets in national and/or regional media compared to men's participation. Secondly there should be a study focusing on the participation of men and women in organised sports at the same (national and/or regional) level. The project application also defined the operational objectives (i.e. the intended immediate effects on the project area(s) and/or beneficiaries) of the project. The research part of the project had then to provide the basis for the following operational objectives to be achieved (as described in the project application):

- a) To draw up a picture of boys' and girls' participation and retention in organised sports.
- b) To identify the stereotypes presented of male and female athletes in sports reporting.
- c) To identify a best practices framework, which would allow girls/women to be more comfortable with their identity as athletes.
- d) To train sports reporters, coaches, and instructors in methods which will retain both genders in organised sports.

- e) To disseminate knowledge about said methods to the national sports associations and create a basis for continued work in this field at a European, as well as at a national, level.

These objectives are not easily realised within a project with duration of only fifteen months and where only about half of that time can be used for data collection. The research team thus had to prioritise and focus the research as a part of a project aimed at initiating change rather than designing a pure research project.

### ***Key definitions***

One of the key questions that had to be answered by the research team was which activities should be defined as a sport. The team was in agreement that this definition should be on the basis of content i.e. the activities themselves rather than on the basis of appearance i.e. whether the activity was presented as sport or not. In the end a decision was made to use a rather narrow definition and include only Olympic sports which are the following:

**Table 1: Overview of stories analysed in the quantitative part of the research project.**

Aquatics	Archery	Athletics	Badminton	Baseball
Basketball	Boxing	Canoe/kayak	Cycling	Equestrian
Fencing	Football	Gymnastics	Handball	Hockey
Judo	Pentathlon	Rowing	Sailing	Shooting
Softball	Table Tennis	Taekwondo	Tennis	Triathlon
Volleyball	Weightlifting	Wrestling	Biathlon	Bobsleigh
Curling	Ice Hockey	Luge	Skating	Skiing

Focusing on Olympic sports of course means that activities which many would consider to be sport are not classified as such. Thus in this study for example, formula 1 is not considered to be a sport and neither is chess. However, using this classification reduces the grey area between sports and entertainment and draws the focus of the study towards sports as a tradition with a strong ethical and educational value.

A second important definition is what should be considered as sports media coverage. This is fairly straight forward in print media but as for television the research team decided to focus on all news stories involving sport activities and individuals (or groups) which could be called athletes. This would mean both regular news as well as news-like programs covering sports.

A third important definition is what media should be covered. The mere scale of the project clearly ruled out the possibility of a broad definition. However, it was deemed necessary to include both print- and electronic media and in the end it was decided to

look at newspapers and television. The study could by no means include all newspapers and TV stations so a further selection had to be made. The final decision then was to select at least two newspapers and two TV stations in each country based on the following criteria:

- a) The newspapers should be ordinary newspapers, which cover news from politics, economy, culture, sports etc. Two different kinds of papers should then be chosen along the following lines: 1) The biggest (most readers) national “classical” newspaper of the country, often the biggest national subscription paper of the country. 2) The biggest (most readers) tabloid newspaper of the country, which means: big headlines and pictures, tendency to cover drama, conflict, sexy bodies etc. These papers are normally produced in the capital of the countries. The reasoning behind this is that the tabloid papers are often assumed to cover more stereotypes than the classical or advertisement ones.
- b) The TV stations should be at least the national number one and if possible also the second largest. The reasoning is similar to that of the newspapers; that is to try to include two potentially different stations.

The fourth definition was when to collect data. The options were to some extent limited by the fact that all data collection must be finished before June 2005 and the fact that backwards data collection can be difficult when looking at television. The most limiting factor was, however, the resources available for data collection which allowed for a maximum of one week of observations if two TV stations and two newspapers were to be observed. The original idea was to make the observations in the period from January to May 2005 but when suggested in the research group the idea of including also observations from the 2004 summer Olympics was found to open up the possibilities for some interesting comparison. The final decision then was to collect data from six strategically chosen days, two from the 2004 summer Olympics and four in the first half of 2005 (January to May). The Olympic days should be chosen so that each country would select on one hand the day where the country had its best male performance (individual or team) and on the other the day when it had its best female performance (individual or team). The more “normal” days during the first half of 2005 should be chosen so that a single sport was not dominating the media coverage.

## **Data**

An attempt was made to collect secondary data on participation in organised sports. This proved to be difficult to obtain at comparable levels. Firstly, if data was available at all it would seldom be gender divided. Secondly, data would often be based on different criteria. This results in the information being quite incoherent but still informative and necessary for interpretation and understanding of the uniqueness of each country.

Based on the definitions outlined above the primary data collection was carried out on both qualitative and quantitative levels. In the quantitative part of the study each

national team went through all material in the chosen newspapers and TV stations for the selected days and registered standardised information about each story. This is probably best described by saying that the coders answered a short questionnaire for all stories that were analysed (See appendix I for the SMS coding sheet). In the end more than 1.700 stories were analysed and coded in this way. It should be stressed that even though the quantitative data collection was fairly standardised it is by no way value-free as some of the information coded is based on the subjective evaluation of the individuals which examined the news stories.

**Table 2: Overview of stories analysed in the quantitative part of the research project.**

<b><u>Number of stories analysed</u></b>		<b><u>Division between mediums</u></b>	
Austria .....	573	TV .....	754
Lithuania .....	134	Newspaper .....	997
Norway .....	199	<b>Total .....</b>	<b>1.751</b>
Italy .....	577		
Iceland .....	268	<b><u>Division between periods</u></b>	
<b>Total .....</b>	<b>1.751</b>	Within Olympic period .....	673
		Outside Olympic period .....	1.078
		<b>Total .....</b>	<b>1.751</b>

Due to the different number of stories from each country the data has been weighted in order to level out the difference. Thus the data is analysed as if an equal number of stories would have come from the five countries with each country weighing approximately one fifth. This method is used to let the data represent the general European dimension.

As mentioned before the stories which are analysed in this study are collected from two rather different periods, during the 2004 summer Olympics and during the first half of 2005. All in all stories from the Olympic period make up some 38% of the stories in the database. This does not mean that 38% stories are from Olympic Games themselves. It is more correct to say that this coverage took place at a time period when the Olympic Games are providing a structure which affects a large proportion of the stories. The data is not weighted to reduce the number of stories from the Olympic period. The argument is that large international events such as the Olympic Games occur several times a year even if they do not match the Olympics in terms of scale. However, this means that stories from the Olympic period make up a much larger share of the data than they would in a randomly chosen sample of stories. This leads to the conclusion that due caution should be made in generalising for population parameters based on this sample of stories.



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To complement the quantitative data and provide examples of how the gender stereotyping actually occurs in the daily news coverage of sports the research team in each country also selected several examples for further analysis. To begin with the team in each country selected up to eight examples and aimed at providing stories from both newspapers and television, from both periods, on both men and women and showing both clear and not so clear examples of gender stereotyping. These stories were taken from the same material as was used in the quantitative part. From these examples the Icelandic team choose two from each country which were analysed in more detail.

Additional data was also collected at a project meeting in Norway where members of the expert advisory group participated in a kind of focus group discussion. The discussion lasted about three hours. The meeting was both audio and video recorded and these discussions were then transcribed and used as starting points for the analysis of the data. Thus the data was used to test some of the ideas that the members of the group had about sports media and stereotypes.



## WOMEN AND MEN IN SPORT

### *Number of stories*

The first thing to be looked at is the number of stories by gender. The gender of the stories was determined by asking the coders to assess the proportion of women of individuals involved in the story thus focusing not on the number of women seen (e.g. as bystanders) but on the number of women of individuals that are a part of the story. Based on that, the stories were split up in three groups. The first group is stories which focus only or almost only on men. The vast majority of these stories shows men only but in a few of them women might have appeared in a minor role. The second group is stories which focus only or almost only on women with perhaps one or two men appearing in between. The third group is stories where men and women appear to a more or less equal extent.

The most striking finding of the SMS comparative study is the obvious absence of women from European sports news. Out of every five reports, nearly four involve exclusively or almost exclusively men. As for the remaining part about, approximately one tenth involves men and women in fairly equal proportions, and a little more than one tenth is exclusively or close to exclusively on women.

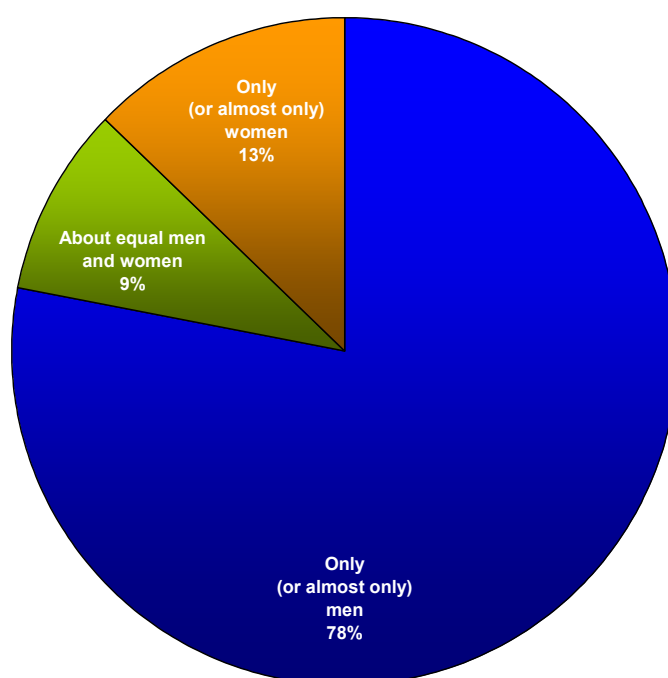
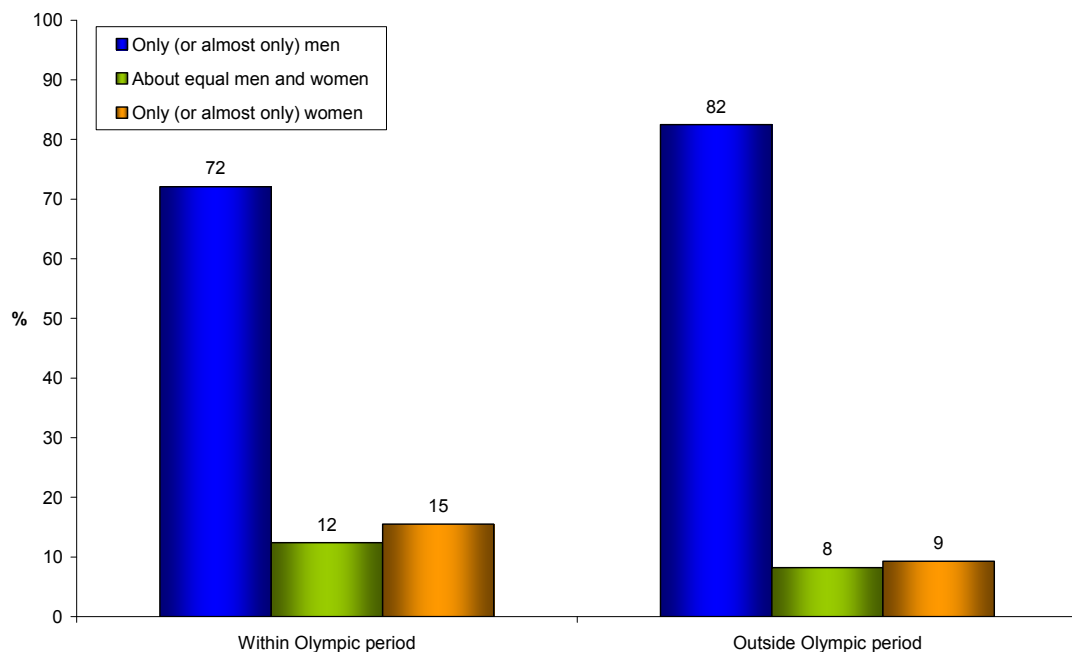


Figure 1. Proportion of stories, by gender.

This absence of women is significant for several reasons. Firstly, it reveals that sports news definitely does not reflect the true proportions of sport practitioners by sex. Secondly, the male bias in sports news is likely to present young boys with a far greater number of role models than young girls are provided with. It is thus safe to say that European sports coverage centres on men, whether in terms of the amount of coverage or the number of reports. Every measurement, regardless of its approach, points in the same direction.

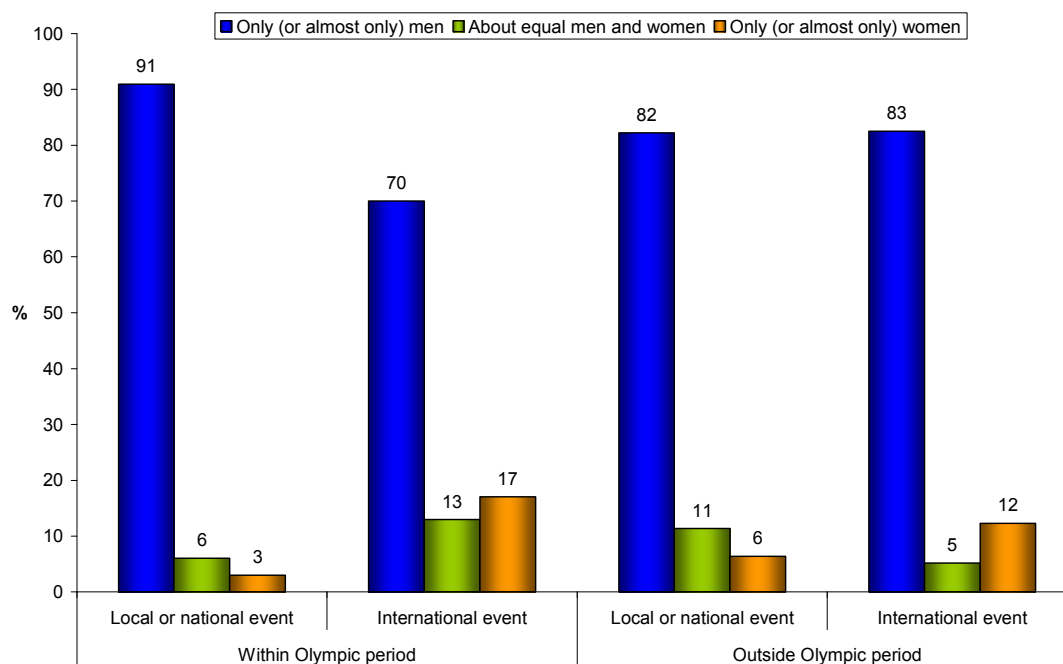
Looking at the Olympic period on one hand and news stories collected outside the Olympic period on the other indicates that women do have better access to sport news within the Olympic period. This is perhaps not surprising, bearing in mind that all of the world's best female athletes compete at the games. They and their achievements cannot be ignored when such a big international event takes place. This suggests that women have to be the best at an international standard to be noticed in the sport news.



**Figure 2. Stories by gender outside and within the Olympic period.**

Several members of the expert advisory group expressed their concern that sport journalism as well as the sports world itself is somewhat governed by the interests of sponsors which limits the possibilities of the media to choose what they want to cover. If this is the case then one would expect to find greater gender equality in stories which come from the local or national level where the newspapers and TV stations should have more flexibility. This is not the case, however, and as it turns out women are less likely to appear in stories labelled as local or national events than in international sport news. This further supports the idea that women have to be outstanding in regards to international standards to appear in sport news. It is not enough for sportswomen to be

amongst the best in their own country or region. Their local and national achievements are not seen as interesting.



**Figure 4. Stories by gender, period and by location of the event.**

This finding then does not support the view that international sports are more dominated by money and marketing issues and therefore there is no room for unconventional events such as women's sports in the news. One might think that the Olympic Games, being an international event, give a biased view of the situation as we have already seen the increased proportion of women during the Olympic period. From the data gathered evident, however, that even outside the Olympic period women get significantly more international attention than local or national. This suggests there must be other reasons for the absence of women in sport news than global marketing of international men's sports events. Either men's national and local sport events are just as well marketed or the marketing and money factor simply does not play a significant role when it comes to proportion of women in sport news. It can be inferred that women do have to be successful at an international standard to be valued as worthy of news coverage and the reason for their absence is not the intense marketing of men's international sport alone.

Another interesting comparison which further supports this conclusion is that women do not fare better in newspapers than in television. Newspapers should have a greater opportunity to devote space to women's sports whereas television would probably be more selective in terms of the number of stories. When comparing television and newspapers and the two different periods, the possibility of finding a story on women in sports news is greatest in television during the Olympic period but lowest in newspapers outside the Olympic period.

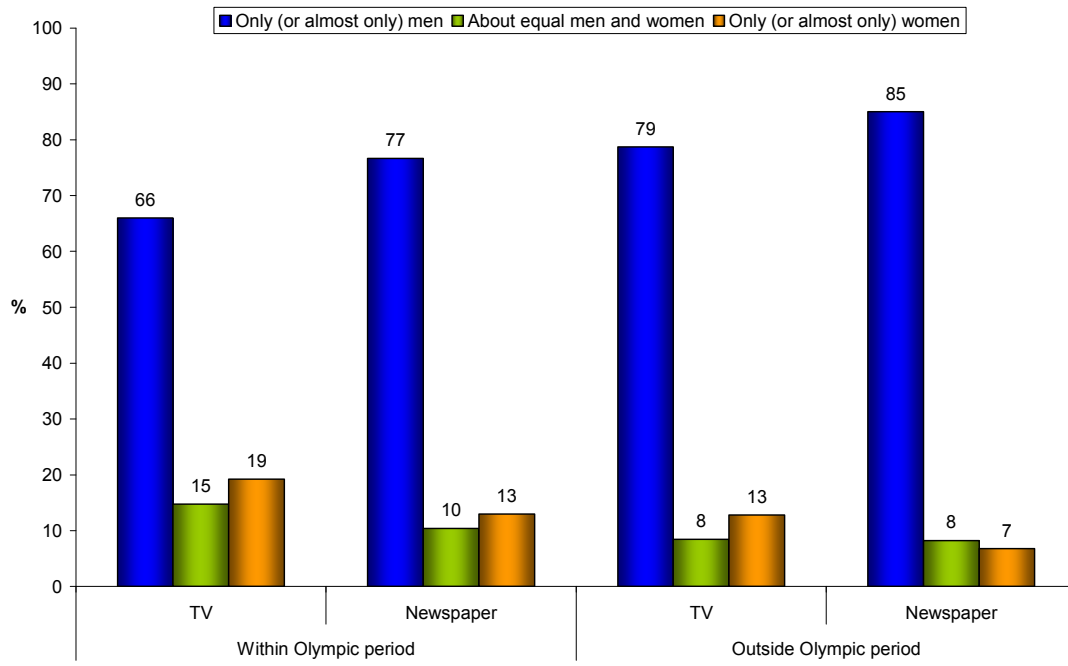
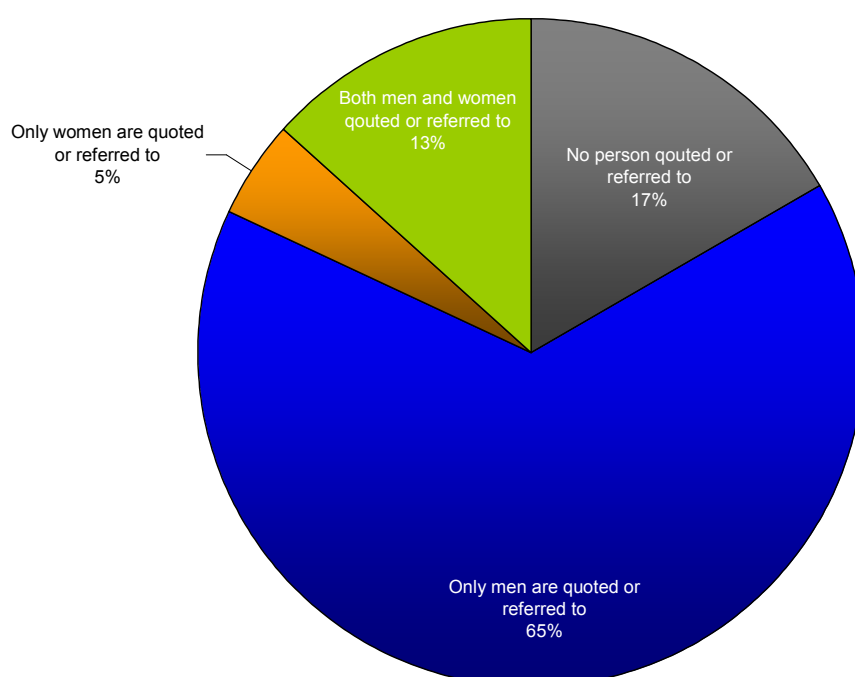


Figure 5. Stories by gender, period and by type of media.

## Quotes and references

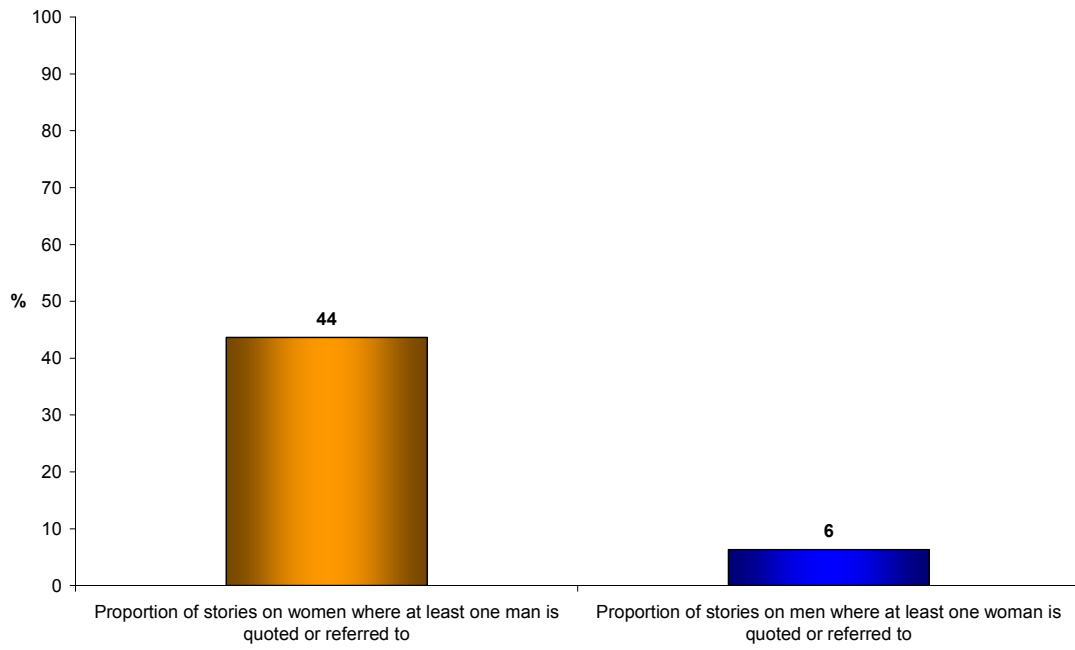
An important part of all news stories are the persons that are quoted or referred to. These are persons that state opinions, speak on behalf of something or somebody and thus appear as persons of importance. Therefore the coders were asked to write down the number of men and the number of women quoted or referred to in each story.

The vast majority of sport news stories involve at least one person who is quoted or referred to and only 17% of the stories did not quote anyone. This means that the reporter handled all the coverage. On the other hand 83% of the stories did quote someone, i.e. a coach or an athlete.



**Figure 6. Persons quoted or referred to by gender.**

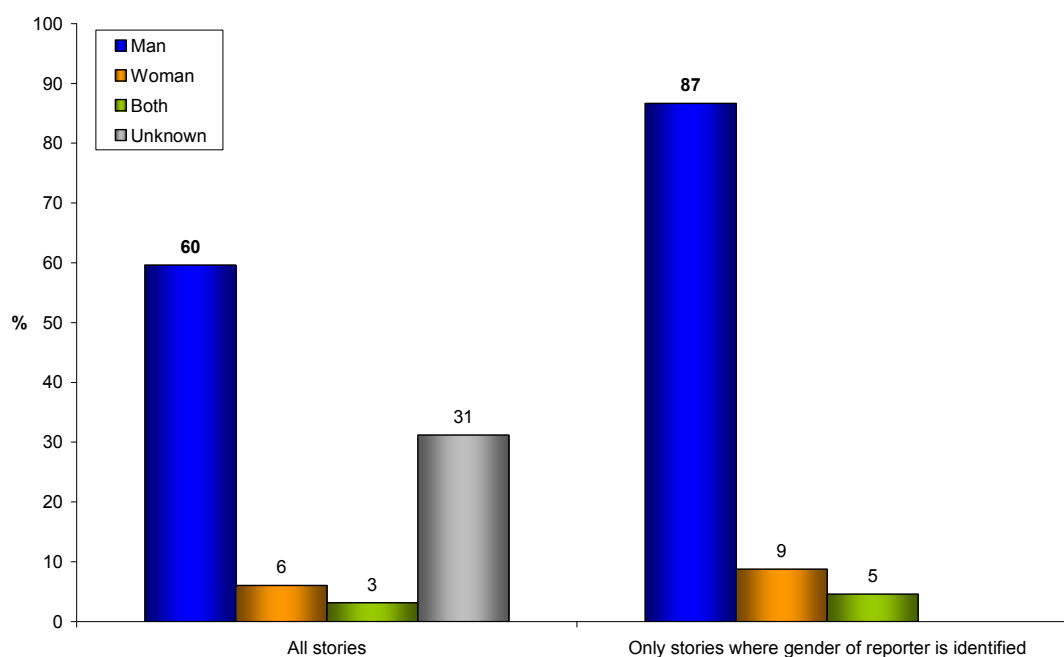
For the first thing it is interesting to note that women are even less likely to be quoted or referred to than to appear on sports news. This means that there are more reports simply telling about women than there are reports where women are allowed to express themselves in their own words. As we saw earlier, some 13% of the total news pieces were about women only, but only in 5-6% of the pieces are women actually quoted. Another interesting aspect is what could be called cross referencing, i.e. when men are quoted or referred to in stories which are about women and vice versa. Then we see that men are frequently quoted on the performance and status of sportswomen, while it is substantially less likely for women to be quoted on the performance and status of sportsmen. This means that men are much more involved in women's sports than women are in men's sport. Men's field seems to be closed women's comment on male athlete performance whereas men are valued as commentators on female athletes.



**Figure 7.** Proportion of stories quoting or referring to persons of the opposite sex to the subject of the story.



## Gender of reporters



**Figure 8. Reporters of sports news by gender.**

Around 87% of sports news where gender of reporter is known is reported by a male reporter but little less than 10% are represented by woman. Here we might be looking at one reason for the absence of women in sport news, as the coaches, researchers and reporters pointed in the qualitative interviews:

Female speaker (Norwegian journalist):

One reason is that 90% of the [editors], in the media, is men. In the sport. That is one reason, it is not the only reason, but men and women have a different view, so we can feel it. [...] I think if we had done exactly the opposite with 90% of women and 10% of men it would have been I think some other kind of sports pages and perhaps in the media. Because there is some difference in the way we want to present even if we all are journalists. [...] And then when I am just one woman against 17 men it is very difficult to argue on that, so perhaps that is just one reason.

Here it is stated that one of the main reasons for women's absence in sports news is the gender of the reporters. The male reporters are clearly dominant in the field and therefore their views and values are those represented in sports news. More quotes from the interviews mentioned above can be found:

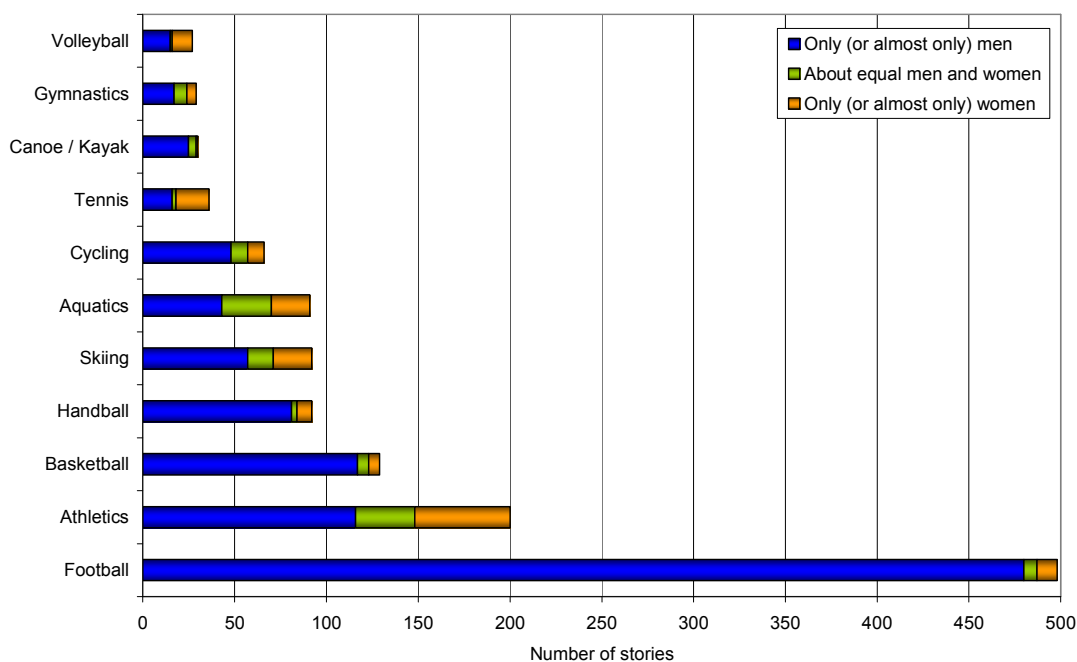
Male speaker (Lithuanian):

For the men, just exactly so; the results, why, what, that is all - not very interesting. But the women sometimes looking absolutely different. And if I am reading sometimes I do not understand. Why she is including this way? But I agree absolutely. It is very good, very new, one new direction.

When combining the statistical knowledge about proportion of women as sports reporters and the alleged different views and interests of male and female reporters a possible reason for women's subordination in the sport field unfolds.

### ***Men and Women in different sports***

In some sports women are more visible than in others. Athletics are a case in point. Other sports, such as tennis, have traditionally been practiced more equally by both sexes. Still others are predominantly practiced by men or tradition has at least focused most of the attention on the men practitioners of these sports.



**Figure 8. Number of stories by sports.**

As the graph above shows, the number of sports stories about football is two times the number of stories about athletics which comes in second place. The team sports, such as football and basketball and handball have traditionally been dominated - at least in terms of media attention - by male practitioners, much more so than e.g. athletics, skiing or aquatics. This becomes clear when the subject of the stories is examined with relation to sex. The vast majority of football stories involve only men. A tiny fraction involves both men and women and an even tinier fraction in about women only. A similar trend

is apparent in stories about basketball and handball but in sports such as athletics, skiing, and aquatics women are more visible, but not, however, as visible as the men. Thus the trend is firmly established that sports coverage in the European media is mainly focused on those sports traditionally dominated by men and most reports of those sports are indeed about men. Football is especially dominant - that is to say, men's football.

**Table 3: Popularity of sports.**

	Austria	Lithuania	Italy	Norway	Iceland
1st	Aerobic/fitness	Basketball	Football	Football	Football
2nd	Golf	Football	Volleyball	Skiing	Golf
3rd	Tennis	Athletics	Basketball	Golf	Equestrian
4th	Netball	Aquatics	Winter sport	Handball	Handball
5th	Swimming	Handball	Judo	Gymnastics	Basketball

Here we see the number of practitioners in different sports in the countries examined in the study and not surprisingly we shall find that the attention of the media is not completely in accordance with this. It became apparent that the majority of the stories examined in the SMS comparative study involve sports where men have been dominant. The media gatekeepers seem to have defined and established these sports as the most popular ones and the ones that are most interesting and thus perhaps reflecting a general norm in society at large. But while reflecting this reality the media is also reinforcing established norms, including gender stereotypes with respect to the practice of sports. Football is the single most important sport in this respect as it has a unique position in terms of the amount of coverage.

Although the main trend shows an undisputable male domination in sports reporting, the extent of this domination can vary from time to time. The SMS comparative research suggests that the general coverage is somewhat different in times of structured and formal international events such as the Olympic Games. The Olympics agenda is put together of both men and women competitions and when the media spotlight is on the games as such, the reporting is different from what it is in more "normal times". Not only do the media report different sports, they also report more about women than they do otherwise. This becomes apparent when reporting outside the Olympic period is looked at on the one hand and the reporting during the Olympic period on the other.

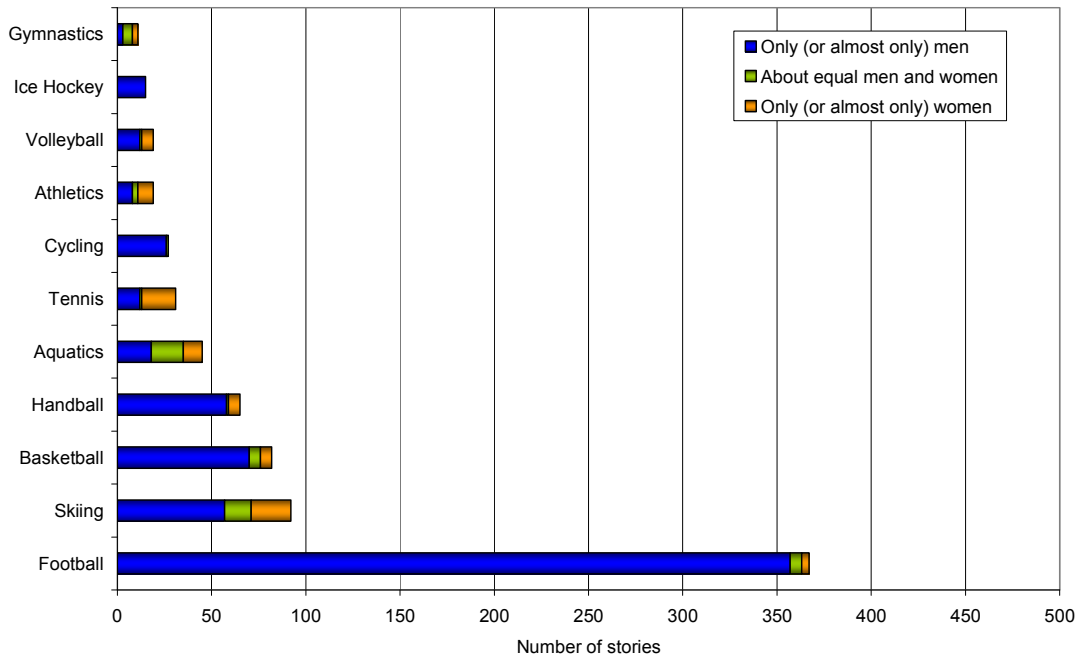


Figure 9. Number of stories outside the Olympic period divided by sports and gender.

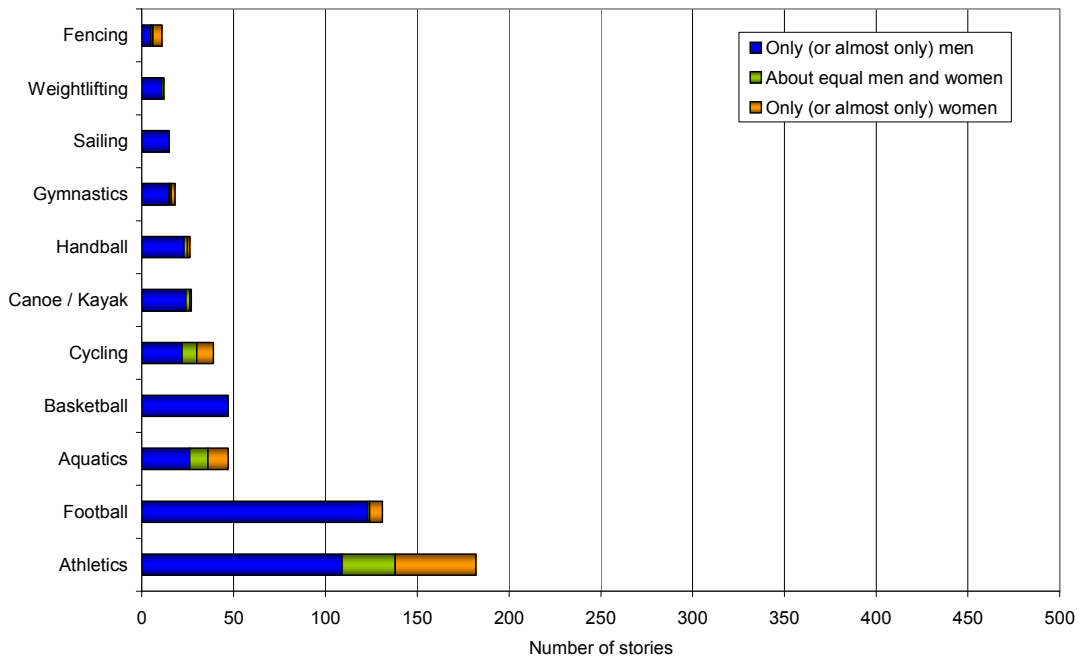
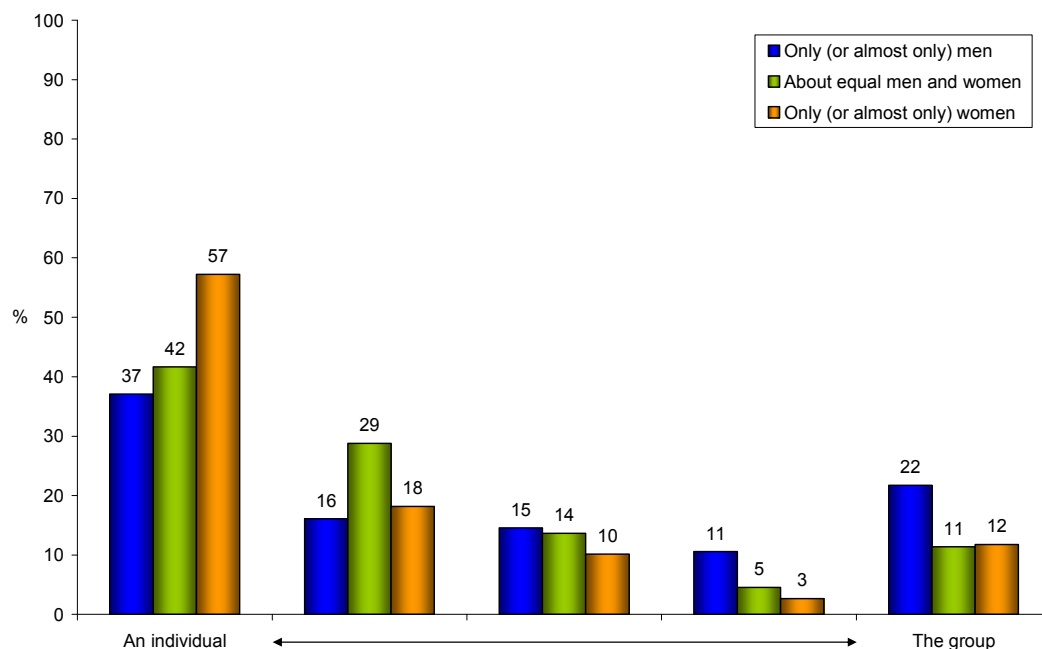


Figure 10. Number of stories within the Olympic period divided by sports and gender.

The media focus is greater on athletics than on football during the Olympic Games and indeed there emerges a somewhat different general picture of sports coverage than in normal times. This has a significant meaning because some of the sports that move to the forefront of the sport pages during the Olympics are not as male dominated as the sports that are most covered outside of the Olympic season. The result is that women in sports become much more visible in the media during Olympic Games than at other

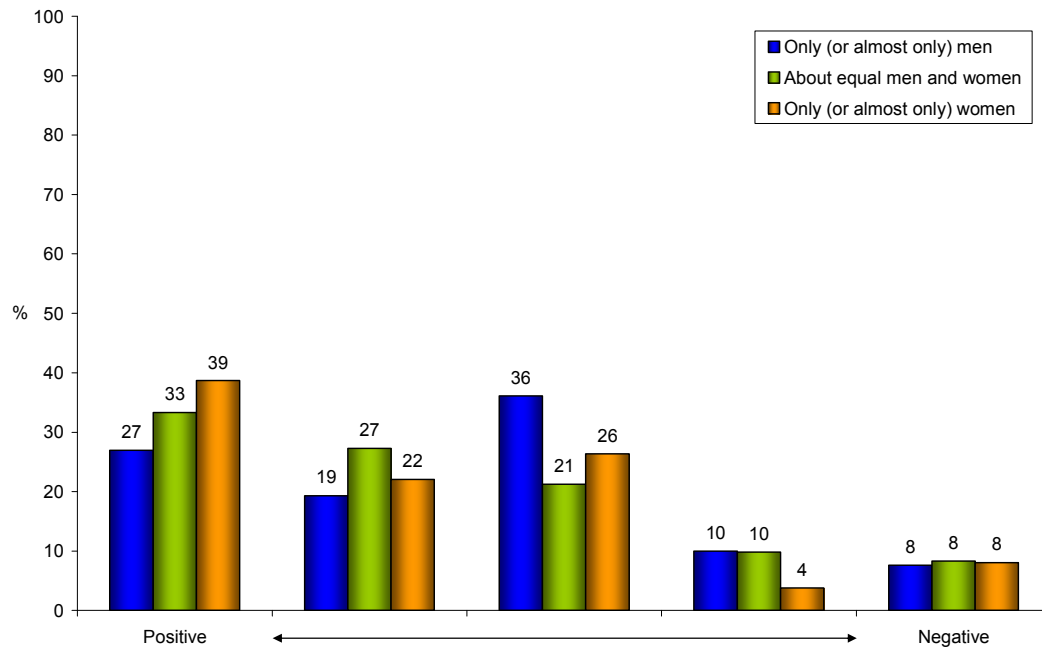
times. In this context it is important to realise that the Olympic committee has established a gender equality policy which contributes largely to this result.

### ***Focus of the stories***



**Figure 11. Focus of the story – individual or the group.**

The graph shows the relations between gender of the athletes and whether the story is focused on a group of athletes or an individual athlete. There is significant difference between stories about male and female athletes. When the story involves only or almost only men the focus is more likely to be on the group. The reason for this is most likely the popularity of men's football displayed in figure 9. Most stories involving only or almost only female athletes are on the other hand in sports where individuals compete such as skiing, tennis and athletics.

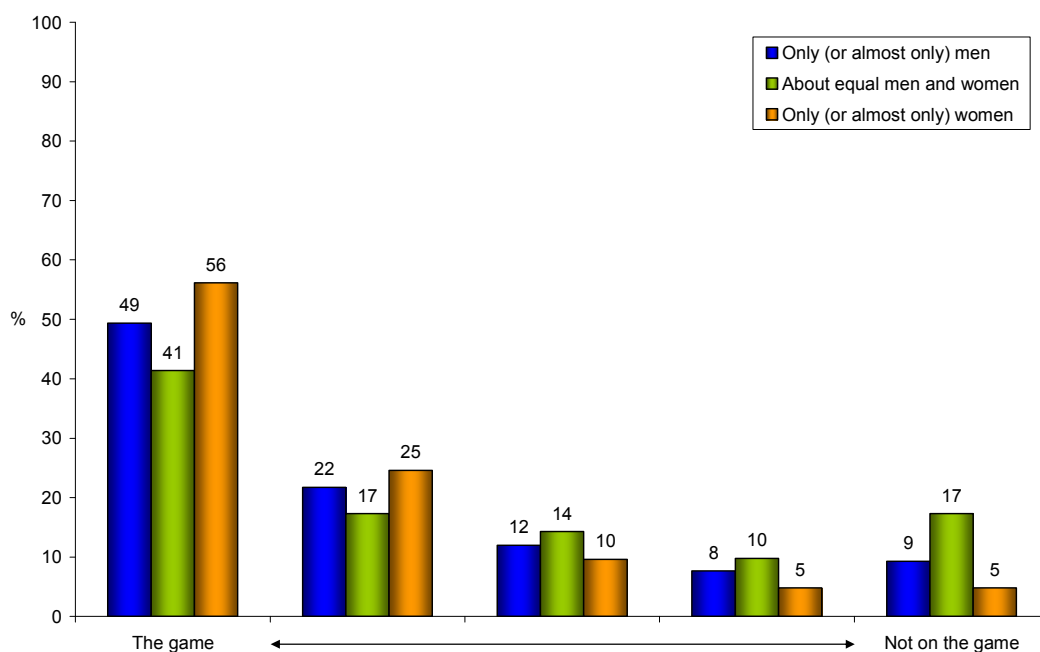


**Figure 12. Focus of the story – positive or negative.**

The graph displays the relations between gender of the athletes and whether the focus of the story is negative or positive. Again there is significant difference between stories about male and female athletes. When the story involves only or almost only men the focus is more likely to be negative. This could be due to the fame of male football players. When the focus of the stories is not on the game it can be on the player's private lives, club transfers, or what may be. The other possible explanation of why men receive more negative or critical coverage than women is that men's sports are considered a more serious business than women's sports. While women's sports are dealt with relatively light heartedly men's sports are regarded almost as a matter of life and death! Not reaching a goal in a man's sport would therefore call for critique while a less important woman's sport does not.

Coverage that is not focusing on the game is much more likely to be negative (32%) than is the coverage that focuses directly on the game (13%) which supports the idea that negative coverage is mainly on negative aspects athletes personal life and affairs not regarding the sport itself. Not surprisingly sportsmen get a less positive focus than sportswomen. This suggests that men are more likely to become celebrities than women, and become newsworthy in their private lives off the field as well as when they are sports heroes on the field. That a considerable proportion of the coverage is deemed negative can be seen as the price of being famous.

This is manifested once more when looking at the relations between gender of the athletes and whether or not the focus is on the game it self.

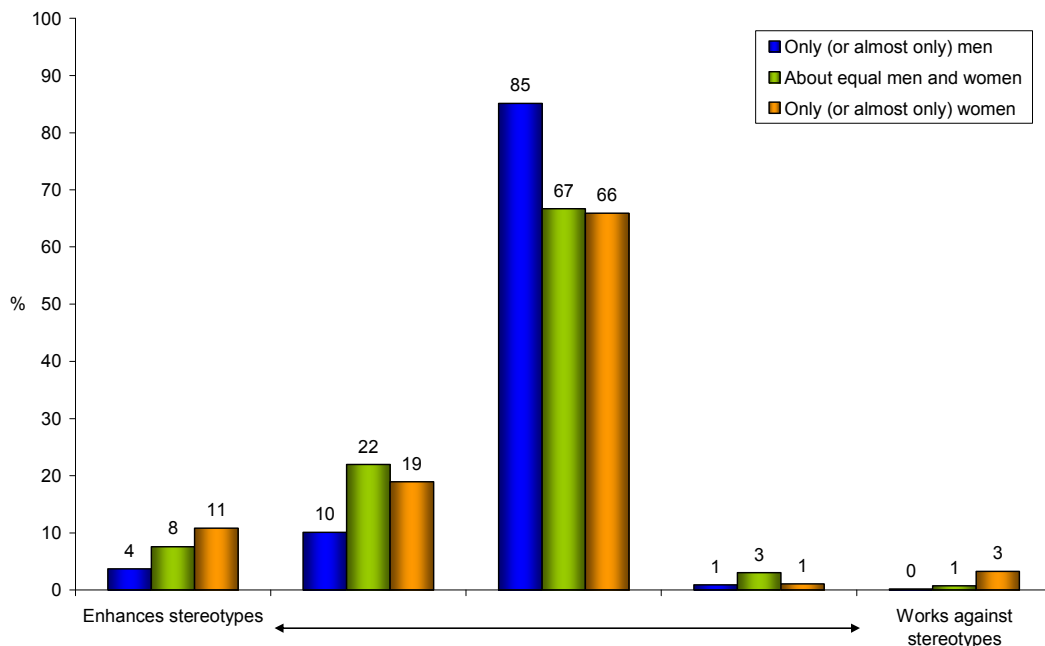


**Figure 13. Focus of the story – the game or not the game.**

On the five step scale in figure 13 higher proportion of women's stories than those on men go under the categories to the right; that is, the focus is clearly on the game. This again supports the argument stated earlier that due to sportsmen's fame it is more likely that the focus of stories mainly on man is not on the game and negative.

These findings show us that on the whole the coverage in the media has a tendency to portray women and men in sports differently. Men tend to be celebrities who get critical/negative coverage not the least because they are doing things of consequence.

Women on the other hand are reported positively and the focus is on the sport itself. However, the underlying notion is that women's sports are less important than men's sports. This is important because it tends to support and further, existing gender stereotyping in society. And indeed this tendency is taken a step further when the focus on stereotyping and sexual undertones is looked at.



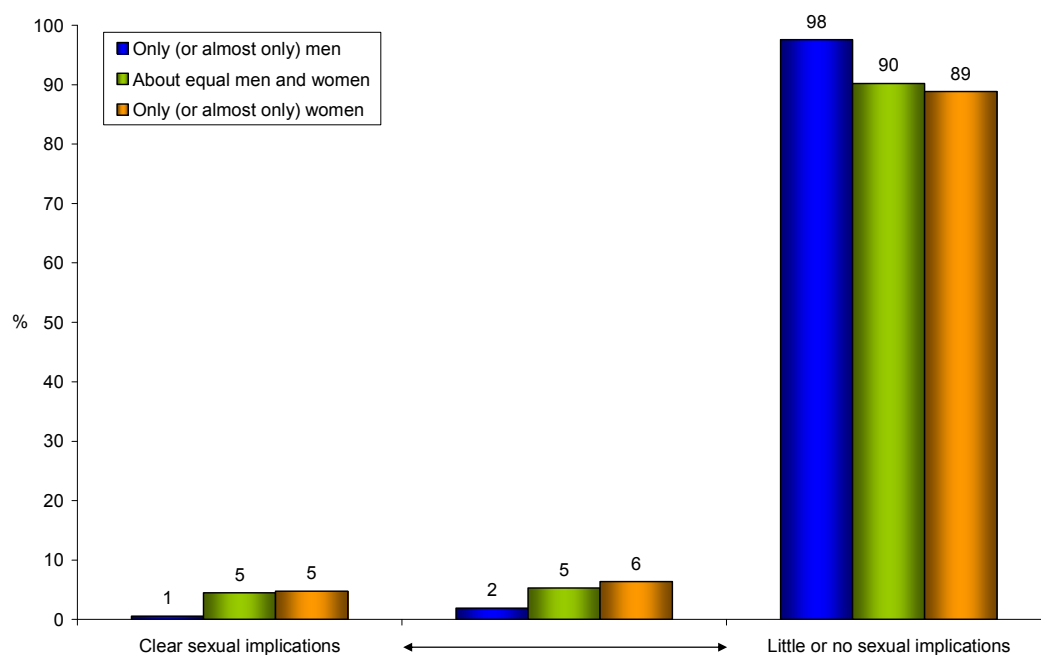
**Figure 14. Focus of the story – enhancing or combating stereotypes.**

Focus of the story in regards to stereotypes divided by gender.

A vast majority of stories neither enhances nor work against stereotypes of males and females in sports. It is interesting that no story at all on men works against stereotypes and only miniature proportion of stories equally on men and women or mainly on women do so (less than 5%). Almost 30% stories on women or equally on men and women are seen as somewhat enhancing existing stereotypes of female athletes but only 14% of male focused stories are considered doing so.

This does not encourage optimism on the development of the gendered environment of men and women in sports. We see almost no tendency at all in regards to diminutive gendered sports stereotypes.





**Figure 15. Focus of the story – clear sexual implications or none at all.**

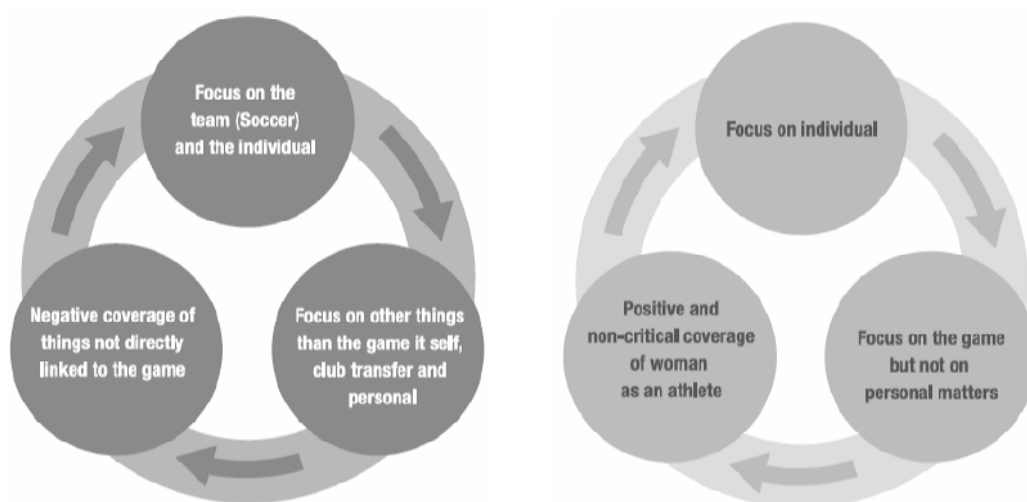
Although stories with strong sexual implications are relatively few, they still do appear, and, as could be expected, they are more common in stories about women than in stories about men. Up to 13% of stories about women have some sexual implications and around 6% of stories have clear sexual implications. The main conclusion that can be drawn from the data is the absence of women in sport news. The most important work must be the change of valuation of the importance of women's sports both with the media and the public.

A certain pattern emerges when the first three issues are examined with regard to the sexes. In stories about women, the focus tends to be on the game or that particular sport, not on various other things related to the sportswoman, such as a potential transfer between teams or her private life. Furthermore, the focus of stories about women tends to be rather positive and in many cases far from as critical as in stories about men. Finally, the focus of stories about women tends to be on the individual rather than the group. This is not surprising in light of what was said earlier about female sports, since reports about women are mostly on sports for individuals, such as aquatics and track and field, rather than on team sports such as football, basketball or handball.

A somewhat opposite picture emerges concerning reports about men, stories about whom are less likely to focus on the game itself and more likely to focus on such external matters as the players' private lives, club transfers, or further aspects considered intriguing by the media. Not surprisingly, sportsmen enjoy a less positive tone than sportswomen, because coverage not concentrated on the game is much more negative than that aimed directly at the game. Another implication is that men are more likely to become

celebrities than women, seen as newsworthy in their private lives off the field as well as while performing as sports heroes on the field. The price of this fame is nevertheless that a considerable proportion of the treatment may be deemed negative.

The following explanations might make the situation clearer: In the case of males in sports, the focus is on both the team and the individual, even though team sports such as football, basketball and handball are frequently discussed. Males are more likely to become celebrities, and media interest is directed not only at what such celebrities do on the field, but also in their daily lives. The themes regarded as newsworthy in the personal lives of celebrities are more often negative themes rather than positive ones; therefore, the negative treatment of male athletes is considerable. The other possible explanation for why sportsmen receive more negative or critical discussion than sportswomen is that men's sports are often considered to be a more serious business than women's sports. While women's sports are dealt with in a relatively nonchalant manner, men's sports are in some cases almost a matter of life and death. Not achieving a goal in a man's event would therefore occasion critique, while this would not be so in a woman's sport, which is evaluated as less momentous. The upshot is that the male athlete becomes even more newsworthy, gathering fame both individually and as a part of a team; this then generates further coverage focused on the individual and the team and has a multiplying effect on coverage as a whole.



In the case of females in sports, on the other hand, the focus is directed first and foremost at the individual, largely because the sports that women participate in and receive coverage for are often individual sports instead of team sports. This contrasts starkly with the coverage of men's sports, as does the focus involved in the next issue. When women's sports are reported, the focus tends to centre on the game, not on something extraneous to it. This implies that women do not become celebrities as readily as men, and the media expresses less interest in what they do off the field. Thus it follows that the discussion of women tends to be more positive and less critical in nature than the discussion of men. However, the other side of the coin from what was just said

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about men applies here, i.e. that women's sports are considered less important than men's sports and for that reason do not excite as much heated criticism and negative treatment.

These findings indicate that the media has a tendency on the whole to portray sportswomen differently from sportsmen. Men tend to become celebrities more frequently, with all the critical, negative discussion involved, not least because they are perceived as doing something of real importance. Women, in contrast, are described positively, with a focus on the sport itself. However, the underlying notion is that women's sports matter less than men's. All of this exercises an impact, by supporting the existing gender stereotypes that society nurtures.



## COVERAGE OF THE OLYMPIC GAMES – EQUALITY OF CHANCES?

The Olympic association has for a long time put a strong emphasis on equality and that all participants in sports should have equal chances to achieve their goals. The participation of women at the Olympic has been slowly increasing since the first woman took part in 1900. The International Olympic Committee has made quite an effort to enhance women's participation in sports for example awarding a "women and sport" trophy to a man or a woman, former athlete, coach, administrator or a journalist, an institution or organisation for a outstanding contribution to develop, encourage and strengthen the participation of women and girls in physical and sports activities, in coaching, in administrative and leadership sport structures, as well as the promotion of women's sport in the media and of women journalists. By this the case of women and sports is brought to the attention of media and other involved in sports (see, IOC, 2004).

Since the International Olympic Committee puts such an emphasis on equality it would be expected that reporting from the Olympic Games should reflect this equality of chances. In light of this it is of special interest to analyse the coverage of the Summer Olympic Games held in Athena 2004. It is clear that during the Olympic Games the proportion of women in sport news is higher or almost 20%. It is not the case though that traditional male sport such as football becomes more focused on women. As we saw earlier this increase in women's proportion is mainly due to more visibility of sports that have more even coverage of men and women, both within and outside the Olympic period. About 56% of female coverage within the Olympic period is on athletics (30%), aquatics (15%) and triathlon (11%). There is a substantial increase in the coverage of these three sports but athletics go from being number 8 to number 1, aquatics are number 5 outside the Olympic period but become number 3 within the Olympic period and triathlon goes from being number 26 to number 10. The total proportion of coverage on only or almost only women in this three sports rises from 14% outside the Olympic period to 29% within the period. This means that the sports where women are traditionally more visible (though of course never as visible as men) gain access to the media through the Olympic Games and that coverage on these sports does have an increase in proportion of women during this period. Other sports, such as football and basketball that traditionally are dominated by men do not increase their proportion of women during the Olympic period.

Some qualitative data was also gathered by analysing the coverage of achievements of the best female and male athlete in the Olympics from each country participating. In some of the cases the performance of the male and the female is not fully adequate for

comparison. The discussion, however, gives a lead to the nature and amount of coverage of the athletes and provokes questions on the nature of media coverage.

## ***Ten female and male top athletes***

### **Kate Allen (Austria)<sup>3</sup>**

Kate Allen, born on the 25<sup>th</sup> of April 1970, grew up in Geelong, Australia. She ran to primary school every day, a distance of three kilometres. At the age of six, she won the first “Little Athletics” competition and became one of the most promising young talents of Australia. Continuing to compete at running till she was 14, Kate Allen managed outstanding achievements in 1500-metre and cross-country races. At the age of ten -- in addition to running -- she started gymnastics, which she described later on as providing essential coordination for her career in the triathlon. Despite her sports achievements, she decided upon an academic education and became a nurse. In 1995, at the age of 25 and on her second trip to see the world, Kate moved to Kitzbühel in Austria, where she earned money as a barkeeper. Besides her job, she went swimming at an indoor swimming pool and came to know her husband-to-be there, a triathlete with whom she started to train. In 1996 she participated in her first triathlon and came in fourth, initiating her fabulous career. In the following period she prepared herself for the disciplines of “Olympic short distance” and “Iron Man”. Her achievements of the next years included the best Iron Man performance of the year in 2003, with a time of 8:54:01, and the Austrian championship title for the short and the long distance triathlons. Her 2004 season started well for her, as she improved in every discipline, especially in her “weak point”, swimming. She was not only chosen Austrian Athlete of the Year for 2004, but also received the European Sports Award for the same year.

Just four months before the Olympic Games, she won a silver medal at the European Championships in Valencia, Spain. By this time she had started to train with her mentor, Dr. Bernd Pansold, specifically for the “killer course of Athens”. On the 25<sup>th</sup> of August her dream came true, as she won the Olympic Triathlon with a time of 2:04:43, the first Austrian female athlete ever to triumph in this event. Now her training is focused on winning the Iron Man Hawaii.

### **Markus Rogan (Austria)<sup>4</sup>**

Markus Rogan was born on the 4<sup>th</sup> of May 1982 in Vienna, Austria. Already a keen swimmer in his early years, he has pursued serious swimming since the age of six. At fourteen Markus moved with his family to Washington, D.C., where he trained with some of the world’s best swimmers and thereby advanced from being a notable talent to a dependable competitor of global ranking.

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<sup>3</sup> [www.kateallen.at](http://www.kateallen.at)

<sup>4</sup> <http://markus-rogan.at>

Besides his swimming, he started studying international relations and economics at Stanford University, California, in 2000. Four years later he was able to finish his degree and thereupon returned to Austria.

The year of 2004 was one of outstanding results for Markus. At the European Long Course Championships in Madrid, he placed first in both the 200-metre medley and 200-metre backstroke. At the Olympic Games he won silver, whereas his friend Aaron Peirsol came in first, after initially being disqualified. Markus pointed out that Aaron had had an obvious lead, so that disqualification would not be fair. In September he received the “Special Fair Play Award” for his outstanding, exemplary behaviour after these Olympic Games finals. He was furthermore voted Austrian Athlete of the Year, 2004. In addition, for the first time in Austrian swimming history Markus won gold twice at the European Short Course Championships in Vienna, for the 200-metre backstroke and medley, as well as silver twice for the 100-metre backstroke and medley. These achievements, which included breaking one European and two Austrian records, continued in 2005 as he won events in Stockholm and Berlin.

### **Valentina Vezzali (Italy)<sup>5</sup>**

The 30-year-old Valentina Vezzali, born in Jesi, has reached a top position in fencing since Atlanta’s Olympic Games in 1996, when she won gold medal in the team foil and silver medal in the individual foil; her brilliant career continues with gold medal both in team foil and individual foil in Sidney’s Olympic Games in 2000 and the gold medal in individual foil in Havana’s World Championships in 2003. During the 2004 season, she won the world championship in team foil in New York.

### **Aldo Montano (Italy)**

35-year-old Lado Montano, born in Lovorno, was a surprise. He came from a family of great athletes in fencing: his grandfather won silver medal (individual sabre) in Berlin’s Olympic Games in 1937 and his father won gold medal (team sabre) in Munich’s Olympic Games in 1972. Even his father’s cousins were winners of gold medals in fencing. His career is rising up, from the third place in Havana 2002 to the podium at Athens 2004.

### **Austra Skujytė(Lithuania)<sup>6</sup>**

The heptathlete, Austra Skujytė, is among Lithuania’s best sports performers. She was born on the 12<sup>th</sup> of August 1979 and raised in the town of Biržai, located in the northern part of Lithuania. She began sports training at the age of fifteen. In deciding on the heptathlon, Austra was encouraged by her first coach, Vytautas Klemka, whom she has declared to be the most influential person in her career. She graduated from Kansas State University in the USA and since 2001 has had two trainers, Cliff Rovelto (USA) and

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<sup>5</sup> <http://www.valentinavezzali.com/>

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.athens2004.com/en/ParticipantBiography?pid=9001977>

Eugenijus Burokas (LTU). Along with her training regime of two sessions a day, her main hobbies are reading, drawing and outdoor games, and she is single.

Austra has held a scholarship through the Olympic Solidarity programme since August 2002. Among her competition highlights are that she has been among the top eight at the Olympic Games and a finalist in both the World Championships and World Athletics. Also, Austra finished among the top three at the Golden League, Super Grand Prix and Grand Prix I competitions.

### **Virgilius Alekna (Lithuania)<sup>7</sup>**

The discuss thrower, Virgilijus Alekna, is currently the best athlete in Lithuania. Alekna was born on the 13<sup>th</sup> of February 1972. He was raised in the small village of Terpeikiai in northern Lithuania.

Virgilijus began in sports at the age of fourteen. Together with his brother and like almost every other Lithuanian boy, he played basketball; he also tried javelin throwing, but finally decided on the discus. Virgilijus goes through two training sessions a day, directed by his coach since 1991, Rimantas Kalibatas. In 1994 he made his debut in the European Championships in Helsinki and in 1997 became a silver medallist at the World Championship in Athens, with a throw of 66.70 meters. Since then Virgilijus has steadily achieved top-notch results.

On the 23<sup>rd</sup> of August, Virgilijus became an Olympic gold medallist and set an Olympic record of 69.89 m, when Robert Fazekas failed to pass a drug test. The latest achievement by Virgilijus was his gold medal at the World Championship in Helsinki, 2004, with a result of 70.17 m. Virgilijus Alekna was awarded the title of Athlete of the Year by Track and Field News in 2000. Moreover, he was presented with a Lithuanian state award - the Gediminas Order - and since 1995 has served the President as a guard.

### **Gunn-Rita Dahle (Norway)<sup>8</sup>**

Gunn-Rita Dahle, born on the 10<sup>th</sup> of February 1973, reigned in 2004 as the undisputed queen of cross-country mountain bike racing. During the year of the last Olympic Games, she won almost every race she entered, including six out of seven World Cup competitions, world championships in both the cross-country and marathon disciplines, and, not least, the Olympic mountain bike race.

Currently she lives in Stavanger, Norway, with her combination coach, masseur, lover and friend. During her girlhood in Norway, she was an active “tomboy”. Then, at the age of 17, she moved to Australia and finished secondary school in Sydney. Next she worked as a journalist for a local paper near Stavanger, before finishing her two years of education in journalism at the University College of Stavanger.

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<sup>7</sup> <http://www.athens2004.com/en/ParticipantBiography?pid=9001960>

<sup>8</sup> <http://www.gunnrita.com/>



Her interest in cross-country mountain biking started in 1995, although it was immediately that year that she won the Norwegian championship. A mere three months later, she won the Nordic Championship and took part in the World Cup race, all in the same year. Also that year, since the sponsors had discovered her talent and personality, she concluded a professional contract with a Dutch team. Since then, she has been travelling to competitions around the world. In 2004, in fact, she travelled for 280 days, so she must use her time efficiently insofar as training is concerned. Her coach carries a large bag containing her bicycle, which is taken apart in such a way that it can easily be reassembled for training at any airport on earth, while Gunn-Rita is waiting for her next flight!

A genuine professional, she maintains a clear focus while working out, which she does for 15-20 hours every week in the summer, and 20 hours per week in the winter.

Besides five Norwegian championships, she has won three European championships, three world championships, two world cups and one Olympic gold medal.

In 2005 she won the Birkemarathon, a UCI world championship for mountain bikers, competing on the tough Rena-Lillehammer stretch. This race was the summertime Birkebeiner, traversing 89 kilometres and building on a tradition dating from around 1200 during the civil war in Norway, when the young king Sverre was rescued. Two of the king's best skiers managed to escape from their enemies by skiing over this distance, carrying the baby king on their back.

## **Andreas Thorkildsen (Norway)<sup>9</sup>**

The media has created terms like “the big surprise”, “the golden shock” and “dream hit” to describe Andreas's Olympic gold medal. The president of the Norwegian Track and Field Federation even stated: “This is perhaps the most unexpected day in Norwegian track and field since 1956, when Egil Danilesen from Norway won the gold in the same event” (VG, 29 August 2005). No one except perhaps the old winners, Egil himself and Trine Hattestad, the gold medallist in women's javelin in 2000, believed Andreas would win. The Czech, Jan Zelensky, had won in 1992, 1996 and 2000. Despite this, the new king turned out to be 22-year-old Andreas.

On the 1<sup>st</sup> of April 1982, Andreas was born in Kristiansand into a track-and-field family. His mother had become the Norwegian champion in the 100-m hurdles in 1972, while his father has thrown the javelin 72 m, and was his first coach. At the age of eleven, Andreas threw a javelin for the first time. His father, observing the boy's talent, wanted him to practise track and field, but Andreas initially opted for football, like most boys his age. When he reached the age of fifteen, his father started coaching him in track and field, but it was not until 2001 that Andreas began concentrating on the javelin. His breakthrough came right away the following year, when he achieved a throw of 83.43 m.

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<sup>9</sup> [http://fi.wikipedia.org/wiki/Andreas\\_Thorkildsen](http://fi.wikipedia.org/wiki/Andreas_Thorkildsen)

Later that year, he telephoned the club, Vidar, in the capital city of Oslo, and asked if the coach there could teach him to become the best javelin thrower in the world. The club rented a small flat for him in Oslo, but it was not until he had earned the Olympic gold medal that he acquired a sponsor outside of his club, Vidar.

Andreas is presented as young, handsome and nonchalant, wearing a cap during the competition in Athens. Now his trademark, the cap was first used at a training session in South Africa to protect his face from his uncontrollable hair. Andreas Torkildsen has been successful in defending his private life and when asked what girl had been sitting on his lap at a party after the competition in Athens, his answer was: "Those who were present know." This year he won the silver medal at the world championship in Helsinki, throwing the javelin 86.18 metres, which was farther than his winning performance in Athens.

### **Þórey Edda Elísdóttir (Iceland)**

Þórey Edda Elísdóttir, pole-vaulter, is currently one of the athletes Iceland can most pride itself upon. She was born on the 30<sup>th</sup> of June 1977 and raised in the town of Hafnarfjörður, which is located in the capital city area of Southwest Iceland. At the age of nine, Þórey started to train in gymnastics with Björk, a club in Hafnarfjörður. Although gymnastics was her first sport, she later decided to start in track and field with another club in Hafnarfjörður, FH. That was where she encountered pole vaulting, for which she quickly developed an enthusiasm. The immense promise she showed in this particular sport gave her encouragement at the time when pole vaulting was first establishing itself among Icelandic women. In 1998 her training started in earnest, upon her moving to Malmö in Sweden. Since then there has been no retreat but rather conspicuous, steady progress, despite a severe injury a couple of years back which momentarily threatened her career. There was no stopping her, however, and she came back stronger than ever.

Simultaneously with her training, Þórey has been active in politics, running for office and attracting attention in Iceland's Left-Green Movement in the 2002 general election campaign. A few years ago, she was also voted onto the athletes committee operating under the European Athletic Association. Þórey currently lives and trains in Leverkusen, Germany, under optimum conditions. Along with her training, she is not only learning German but is also enrolled in distance studies in engineering at the University of Iceland.

The year of 2004 was outstanding for Þórey, who confirmed her status as one of the world's top female pole-vaulters. Besides finishing fifth at the Athens Olympics, she won the Icelandic championship in track and field together with her club FH. In addition, she bettered the Nordic record for pole vaulting, not just once but twice, and currently holds the highest ranking of any Icelandic track and field competitor on the list of the International Track and Field Association. She topped off that year of major

achievements by being voted Hafnarfjörður's Athlete of the Year for 2004. She was also the runner-up for Iceland's Athlete of the Year, selected by the Icelandic Sports Reporters Association.

For the time being, however, Þórey's greatest day has got to be the 24<sup>th</sup> of August 2004, when she earned a place in Icelandic history by finishing fifth in the pole vault competition at the Athens Olympic Games.

### **Rúnar Alexandersson (Iceland)**

The gymnast, Rúnar Alexandersson, has been one of the best Icelandic athletes for the last eight years or so. Hailing originally from Estonia, Rúnar came to Iceland in 1994, when a gymnastics coach by the name of Mati Kirmes came to Iceland and started working for the club Gerpla in Kópavogur, a municipality in the capital city area of Southwest Iceland. Mati brought along the fifteen-year-old Rúnar, who was then the artistic gymnastics champion in his age group in Estonia. Upon coming to Iceland, Rúnar had no citizenship in any country, and went by the name of Ruslan Ovtchinnikov. The reason for his lack of citizenship was that when Estonia received its independence in 1994, only the citizens who spoke Estonian were granted citizenship. Since Ruslan's family lived in a part of Estonia where only Russian was spoken, they did not obtain Estonian citizenship. This made Ruslan eligible for special treatment, and he became an Icelandic citizen in 1996. On the other hand, he was thereupon required to adopt an Icelandic name and decided on Rúnar Alexandersson. He also had to be allowed an exemption to participate in the 1996 Olympics, since his lack of citizenship at the time would have prevented him from participating in the qualifying competition.

Until 1998, Rúnar trained in Iceland, but he then moved to Älvsbyn, Sweden, to resume training under Mati, who had moved there in 1997. In 2003, Rúnar moved once more, this time to Riga in Latvia, where he still lives and trains under Artur Mickevich, who is the national coach of Latvia and one of the most respected gymnastics coaches in Europe.

There is no question as to Rúnar being the best Icelandic gymnast ever. He has participated in the last three Olympic Games and is a multiple Nordic and North European champion on the pommel horse, which is considered by many to be the most challenging event in artistic gymnastics for men. Among his foremost achievements so far are his first-place finish on the pommel horse, scoring 9.788, at a world cup event in Ljubljana in 2000, and his coming in second for the world cup the same year at Glasgow, where he scored 9.737. He has been ranked as high as third globally on the pommel horse, leaving no doubt that he is one of the most capable in the world in that event.

On the 22<sup>nd</sup> of August 2004, Rúnar achieved greater success than any other Icelandic gymnast ever, by winning seventh place on the pommel horse at the Olympics. That autumn the Icelandic Gymnastics Association awarded Rúnar a golden badge, its most prestigious acknowledgement. Rúnar then capped off the year by being voted

Kópavogur's Male Athlete of 2004 and being voted third in the Icelandic Athlete of the Year election by the Icelandic Sports Reporters Association.

## ***Volume of Media Coverage***

Let us first look at the volume of media coverage that each of the ten athlete got. From the table it is obvious that the athletes get a very different coverage but this can not be related directly to gender. It is interesting to note, however, that on the whole the male athletes get on the average more picture coverage while the females are covered more in text.

**Table 4: Volume of media coverage of top athletes at the Olympic Games.**

			Total coverage (cm <sup>2</sup> )		
Country	Name of athlete	Sport	Pictures	Text	Total
Austria	Kate Allen (f)	Triathlon/gold	1.408	1.696	3.104
Austria	Markus Rogan (m)	Swimming /silver (x2)	1.110	1.632	2.742
		<i>Women as % of men</i>	<i>127%</i>	<i>104%</i>	<i>113%</i>
Italy	Valentina Vezzali (f)	Fencing / gold	4.010	3.853	7.863
Italy	Aldo Montano (m)	Fencing /gold	4.137	3.121	7.258
		<i>Woman as % of man</i>	<i>97%</i>	<i>123%</i>	<i>108%</i>
Lithuania	Skujyte (f)	Heptathlon /silver	1.538	1.250	3.416
Lithuania	V. Alekna (m)	Discus / gold	2.019	737	2.786
		<i>Woman as % of man</i>	<i>76%</i>	<i>170%</i>	<i>123%</i>
Norway	Gunn Rita Dahle (f)	Mountain biking / gold	2.428	2.499	4.927
Norway	Andreas Thorkildsen (m)	Javelin / gold	4.114	2.573	6.687
		<i>Woman as % of man</i>	<i>59%</i>	<i>97%</i>	<i>74%</i>
Iceland	Þórey Edda Elís dóttir (f)	Pole vault / 5th place	1.443	1.060	2.504
Iceland	Rúnar Alexandersson (m)	Gymnastics / 7th place	805	779	1.584
		<i>Woman as % of man</i>	<i>179%</i>	<i>136%</i>	<i>158%</i>
			Pictures	Text	Total
Female athletes			10.827	10.358	21.814
Male athletes			12.185	8.842	21.057
<i>Women as % of men</i>			<i>89%</i>	<i>117%</i>	<i>104%</i>

## Austria

On the 25<sup>th</sup> of August 2004, Kate Allen won first place in the Olympic triathlon -- the best Austrian result ever in this event. This achievement merited a photograph and coverage on the front page of the Standard, which also published two additional pages including abundant pictures. The Krone printed a photograph of Kate Allen on its front page and discussed her achievement on five other pages, containing many pictures that lent increased emphasis to the story.

The public television station ORF broadcast the event live within its Olympic special. Following the competition, numerous interviews were broadcast with Kate Allen and her husband/manager, Marcel Diechtler, in addition to the achievement being the number one story of every newscast that day.

On the 20<sup>th</sup> of August, Markus Rogan finished second in a swimming event. There happened to be some complications, because the swimmer who came in first, Aaron Peirsol, was initially disqualified, but subsequently recognised as the winner. The Standard reported Markus Rogan's achievement through a photograph on the front page and through text and pictures covering a whole page inside the paper. The Krone, on the other hand, reported this accomplishment on its front page and on four inside pages including both photos and text, while comments on the achievement and the connected debate due to the disqualification question were printed on three further pages. Both newspapers presented a large image of the scoreboard listing Markus Rogan as number one.

Again, ORF broadcast live within the framework of its Olympic special. After the competition and the final decision on the matter, numerous interviews and analyses were broadcast involving Markus Rogan and some of his team mates. Also, the achievement was the top story in ORF newscasts.

On the whole, Kate Allen was allotted marginally more media treatment than Markus Rogan. At least some of this seems justified by her achieving a higher place than he.

It can also be generally asserted that both athletes were represented as Austrian "national heroes". Taking a closer look at the reports nonetheless reveals several differences in how the athletes were portrayed.

Especially as regards the newspapers, Kate Allen, the woman, was presented as highly emotional. Her triumph and her exuberant feelings over victory were dramatically described, though this discussion was accompanied by "non-active" photographs of her, creating an ambivalent message. While the media stressed that this was "our" first gold and an astonishing achievement, considerable news space was spent drawing attention to her "weak spot", swimming.

In contrast to Kate Allen, who won the triathlon quite unexpectedly, Markus Rogan was anticipated to win a medal at the Olympics, even as high as the gold. After the major fuss concerning the allegation of infringement by his competitor, he was represented as a noble sportsman. Despite his finishing second rather than first, no one asked what weak spot of his had led to the silver medal instead of the gold.

## Italy

On the 18<sup>th</sup> of August 2004, Valentina Vezzali won the gold medal in fencing (individual foil) against another Italian sportswoman, Giovanna Trillini. The news of this achievement, along with a photograph, was positioned on the front page of the newspapers *La Repubblica*, *Il Secolo* and *La Gazzetta dello Sport*. *La Repubblica* covered the news in its sports section on four full pages including two very large photos spanning two pages. *Il Secolo* treated the news by way of two half pages in its sports section, while *La Gazzetta dello Sport* told about Vezzali's gold on close to three-and-a-half pages, with four large pictures.

The state-run television network, RAI 2, broadcast the entire event live, in addition to news about the competition and an interview with the winner on the evening news, and a report in the late-night show 'Notti olimpiche'. The main private television station, Canale 5, presented expansive coverage of the achievement on the evening news, involving a brief interview with the winner.

On the 14<sup>th</sup> of August 2004, Aldo Montano won the gold medal in fencing (individual sabre) against the Hungarian athlete Zsolt Némcsik. News of this achievement, along with a photograph, was positioned on the front pages of *La Repubblica*, *Il Secolo* and *La Gazzetta dello Sport* (in the last instance with a large photo). *La Repubblica* had three pages on the topic, with two expansive photos. *Il Secolo* reported the news in its sports section on one-and-a-half pages (including a massive photo). In *La Gazzetta Dello Sport*, Montano's gold was allotted almost three-and-a-half pages containing three major photos.

The state-run television network, RAI 2, broadcast the entire match live and presented news from the event and an interview with the winner on its late evening news and a report during its late-night show 'Notti olimpiche'. The main private television station, Canale 5, provided major coverage of the achievement on the late evening news, including a brief interview with the winner.

While the coverage in each case proved to be almost equal, Valentina Vezzali received slightly more coverage in the newspapers, probably due to the final in women's fencing taking place between two Italians, which made a great impression on the media. It must also be pointed out that on the same day that Aldo Montano won his gold in fencing, another Italian athlete, Paolo Bettini, won the gold in cycling, so that Montano had to share the day's Italian victories with him, and they in fact appeared together in every front-page photograph.

In contrast to what might have been expected, the front-page photos - and even the inside newspaper articles - presented the female athlete Valentina screaming during the fight, or sweaty and ruffled after the fight, whereas the male athlete Aldo was very often displayed in the air of a beauty queen, dressed up in his uniform and crowned with laurel, holding a bouquet in his hand and kissing his medal, or carried in triumph by his companions.

La Repubblica and Il Secolo emphasised Valentina's mentioning right after the victory that she wanted to have a baby (and now she does have one). Many articles underlined the tension and coldness reigning between Valentina and her opponent even in everyday life, suggesting the classical stereotype of supposed 'natural' rivalry between women.

## Lithuania

On the 23<sup>rd</sup> of August 2004, Austra Skujytė won the silver medal for the heptathlon at the Athens Olympics. News of this achievement covered the front page of Lietuvos rytas and its sports pages, including a photograph of Austra. Vakaro žinios covered this news on its front page and back page, including one large-sized and several smaller photographs. The same day, the 23<sup>rd</sup> of August, was also significant for Lithuania because the men's basketball team won its match against the USA, slightly overshadowing Austra's victory. She and the best player on the basketball team, Šarūnas Jasikevičius, had to share space on the front pages of the papers. The pictures were combined or displayed in such a manner that Austra was depicted standing behind Šarūnas, or as second in line.

Lithuanian state television (LTV) broadcast the awards ceremony at which Austra received her medal, and the final event of the competition was shown both in the sports programme and the main news.

On the 25<sup>th</sup> of August 2004, Virgilijus Alekna won the gold medal for the discus throw at the Athens Olympics. It was his second Olympic gold, following a previous victory in the Sydney Olympics. However, there were complications in how he managed to obtain the 2004 medal. Originally, that competition had been won by another athlete, Robert Fazekas from Hungary, but he failed the drugs test and was disqualified, so that Virgilijus was pronounced the gold medallist. The doping scandal and celebration of victory became a two-pronged thrust of the Lithuanian news. A picture of Virgilijus together with two other medallists appeared on the front page of Lietuvos rytas, and the award received coverage including photographs in the sports section. Virgilijus's achievement was presented in Vakaro žinios through a large portrait on the front page and through text and a large picture on the back page.

LTV broadcast a live interview with Virgilijus as the main item in the evening news, concentrating on the doping affair. This interview was complemented by a discussion with his parents and footage of his discus throw at the stadium. In addition, the sports

programme carried a live interview with Virgilijus as well as scenes of his “golden throw”.

All in all, Austra was allotted significantly less coverage than Virgilijus in the newspapers, but the difference in national television coverage was not as great as Virgilijus’s, but less on national television. Two reasons can be seen for this difference in coverage. Firstly, the story of Virgilijus’s gold medal was intertwined with a drug scandal, which in general provides a prime topic for the media. Secondly, Virgilijus was not awarded his gold medal until the day after the competition, having in the meantime been considered a silver medallist. The result was that Virgilijus’s medal was discussed in the newspapers for two days, thus receiving more press attention than Austra’s medal. Naturally, it also makes a difference that Virgilijus ended up with a gold and Austra with a silver medal.

On the other hand, certain differences in how the media handled Skujytė and Virgilijus’s awards are worth noting, since they indicate a type of gender bias. The media emphasised contrasting emotional states for each athlete. Austra, for instance, was shown feeling very emotional, overwhelmed by surprise at this unexpected achievement, joyfully crying, barely managing to keep back her tears during the awards ceremony, and involved in phoning home to her mother. The journalists interviewing her usually asked questions about her emotional state during the award ceremony, typically recalling her frequent “tears of joy”. Virgilijus, on the contrary, was presented as quite reserved, calm and collected. His passivity as shown on the photographs might have been identified by captions using the term “self-control”. The media explained his staunch emotions as innate features of the personality that heroically attained the prize for Lithuania.

## Norway

The tabloid VG produced much more detailed coverage on the male winner than the female one, whereas the reports in the full-format *Aftenposten* were nearly the same size on each athlete.

On the 27<sup>th</sup> of August, the Norwegian Gunn-Rita Dahle won the gold medal in women’s mountain biking. News of this victory covered the front pages of the conservative full-format *Aftenposten* and of the conservative tabloid VG on the following day. The *Aftenposten* presented as its eye-catcher a photograph of the winner on her bike, smiling and celebrating her victory while holding a Norwegian flag in both hands. VG, on the other hand, showed a small photograph of her in an evening dress kissing her fiancé. The captions accompanying this minor picture were: “Golden girl ready for marriage” and “Waiting to get children”. Thus, VG’s treatment builds on traditional stereotyping, i.e. by defining women’s roles in relation to men, and by staying in line with the old-fashioned “core of femininity” and gender order of traditional sports. The woman is not depicted as an active subject in her sports gear. Overall, the photo and text might be understood in two ways. Interpreted the first way, it communicates an ambiguous view of female sports. Gunn-Rita is a gold medallist in the Olympic Games and certainly does



not stand for a fragile anatomy. On the contrary, she displays a strong physique and will to win, which is a highly modern female characteristic. Still, she is shown to be dependent upon a man, in this case her lover and coach. This last image is well-known in women's sports. Interpreted the second way, her situation is shown as not ambiguous after all, since the impression is given that she is a "normal", modern, active woman, who is dependent upon a man to fulfil her aims.

The news about her gold medal covers three pages in the sport's section of VG and one page in the full-format Aftenposten. The central headline in VG reiterates the front page in relation to "Waiting to get children" and focuses on three relationships: the winner and her lover, the winner and other people celebrating her gold medal, and the winner and her parents. Aftenposten, on the other hand, focuses more on the competition drama surrounding her bike. Although her cycle broke down near the end of the race, she managed to fix it.

On the 28<sup>th</sup> of August, Andreas Thorkildsen won the gold medal in the men's javelin. News of this victory covered the front pages of the two papers on the following day. In Aftenposten the picture of the winner was a little smaller than that of the female winner. In the contrasting VG, Andreas covers nearly the whole front page, along with the headlines "The golden party", "Andreas celebrated tonight" and "Javelin sensation", among others. The news on Andreas in the sports section of the full-format paper covers one whole page, whereas that in VG covers five pages. Why do the two winners receive such different coverage in the tabloid paper? A conservative would probably argue that it was because Andreas's victory was more of a surprise than Gunn-Rita's triumph. He might also add that the ancient sport of track and field is more popular than that of mountain biking. Nevertheless, it is difficult to ignore the most obvious explanation, that of gender.

The news on Andreas in VG is directed at the surprise of his victory and his development as an athlete. His father, who was his first coach, is another subject, as well as his current coach, who discusses Andreas's future potential. Aftenposten pointed out that it had been 49 years since Norway had won a gold medal in the javelin. In that respect the paper forgot the Norwegian women's gold won by Trine Hattestad in Sydney in 2000, suggesting that it is still men's achievements which represent sports rather than women's achievements, insofar as "the real thing" or the "core of sport" is concerned.

## **Iceland**

On the 2<sup>nd</sup> of August 2004, Þórey Edda Elís dóttir won fifth place in the women's pole vault at the Athens Olympics. This happened also to be Iceland's fifth highest Olympic placing ever, in any event. News of this achievement was situated on the front page of Fréttablaðið and was covered in the sports section of the same issue, along with a photograph of Þórey. Morgunblaðið covered this on its back page, with a large-sized photograph, and in the sports section on two full pages showing numerous pictures.

The state-run television network, RÚV, broadcast live from the final rounds of the women's pole vault, twice interrupting the main evening newscast to interpolate scenes from this event. RÚV even cancelled *Kastljós*, a debate show following the main newscast, so that the pole vault could be broadcast continuously to the finish. This was also the main news item in the ten o'clock news and got extended coverage in the Olympic recap later the same night, when Þórey was interviewed. However, Channel 2 did not report this achievement among the main news in the evening newscast, and only as the third item in the sports announcements.

Rúnar Alexandersson came in seventh in the men's pommel horse competition, which was the highest achievement ever for any Icelandic gymnast. A photograph of Rúnar was the largest on the front page of *Fréttablaðið*, and the achievement received coverage along with two photographs in the sports pages. In *Morgunblaðið*, Rúnar's achievement received a photograph and some text on the back page and nearly a full page containing two photographs in the sports section.

RÚV broadcast live from the final rounds of the men's artistic gymnastics. While the report on Rúnar's achievement was delivered among the main news in the evening newscast, it was situated only as the second, relatively short item about sports. In a recap of the Olympic events it appeared only as the fourth item and was comparatively short. On the other hand, RÚV showed this achievement a degree of justice in the Olympic recap the night afterwards, presenting event footage and an interview with Rúnar and his coach. Channel 2 did not give this event any place in its main evening newscast, and although the achievement was announced as the principal news in the sports reports, the description was brief.

All in all, Þórey was given considerably more coverage in the media than Rúnar. This is to some extent understandable, considering Þórey won a higher place than Rúnar. It should also be noted that on the same day when Rúnar competed in the pommel horse finals, the Icelandic handball team lost a match to Russia for entering the quarter finals. This relegated Rúnar's achievement down the pecking order, since handball is Iceland's "national sport". Nor did it favour his coverage that the finals of the men's 100-m sprint also occurred on the same day, since it is frequently considered the leading Olympic event. Another aspect perhaps affecting the media's attention to Rúnar is that he is a nationalised Icelander, i.e. not a "true" native. Lastly, the fact that gymnastics is sometimes considered a feminine sport may also have affected the news coverage on Rúnar.

The nature of the presentations on Þórey and Rúnar was fairly similar. Yet, it was noticeable that the media inflated the factor of Þórey's emotional state, recalling time and time again her having to be carried out of the stadium in the Sydney Olympics, four years earlier, upon failing to reach the quarter finals. Even though photos of Rúnar comprise a higher percentage of his total newspaper sheet coverage, or 49% compared to Þórey's 42%, it is noteworthy that the pictures of Þórey in the newspapers more often than not

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showed her in passive and/or non-athletic poses, while Rúnar's almost always depicted him in "action".



# BEACH VOLLEYBALL – THE ULTIMATE STEREOTYPE?

By Gerd von der Lippe

## ***Introduction***

This chapter focuses on texts and pictures on the dress code in beach volleyball in the Olympic Games (OG) in 2004. This type of mediation is understood as an example of the sexualisation of bodies in the public sphere, and is both publicly criticised and consumed (Gunter, 2002; McNair, 2002; Lippe, 2005). The small dresses turned out to be a theme in Norwegian media, because among other things the cameras zoomed in the resilient bottoms of the female athletes during the matches. While one of the players is serving, the other makes a sign with the fingers in front of the bottom what position she will take when the competitors are attacking them. This sign is seen as a legitimating focus on women's bottoms. When the seam on the sides of the bikini is only seven cm maximum and the low-cut on the top of the women's dress is more marked than that of the men's, the skin of the female athletes is in focus. The International Beach Volleyball Federation (FIVB) has described the dress code under the heading of "Marketing Guidelines." The athletes have, further, to wear the official tank top provided by the promoters during all international competitions. In connection with the guidelines of 2004, the FIVB signed a partnership agreement with Eurosport with the aim to grant exposure in 54 countries and reach 97 million households and with other channels to reach 146 countries outside Europe. Only the muscles of the stomach and back of the females are to be exposed. It does not seem very exciting to zoom in the bottoms of the male athletes, because their shorts cover the bottom down to 15 cm over the knee. Most of the photographers in the OG are more likely interested in female than male bottoms. Because of the presumed market profit, "the female athletes had to be stripped".

The dress code was mediated in Swedish media and on the Norwegian Television I on the 18<sup>th</sup> of August, in VG and Dagbladet on the 19<sup>th</sup> of August and in Aftenposten the following day. On the 19<sup>th</sup> of August the bodies of and texts on the Norwegian female athletes were constructed as the ultimate front-page news, and covered 74% of this page in VG and 60% of Dagbladet in contrast to only 6% of the full format Aftenposten, the 20<sup>th</sup> of August. The female bodies were the eye-catcher in both the tabloid papers. The term "sex" was included in both the headlines "Sex-appeal part of sport" (VG) and "Snorting on sexcritic" (Dagbladet). 36% of the small coverage on the front page of Aftenposten was constructed as text, and the picture covered 64%. The focus here was on a female athlete in action under the headline: "Said no to Playboy." This was the first

time female beach volleyballers achieved such an eye-catcher in the tabloid papers. The Norwegian players were at that time all out of the game.

The focus of this chapter is the mediation on the dress code in beach volleyball in 2004 summer Olympics.

The themes are as follows:

*What discussions do agents of the media draw on?*

*To what extent and in what way do the pictures confirm a stereotype understanding of gender?*

As to the last question I draw on findings by among others Jennifer Hargreaves (1994) and Lippe, 2002 and 2005. I have analysed the three papers from the 17<sup>th</sup> of August till the 20<sup>th</sup> of August; when the first results of the female athletes were produced in the papers. The focus is on the news of the dress code. The attention is first on mediasport as a masculine exposure industry, then on stereotypes. The mediation and the analysis are tied together.

### ***Mediasport as a masculine exposure industry***

Media institutions have symbolic power, i.e. power of constructing reality (Bourdieu, 1991). This power is far from automatic. It is continually reproduced. Mediasport has become a central strategy to increase the amount of readers, onlookers and listeners. Sport in the twentieth century has given men an arena in which to create and reinforce values of male superiority (Bryson, 1987; Hall 1996; Messner, 1988; Hargreaves, 1994; Lippe, 2001). Mediasport has to a large extent reconstructed this imbalance between the sexes. In this way texts and pictures of athletes contribute to construct and reconstruct images and identities of gender (Craig, 1992; Hargreaves, 1994; Casmore 2002; Lippe, 2002, 2004). Men's sport is implicit the symbol of mediasport, whereas women's sport is created and recreated as the second gender order. This manifest itself as a tendency to use women as décor, become less visible and reconstruct stereotypes of both sexes.

Elite sport athletes are outstanding exposure objects and are often used as attractive topic for newspapers. Texts and pictures of male sporting bodies - first and foremost in football – dominate mediasport in the Scandinavia countries (Monday Morning, 2002). Only 11 % of the coverage of sports section in VG in 2001 was on females sports, in contrast to 82 % on male sports (Flekke, 2005). Further, only 5% of the articles were written by female journalists, whereas 95% was constructed by males. At last, the journalists had their information from men in 87% of the coverage and from women in 12%. When female athletes in “sex-appropriate sports” in Norway excel, they are very visible in the media. When the Norwegian female handball team achieved gold in the European championships in 1998 and in 2004, handball dominated the coverage in both VG and Dagbladet during the period of the championships. The fact that about 94 % of

the Norwegian sports journalists were men in 2002 contribute to this gender imbalance. Although most of the sources in mediasport are male, female sources dominate in themes on equal rights, anorexia nervosa and sport for children. The decisive reason for this gender order is the structure of trinity of middle-aged male media editors/owners, male sponsors and male central leaders and coaches in elite sport (Lippe, 2005). The communication processes of this trinity network seem to reconstruct a gender order of men as the first sex and women as the second. In this way they create and recreate a culture with a dominant male marketing logic. I do not interpret these marketing logics as objective, but gendered shaped and believed to be “natural” in this network.

## **Stereotypes**

Walter Lippmann introduced the concept of stereotypes to the social sciences in 1922. According to Lippmann we construct simplified pictures “in the great blooming, buzzing confusion of the outer world (where) we pick out what our culture had already defined for us, and we tend to perceive that which we have picked out in form of stereotypes for us by our culture” (Lippmann, 1922, 81). A stereotype is therefore a fixed conventional representation (Perkins, 1979). Equally importantly, they also pre-exist their specific use: that is, they are already existing concepts that are hailed into existence by trigger traits. O'Donnell (1994), in his study of football male stereotypes, characterises media versions of Scandinavians as people of coolness and clinical rationality, Germans are represented as mentally controlled, disciplined, effective, reliable and hard working, whereas Latin Americans and to a certain degree Italians, are magical, creative, irrational, undisciplined, and reckless, with a temperament supercharged with emotions and completely irresponsible. Female athletes are described as emotional vulnerable and instable, insecure, less ambitious than the male athletes and less willing to train as hard as men. Therefore, they are believed to be not so competent leaders and coaches as men, and as a tendency, they lend on male leaders and coaches rather than female ones (Lippe, 2002). These gender stereotypes are shared with other individuals in our western culture. Cultural stereotypes, like these, have a broader impact than individual ones, particularly because people from these groups are likely to expect to be stereotyped, not only by some or a few people, but by a whole culture (Strangor, 2000).

Part of their power and one of the reasons for their longevity is that they resonate as makers of identity across many domains within a given culture, passing unchanged, unhindered and frequently unchallenged from, say, sport to cinema and from literature to politics and back again. (Crolley and Hand, 2002, 9).

In this way the stereotypes are not completely inaccurate, but over generalised, exaggerated and addressed to groups of people without individual nuances. Above all, perhaps, stereotypes contribute to prevent changes between the sexes and among the sexes - we detect today in everyday life. Media institutions of today construct news and

stories in a speed unknown to history. Critical media research is therefore not easy to do by journalists.

### ***News on the dress code***

It is interesting to notice that news about the female beach volleyballers was scarcely mediated in the press before the 19<sup>th</sup> of August. The day after the women had beaten Switzerland, the 17<sup>th</sup> of August, there was nothing in VG, a small article in Dagbladet (185cm<sup>2</sup>), and a small notice in Aftenposten (4.5cm<sup>2</sup>). The day after they had won over Germany, only VG covered the news with 397.75cm<sup>2</sup>. After the mediation about the dress code on TV and the Swedish papers, 19<sup>th</sup>, all the papers as mentioned covered the news about the half naked bodies on the first page. Dagbladet and Aftenposten also mediated the news in the sports section, whereas VG placed in the ordinary news section. VG used two whole pages (1850cm<sup>2</sup>), Dagbladet nearly two (1638cm<sup>2</sup>) and Aftenposten 288.75cm<sup>2</sup>.

The eye-catcher on the front pages of VG was the two winning female volleyballers just before they were greeting each other. The reader will see their bodies from the top to the thighs. The mouth of the woman in front is open, but with a natural victory smile. They seem to be really happy. This is a typical sport's victory picture. A big headline covers the back of one of them and the stomach of the other. In addition to the main headline, quoted by a male volleyballer: "Sex-appeal part of sport", another minor headline is produced: "The girls are sex-objects" (by a female representative in the Parliament). There are also two minor pictures; one of the male volleyballer and one of the female politicians. The front picture of Dagbladet connotes a different setting to me. Here we detect the bodies of the two winners from top till toe. The main headline covers only their legs from the knee and down. One is positioned from the back, with half of the bottom visible, while she is standing still, only moving her right arm slightly to touch her fellow player. The other woman is seen in front, diagonal, slightly walking out of the picture. Another headline is as follows: "Bikini trouble for the OG girls".





## Takket nei til Playboy

**Uaktuelt.** Kathrine Maaseide sa nei til å stille i en bildereportasje i Playboy. Hun er en av seks kvinnelige sandvolleyballspillere som var ønsket av det amerikanske mykpornomagasinet. Men i sandkassen har Sandnes-jenta ingen problemer med å stille med minimal bikini. Aftenpostens kommentator mener norsk sandvolleyball har tatt vare på den gyldne muligheten sporten får i OL, og mener den har en fremtid. Side 19

ATHEN 2004

FOTO: DAVE MARTIN/AP



**LETTKLEDD:** Idrettsforskere mener lettkledd sandvolleyballjenter er en uting.



**Dagbladet** OLAV H. HAUGE **biografi**

«En åpen og grundig bok om Olav H. Hauge. Også de merkelige sidene i diktens liv kommer for dagen»

**BIKINIBRÅK RUNDT OL-JENTER**

**GLISTE av Italias FLAUSE**

**«Noen vil tape penger.»**

**HYLLET SOM KONGE**

**FNYSER av sexkritikk**

**IKKE NAKEN**

**12-ÅRING FIKK PIERCING**

**NORSKE BARN MYSTISK SYKE PÅ SYDEN-HOTELL**

**ITALIA-PLAN**

**Storingsrepresentant: Jentene blir sex-objekter**

**SEX-APPELL**

**en del av sporten**

Aftenposten constructs a small heading: “No to Playboy” together with a picture of one of the female volleyballers during one of their competitions: just after she has smatched the ball. We see her in front in action just before she is lying flat in the sand.

### ***The context inside the papers***

The focus is on the mediation of the day the papers first constructed the news about the dresscode: the 19<sup>th</sup> of August (VG and Dagbladet) and the 20<sup>th</sup> of August (Aftenposten).

VG produced two pages before the sports section, which consisted of 14 pages. Pictures covered 33% of the total, headlines 15% and text 49%. Four articles are produced in addition to one part in which the dress-code of both sexes is presented. One female and five male journalists produced the text. There is only one main headline attached to the biggest article: “Is of the opinion that beach volleyball girls are sex-objects”. This is presented together with a big picture of one of the female players: Susanne Glesnes is seen, lying on her back, worn out. One arm is behind her head, stretching out, while the other is bent beneath her breasts. Her legs are bent with her thighs spread out. We do not see her feet. She is covered by sand on parts of her body. The journalists were able to choose among several pictures, but this from Scanpix/AP from a male photographer was chosen.

Dagbladet has 12 pages of sport on the 19<sup>th</sup> of August. 87% of the two first sport's pages in Dagbladet is about the dresscode. Here are more space to pictures; 45% of the total, 23% about headlines and only 28% of text. Ingress, illustrations, pictures and headlines consist of 80% of the total coverage on this theme. There are two articles. The eye-catcher is a picture of Susanne Glesnes and Kathrine Maaseide in front, while both of them are trying to get hold of the ball. Two big headlines are in focus: “The boys: The question is Sex-appeal. The girls: Stupid critic” and “Sport’ s researchers: Misogynist”. The ingress of this is as follows: “The international volleyball rules are sex discriminating, says researchers. The girls have to play with small bikinies, while the boys are able to wear loose shorts and tops.” A female journalist has produced the texts from the female researchers and female politicians, whereas a male journalist has produced texts from the athletes on his job in Athens. The ingress from the last-mentioned is as follows: Kathrine Maaseide (27) is really fed up with “the opinionated persons” (Norwegian: *synserne*), but Vegar Høidalen (33) says sex-appeal is part of the play”. One of three small pictures shows the bottom of a female player and her finger signs.

Aftenposten has four full format pages of sport on the 20<sup>th</sup> of August. 15% of the first page consisted of the question from Playboy and the dress-code. Only one male journalist produced the text. Picture covered 8% of this discussion, headline 28% and text 64%. The ingress is as follows: “Kathrine Maaseide was one of six beach volleyball players who were wanted in reportage in the American soft porn magazine Playboy.”

## ***What discussion do agents of the media draw on?***

Two answers of agents are left out. One is from a male researcher, who answered that opinion on this matter differed, while the other, an information consultant in the Norwegian Volleyball Federation, talked about competition rules in volleyball. The point of departure of discussions are the journalists' reconstruction of the positions and perspectives of those interviewed; the sources. The relationship between the journalist and the sources are important here. No "ordinary" readers are allowed to speak. Three male journalists have produced the main article in VG, whereas one female has constructed article number two and a male journalist article number three. The last one has no signature. As above-mentioned, there is only one article in Aftenposten.

VG and Dagbladet have interviewed several persons on the topic, in contrast to Aftenposten, whose only source is Kathrine Maaseide.

## ***The discussion on Equal Rights***

Here are interviews with female politicians, researchers and protagonists for the question on Equal Rights, except for the secretary of the Parliamentary group of the Labour Party, Karin Yrvin. The ombud for Equal Rights questions, Kristin Mile, the director of Equal Rights, Long Litt Woon, the former Minister of Equal Rights in Sweden, Margareta Winberg, Parliament member of the Labour Party, Gunn Karin Gjøl, and the researchers Kari Fasting, Jorunn Sundgot Borgen and the undersigned.

The director of Equal Rights, Long Litt Woon, is quoted in Dagbladet as follows:

- It is strange that the difference between the sexes is so marked.

Researcher, Kari Fasting, is constructed the following way in Dagbladet:

- The focus ought to be on the results, not on the body and looks.

The Parliament member of the Labour Party, Gunn Karin Gjøl, is presented in this way in VG:

- It is paradoxical and sex discriminating that the boys are not allowed to take off the top, whereas the girls are forced to undress (ha minst mulig på).

Former Minister of Equal Rights in Sweden, Margareta Winberg, is quoted as follows in VG:

- The women themselves ought to decide their dress code.

Researcher, Gerd von der Lippe, is presented in this way in VG:

- The bikini rules imply that women's sport is not the real thing in itself.

Questions on Equal Rights have been discussed in Norwegian politics in about 120 years. The forming of the Association, “Norsk kvinnesaksforening”, in 1884 is often defined as the start of this debate. The following year the “Kvinnestemmeforeningen” (the right to vote for females) was formed. The idea of equal rights was historically tied to the idea of liberal feminism about the free and rational individual. In a Norwegian context this discussion has been reconstructed in several periods: 1880s until 1913 (right to vote for Parliament), 1930s (women forced out of the labour market), 1970s (the women’s movements) and today (female leaders).

In the public sphere of Norway the question on Equal Rights seems to be more popular than that of feminism, among others things because of the Law on Equal Rights in 1979 and the first female Prime Minister, Gro Harlem Brundtland in 1981. In this way the discussion on Equal Rights are interpreted as a meta-discourse on Norwegian feminism from the 1970s onwards. The theme on discrimination is a part of the Equal Rights question. In the texts from the papers it was among other texts manifested by “the difference between the girls and boys...” (Woon) and “sex discrimination” (Gjul). In the last text it is a question about the boys. This is a new perspective in relation to the 1970s.

Up till now most of the questions on Equal Rights have focused on male dominance (Skjeie & Teigen, 2003). I categorise “the women themselves ought to decide their dresscode” (Winberg) in this discussion, but it could also be categorised in the following, that of feminism. Here the theme on power/dominance is essential.

### ***The discussion on traditional feminism***

Here we have quotations from Gjøl, Woon, Synnøve Konglevold and the undersigned.

Gjøl is presented as follows in VG:

- It seems like this is a gang of macho-pigs (griskaller) who has made these rules.

Woon is quoted the following way:

- The sexualisation of the public sphere is problematic (VG).
- Normally sponsors wish that the athletes wear clothes they are able to include big logos on. In this case it seems as if the female body itself is the logo (Dagbladet).

Winberg is mediated in this way in Dagbladet, which refers to Aftonbladet, Sweden:

- ... beach volleyball (is) not a sport, but sexist entertainment.

Konglevold is presented this way in VG:

- These competent girls are constructed more like sex-objects than athletes when the dress rules are made with regard to pure commercial aims.

The undersigned are quoted as follows:

- This TV-production seems to be very speculative. Several young girls are not likely to concentrate on beach volleyball, because they do not wish to have their bottoms stuck to the TV- screen, says Gerd von der Lippe during a debate in the OG-studio of the NRK1 (VG).

- Elite sports, media and the sponsors are ruled by men in the 50s. This fact increases the focus on women's bodies... (Dagbladet).

In the field of Norwegian sport feminism is normally interpreted as a doxa with the exception of 1984-90, when the Central Women's Committee in the Norwegian Confederation of Sport included this term in their seminars. The perspectives of power and dominance are clear elements in the feminist discussion with point of departure of radical, socialistic and Marxist feminism. Representations from these three perspectives I categorise as traditional feminism. According to Beatrice Halsaa the focus on power became central in the second wave of feminism and women's movements from the 1970s onwards (Halsaa, 1996).

The relation between male leaders/coaches and female athletes is an asymmetrical gendered relation, which is often taken for granted, because it is so dominating and usual (Lippe, 2001). The discussion on the "natural" fact that older male leaders/coaches decide the rules of female athletes and what sports they do and how they do it, is part of a 150 year old discussion in Norwegian sports. Two themes are in focus here: Female bodies as a manifestation of a sexualisation in the public sphere and the older men of power behind. Winberg pinpoints this by the following quotation: "... beachvolleyball (is) not sport, but sexist entertainment."

### ***The traditional discussion on sport***

Only the most quoted athlete, Maaseide, is included here.

She finishes off her interview in Dagbladet as follows:

- This is about stamina, jumping power, speed, technical skill – and of course the speaker, who adds fuel to the atmosphere with music, and the singing audience. But most of all, it is the competition which is in focus.

She is quoted this way in VG:

- I do not understand why these people answer questions to journalists they do nothing about. Do they need to assert themselves? They ought to have travelled here and watched before they were mediated in the press. Until then they ought to say nothing.

She is quoted nearly in the same way in *Aftenposten*:

- The critics have to watch us play on the pitch to get an idea what this is all about.

She does not seem to reflect on the relation between market, bikini size and elite sport in VG:

- She does not believe that less textile increase the market value of the athletes. I believe the sport of beach volleyball itself increases the market value, because it is an exciting sport which is very popular. I do not think that the market value is dependant on the size of the bikini.

Maaseide focuses on the traditional sporting qualities like for example stamina, jumping power, speed and technical skill in *Dagbladet*. These qualities were in historical times point of departure for sports journalism all over the world. How to present sporting achievement as news? The critics ought to watch the play on the pit, is also an element of this traditional sporting capital. The market value of the athletes is not included in this traditional way of understanding sports competitions, but essential in the following discussion.

### ***The discussion on neoliberalism in sport***

Here we include Borgen, Yrvin, cross-country athlete, Vibeke Skofterud, football spokesman, Ingebrigt Steen Jensen, Maaseide and Vegar Høidalen.

Borgen and Skofterud focus among other things on the bodies of the athletes in VG. First, Borgen:

- We must remember that we talk about attractive, beautiful young women... They are exhibitionists... (they) do undress in sport, they are good looking.

Høidalen is quoted as follows in VG:

- Sex-appeal (is) part of sport.

Maaseide is presented in the following ways:

- This is about adapting oneself to a culture (*Dagbladet*).

- I would never have played in shorts, it is quite old-fashioned (VG).

- We prefer bikini. We do only adapt to the fashion of today (Aftenposten).

Yrvin is quoted as follows in VG:

- It is OK as long as the girls think that this works satisfactorily.

Jensen answered the following question from VG: In what way does the market value of the girls increase in relation to the decrease of the bikini:

- Because we pip extra... You know, it is eight reasons to watch beach volleyball: Four bikini tops and fire bikini panties, he goes on with a grin.

To adapt to a culture, in this context to increase the profit, can be tied to the logics of new-liberalism. Small tops and bikinis are here a weapon to increase the interest from middle-aged male sponsors for young women in a global sport. A consequence for the athletes is to stage themselves as flexible, as good looking and fashionable as their sport allows. Without a sponsor they have no chance to survive and excel. Texts like: "Sex-appeal (is) part of sport" (Høidalen), "This is about adapting oneself to a culture" and "I would never have played in shorts, it is too old-fashioned" manifest these logics.

On one level we can talk about a re-negotiation of what sport is; a new definition of sport (Lippe, 2005). Is the essence of sport results in competitions "only", or do we have to add "sexist entertainment"? Thus, the texts of Fasting, von der Lippe, the female politicians and the Equal Rights spokeswomen are in the traditional category of a sports definition, whereas the athletes are within the logic of new liberalism, because marked value has to be added. Here the borders between sport and entertainment are blurred in late modernity. If the sport, the athletes and the competitions are not considered as an interesting object of entertainment, the athletes are not mediated. Today, there is a continually re-negotiation about what sport is. Thus, sex and entertainment is the new manifestation of sport in a global consumption culture. There is no longer a privileged or universal position which is able to deliver recipes on a good life or how athletes ought to behave. Each individual has to take that responsibility. What seems contradictory in this context is the fact that female beach volleyballers are not allowed to decide if they want to cover their bottom and stomach in the Olympic Games. They have to stick to the dress code made of middle-aged men. Thus, they become the object of the marketing guidelines of their sport. They are either in or out. In this way they do not really have a free choice, because they are not able to negotiate the meaning of sport - what sport is, because this is decided by others. One important question is, how is gender constructed in the media in 2004? Bikini tops and bikini pants are here a means to increase the amount of onlookers in the TV and readers of the newspapers and magazines.

(Jensen: we pip extra). A feminist position goes, however, beyond this and is here critical to a new liberalist one, because the first-mentioned asks what consequences this mediation have for the interpretation and practices of women's bodies in and out of



sport. Pictures and texts are dependent on being understood and recognized by “ordinary people” as something old or new. If the focus is on change, new manifestations have to be created continually, although within a feminist position “the change” is interpreted as a repetition of the image of the old babe, only within a new package. The relationship between the men in power and the female athletes is as such a reconstruction of an asymmetrical relation of power, which is 150 years old. The change is the focus on naked young skin within the logics of new liberalism.

### ***Do pictures confirm a stereotype understanding of gender?***

There is one picture on the front page of each newspaper. Further, three pictures inside VG, four inside Dagbladet and one inside Aftenposten.

First, the front pictures. Of the three, only the one in Dagbladet connotes, as I see it, a stereotype understanding of female athletes. The two women are passive in relation to their sport, and we see them from top till toe in the bikini with a focus on this bottom of one of the athletes. In this way an easy eye-catcher is this part of the body. The aim is not to show female athletes in action. Neither, do we see how their bodies are disciplined by effective movements, nor their techniques or a celebration of a victory. The last element is included in the front picture of VG as an eye-catcher. The picture on the first page of Aftenposten is from the competition, an athlete in action and not in a speculative angle. In the logics of the visual rhetoric inspired by Aristotle's Rhetoric (Kjeldsen, 2002), I interpret this picture as the “actio” of sport. Here we see the athlete just after she has done her utmost to catch and send the ball to her opponents. Her body is still tense and concentrated.

Of the three pictures inside VG, two might be interpreted as speculative and stereotype. The biggest one of them covers 33% of the two pages together. Here we see one of the females lying down on her back in her bikini in the sand exhausted, with her legs spread out to some degree. The horizontal position is the classical, passive babe one (Rosenberg, 2002). This is in contrast to the sport's “actio” in Aftenposten and the big one inside Dagbladet. The other speculative and stereotype picture measures only 48cm<sup>2</sup>. It shows two athletes in the sand, missing the ball. One is from the back with her legs spread out and half of her bottom is visible, while the other is from the side. The speculative element is easy to detect. I interpret it also as stereotype, because it shows a female failure in sport. This connotes the fragile body of historical times, which symbolizes “the lack” of a female body in contrast to that of a male one (Lippe, 2001). Women are in this context not made for victories. The other small picture of the same size connotes victory, and is not a stereotype. The female volleyballer is exciting, because they have just won the set.



Of the four pictures on the sport's section in Dagbladet, I interpret two of them as speculative and stereotype, and the other two as "ordinary" sport's pictures. The biggest of them shows two female athletes in a sport's "actio". They are both trying to hit the ball, and one of them manages to do so. They are in front, jumping, concentrated and eager to get it their way. The other non-speculative denotes an athlete from the side, managing to blow a bogger. This picture is on a row of three small ones. The two others, I connote as speculative and stereotype. One is the classical stereotype from these Olympics; just a female bottom in a small bikini, four fingers in front to signalise what position she will take when the competitors are attacking them. This is an example of mediating women's bodies only reduced to body parts with no face, identity or energy. According to Barrie Gunter (2002) this is an un-human representation.

The only picture on the sport's section in Aftenposten is very small, only 24cm<sup>2</sup>. We see a female athlete when she is down on her knees ready for a bagger blow. She is concentrated on her task. I interpret this picture as ambiguous. She is on the one hand in "actio", but the focus is on her arms near her front part of her tiny bikini between her legs with her thighs apart. For me, this is both a stereotype and not a stereotype at the same time.

To sum up, of the tabloid papers one of the two (Dagbladet) mediated a stereotype and speculative picture on the front page as an eye-catcher. Inside, this paper presented two of four pictures as stereotype, but the biggest of all was not speculative. Inside VG, two of three were interpreted as stereotype and speculative, which was the biggest of all of them. In the full format, Aftenposten, the picture on the front page was not stereotype or speculative. The inside one, might both be interpreted as stereotype and working against stereotype at the same time.

### ***Short summary***

The article focuses on the mediation on the dress code in beach volleyball in the Olympic Games in 2004. The gender representations are read as a manifest of the sexualisation in the public sphere, structured invisibly, so to say, by a dominating masculine exposure industry. The texts draw on these discussions: that of Equal Rights, that of traditional feminism, that of traditional definition of sport and that of the new liberalism in sport. The asymmetric relation between young female athletes and middle-aged men in power is an old one, but in a new package; that of naked young skin. The tabloid papers, VG and Dagbladet mediated five out of nine pictures as stereotype and speculative, whereas the full format Aftenposten only presented two pictures, of which one both is interpreted as ambiguous; stereotype and working against stereotype at the same time.



## CONCLUSIONS

The SMS comparative study shows clear distinctions in how men and women in sports are portrayed by the media.

Firstly, there are far fewer stories about women than men. Also, a large proportion of the reports deal with team sports, where men tend to be highly visible. Women receive what little visibility they have primarily in news about individual rather than team sports.

Secondly, there is a strong tendency to idolise the leading men in sports, focusing on them as social celebrities as well as sportsmen. Thus the sports media not only covers men more extensively in general, but also often discusses aspects about them that are unrelated to the sport itself. Women, on the other hand, neither find their way into the media as readily nor, when they do, does the focus diverge much from their role as sportswomen. As a result, men must pay the price of fame, with many of their stories having a negative undertone, while women enjoy a relatively positive tone. An evident reason for the more critical treatment and the idolisation of men in sports as opposed to women is that women's sports are not considered as important as men's sports, whether by the media or the public. European sports coverage thereby reflects and interacts with public opinion and in fact reinforces traditional gender stereotyping.

Thirdly, on the whole, sports news neither reinforces nor combats stereotypes. However, in a number of stories there is a tendency – especially regarding the presentation of sportswomen – to support traditional stereotypes. Indeed, SMS researchers found that almost one in every three stories about women corroborated stereotypes to some extent, though it is particularly important to note that the stereotype connotations of a particular story or photo are not always obvious and are rarely the result of a conscious decision by the reporter or photographer. What lends this significance to the material in question is its context – the context of a world of sports reporting that is dominated by men.

Fourthly, there are relatively very few female sports reporters, so that media gate-keeping is loaded with male norms and values. The disproportionate sex ratio of sports reporters in itself creates a tendency to reiterate traditional stereotypes.

All of these problems have to be given special attention. Special caution should, however, be exercised in how the media, sports authorities and athletes themselves go about raising sportswomen to the media status they deserve. Their under-representation should not be rectified by “selling” female athletes as sex objects or by subjecting them to the roles laid down by traditional gender stereotypes.

Although the media coverage of women seriously needs to be magnified and multiplied, it is of vital importance to do this by multiplying the exemplary reporting already being done, not by magnifying the content of stereotypes and sexism.

Sports, media and stereotypes are complex phenomena, with no single authority empowered to rectify these issues once and for all. Still, the authorities can contribute policy landmarks, and strategic groups such as sports trainers and sports reporters have a vital role. In the final analysis, however, these matters concern everyone and are a question of mending norms and values that are deeply encroached in our culture and therefore can only be altered by creating a collective awareness in society about their meaning.

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## **Appendix**

## **Appendix 1 – The SMS coding sheet**

**1. Media:**

- TV station № 1                       Newspaper № 1  
 TV station № 2                       Newspaper № 2  
 TV station № 3 (optional)       Newspaper № 3 (optional)

**2. Date:**

\_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ 200 \_\_\_\_      Time: \_\_\_\_\_

**3. Order within programme/printed on page №:**

№: \_\_\_\_\_

**4. Total length of programme                      or                      Total number of pages:**

Number of minutes: \_\_\_\_\_                      or                      Number of pages \_\_\_\_\_

**5. Length of story:**

\_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ (min/sek)                      or                      Column cm. \_\_\_\_\_

Size of accompanying picture                      Column cm. \_\_\_\_\_

**6. Highlighted story:**

- Main story  
 Middle range or number 2 story  
 Story of marginal importance

**7. Is a part of sports section or sports pages:**

Yes     No

**8. Reporter:**

Man                       Woman                       Unknown

**9. Location of story:**

Local event                       National event                       International event

**10. Sports discipline (refer to number on list):**

\_\_\_\_\_

**11. Age of (the majority of) athletes involved:**

- Kids (up to about 18 years)
- Young adults (about 19 – 35)
- Older adults (36 and older)

**12. Total number of individuals involved (not including bystanders):**

\_\_\_\_\_

**13. Proportion of women of individuals involved:**

None											All
0%	10%	20%	30%	40%	50%	60%	70%	80%	90%	100%	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**14. Number of persons interviewed or referred to:**

Men \_\_\_\_\_ Women \_\_\_\_\_

**15. The focus of the story:**

	-2	-1	0	1	2	
The game	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Something else
An individual	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	The group
Positive	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Negative
Sexual implications	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	No sexual implications
Enhances stereotypes	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Works against stereotypes

**16. The focus of accompanying picture(s):**

	-2	-1	0	1	2	
The game	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Something else
An individual	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	The group
Positive	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Negative
Sexual implications	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	No sexual implications
Enhances stereotypes	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Works against stereotypes

**Official Olympic disciplines and coding numbers**

- 01 Aquatics
- 02 Archery
- 03 Athletics
- 04 Badminton
- 05 Baseball
- 06 Basketball
- 07 Biathlon
- 08 Bobsleigh
- 09 Boxing
- 10 Canoe / kayak
- 11 Curling
- 12 Cycling
- 13 Equestrian
- 14 Fencing
- 15 Football
- 16 Gymnastics
- 17 Handball
- 18 Hockey
- 19 Ice Hockey
- 20 Judo
- 21 Luge
- 22 Pentathlon
- 23 Rowing
- 24 Sailing
- 25 Shooting
- 26 Skating
- 27 Skiing
- 28 Softball
- 29 Table Tennis
- 30 Taekwondo
- 31 Tennis
- 32 Triathlon
- 33 Volleyball
- 34 Weightlifting
- 35 Wrestling

## ***Appendix 2 – Country reports***

# ÖSTERREICH

## **Einleitung**

Die Medien spielen eine einflussreiche Rolle bei der Entstehung von Vorstellungen über Frauen und Männer. Die Sport-Berichterstattung in den Medien wird hauptsächlich dominiert von der Berichterstattung über Männer im Sport, was sich in der traditionellen öffentlichen Ansicht spiegelt, Männer seien aktiv und athletisch, und Frauen, im Gegenzug, seien das nicht. Um nur ein Beispiel für die Bedeutung dieses Phänomens zu geben: Studien haben gezeigt, dass Mädchen häufig im Teenageralter aus dem organisierten Sport ausscheiden, und dies hat zumindest zum Teil mit dem Mangel an weiblichen Rollenmodellen in den Sportmedien zu tun.

Ende 2004 haben die ProjektpartnerInnen aus fünf Ländern, Österreich, Litauen, Norwegen, Italien und Island, ein Projekt mit dem Titel „Sports, media and stereotypes – women and men in sports and media“ (SMS) gestartet. Das Projekt wurde entwickelt und wird koordiniert vom Centre for Gender Equality in Island, der nationalen isländischen Behörde für Gender-Gleichberechtigung, und erhielt substantielle finanzielle Unterstützung von der Europäischen Union. Das Ziel dieses Projekts ist, zum Wissen über die Repräsentation von Frauen und Männern in den europäischen Sportmedien beizutragen und Veränderungen in den stereotypischen Darstellungen von beiden Geschlechtern in diesem Feld zu begünstigen.

Das erste Ziel, zum Wissen über die Repräsentationen von Frauen und Männern in den Sportmedien beizutragen, wurde mit der Durchführung einer internationalen Studie, um Ähnlichkeiten und Unterschiede in den Darstellungsformen von Frauen und Männern im Sport herauszuarbeiten, erreicht. Im Rahmen dieser Untersuchung wurden die Vorstellungen von der Beteiligung von Frauen und Männern im Sport, die durch nationale und regionale Medienberichterstattung entstehen, analysiert. Dies diente dem Zweck, ein Bild der Sportkultur in jedem Land zu zeichnen, da dies notwendige Hintergrundinformationen für das Projekt darstellt, und um die Realität der Medien-Welt mit der Realität statistischer Informationen zu vergleichen.

Das zweite Ziel, Veränderungen in den stereotypischen Darstellungen von beiden Geschlechtern in diesem Feld zu begünstigen, wurde mit dem Versuch angestrebt, die einflussreichsten Zielgruppen, speziell jene im Bereich der Medien, über die Folgen ihrer Darstellung von männlichen und weiblichen AthletInnen zu informieren und ihnen zu zeigen, wie dies traditionelle Vorstellungen von Frauen und Männern kreiert und aufrecht erhält. Dies geschah auf dreifache Art und Weise. Erstens, durch die

Entwicklung eines Multimedia-Trainings das darauf abzielt, SportreporterInnen sowie SportlehrerInnen und –trainerInnen hinsichtlich der Repräsentation von Frauen und Männern im Sport zu bilden und ihnen dadurch ein praktisches Instrument zu geben, um ihre tägliche Arbeit zu analysieren. Zweitens, durch die Einrichtung von nationalen ExpertInnengruppen zu dem Thema, welche ExpertInnenwissen bereitstellen und die nationalen PartnerInnen und das transnationale Führungskomitee bei der Entwicklung des Multimedia-Materials unterstützen. Drittens, durch die Stimulation einer Diskussion zu dem Thema auf europäischer Ebene durch die Abhaltung einer internationalen Konferenz.

Die SMS Vergleichsstudie verwendete sowohl quantitative als auch qualitative Methoden, um eine Beschreibung der Sportberichterstattung in den fünf Ländern Österreich, Italien, Litauen, Norwegen und Island zu erstellen. Im quantitativen Teil der Studie wurden mehr als 1.700 Medien-Beiträge analysiert und auf standardisierte Art kodiert. Aufgrund der unterschiedlichen Anzahl von Beiträgen pro Land wurden die Daten gewichtet um diesen Unterschied auszugleichen. Dadurch wurden die Daten so analysiert, als wenn jedes der fünf Länder eine gleiche Anzahl an Beiträgen kodiert hätte. Die Datensammlung fand in zwei verschiedenen Zeitperioden statt. Erstens an spezifischen Tagen während der Olympischen Sommerspiele 2004 und zweitens an einigen Wochenenden in der ersten Jahreshälfte 2005, die ausgewählt wurden anhand von zu diesem Zeitpunkt stattgefundenen nationalen Sportereignissen. Daten wurden sowohl aus den Print-, als auch aus den elektronischen Medien gesammelt, sprich aus Tageszeitungen und Fernsehen. Es sollte allerdings erwähnt werden, dass, obwohl die Datensammlung standardisiert war, sie auf keinen Fall wertneutral zu sehen ist, da einige der Informationen auf der subjektiven Evaluierung der Personen, welche die News-Meldungen analysierten, basieren.

Tabelle A-1 Anzahl der analysierten Meldungen nach Ländern, Medien und Zeitabschnitten:

#### **Anzahl der analysierten Meldungen**

Österreich.....	573
Litauen .....	134
Norwegen.....	199
Italien.....	577
Island.....	268
<b>Summe .....</b>	<b>1.751</b>

#### **Medien**

TV.....	754
Zeitung .....	997
<b>Summe .....</b>	<b>1.751</b>

#### **Zeitabschnitte**

Olympia .....	673
Außerhalb Olympia .....	1.078
<b>Summe .....</b>	<b>1.751</b>

## **Hauptergebnisse**

Die SMS Vergleichsstudie zeigt, dass es einen großen Unterschied gibt zwischen der Darstellung von Frauen und Männern in den Medien.

Erstens gibt es weniger Berichte über Frauen als über Männer. Ein großer Anteil der Sportberichterstattung behandelt Teamsport. Männer sind in diesem Typus von Berichten viel sichtbarer während Frauen in der Berichterstattung über Einzelsportarten häufiger vorkommen.

Zweitens gibt es eine klare Tendenz, Männer im Sport zum Idol zu machen und auf sie als „Berühmtheiten“ ebenso zu fokussieren wie als Sportler. Dies wird durch die Tatsache widerspiegelt, dass die Medien nicht nur ausführlicher über Männer berichten sondern dass der Fokus bei Geschichten über Männer häufig auf anderen Aspekten liegt als dem Spiel. Frauen auf der anderen Seite finden den Weg in die Medienwelt nicht so leicht und wenn, dann liegt der Fokus der Berichterstattung auf ihnen als Sportlerinnen. Daraus folgt, dass Männer den Preis der Berühmtheit bezahlen müssen und dass viele der Geschichten über sie einen negativen Unterton haben, während über Frauen im Vergleich eher positiv berichtet wird. Es scheint in Folge auch evident zu sein, dass der Grund für die ausführlichere und kritischere Berichterstattung und Idolisierung von Männern im Gegensatz zu Frauen im Sport daran liegt, dass Frauensport – durch die Medien sowie durch die Öffentlichkeit – nicht als so wichtig gesehen wird wie Männersport. Auf diese Art und Weise reflektiert und beeinflusst die europäische Sportberichterstattung die öffentliche Meinung und führt zu einer Verfestigung traditioneller Gender-Stereotypen.

Drittens, im Großen und Ganzen verstärken Sport-Nachrichten-Beiträge Stereotype weder, noch arbeiten sie gegen sie. Es gibt allerdings in einer Anzahl von Berichten eine Tendenz – im Speziellen in Bezug auf die Sportberichterstattung über Frauen – Gender-Stereotypen zu verstärken. Die SMS ForscherInnen fanden heraus, dass beinahe eine von drei Geschichten über Frauen auf irgendeine Art Stereotype verstärkt. Es muss auch gesagt werden, dass die stereotypischen Konnotationen einer bestimmten Geschichte oder eines Fotos nicht immer offensichtlich sind und dass sie selten das Resultat einer bewussten Entscheidung des/der Reporters/in oder des/der Fotografen/in sind. Es ist der Kontext, der einer Geschichte diese Bedeutung gibt – der Kontext einer Welt von Sportberichten, die von Männern dominiert wird.



Viertens gibt es zu wenige weibliche Sportjournalistinnen, was bedeutet, dass die Selektions-Funktion der Medien in diesem spezifischen Kontext mit männlichen Normen und Werten belegt ist. Daher führt die ungleiche Geschlechterverteilung unter den ReporterInnen automatisch dazu, traditionelle Stereotype zu verstärken.

In ihren Strategie-Empfehlungen führen die SMS ForscherInnen diese Punkte aus und schlagen vor, ihnen besondere Aufmerksamkeit zu widmen. Sie empfehlen darüber hinaus aber auch, dass spezielles Augenmerk auf die Art wie die Medien, Sportbehörden und die SportlerInnen selber sich darum bemühen, Sportlerinnen den Platz in den Medien zu geben, den sie verdienen, gelegt wird. Ihre Unter-Repräsentation sollte nicht berichtigt werden durch das „Verkaufen“ von Frauen als Sexobjekte oder durch die Zuschreibung von Rollen, welche im Sinne traditioneller Gender-Stereotypen festgelegt sind.

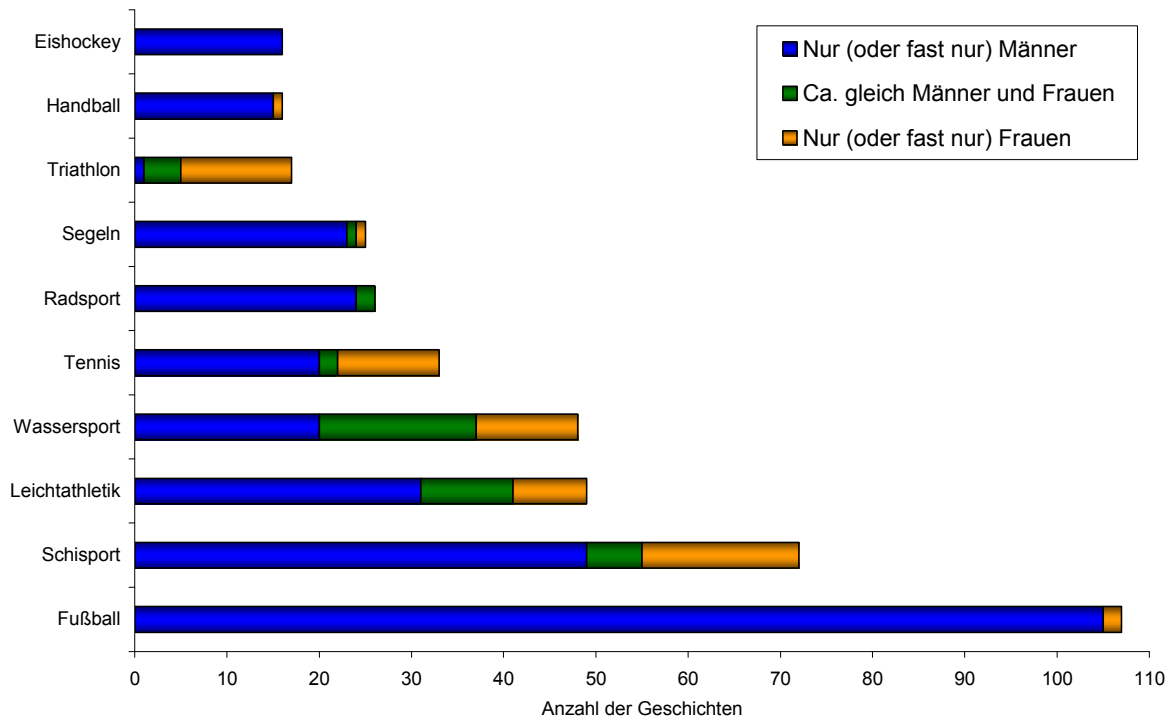
Mit anderen Worten ist es wichtig, die Medienberichterstattung über Frauen zu vergrößern und vervielfachen, aber es ist auch von grundlegender Bedeutung, wie dies geschieht. Es sollte durch ein Vervielfachen der objektiven Berichterstattung passieren und nicht durch die Vergrößerung jenes Teils, der mit Stereotypen und Sexismen beladen ist.

Sport, Medien und Stereotypen sind komplexe Phänomene und es kann nicht die Verantwortung einer einzelnen Behörde sein, die Verfehlungen in diesen Bereichen auf einmal richtigzustellen. Allerdings können die Behörden sehr wohl wichtige politische Beiträge leisten, und strategische Gruppen wie SporttrainerInnen und SportreporterInnen sind von spezieller Bedeutung. Aber dieses Thema betrifft jede/n, denn es handelt sich um eine Frage der Veränderung von Normen und Werten, die tief in unsere Kultur Eingang gefunden haben.

## Länderspezifische Schlussfolgerungen

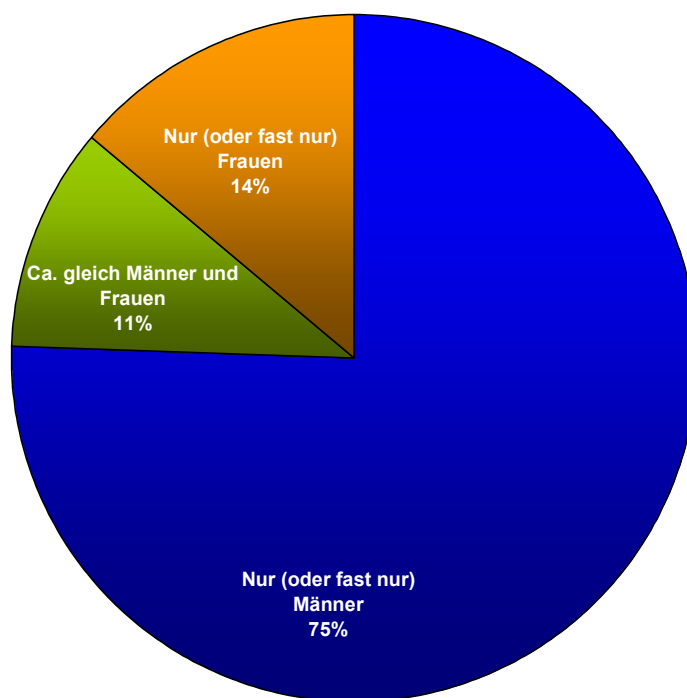
### Zusammenfassung Österreich

Wie in allen anderen Ländern die an der Studie teilnahmen, ist die Verteilung der Sportarten auch in Österreich sehr unausgeglichen. Fußball dominiert die Berichterstattung. Am bemerkenswertesten daran ist definitiv die proportional extrem geringe Anzahl von Beiträgen über Frauenfußball, im Besonderen im Vergleich zu anderen weit verbreiteten Sportarten in diesem Land, wo die Berichte über Frauen einen größeren Anteil einnehmen. Davon abgesehen ist das interessanteste Charakteristikum im österreichischen Sportjournalismus der Umfang, den die Berichterstattung über Schisport einnimmt. Dies spiegelt die Popularität von Wintersport in Österreich wider.



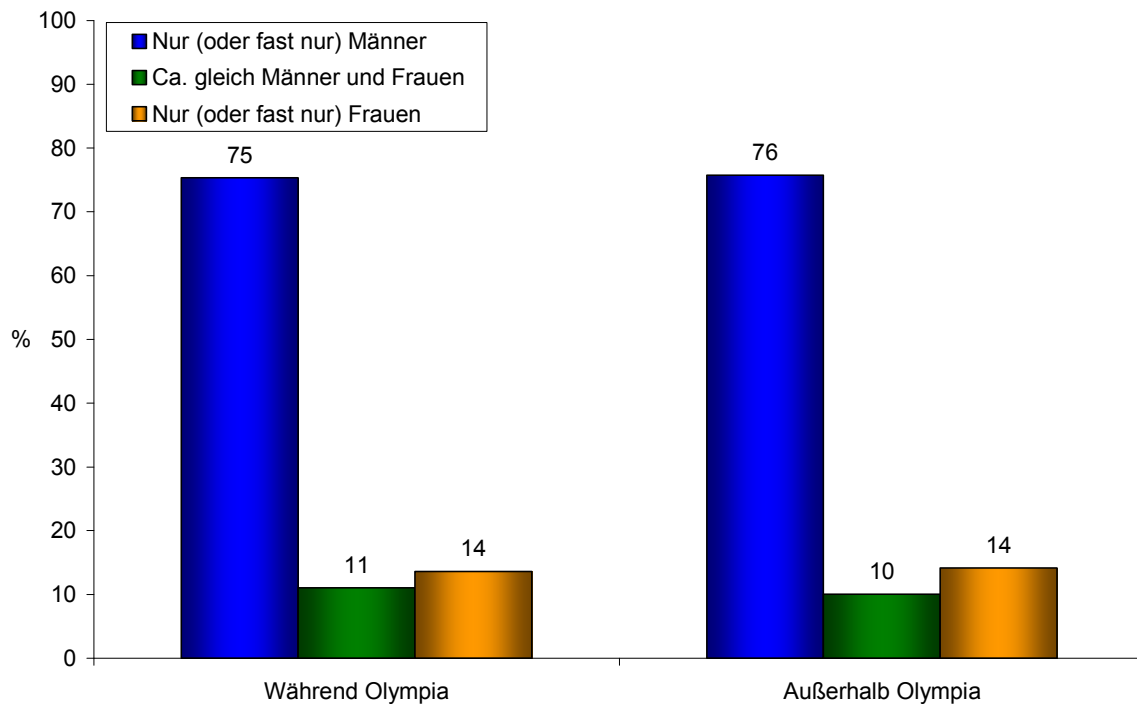
Anzahl der Berichte nach Sportart und Geschlecht.

Die unausgeglichene Sportberichterstattung in Österreich wird am besten durch diese Tortengraphik dargestellt. 75 Prozent aller analysierten Berichte inkludierten nicht eine einzige Frau. Aber so unglaublich dieses Resultat auch scheint, so ist es dem Gesamt-Resultat für alle Länder, die in die Studie involviert waren, doch einigermaßen ähnlich. Geschichten, die nur auf Frauensport und Sportlerinnen in Österreich fokussieren, ohne Einbeziehung von Männern, machen gerade einmal 14 Prozent aus.



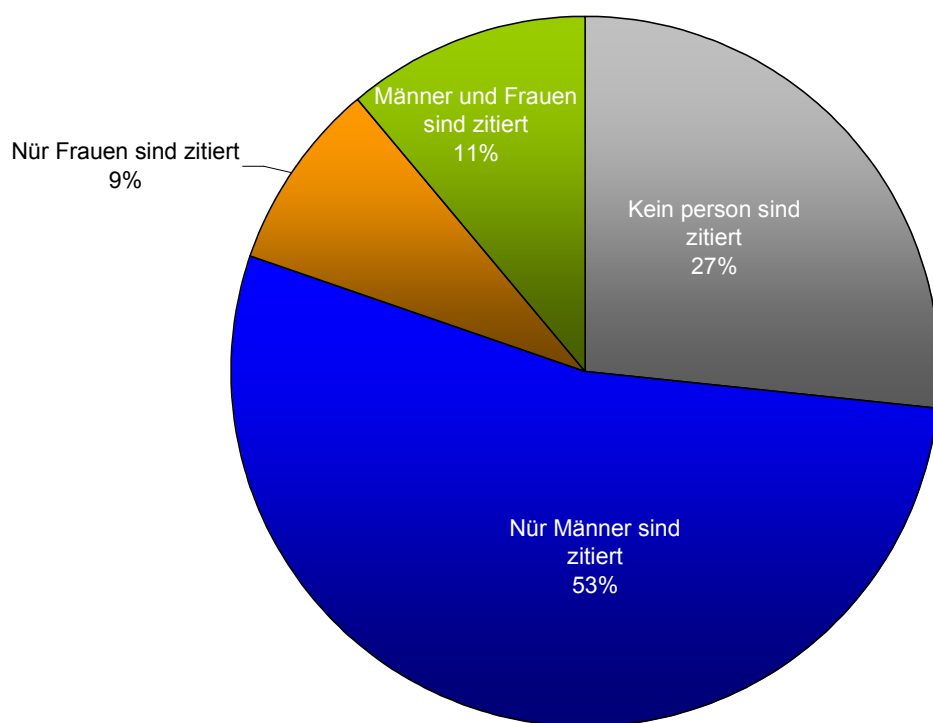
**Geschlechterverteilung in der Sport-Berichterstattung.**

Interessanterweise scheint die Geschlechter-Unausgewogenheit der Sport-Berichterstattung in Österreich sowohl während der Olympischen Spiele als auch außerhalb dieser Periode fast gleich zu sein. Die Gesamtergebnisse zeigten eine größere Anzahl an Berichten über Frauen während der olympischen Periode.



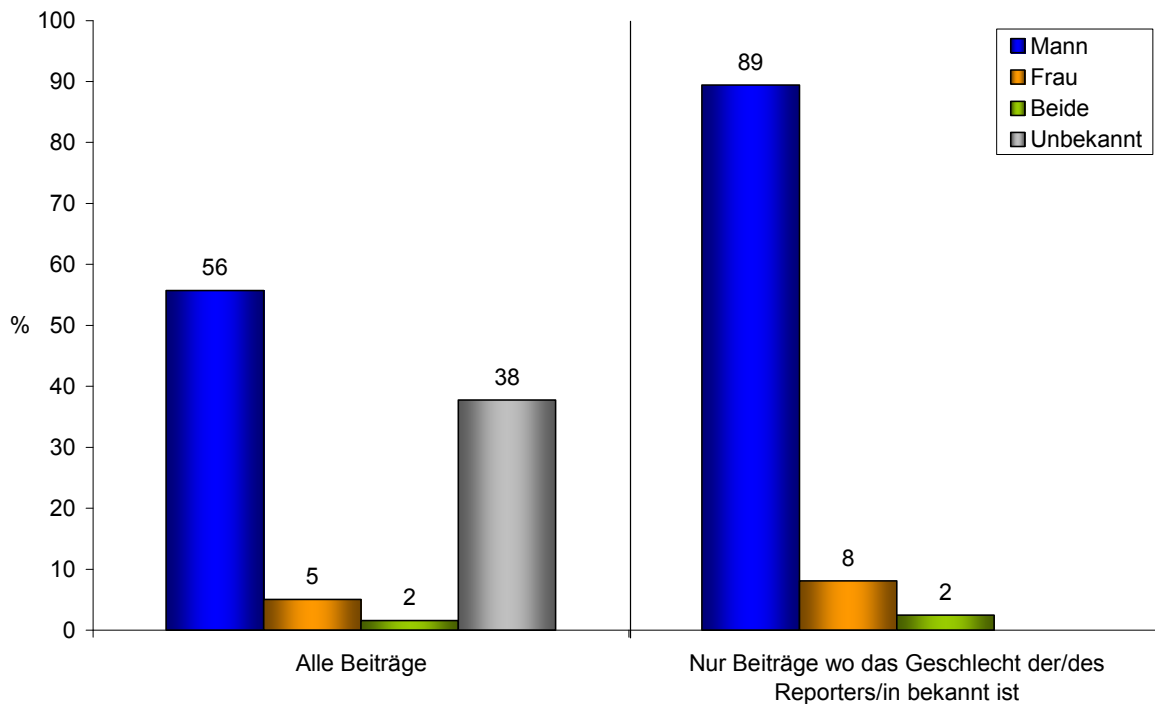
**Aufteilung pro Nachrichten-Beitrag nach Geschlecht und Zeitabschnitt.**

In Österreich werden in fast 60% aller Beiträgen nur Männer als Referenzquellen zitiert. Das ist v.a. bemerkenswert im Vergleich zu der geringen Menge an Artikeln, nur 8 Prozent, in denen nur Frauen zitiert werden. Dies spiegelt den Trend wider, den die allgemeinen Ergebnisse zeigen. Zur Erinnerung: im Tortendiagramm haben wir gesehen, dass ca. 14% aller Geschichten von Frauen handeln. Hier sehen wir aber, dass in nur 8% der Beiträge Frauen auch hauptsächlich zitiert oder auf sie Bezug genommen wird. Dies zeigt, dass Männer auch bei Beiträgen über Frauensport als Referenzquelle herangezogen werden.



**Aufteilung von zitierten Personen oder Referenzquellen nach Geschlecht.**

Die Rolle, die weibliche Sportjournalistinnen in Österreich spielen, ist marginal. Aus allen Beiträgen, wo das Geschlecht der/des Journalisten/in bekannt ist, wurden 89% von Männern geschrieben bzw. gestaltet. Das Geschlecht der/des Journalisten/in ist allerdings nur in sehr wenigen Fällen nicht bekannt. Dies ändert nichts an der Tatsache, dass die Sichtbarkeit von Sportreporterinnen in Österreich praktisch nicht vorhanden ist.



**Geschlecht des/der Reporters/in.**

# ITALIA

## **Introduzione**

I mezzi di comunicazione hanno molta influenza nella costruzione delle immagini e dei ruoli maschili e femminili. La copertura degli eventi sportivi nei media è in larga parte volta a eventi i cui protagonisti sono uomini, quasi a dare un'esplicita conferma dell'opinione tradizionale che gli uomini sono attivi e atletici, mentre le donne invece non lo sono. Per fare solo un esempio dell'importanza della questione, molti studi hanno dimostrato che le ragazze lasciano gli sport organizzati una volta giunte in età adolescenziale, cosa che può essere spiegata, almeno in qualche misura, dall'assenza nel giornalismo sportivo di modelli femminili in cui riconoscersi.

Alla fine del 2004, ricercatori di cinque paesi europei, Austria, Islanda, Lituania, Norvegia e Italia, hanno dato vita al progetto di ricerca *Sports, media and stereotypes – women and men in sports and media (SMS)*. Promosso e organizzato dall'islandese Centre for Gender Equality (Centro per l'eguaglianza di genere), autorità nazionale in Islanda per le questioni delle pari opportunità, il progetto ha ricevuto un considerevole supporto finanziario dalla Unione Europea. L'obiettivo del progetto era duplice: contribuire alla conoscenza delle rappresentazioni di uomini e donne nei media sportivi europei e promuovere il superamento degli stereotipi di genere per ambedue i sessi in questo campo.

Il primo di questi obiettivi – la conoscenza delle rappresentazioni di donne e uomini nei media sportivi – è stato raggiunto attraverso uno studio mirato a rilevare somiglianze e differenze nella rappresentazione di atleti e atlete. Lo studio ha comportato sia l'analisi delle raffigurazioni della partecipazione maschile e femminile allo sport nei media a livello nazionale e/o regionale, in ciascuno dei paesi partecipanti, sia la raccolta di dati sulla partecipazione effettiva allo sport da parte di donne e uomini, sempre in ciascun paese. Si è potuto così offrire un quadro della cultura sportiva in ciascun paese come retroterra del progetto e nello stesso tempo confrontare la realtà mediatica con la realtà dell'informazione statistica.

Il secondo obiettivo – la promozione di un cambiamento nella presentazione stereotipata dei sessi nello sport – è stato perseguito tentando di informare i gruppi più influenti intorno agli effetti sociali delle loro rappresentazioni degli atleti maschi e femmine nel giornalismo sportivo; immagini spesso stereotipate e atte a riprodurre e mantenere lo stereotipo maschile e femminile. Lo scopo è stato raggiunto in tre modi: 1. producendo materiale multimediale, incentrato sulla rappresentazione delle donne e degli uomini nello

sport, utilizzabile nella formazione di giornalisti sportivi, di istruttori e di allenatori, ma anche come strumento di verifica della pratica quotidiana di ciascun operatore in questi ambiti; 2. costituendo un gruppo di esperti per ogni paese, capace di fornire conoscenze e assistenza ai diversi partner nazionali e al comitato internazionale di coordinamento nella fase di sviluppo del materiale multimediale; 3. sviluppando la discussione su questo problema a livello europeo con l'organizzazione di una conferenza internazionale.

Lo studio comparativo SMS ha usato sia metodologie quantitative sia metodologie qualitative al fine di fornire una descrizione della copertura mediatica degli eventi sportivi nei cinque paesi, Austria, Islanda, Lituania, Norvegia e Italia. Nella fase quantitativa della ricerca sono state analizzate e codificate secondo un metodo standard più di 1700 notizie. Dato il differente numero di notizie analizzate e codificate nei diversi paesi, i dati sono stati bilanciati per livellare le differenze numeriche: in altre parole i dati sono stati analizzati come se dai cinque paesi provenisse un eguale numero di notizie. La raccolta di dati si è concentrata in due periodi: alcuni giorni particolari durante i giochi olimpici di Atene nell'estate 2004 e alcuni "normali" week-end durante il primo semestre del 2005 (scelti – almeno per quanto riguarda l'Italia – non del tutto casualmente, ma per la concomitanza di eventi sportivi di rilievo internazionale, mondiali di sci e di tennis, presumibilmente in grado di competere con la "normale" preponderanza del calcio nel giornalismo sportivo). I dati sono stati raccolti sia dalla stampa sia dai mezzi di comunicazione audiovisiva, cioè giornali quotidiani e televisioni. È d'uopo rilevare che, sebbene i dati quantitativi siano stati accuratamente standardizzati, non si tratta di un metodo completamente valutativo, dal momento che alcune informazioni sono state codificate sulla base della valutazione soggettiva di chi ha esaminato le singole notizie.

Tavola A-1 Numero di notizie analizzate, per paese, mezzo e periodo.

#### **Numero di notizie analizzate**

Austria .....	573
Lituania.....	134
Norvegia.....	199
Italia .....	577
Islanda .....	268
<b>Totale .....</b>	<b>1.751</b>

#### **Divise secondo i media**

TV .....	754
Quotidiani.....	997
<b>Totale .....</b>	<b>1.751</b>

#### **Divise secondo i periodi**

Durante il periodo olimpico .....	673
Non nel periodo olimpico.....	1.078
<b>Totale .....</b>	<b>1.751</b>



## ***Risultati significativi***

Lo studio comparativo SMS dimostra che c'è una grande differenza nel modo in cui uomini e donne compaiono nei media.

In primo luogo le notizie che riguardano le donne sono molto meno numerose di quelle che concernono gli uomini. In larga misura le notizie sportive riguardano squadre e gruppi sportivi: gli uomini tendono ad essere largamente visibili in questo tipo di notizie, mentre le donne più spesso emergono nelle notizie relative agli sport individuali.

In secondo luogo c'è una chiara tendenza a mitizzare gli uomini nello sport e a concentrare l'attenzione su di loro non solo come atleti ma come celebrità. Ciò è ben dimostrato dal fatto che i media non solo dedicano quantitativamente maggior attenzione e copertura agli uomini, ma anche dal fatto che l'attenzione nelle notizie sportive riguardante gli uomini è spesso concentrata su tutt'altro che sul gioco. All'opposto le donne non trovano facilmente spazio nei media e, quando ciò avviene, il focus della notizia è sulla loro attività atletica e non sulla loro personalità. Ne segue che gli uomini devono pagare il prezzo della fama: spesso le storie che li riguardano hanno un sostrato negativo, mentre le storie riguardanti le donne hanno al confronto un tono positivo. Risulta d'altro canto evidente che la ragione di una copertura mediatica degli sportivi più critica e allo stesso tempo mitizzante rispetto a quella delle atlete è insita nel fatto che gli sport femminili non sono considerati dai media e dal pubblico così importanti come quelli maschili. In tal modo la copertura mediatica dello sport in Europa riflette e interagisce con l'opinione comune e di fatto rafforza gli stereotipi di genere.

In terzo luogo un gran numero di notizie sportive risultano neutre: non incrementano né combattono gli stereotipi. Tuttavia in un certo numero di storie, specialmente relative allo sport femminile, c'è una tendenza a incrementare gli stereotipi. I ricercatori del SMS hanno rilevato che almeno una su tre delle notizie relative a donne sportive sviluppa in qualche modo gli stereotipi. A questo proposito è indispensabile notare che le connotazioni stereotipiche di una particolare storia o fotografia non sono sempre ovvie e che raramente sono il frutto di una scelta consapevole da parte del reporter o del fotografo. È il contesto che attribuisce questo significato alla notizia, e il contesto è il mondo della comunicazione sportiva, dominato dagli uomini.

Infine ci sono troppo poche donne reporter, il che significa che l'accesso ai media è regolato da norme e valori maschili. Per di più la stessa ripartizione ineguale per sesso tra i reporter tende a rinforzare gli stereotipi.

Nelle loro indicazioni operative i ricercatori di SMS evidenziano tutti questi risultati e suggeriscono che si dovrebbe dar loro una speciale attenzione. Inoltre suggeriscono che una cura speciale deve essere data al modo in cui i media, le autorità sportive e gli atleti stessi si comportano a proposito dell'attribuire alle donne nei media sportivi il posto che esse meritano. La sottorappresentazione delle donne nello sport non dovrebbe

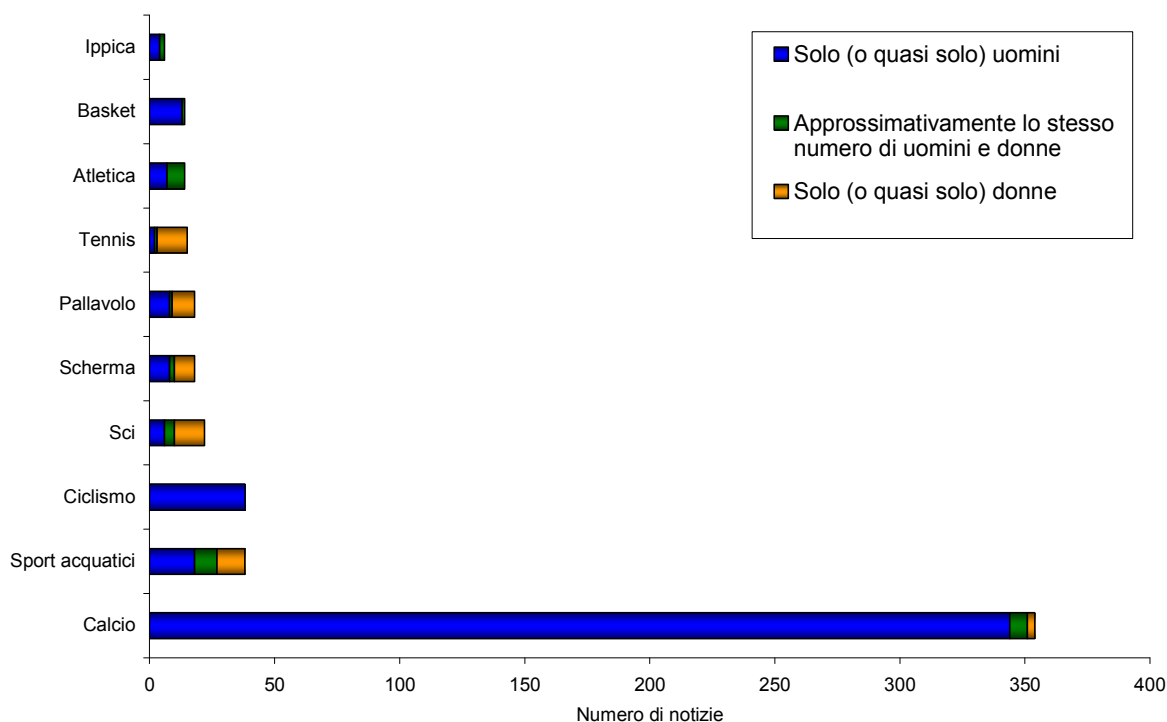
trasformarsi in un “mercato” delle donne come oggetti sessuali o nella riproposta di ruoli determinati dagli stereotipi tradizionali.

In altre parole, è fondamentale ampliare e moltiplicare la copertura mediatica degli sport femminili, ma anche il modo in cui ciò viene fatto è di vitale importanza. Si dovrebbe farlo moltiplicando il giornalismo virtuoso che è praticato oggi, non amplificando quella parte che è intrisa di stereotipi e di sessismo.

Gli sport, i media e gli stereotipi sono fenomeni complessi, e non sta a nessuna singola autorità rettificare tali questioni una volta per tutte. Senza dubbio, però, le autorità possono apportare fondamentali contributi in termini di politiche, e i gruppi strategici come gli allenatori e i giornalisti sportivi sono particolarmente importanti. Ma la cosa riguarda tutti; si tratta di cambiare norme e valori che sono profondamente radicati nella nostra cultura.

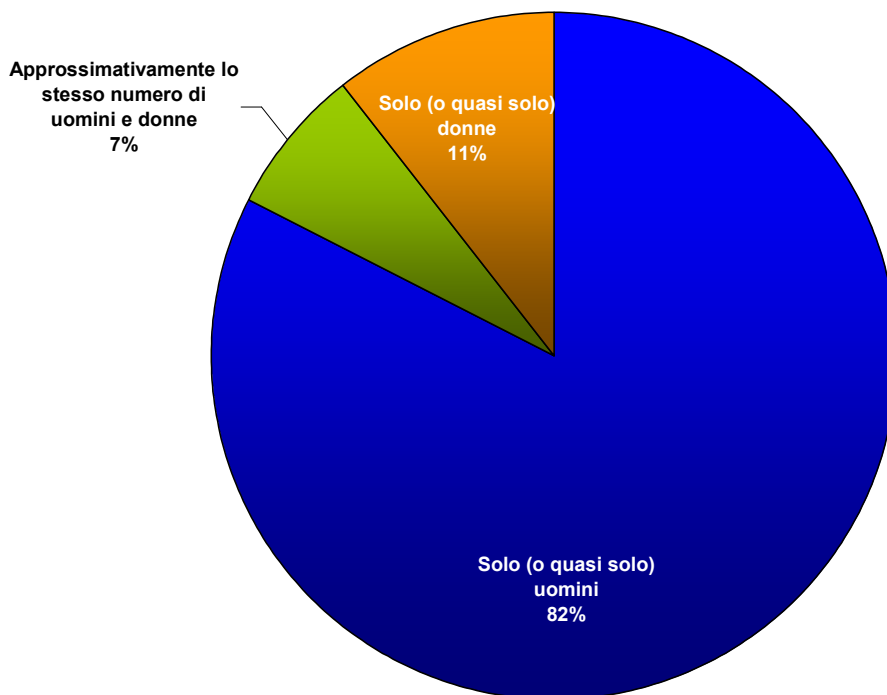
### ***Conclusioni specifiche e riepilogo per l'Italia***

Anche se per la maggior parte degli altri paesi le statistiche hanno riflesso la preponderanza del materiale relativo al calcio nella copertura mediatica, nessuno di essi rivela la sproporzione enorme che esiste in Italia. Il calcio è praticamente il solo sport coperto. Come altrove, la sproporzione e la differente copertura degli eventi femminili fra le notizie riguardanti questo popolarissimo sport è enorme. Se si guarda alla copertura degli altri sport praticati nel paese, le notizie sulle donne giocano un ruolo maggiore.



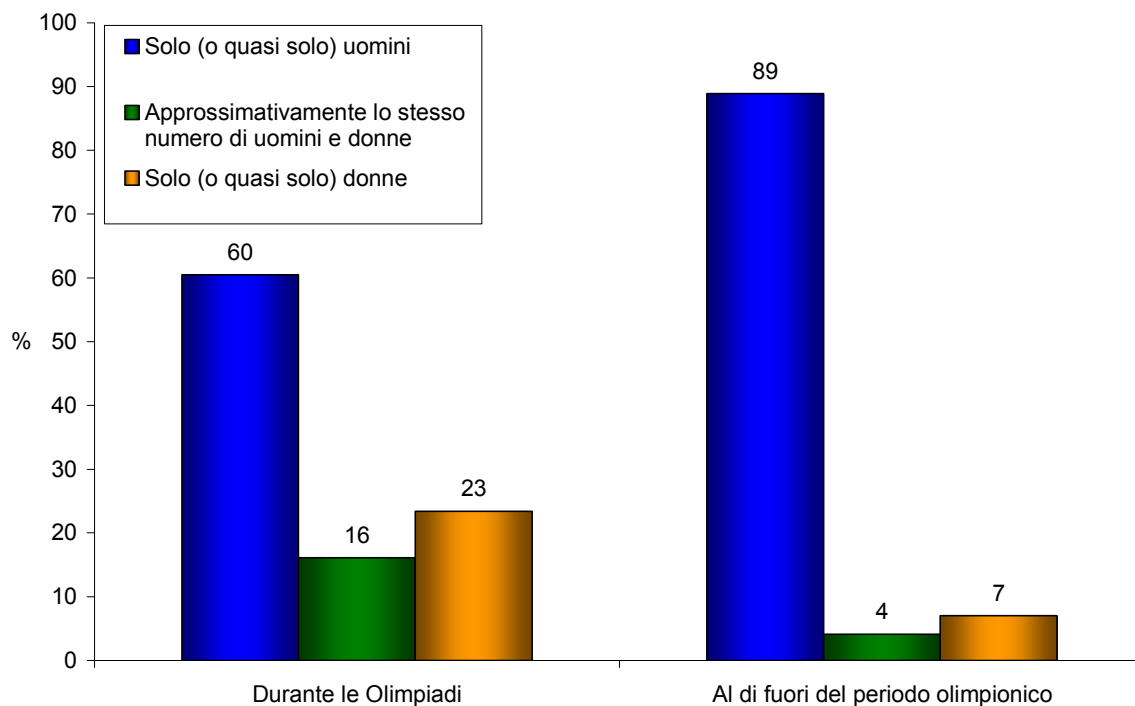
## Numero di notizie per disciplina e genere

La sproporzione nella copertura mediatica dello sport in Italia è rappresentata al meglio nel grafico a torta qui sotto. L'82% di tutte le notizie riportate non riguardava neppure un partecipante donna. Questo risultato impressionante è leggermente superiore alla media dei paesi coinvolti nella ricerca. In Italia le notizie che vertono esclusivamente sulle attività sportive delle donne e sulle atlete femminili, senza alcun coinvolgimento di partecipanti maschi, rappresentano il mero 11%.



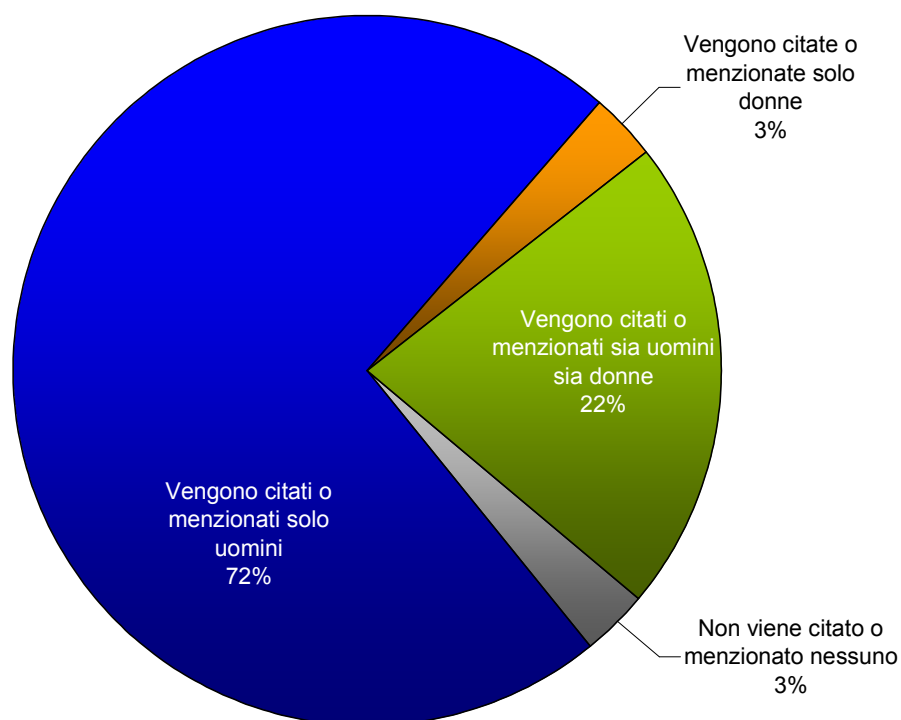
## Proporzione coinvolta in ciascuna notizia per sesso

In Italia l'equilibrio fra i generi delle notizie sportive tende a essere ancora più negativo per gli sport femminili quando non riguarda gli eventi olimpionici. E' un fatto notevole che la copertura delle Olimpiadi tende ad essere eguale sotto questo rispetto. Ciò lascia il resto delle notizie in una sproporzione ancora maggiore di prima, dopo che si sono sottratte dalle statistiche le notizie che riguardano gli sport olimpionici.



### Proporzione coinvolta in ciascuna notizia per sesso e periodo

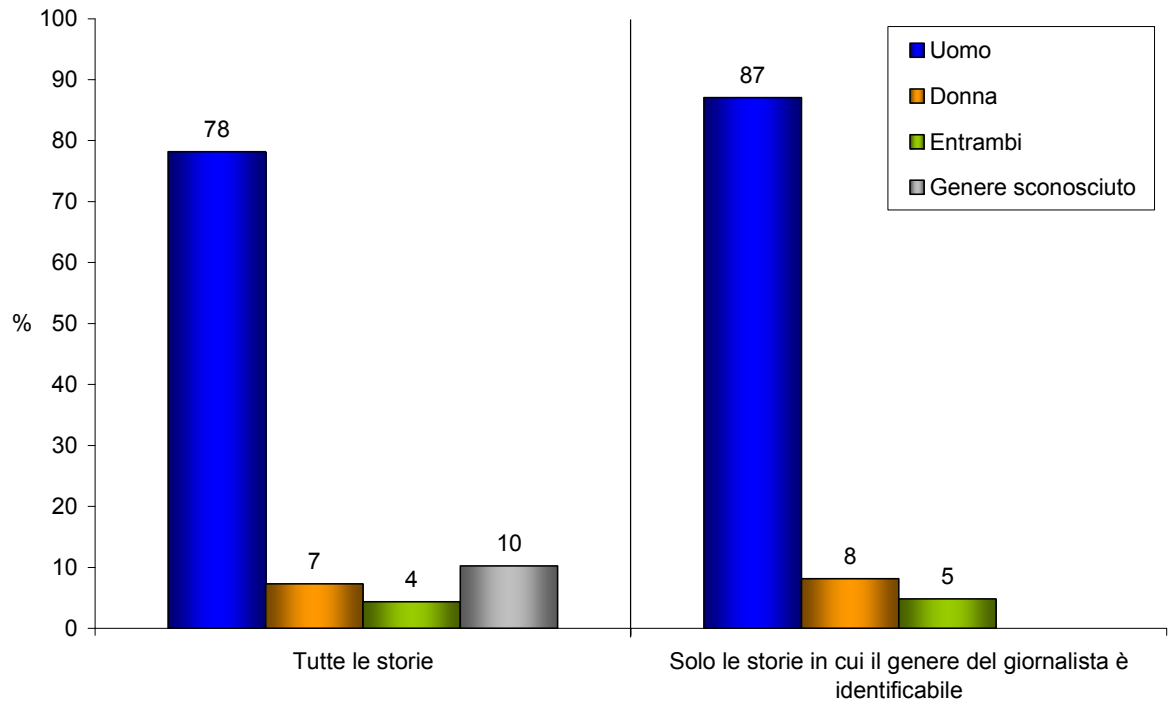
In Italia esiste una tendenza notevolmente maggiore a citare o a riferirsi esclusivamente a uomini che negli altri paesi studiati, e l'Italia differisce dal trend generale sotto questo rispetto. Come mostra il grafico a torta, in più del 70% di tutte le notizie sportive vengono citati o menzionati esclusivamente degli uomini, mentre solo il 3% si riferisce esclusivamente a delle donne. Tuttavia, le notizie in cui vengono citati sia uomini sia donne sono più numerose che in molti degli altri paesi, arrivando al 22% circa del numero totale delle notizie.



### Proporzione di donne e uomini citati o menzionati

In Italia la proporzione di notizie che fanno uso di stereotipi nel rappresentare le atlete è più bassa che negli altri paesi. Le notizie tendono a focalizzarsi più sulle prestazioni atletiche e meno sulla personalità dell'atleta in quanto donna. Questo dato è meno sorprendente di quanto possa apparire a prima vista: quando ad un evento sportivo è concesso poco spazio e poca attenzione, è difficile che i giornalisti possano spendere troppe parole sul carattere e sull'immagine degli atleti coinvolti. Il numero relativamente basso di stereotipi femminili presenti nei media italiani è da mettere direttamente in relazione con la minore copertura degli sport femminili.

Il ruolo giocato dalle donne giornaliste nei media sportivi italiani è marginale. Di tutte le notizie delle quali è noto l'autore, l'87% sono riportate da maschi. Tuttavia, occorre rilevare che in alcuni casi il genere del giornalista è sconosciuto. Ciò non cambia il fatto che la presenza delle giornaliste nei media italiani è scarsa.



Genere del giornalista

## LIETUVA

### **Įžanga**

Žiniasklaida atlieka svarbų vaidmenį, kuriant tiek moterų, tiek vyrų įvaizdžius. Spauda dažniau pateikia informaciją apie vyrų dalyvavimą sporte nei apie moteris ir atspindi tradicinį visuomenės suvokimą, kad vyrai yra aktyvūs ir sportiški, o moterys – ne. Tyrimai parodė, kad merginų polinkis nustoti lankius organizuotą sportą paauglystėje, iš dalies gali būti paaiškintas tuo, jog žiniasklaida nepateikia elgesio modelių, kuriais merginos galėtų sekti.

2004 m. pabaigoje Austrijoje, Islandijoje, Italijoje, Lietuvoje ir Norvegijoje buvo pradėtas įgyvendinti projektas Sportas, žiniasklaida ir stereotipai – moterys ir vyrai sporte ir žiniasklaidoje. Jam vadovavo Lyčių lygybės centras Islandijoje, valstybinė institucija, atsakinga už lyčių lygybės klausimus Islandijoje, kuriai buvo suteikta Europos Sąjungos finansinė parama. Šio projekto tikslas – atkreipti dėmesį į moterų ir vyrų reprezentacijos ypatumus sporto žiniasklaidoje ir paskatinti su abiejų lyčių reprezentacija susijusius pokyčius.

Projekto metu buvo atliktas tyrimas. Siekta nustatyti moterų ir vyrų sportininkų reprezentacijos panašumus ir skirtumus, nagrinėjant įvaizdžius visų šalių žiniasklaidoje ir surenkant bei analizuojant turimus duomenis apie moterų ir vyrų dalyvavimą sporte. Šio tyrimo tikslas – pateikti kiekvienos šalies sporto kultūros vaizdą ir palyginti žiniasklaidoje atspindimą realybę su statistine informacija.

Stereotipus keisti siekiama informuojant įtakingų tikslinių grupių atstovus/atstoves ir suteikiant žinių apie moterų bei vyrų reprezentacijos ypatumų poveikį, kuriant ir palaikant tradicinius stereotipus. Tuo tikslu sukurta internetinė mokymo priemonė, skirta sporto žurnalistų, trenerių, instruktorių informavimui apie moterų bei vyrų reprezentacijos sporte ypatumus ir tuo būdu suteikiant jiems/ joms praktinę priemonę, padedančią gerinti savo kasdienį darbą.

Lyginamoji projekto studija rėmėsi kiekybiniu ir kokybiniu metodu. Atliekant kiekybinį tyrimą buvo surinkta ir išnagrinėta daugiau nei 1700 reportažų. Duomenys buvo suskirstyti į du laikotarpius. Visu pirma, pasirinktos tam tikros 2004 m. Olimpinė žaidynių dienos ir antra, atsitiktinai pasirinktos „eilinės“ dienos 2005 m. pirmoje pusėje. Duomenys buvo renkami iš spaudos ir televizijos. Svarbu pabrėžti, kad kiekybiniai duomenys buvo renkami ir koduojami standartizuotu būdu, tačiau nepavyko išvengti tam

tikro vertybinio šališkumo, nes kai kurios informacijos dešifravimas buvo grindžiamas subjektyviu žiniasklaida nagrinėjusios/ nagrinėjusio asmens vertinimu.

#### **Nagrinėtų pasakojimų skaičius**

Austrija .....	573
Lietuva.....	134
Norvegija .....	199
Italija .....	577
Islandija .....	268
Viso .....	1.751

#### **Žiniasklaidos pasiskirstymas**

TV.....	754
Laikraščiai .....	997
Viso .....	1.751

#### **Skirtingi laikotarpiai**

Olimpinės žaidynės.....	673
Ne olimpinis laikotarpis .....	1.078
Viso .....	1.751

## ***Pagrindinės išvados***

Atliktas tyrimas parodė, kad yra didelis skirtumas tarp to kaip moterys ir vyrai sportininkai reprezentuojami žiniasklaidoje.

Moteris skirtų reportažų yra žymiai mažiau, nei vyrams. Didelė dalis pasakojimų skirti komandiniam sportui, kur vyrai yra labai ryškiai matomi, tuo tarpu moterys dažniau minimos reportažuose apie individualaus sporto šakas.

1. Aiškiai pastebima tendencija garbinti vyrus sportininkus bei domėtis jais ir kaip sportininkais, ir tiesiog kaip įžymybėmis. Tai pasireiškia ne tik tuo, kad žiniasklaida apie juos pateikia kur kas daugiau informacijos, bet ir tuo, kad naujienos apie vyrų sportą koncentruojasi į dalykus, nesusijusius su varžybomis. Tuo tarpu moterims kur kas sunkiau patekti į žiniasklaidos akiratį, o kai tai įvyksta, apie jas kalbama išimtinai varžybų kontekste. Tačiau vyrai už šlovę sumoka savo kainą – žiniasklaidoje pastebima nemažai neigiamų reportažų apie vyrus sportininkus, ko moterys išvengia. Tačiau peršasi išvada, jog kritiškesnis vyrų sporto vertinimas ir tuo pačiu didesnis jo garbinimas, lyginant su moterimis, yra susijęs su tuo, kad moterų sporto nei žiniasklaida nei visuomenė nelaiko tokiu svarbiu kaip vyrų. Taigi galima teigti, jog Europoje sporto reprezentacijos atspindi visuomenėje vyraujančias nuostatas ir iš esmės sustiprina tradicinius lyčių stereotipus.
2. Bendrai paėmus sporto naujienos yra gana neutralios lyčių požiūriu, jos nei sustiprina, nei paneigia stereotipus. Tačiau kai kuriuose reportažuose – ypač skirtuose moterims – yra polinkis stiprinti egzistuojančius stereotipus. Projekto metų atliktas tyrimas atskleidė, kad beveik kas trečias pasakojimas apie moteris tam tikru būdu sustiprina stereotipus. Ypač svarbu paminėti, kad konkretaus straipsnio



ar įvaizdžio stereotipinės prasmės ne visuomet yra akivaizdžios, jos retai būna sąmoningo žurnalistų ar fotografų sprendimo rezultatas. Tokio pobūdžio prasmės suteikia būtent kontekstas, kuriame dominuoja vyrai.

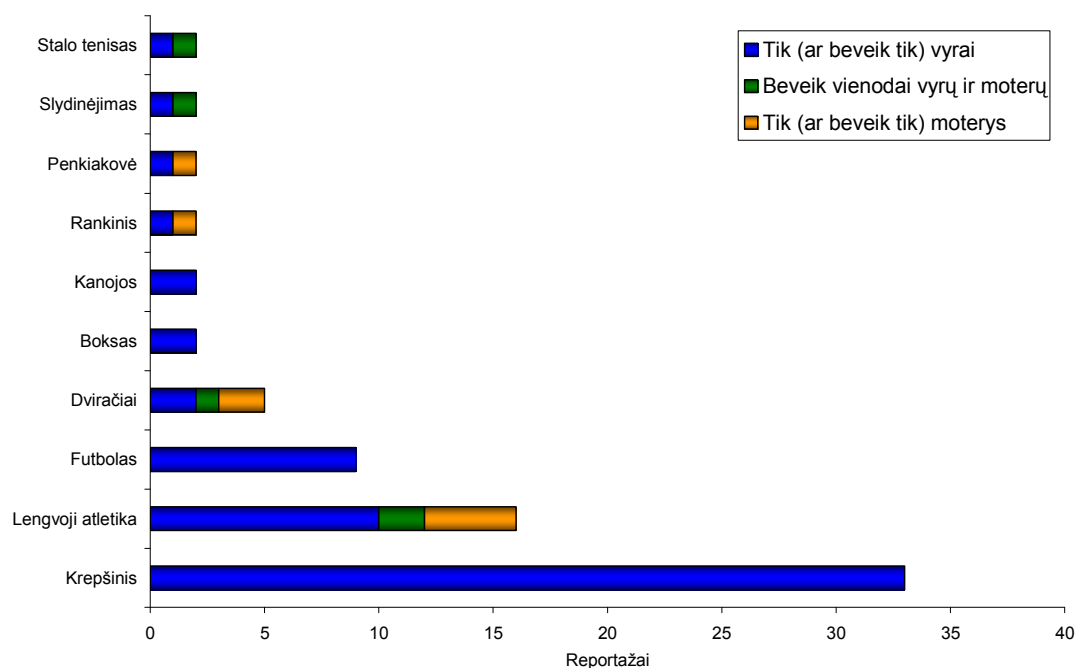
3. Yra labai mažai sporto žurnalisčių moterų, o tai reiškia, kad žiniasklaida prisodrinama vyriškomis normomis bei vertybėmis. O nevienodas pasiskirstymas lyčių požiūriu tarp žurnalistų pats savaime skatina tradicinius stereotipus.

Svarbu atkreipti dėmesį į minėtus faktus. Būtina stebėti, koku būdu žiniasklaida, sporto valdžios atstovai ir pačios sportininkės apibrėžia savo vietą sporte. Nepakankamai skaitlinga jų reprezentacija žiniasklaidoje neturėtų būti gerinama „parduodant moteris“ kaip seksualinius objektus ar skiriant joms tradiciniais stereotipais apribotus vaidmenis.

Svarbu, kad informacijos apie moterų sportą būtų kuo daugiau. Tačiau svarbu taip pat, koku būdu ji pateikiama. Būtina rengti profesionalius, aukštos kokybės reportažus ir išvengti atgyvenusių stereotipų bei moterų menkinimo.

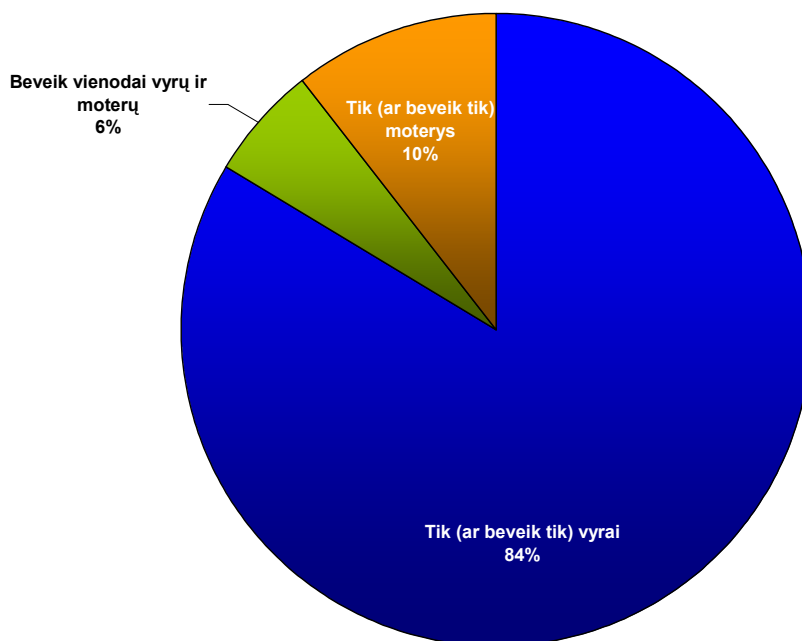
## Trumpos išvados apie Lietuvą

Įvairių sporto šakų reprezentacija Lietuvos žiniasklaidoje yra labai netolygi. Tačiau priešingai nei kitose šalyse, futbolas jos žiniasklaidoje nedominuoja. Daugiausiai dėmesio sulaukia krepšinis. Ir tai suprantama, nes jis yra populiariausia sporto šaka, kuriai neprilygsta joks kitas sportas. Vienos sporto šakos dominavimas nėra kažkuo išskirtinis, ką rodo ir kitų šalių pavyzdžiai. Kur kas svarbiau yra tai, jog moterų sportinė veikla nušviečiama neadekvačiai. Tiriamuoju laikotarpiu Lietuvos žiniasklaidoje nebuvo užregistruotas nei vienas reportažas apie moterų krepšinį.



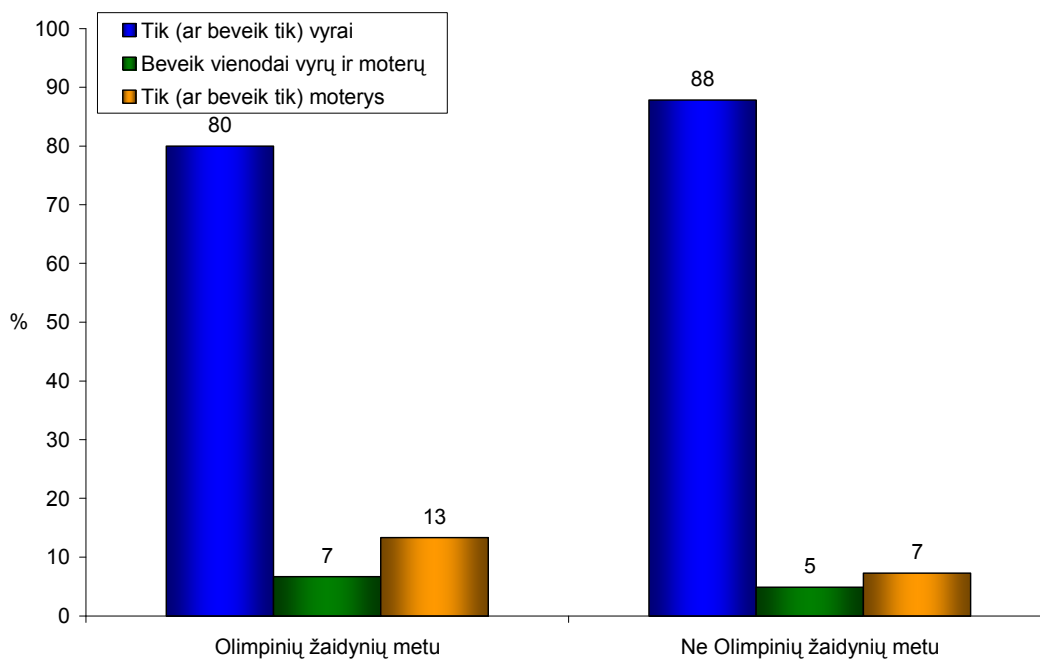
### Reportažų skaičius pagal sporto šakas ir lytis.

Netolygią sporto šakų reprezentaciją geriausiai atspindi pateiktas grafikas. 84 proc. visų reportažų nėra paminėta nei viena moteris. Šie duomenys išties pribloškia, tačiau panašūs jie yra ir kitose šalyse. Pasakojimai išskirtinai tik apie moteris sportininkes Austrijoje sudaro 10 proc. Ir tai yra žemiausias rezultatas lyginant visas tyrime dalyvavusias šalis.



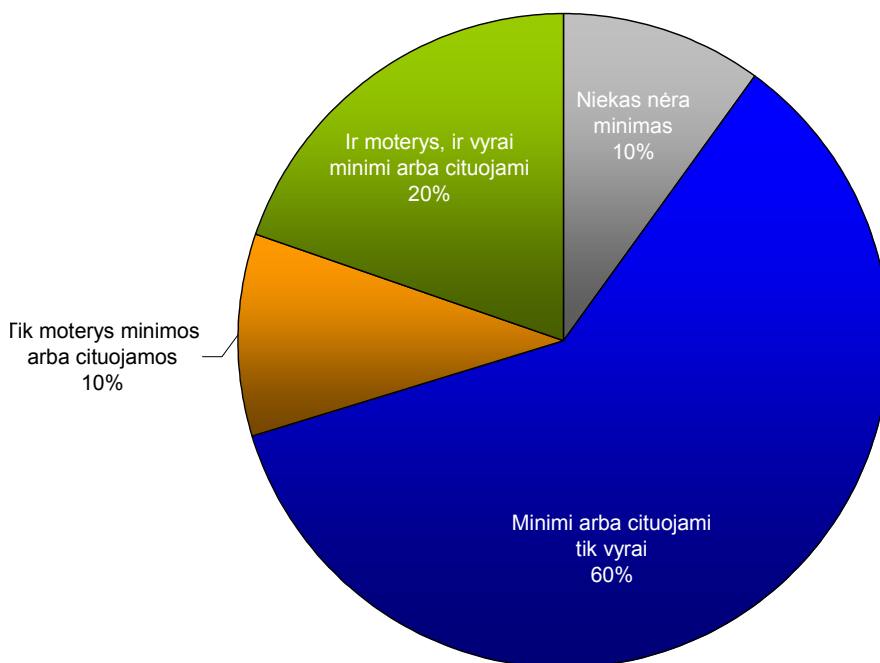
### Lyčių pasiskirstymas reportažuose.

Lietuvoje sporto reportažuose lyčių balansas yra dar prastesnis. Yra žinoma, jog reportažai iš Olimpinių žaidynių lyčių požiūriu yra labiau subalansuoti. Todėl pašalinę iš apskaitos olimpinio laikotarpio duomenis, turėsime dar prastesnius moterų reprezentacijos rezultatus.



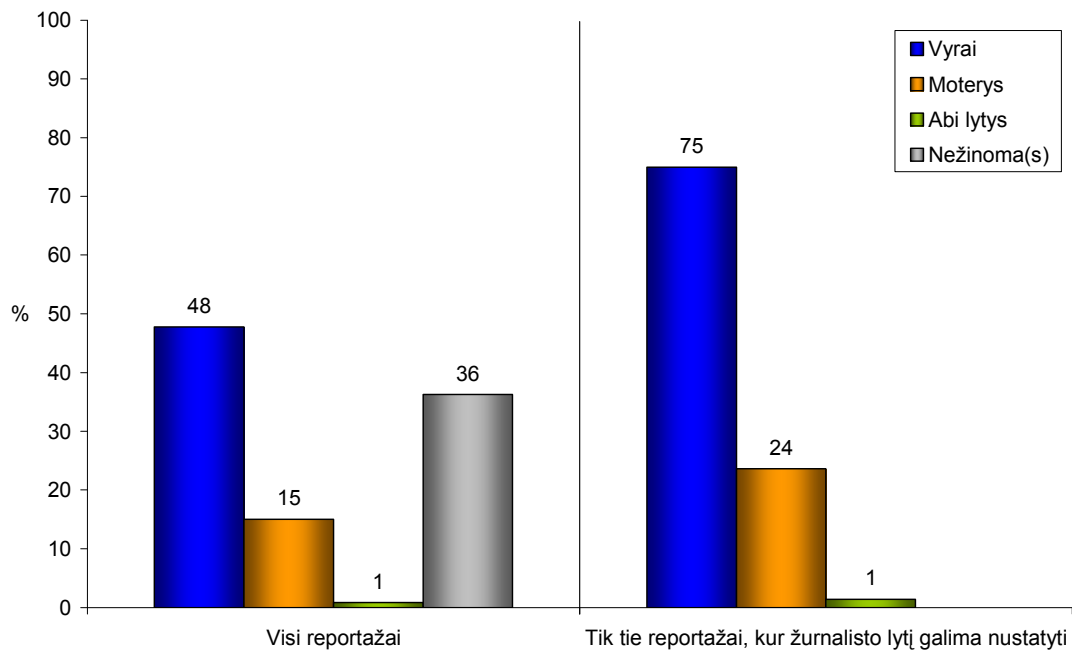
### Reportažų pasiskirstymas pagal lytis ir laikotarpius.

Lietuvoje kaip kitose šalyse žurnalistai yra linkę minėti ir cituoti vyrus. Šiuo požiūriu Lietuva atitinka bendrąsias Europos tendencijas. Matome, kad 60 proc. visų istorijų yra minimi arba cituojami vyrai ir tik 10 proc. reportažų – moterys. 16 proc. reportažų minimi ir cituojami tiek moterys, tiek vyrai.



### Citavimų ir nuorodų pasiskirstymas pagal lytis.

Svarbu paminėti, kad Lietuvoje moterys sporto žurnalistės yra pastebimesnės nei kitose šalyse. Moterys parengė 24 proc. visų reportažų, kuriuose minima autoriaus pavardė. Tai yra gana didelis skaičius, lyginant su kitomis šalimis. Tačiau faktas, jog vyrai sudaro 75 proc. visų reportažų rengėjų, parodo vyraujančias tendencijas.



### Žurnalistai pagal lytį.

# NORGE

## *Innledning*

Menn har dominert og dominerer fortsatt i det offentlige rom. Det kan knyttes til menns posisjoner i det norske samfunn. De utgjør i snittet 84 % av styremedlemmene i næringslivets selskaper, har 63 % av Stortingetsrepresentantene og kvinner tjener i snittet 85 % av hva menn gjør. Kilder i nyhetsmediene er først og fremst fra det økonomiske, sosiale og kulturelle lederskiktet, inkludert sentrale idrettsledere og trenere i norsk organisert idrett. Dette er svært mannsdominert. Idrett i mediene er blitt en sentral strategi for å øke antall lesere, lyttere og seere. Slik sett er sporten et viktig utgangspunkt for å skape og gjenskape kvinne- og mannsbilder. Her er mannsidretten indirekte symbol på idretten, mens kvinnelige utøvere ofte blir produsert som det annet kjønn. Selv om mannsfotball dominerer stort, kan for eksempel kvinnehåndball få størst dekning under store mesterskap når landslaget vinner de edleste medaljene.

Prosjektet "Sport, media and stereotypes" gikk i 15 måneder, fra november 2004 til februar 2005 med partnere fra Island, Italia, Litauen, Norge og Østerrike etter en søknad til EU fra Senter for Likestilling på Island. Formålet var å bidra til større kunnskap om mediering av kvinner og menn på sporten og å starte en debatt om hvordan endre på kjønnsstereotypene.

Prosjektet er todelt. Først, å samle inn og analysere dekningen av kvinner og menn i minst to landsdekkende aviser, samt fra en eller flere TV-stasjoner. I Norge er disse inkludert: Aftenposten, VG, Telemarksavisa og NRK1 og TV2. Utgangspunkt for oss var her to fortellinger fra OL-04, der Norge fikk gull. Vi valgte landsdekkende aviser (Aftenposten og VG) som presentere Gunn Rita Dahle (forventet resultat) og Andreas Thorkildsen (uventet resultat) etter seirene. All sport ble analysert disse to dagene. Dessuten ble tilsvarende for NRK1s OL-sendinger studert. I tillegg inkluderte vi medieringen av Norges mesterskap (NM) de første tre månedene i 2005. Siden dekningen av NM i bl.a. snowboard, Telemark, volleyball og innendørs bandy var meget dårlig, valgte vi NM i langrenn. Her inkluderte vi Aftenposten og Telemarksavisa. Deretter var målet å informere viktige målgrupper om resultatene som idrettsledere, trenere og sportsjournalister. For det første, ved å lage et multi-media materiale som kunne bidra til refleksjon. For det andre, å opprette nasjonale ekspertgrupper i hver av de fem landene. I Norge ble en kvinnelig journalist i Aftenposten med og nestleder i styret i Norge Idrettsforbund. Sist, å arrangere en europeisk konferanse om temaet "Idrett og kjønn i mediene".

Både kvalitative og kvantitative metoder er nyttet med utgangspunkt i totalt 1.751 artikler, hvorav 199 er norske. Totalt er fortellingene fordelt på 754 i TV og 997 i aviser, mens 637 er knyttet til OL og 1.078 er fra ikke-olympiske begivenheter. Antall spaltecentimeter er også analysert. Siden resultatene om kjønnsdekningen var den samme for de to måle-enhetene, er kun antall artikler inkludert i figurene som presenteres seinere. Selv om utvalget ikke er statistisk representative for medieinnslagene i de fem landene, viser resultatene viktige tendenser som stemmer overens med annen forskning.

## **Generelle resultater**

Ikke uventet fant vi store forskjeller i mediering av kvinner og menn.

Det var for det første langt færre artikler og fortellinger om kvinner. Mesteparten var fra lagidretter. Her er menn ofte meget synlige, mens kvinner får bedre dekning i individuelle idretter. For det andre, er det en klar tendens til å produsere mannlige utøvere som idrettsidoler. Leserne og seerer blir bedre kjent med hva disse gjør i privatlivet, mens kvinnenens mer sparsomme omtale dreier seg stort sett om idrett. Det betyr at mannlige utøvere betaler prisen for å være berømt med større innslag av negativt ladde fortellinger. Kvinner får i våre utvalg mindre kritikk, kanskje fordi de forstås som mindre viktige for konstruksjon av idrettens nasjonale identiteter i de fem landene. Med utgangspunkt i det som er nevnt her bidrar fortellingene i dette utvalget altså til å gjenspeile visse tradisjonelle kjønnsstereotyper.

For det tredje, alt i alt bidrar fortellingene totalt sett verken til å forsterke eller å motarbeide generelle stereotyper om idrettsutøvere. Dette kan dels knyttes til det faktum at vi valgte utøverne som lyktes i et OL og at innslagene fra de nasjonale mesterskap fokuserte på vinnere. Vi fant også en tendens til stereotypisering av kvinnene i en av tre innslag. Her er det viktig å få med at produksjon av stereotyper ikke forstås som en bevisst handling. Journalister og fotografer gjør bare det de pleier å gjøre i en hektisk hverdag. Disse er innvevd i en maskulin kultur med maskuline tradisjoner.

For det fjerde, det er meget få kvinnelige sportsjournalister. Døråpnerne i medie verden; treenigheten mellom redaktører og journalister, sentrale styremedlemmer/ trenere i organisert idrett og sponsorer kan forstås som et maskulint eksponeringsnettverk. I deres logikker er få kvinner interessante og ”gode nok”, selv om enkelte kvinnelige utøvere blir forstått som verdige representanter for idretten.

Vi mener at det ikke er tilstrekkelig bare å fokusere på media. Hele treenigheten må i fokus, i tillegg til de individuelle utøverne. I Norge har vi erfaring om at enkelte av disse kan bidra til å bestemme hva slags bilder som skal tas, når de først er interessante for media. Idrettene har her et stort ansvar i å skolere spesielt de unge utøverne, slik at de ikke lar seg forføre til å stille opp på bilder de vil komme til å angre på seinere. Vi tenker her på den unge kvinnelige langrennsløperen (junior) som lot seg avbilde naken i mykpornobladet ”Lek” senhøsten 2004.

Det er altså viktig å få i gang en debatt om medieringen av idrettskvinner og menn i en global verden. Hvorfor er kvinner mer uinteressante enn menn? Bør det være slik? Hvis idrettskvinner skal få bedre dekning, er det da bare å kle av seg? Slik sett er sporten et av mange felter med fokus på tabloidisering; intimitet, personifisering, intensitet, drama og forenkling i en medie verden der aksjeutbyttet i mediekonsernene i større grad enn tidligere går til aksjeeierne enn til det journalistiske arbeidet.

## ***Oppsummering av de norske resultatene***

Det er store forskjeller i mediering av kvinner og menn i Norge. Ikke uventet fikk mannsfotball størst dekning med nesten 45 % av totalen, mens fotball for kvinner bare fikk en %. En av flere grunner dette var at det norske kvinnelandslaget ikke deltok i OL-04 i motsetning til 2000, da de vant. Medieringen i vårt utvalg speiler altså ikke det faktum at fotball er den største idretten blant kvinner i Norge. Spesielt for Norge i dette prosjektet er at hele fem idretter er relativt godt dekket. Det skyldes utvalget. Her kom friidrett og ski sterkt med, fordi Thorkildsen fra OL og NM i langrenn ble valgt ut. I tillegg til fotball var 35 % av fortellingene om friidrett, 20 % håndball og 16 % ski. At mannshåndballen ble langt mer synlig enn kvinnehåndball, skyldes at VM i håndball for menn gikk i samme tidsrom som NM i langrenn. For første gang i historien, ble det norske herrelandslaget globale helter.

### Andel kvinnelige og mannlige innslag

Hele 80 % av all mediering var mannsidrett, selv om utvalgene var fra OL og NM i idretter der begge kjønn er med. Kvinneidrett utgjorde 11 %. Mediering av lagidrett for kvinner har ofte med et par setninger om den mannlige treneren. Derfor har vår islandske statistikkgruppe laget en kategori "Only (or almost only) women". Den utgjorde altså 11% av totalen uavhengig om det var fra OL eller NM på ski. Det er samme tall som en representativ undersøkelse om VG-sporten i 2001 av Bernt Ove Flekke.

### Andel kvinnelige og mannlige kilder

Her følger Norge et tradisjonelt europeisk mønster. Nesten 60 % av kildene er mannlige, mot bare 8 % kvinnelige, mens 11% har med begge kjønn og 21 % av innslagene ikke til noen kilder. Kvinnelige hovedkilder utgjorde 12 % av totalen på sporten i ovennevnte undersøkelse.

### Andel kvinnelige og mannlige opphav til innslagene

Kvinnelige journalister spiller her en marginal rolle. Hele 82 % av opphavene er mannlige journalister, mens 15 % var produsert av kvinner og 4 av begge kjønn. Det er

her viktig å få frem at bare innslag signert av journalister er med her. I ovennevnte undersøkelse fra 2001 utgjorde kvinnelige opphav bare 5 % av totalen, mot 95% mannlige.

#### Debatt om klesdrakten i sandvolleyball under OL-04

Kun Norge hadde en debatt om kvinnenens drakter i sandvolleyball i TV med derpå følgende oppslag i de største avisene (Aftenposten, VG og Dagbladet). En analyse fra denne er med i den skriftlige rapporten fra prosjektet.

### ***Resultatene sett i relasjon til andre norske og skandinaviske undersøkelser***

Resultatene fra prosjektet "Sport, media and stereotypes" stemmer godt overens med tendenser fra andre undersøkelser. Mannsfotball er i fokus. Denne idretten utgjorde vel 50 % av totalen i ni ledende norske, svenske og danske aviser fra april 2001 til august 2002 (Monday Morning, 2002). Her dekket kvinneidretten 8 %. Videre, selv om det norske herrelandslaget i fotball ikke kvalifiserte seg til det europeiske mesterskapet (EM) i 2004, dominerte denne idretten VG under mesterskapet, mens kvinneidretten bare var på 4 %. (Lippe, von der, 2004). Når norske kvinner vinner mesterskap får de god dekning. Det gjorde det norske håndballandslaget i EM i 1998 og i VM i 2004. Da dominerte nyheter og reportasjer fra konkurransen idrettsstoffet i VG og Dagbladet. Vi ser også en tendens til intimisering av norske idrettsidoler. Dette gjelder først og fremst mannlige fotballspillere, som er aktive på andre europeiske lag og pene kvinnelige utøvere i ski og håndball (Lippe, von der, 2006). Dette er en tendens som nok vil øke som et ledd i tabloidiseringsprosesser og høye krav til aksjeutbytte i en medie verden der sporten kan forstås som en maskulin eksponeringsindustri.



# ÍSLAND

## **Inngangur**

Fjölmiðlar eiga stóran þátt í ímyndasköpun bæði kvenna og karla. Karlar eru á margan hátt ráðandi í íþróttaumfjöllun fjölmiðla meðal annars sem íþróttaiðkendur, álitsgjafar og íþróttافرéttamenn. Þessi veruleiki endurspeglast einnig í þeirri almennu trú að karlar séu virkir gerendur í íþróttum en konur aftur á móti sitji hjá á þessu sviði. Það má ljóst vera að rannsóknir á þessum kynjaða veruleika íþróttahéimsins eru sérstaklega mikilvægar og má þar nefna þá staðreynd að stúlkur hætta oft á tíðum að stunda skipulagðar íþróttir þegar þær ná unglingsaldri en það sama gildir ekki um karlkyns jafnaldrá þeirra. Þetta hefur að hluta verið rakið til skorts á kvenkyns fyrirmyndum í íþróttaumfjöllun fjölmiðla.

Samvinna Austurríkis, Litháens, Noregs, Ítalíu og Íslands í verkefninu *Íþróttir, fjölmiðlar og staðalmyndir – konur og karlar í íþróttum og fjölmiðlum* (e. *Sports, media and stereotypes – women and men in sports and media* (SMS) hófst við lok árs 2004. Verkefnisstjórn var í höndum Jafnréttisstofu en Evrópusambandið fjármagnaði verkefnið að mestu. Markmið verkefnisins var tvíþætt, annars vegar að skapa þekkingu á hluti og hlutverkum karla og kvenna í íþróttافرéttum í Evrópu og hinsvegar að finna leiðir til að brjóta upp staðalmyndir kynjanna í tengslum við íþróttir.

Fyrsta skrefið í átt að þessu marki var rannsókn sem gerð var í þeim tilgangi að greina bæði ólíkar og líkar, birtingarmyndir kynjanna í íþróttافرéttum. Hlutverk og ímyndir hvors kyns voru athuguð í alþjóðlegum og innlendum íþróttافرéttum í hverju þáttökulandanna og gögnum um almenna íþróttáttöku karla og kvenna safnað. Þannig var dregin upp mynd af íþróttamenningu hvers lands en þær upplýsingar voru taldar mikilvægar við túlkun þeirra gagna sem safnað var. Segja má að þessu marki hafi verið náð og liggja niðurstöður úr rannsóknarhluta verkefnisins nú fyrir.

Nú liggur fyrir að finna leiðir til að nýta, meðal annars, þá þekkingu sem aflað hefur verið í rannsókninni til brjóta upp það mynstur ímynda sem einkennir hvort kyn í íþróttaumfjöllun. Því markmiði verður náð með fræðslu um áhrif íþróttaumfjöllunar á konur og karla og staðalmyndir kynjanna til þeirra hópa samfélagsins sem líklegir eru til áhrifa.

Fræðslan fer fram á þrens konar hátt. Í fyrsta lagi með gerð margmiðlunarefnis sem sérstaklega er beint að íþróttافرéttamönnum og þjálfurum. Þær upplýsingar taka á ýmsum þáttum er varða hlut karla og kvenna í íþróttافرéttum og gefur fréttamönnum og þjálfurum tækifæri til að skoða vinnu sína í kynjafræðilegu ljósi. Í öðru lagi hefur verið

komið á fót sérfræðingahóp sem hefur haft það hlutverk að vera ráðgefandi í þeirri vinnu sem fram hefur farið og aðstoða við þróun margmiðlunarefnisins. Í þriðja lagi verður haldin fjölþjóðleg ráðstefna á vegum verkefnisins þar sem niðurstöður rannsóknarinnar ásamt margmiðlunarefninu verða kynnt ásamt því að efnt verður til umræðna um málefni karla og kvenna í íþróttum.

Í rannsókninni var notast við bæði megindlegar og eigindlegar aðferðir við athugun á íþróttufréttum í löndunum fimm, Austurríki, Ítalíu, Litháen, Noregi og Íslandi. Í megindlega þætti verkefnisins voru skráðar samræmdar upplýsingar um rúmlega 1.700 fréttir. Vegna ólíks fjölda fréttu frá löndunum fimm (sjá töflu A-1) var fjöldi fréttu frá hverju landi veginn eftir því sem við átti þannig að við skoðun á heildarniðurstöðum er eins og hvert land eigi um 20% fréttu í gagnagrunninum. Þannig eru niðurstöðurnar miðaðar við að öll löndin hafi sama vægi. Tvö nokkuð ólík tímabil voru rannsökuð. Annars vegar er um að ræða nokkra daga er sumarólympíuleikarnir 2004 fóru fram og hinsvegar nokkra daga, fyrri part árs 2005, er valdir voru þannig í hverju landi að engin ein íþróttagrein væri algerlega ráðandi í fréttuumfjöllun. Í úrtakinu voru bæði fréttir úr dagblöðum og sjónvarpi. Hafa ber í huga að þó fréttirnar hafi verið skráðar á staðlaðan hátt er hluti þessara gagna að nokkru leiti háður huglægu mati rannsækenda.

Tafla A-1. Fjöldi greindra fréttu eftir landi, miðli og tímabili.

#### **Fjöldi fréttu**

Austurríki .....	573
Litháen .....	134
Noregur .....	199
Ítalía .....	577
Ísland.....	268
<b>Samtals .....</b>	<b>1.751</b>

#### **Miðill**

Sjónvarp .....	754
Dagblað .....	997
<b>Samtals .....</b>	<b>1.751</b>

#### **Skipting eftir tímabilum**

Innan Ólympíu-tímabils .....	673
Útan Ólympíu-tímabils .....	1.078
<b>Samtals .....</b>	<b>1.751</b>

## **Helstu niðurstöður**

Niðurstöður rannsóknarinnar þegar litið er á löndin fimm sýna að karlar og konur birtast á mjög ólíkan hátt í íþróttufréttum.

Í fyrsta lagi birtast konur mun sjaldnar en karlar í íþróttufréttum. Jafnframt má í því sambandi benda á að mikill meirihluti fréttanna fjallar um hópíþróttir (einkum knattspyrnu) en þar eru karlar einmitt mjög sýnilegir. Konur eru aftur á móti sýnilegri í fréttum sem fjalla um einstaklingsíþróttir.

Í öðru lagi virðist vera tilhneiging til að gera karlmenn í íþróttum að hetjum og áherslan í fréttum um karlmenn í íþróttum er oft á frægð þeirra og þar með einkalíf. Áherslan er því sjaldnar á íþróttina sjálfa í fréttum sem fjalla um karlmenn. Konur virðast aftur á móti ekki hafa sama aðgang og karlmenn að fjölmiðlum en þegar fréttir fjalla um konur í íþróttum er áherslan oftari á íþróttina sjálfa en ekki á einkalíf kvennanna þar sem þær eru sjaldnast eins frægar og karlmenn í íþróttum. Kostnaður frægðar karlmanna er sá að fréttir um einkalíf þeirra og aðra hluti sem ekki snerta íþróttina beint eru oft með neikvæðum undirtóni á meðan fréttir um konur eru oftari á jákvæðum nótum. Bæði hin neikvæða umfjöllun um karla og hetjudýrkun á sumum þeirra gæti einnig skýrst af því hversu alvarlega íþróttaiðkuninni er tekið af fjölmiðlum. Hreysti og sigri í keppni er tekið sem merki um karlmennsku og því er slæmt gengi karlmanna í íþróttum harkalega dæmt á meðan velgengni er fagnað. Slæmt gengi kvenna virðist ekki fá sömu neikvæðu umfjöllun og velgengni þeirra heldur ekki vekja sömu athygli og velgengni karlmanna. Þannig styrkir evrópsk íþróttumfjöllun hefðbundnar staðalmyndir kynjanna og endurspeglar og vinnur með almennum hugmyndum um karla og konur í íþróttum.

Í þriðja lagi er ekki algengt að benda á að einstakar íþróttufréttir annaðhvort styrki eða vinni gegn staðalmyndum um konur og karla þó heildar mynd umfjöllunarinnar geri það klárlega eins og sýnt hefur verið frammá hér að framan. Stór hluti íþróttufrétta er enda aðeins upptalning á þurrum staðreyndum um úrslit. Í einhverjum hluta fréttanna, einkum þeim sem fjalla um konur, eru þó sérstaklega ýtt undir staðalmyndir kvenna. Niðurstöður rannsóknarinnar sýna að nærri ein af hverjum þremur fréttum um konur virðist ýta undir ríkjandi staðalmyndir. Þessi tilhneiging liggur ekki alltaf í augum upp og er sjaldnast meðvituð stefna þess fréttamanns eða ljósmyndara sem í hlut á. Oft er það því samhengi umfjöllunarinnar og hinn mikli fjöldi frétta þar sem hlutur kvenna er lítill sem enginn sem ýtir undir ríkjandi staðalmyndir kynjanna í hinum karllæga heimi íþróttanna.

Í fjórða lagi eru mun færri konur en karlar íþróttufréttamenn. Því eru sjónarmið, viðmið og gildi karlmanna ráðandi í íþróttufréttamennsku. Hin ójöfnu kynjahlutföll íþróttufréttamanna hljóta því að ýta undir og styrkja ríkjandi staðalmyndir kynjanna í íþróttum.

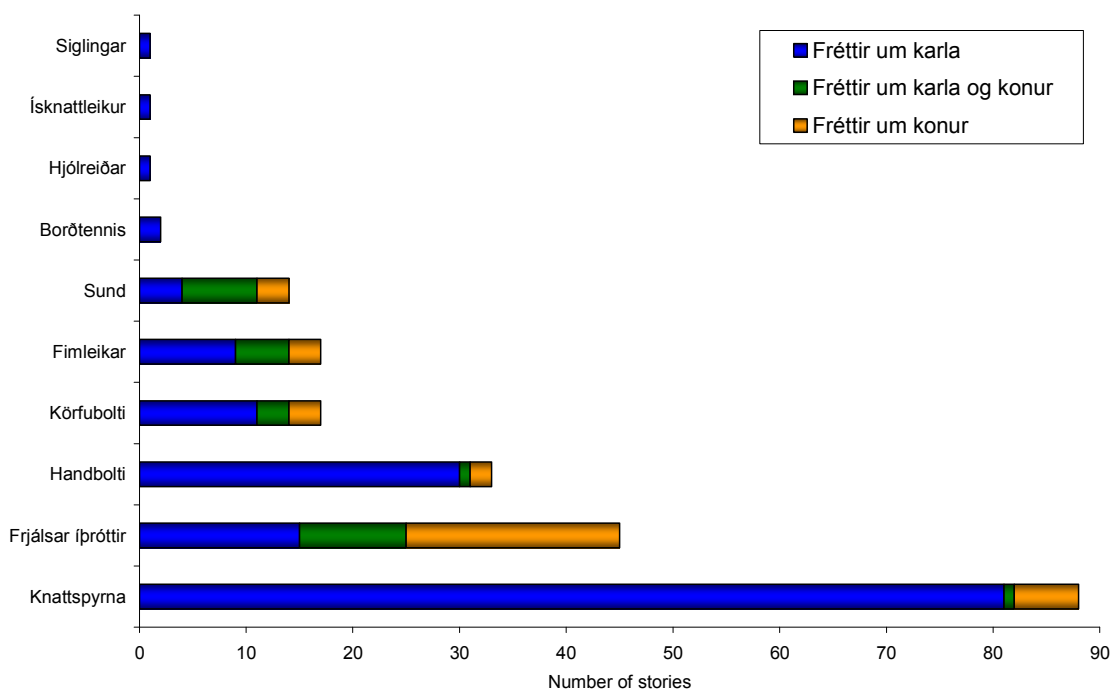
Þegar leiðir til úrbóta eru skoðaðar eru öll þessu atriði tekin til skoðunar. Það er einkum talið mikilvægt að allir hlutaðeigandi aðilar, fjölmiðlar, stjórnmöld og íþróttafólk leggi rækt

við að veita konum þann sess innan íþróttanna sem þeim ber og athugi á hvaða hátt best er að gera það. Skort á umfjöllun um konur í íþróttum ætti ekki að bæta upp með hugmyndum um að auka vinsældir kvennaíþróttanna með kynferðislegri hlutgeringu kvenna eða öðrum þvingandi og stöðluðum kynhlutverkum. Það er, með öðrum orðum, mikilvægt að auka umfjöllun um konur í íþróttum á jákvæðan hátt. Þannig ætti að auka þá umfjöllun sem sýnir konur og íþróttaiðkun þeirra í jákvæðu ljósi en útrýma fréttamennsku sem hlutgerir konur með því að ýta undir ríkjandi staðalmyndir.

Íþróttir, fjölmiðlar og staðalmyndir mynda flókinn veruleika og það er ekki á færi eins aðila að gera þennan veruleika betri fyrir bæði konur og karla. Einstakir aðilar geta auðvitað lagt sitt af mörkum með stefnumótum og aðgerðum og þjálfarar og íþróttufréttamenn gegna mikilvægu hlutverki í þessu sambandi. Málafni kvenna og karla í íþróttum snerta alla og til að breyta hinum karllæga heimi íþróttanna þarf að ráðast að viðmiðum og gildum sem eiga sér djúpar rætur í menningu okkar. Það verður aðeins gert með gagnrýnni sjálfsskoðun allra hlutaðeigandi.

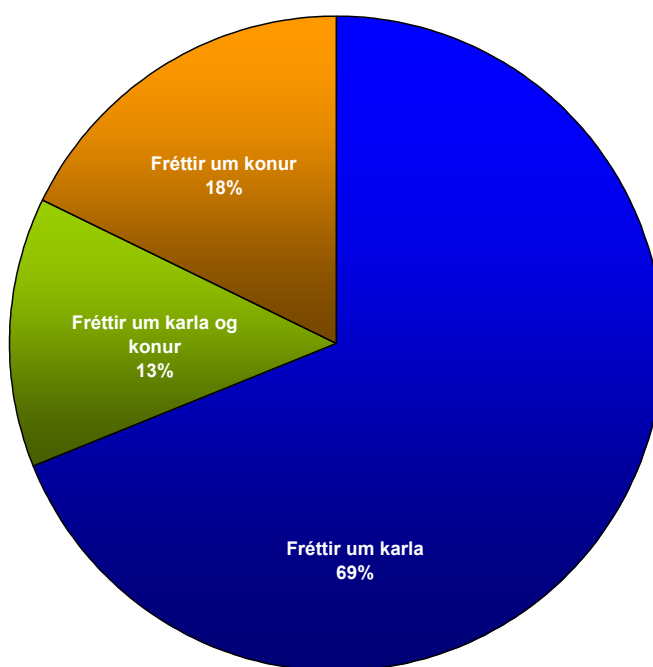
## ***Niðurstöður íslenska hluta rannsóknarinnar***

Í íslenska hluta rannsóknarinnar voru skoðaðar samtals 268 íþróttufréttir í daglögum og sjónvarpi. Niðurstöðurnar fyrir Ísland eru um margt áþekkar niðurstöðunum fyrir öll fimm löndin. Þegar litið er á hlutdeild einstakra íþróttagreina má sjá að yfirgnæfandi áhersla er lögð á umfjöllun um knattspyrnu karla og gnæfir knattspyrnan yfir aðrar íþróttagreinar hvað fjölda fréttanna varðar. Ef til vill mætti þó segja að þessar niðurstöður komi ekki svo mjög á óvart þar sem þær endurspeglar áhuga almennings á íþróttgreininni en það er þó að einhverju leyti spurning um orsök og afleiðingu því hin mikla umfjöllun um íþróttgreinina svarar ekki aðeins áhuga almennings heldur skapar einnig áhuga og þekkingu á greininni. Það sem helst vekur áhuga hvað varðar fótboltaumfjöllun er rýr hlutur kvennafótbolta. Það er einnig áhugavert að bera hlut kvenna í fótbolta saman við hlut þeirra í frjálsum íþróttum þar sem þær mynda nánast helming þeirra íþróttamanna sem fjallað er um. Sér íslenskur áhugi á handbolta kemur einnig í ljós á mynd 1 þar sem handbolti er þriðja algengasta íþróttgreinin í sem fjallað er um í fjölmiðlum. Handbolti er því mun vinsælli á Íslandi en í flestum öðrum löndum en þrátt fyrir það er hlutur kvenna í greininni afskaplega rýr.



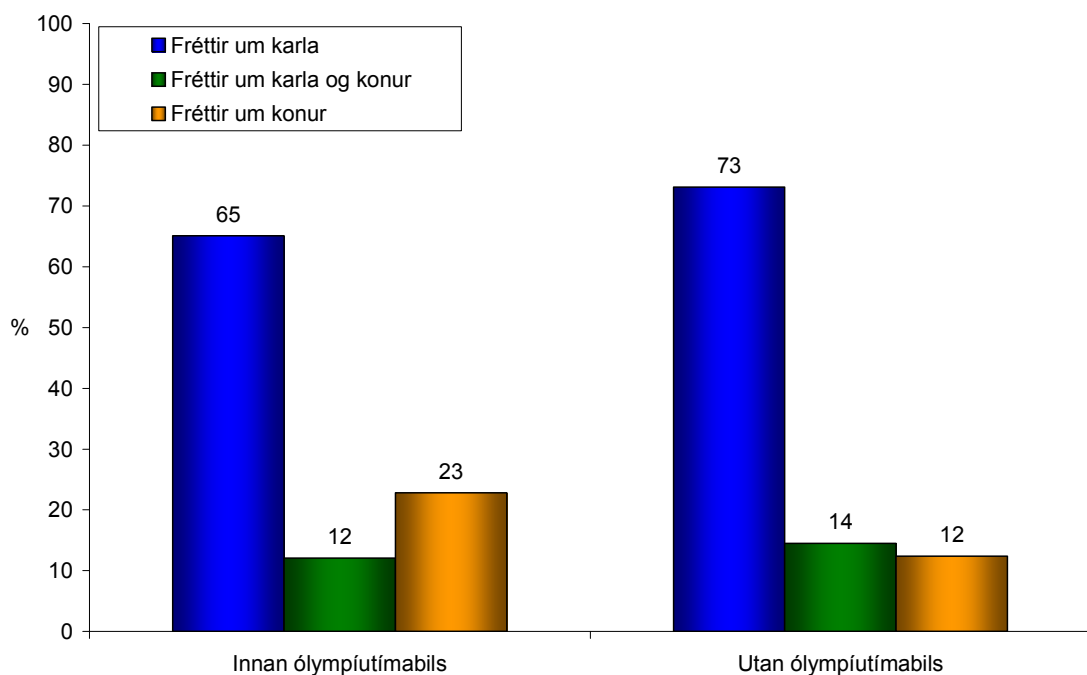
Mynd 1. Fjöldi fréttar eftir íþróttagrein og kyni íþróttamanna, tíu efstu greinar.

Þegar lítið er á þær tíu greinar sem oftast var fjallað um sést að að karlmenn eru ráðandi í öllum greinum nema frjálsum íþróttum. Þessi staðreynd endurspeglar svo þegar fjöldi fréttar er greindur eftir kynferði þeirra sem við sögu koma. Á mynd 2 sést að 69% fréttar fjölluðu eingöngu um karlmenn. Þetta hlutfall er reyndar aðeins lægra á Íslandi heldur en í heildarniðurstöðu rannsóknarinnar þar sem öll fimm löndin voru til skoðunar. Aðeins 18% fréttar fjölluðu eingöngu um konur.



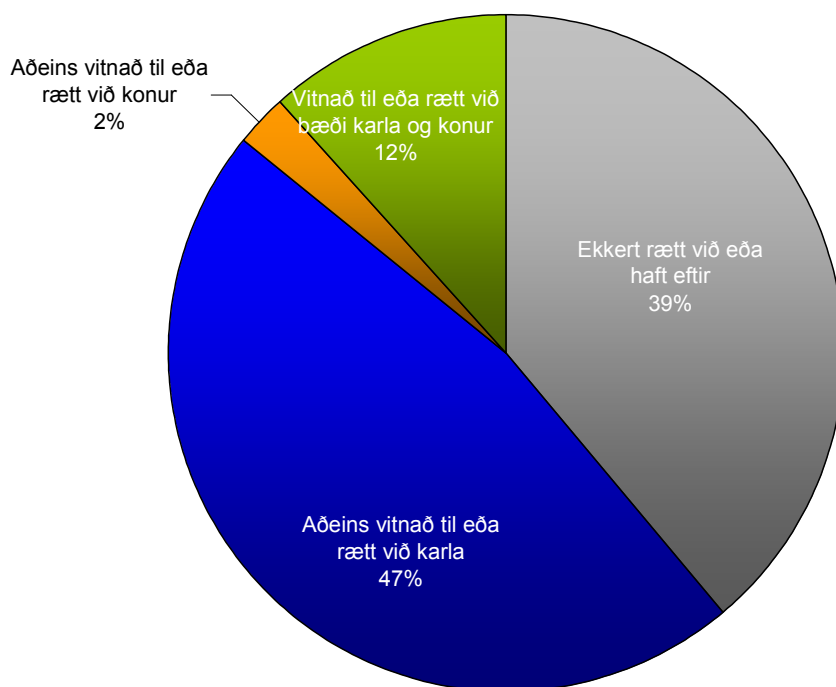
### Mynd 2. Hlutfall hvors kyns í íþróttafréttum

Líkt og að framan er getið er um þriðjungur þeirra íþróttafréttanna sem til skoðunar eru hér komnar frá Ólympíuleikunum árið 2004. Þegar greint er milli fréttanna frá Ólympíutímabilinu annars vegar og fréttanna utan þess hins vegar má sjá að hlutur kvenna er enn minni utan Ólympíutímabilsins. Þetta þarf ekki að koma á óvart þar sem alþjóða Ólympíunefndin hefur sett skýr markmið í jafnréttismálum. Þrátt fyrir þetta er það samt svo að þó að kynjahlutfallið í íþróttafréttum sé jafnara meðan á Ólympíuleikunum stendur eru fréttir af körlum samt í miklum meirihluta. Þetta þýðir jafnframt að þegar Ólympíuleikarnir eru ekki til umfjöllunar í íþróttafréttum er hlutur kvenna enn minni en heildarniðurstöður sýna og á þeim dögum sem til skoðunar voru á fyrrihluta ársins 2005 voru fréttir sem fjölluðu um konur aðeins 12% á móti 18% þegar lítið er á Ólympíutímabilið.



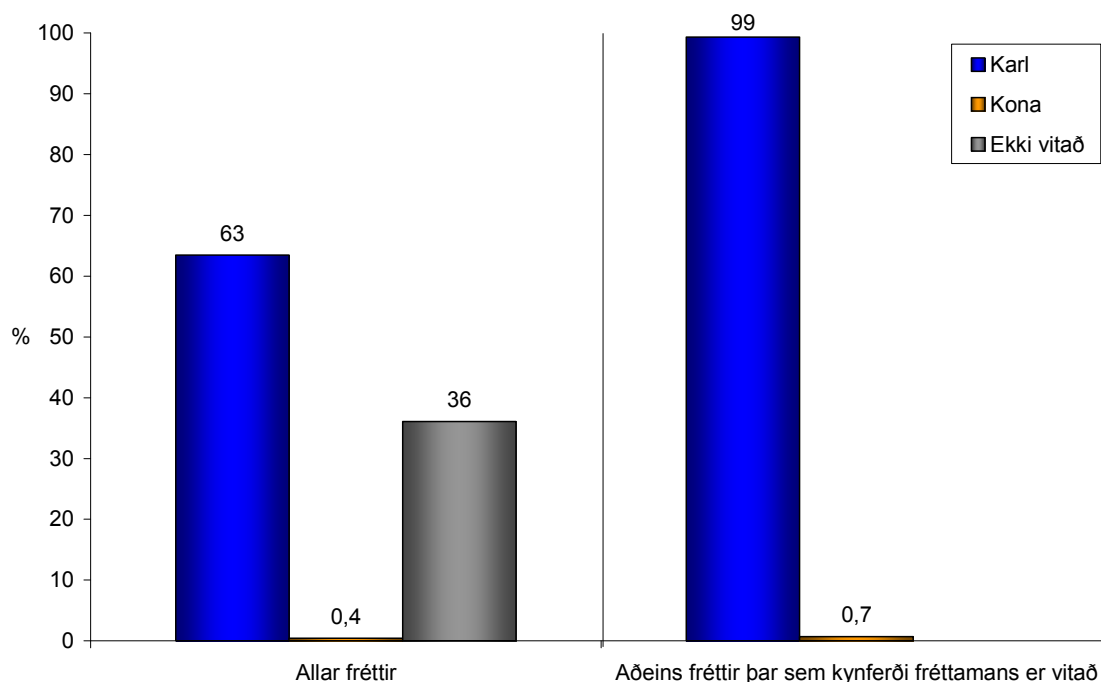
### Mynd 3. Hluttur hvors kyns í íþróttafréttum eftir tímabilum.

Auk þess að skoða hlutdeild kvenna af fjölda íþróttafréttanna er áhugavert að benda á hlutdeild kynjanna í hópi álitsgjafa eða aðila sem vitnað er til í íþróttafréttum. Þar er hlutur kvenna afar lítill. Aðeins í 18% fréttanna er vitnað til kvenna eða álits þeirra leitað meðan vitnað er til karla eða álits þeirra leitað í 59% fréttanna. Einungis 2% fréttanna leita aðeins álits hjá eða vitna til kvenna. Ennfremur má geta þess að býsna algengt er að karlar komi við sögu sem álitsgjafar í fréttum sem snúast um konur meðan hið gagnstæða er afar sjaldgæft. Þetta er enn frekari staðfesting á því skilgreiningarvaldi sem karlar hafa í heimi íþróttanna í gengum fjölmiðlana.



#### Mynd 4. Hluttur hvors kyns sem álitsgjafar í íþróttafréttum.

Líkt og í öðrum löndum sem til skoðunar voru í rannsókninni eru konur að mestu leyti fjarverandi í hlutverki í þróttafréttamanna. Hér ber þó að setja þann fyrirvara að þegar um er að ræða íþróttafréttir í blöðum eru fréttir ekki alltaf merktar viðkomandi blaðamönnum. Ef tekið er mið af þeim íþróttafréttum þar sem vitað er hvers kyns þeir fréttamenn eru sem koma að viðkomandi fréttum þá koma konur við sögu í innan við 1% tilvika. Það þýðir að í íslenska hluta rannsóknarinnar hafa konur komið við sögu í tveimur íþróttafréttum sem fréttamenn og í báðum tilvikum sem fréttapulir, þ.e. með því að lesa kynningu á fréttinni



Mynd 5. Kynferði íþróttafréttamanna.

## Samantekt

Í stórum dráttum staðfestir íslenski hluti rannsóknarinnar niðurstöður annarra athugana á hlut kvenna í íþróttafréttum á Íslandi þess eðlis að hann er til muna minna en hlutur karla. Rétt er þó að vekja athygli á að af þeim fimm löndum sem eru til skoðunar í þessari rannsókn virðist hlutur kvenna í íslenskum íþróttafréttum vera heldur skárri en í hinum löndunum. Ekki er unnt að staðfesta á grundvelli þeirra gagna sem hér eru til skoðunar hvort sá munur er til kominn fyrir tilviljun. Ef það er hins vegar svo að íslenskir íþróttafréttamenn séu meðvitaðri um mikilvægi kynferðis en kollegar þeirra í öðrum Evrópulöndum þá er mikilvægt að nýta það tækifæri sem þar er til að ná lengra í átt til jafnari stöðu karla og kvenna í íþróttum.





