CHAPTER 18

Sports, the Media, and Gender

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Overview: Hartmann-Tews explores the intersections of gender and sports in the media, such as gendered sports coverage and the marginalization of female athletes. She uses critical theory to focus on the media’s social construction of gender and sports and poses questions about the picture that mass media paints about sports, sportsmen, and sportswomen; the kinds of information the media are imparting to consumers; and the consumption chain of the media.
Hartmann-Tews concludes with demands for future research in the field of sports, gender, and media.

“Whatever we know about our society, or indeed about the world in which we live, we know through the mass media” (Luhmann 2000, 1). This first line of The Reality of the Mass Media by Niklas Luhmann indicates a phenomenon that some years later has been revealed in the analytical concept of mediatization, emphasizing the extraordinary growth of the institution of the media and its effect of shaping and framing societal discourses as well as the society within which that communication takes place. This effect is true for media communication about sports as well. It is the media that allows billions of people all over the world to engage in shared experiences of major international sports events such as world championships and the Olympic Games, and much evidence confirms that mediated sports consumption is the source of abundant pleasure and significance for audiences.

This extensive mediatization, and the powerful effect of mass media in framing and creating modern culture, points to the relevance of in-depth theoretical discourses and empirical research on the mass media. Critical sociological research in media sport—that is, the way media and sports interact—is driven by the understanding that the way media talk about, write about, and visually represent sports and sportspersons is a (re-)producer of (sports) culture. At the same time, the field is concerned with findings about the media’s tendencies to reinforce dominant cultural ideologies. Against this backdrop this chapter focuses on the way in which gender is negotiated and presented in mass media, considering the huge
amount of research about daily coverage of sports and occasional coverage of the Olympic Games in particular. The chapter covers mass media—that is, sports information and news in traditional print (newspaper, magazines)—broadcast media, and the so-called new media (online media, sports blogs) and audience reception research. In this sense, the discussion takes into account that sports are an integral part of mediatization in a globalized world, but it will not have space to address advertisements and marketing strategies of the (sports) industry and further aspects that are part of a more global “sport-media-commercial complex” (Messner, Dunbar, and Hunt 2000).

THEORETICAL CONCEPTS AND BACKGROUND

A general assumption about mass media is that traditional print sources respond to an informal obligation to report in an accurate and trustworthy way and present the world as it is. The same assumption applies to sports-media outlets; consumers assume that these outlets report in an objective, accurate, and responsible manner about the world of sports, which will in turn promote greater understanding and fair play among diverse groups of people. These naive assumptions presuppose an ontological, objectively accessible world that is just out there waiting to be discovered, and they ignore that mass media will never be able to reflect and mirror all events all over the world. The function of mass media is observation of world affairs and broad communication of these observations. Given the fact that this requires processes of selection—decisions about what to report and what not—it seems adequate to describe the products of mass media as being social constructions or, as Luhmann points out, “We can speak of the reality of the mass media . . . in the sense of what appears to them, or through them to others, to be reality” (2000, 5; emphasis in the original).

How do mass media in sports construct reality? Several researchers have worked on this topic and identified patterns of media professionals and the underlying rules of selection processes that are concealed in the “framing concept.” When selecting a specific sports event, media professionals have to determine how to “frame” the coverage—that is, they decide what facts to include, what kind of story to tell, what kind of wording to use to describe the event and the athlete, and what pictures to use in order to underline the message (Scheufele and Tewksbury 2007). These decisions are socially structured, deriving from long-term interplays between a variety of social agents. We know from media studies in sports that media professionals’ decisions are made with reference to (in-)formal, so-called news factors or news values, and the most important of these factors in sports media are immediacy and event orientation, success, national reference, personification, human interest, and negativity (Loosen 1998). Thus, the process of framing is based on a central organizing
idea for news content. It suggests and conveys—through the use of inclusion and exclusion, emphasis and elaboration—what the issue is, what the facts are, and what the reality is. Yet consumers are seeing or reading only a fraction of the events in the sporting world at any given time and through a mediated, social construction of sports reality.

In sports-media studies, many sports sociologists and sports management researchers have begun referring to the concept of “agenda setting” (e.g., Burch et al. 2011), noting that media coverage (potentially) shapes the perception of the audience and that the amount and quality of coverage devoted to a specific sport, issue, or athlete can affect the perceived importance of the sport, issue, or athlete. The theoretical concepts of agenda setting were developed by a foundational study in political sciences that examined the media coverage of the 1968 US presidential campaign (McCombs and Shaw 1972). The findings revealed a high correlation between the media coverage of main issues and the perceived importance of these issues with audience and voters. As the media have a powerful effect on the audience in general, one can assume that sports-media have a powerful effect on fans and consumers. Therefore, it is important to examine and understand how grassroots sports and major sporting events such as international championships and the Olympic Games are presented, what kind of realities are constructed in these presentations, and whether the presentations differ by different media outlets and/or countries.

From a critical theoretical perspective, sociologists examine whether social institutions and processes privilege some groups over others (e.g., men versus women, young versus old, ethnic majority versus minorities), based on broader social, cultural, political, or economic structures. As a social system that involves physical skills and capacities, sports have traditionally been considered as a natural territory of men, and the ideology of male superiority is often communicated as based on male genetic dispositions, body composition, and strength (Pfister and Bandy 2015). This perception has shifted as more and more women participate in sports and the gender proportion in the Olympic Games has almost balanced out. The following discussion adapts the perspective of critical theory and focuses on the media’s social construction of gender and sports. It will explore two questions: First, what kind of picture about sports—and sportsmen and sportswomen—are media drawing and what kind of information are they imparting to the consumer? And second, how should the findings and their role in a broader production-consumption chain of the media be interpreted? After examining the answers to these questions, the chapter will outline considerations for necessary future research in the topic of sports, gender, and media.

GENDERED SPORTS COVERAGE IN THE MEDIA

The issue of gender representation in media coverage of sports has had an enduring attraction in the United States and globally since the increase in media outlets and female participation in sports in the late twentieth century. Most of the empirical studies investigate traditional media, and only recently new media studies have been added to the huge stock of research. The focus is
primarily on text and to a lesser extent on visual portrayals. The findings are best revealed with two sections, the first one about quantitative representations of athletes in the media coverage and the second one about qualitative differences and similarities of coverage.

MARGINALIZATION OF FEMALE ATHLETES IN SPORTS COVERAGE

Researchers in Europe and the United States have consistently shown the degree to which female athletes are marginalized by receiving far less day-to-day coverage than their male counterparts. For instance, in content analyses from a wide range of countries, and of varying time frames ranging from one week to one year, women’s sports averages approximately 10 percent of print media and 5 percent of television news coverage (Bruce, Hovden, and Markula 2010; Horky and Nieland 2013). This empirical finding of underrepresentation holds true for daily newspapers (e.g., Hartmann-Tews and Rulofs 2003; Dunne 2017), sports magazines (e.g., Bishop 2003; Lumpkin 2009), broadcast media (e.g., Caple, Greenwood, and Lumby 2011; Cooky, Messner, and Musto 2015), and even new media (e.g., Clavio and Eagleman 2011).

Several longitudinal studies, across a variety of media platforms, show that media coverage of women’s sports and female athletes has actually declined over the years despite women’s increased participation and athletic performance (e.g., Kane 2013; Weber and Carini 2013). Cheryl Cooky, Michael A. Messner, and Michela Musto (2015) replicated a longitudinal study of television coverage of the 11 p.m. sports news and highlights of the local Los Angeles network affiliates as well as ESPN’s SportsCenter, a study that has been ongoing every five years from 1989 to 2014. The percent of airtime received by female athletes during these sports telecasts ranged from a minimum of 1.6 percent (2009) to a maximum of 8.7 percent (1999), with a visible tendency toward a decreasing amount of coverage. The “deepening silence” (Cooky, Messner, and Musto 2015, 5) around women’s sports in US televised news and highlight shows in the United States is troubling, even more as it seems to reflect a more general feature of “symbolic annihilation” of sportswomen in media sports coverage. The concept of symbolic annihilation has been elaborated by Gaye Tuchman (1978) to describe processes that make members of a social group (based on their race, sex, sexual orientation, etc.) invisible through the explicit lack of representation in media and diverse additional strategies of media communication.

Yet in the same period, impressive changes toward gender equity and equality have been witnessed in many nations. In sports, female participation has increased in all age cohorts and is now an appreciated activity for women and girls in many countries. In 2012, the London Olympic Games were announced as a “major boost for gender equality” by International Olympic Committee president Jacques Rogge, as for the first time sportswomen took part in every Olympic sport; women comprised more than 44 percent of all participants at the Games, and all countries sent at least one female participant (Donnelly and Donnelly 2013, 5; IOC 2014). While the majority of everyday sports reporting focuses on men’s sports, women’s sports are relatively more visible during major international events and during the Olympic Games in particular. Across a wide range of countries, findings
consistently show a general trend of increased media coverage of women’s sports during the Olympic Games: in newspapers (Bruce, Hovden, and Markula 2010), on television (e.g., Billings and Angelini 2007), and in new media (e.g., Burch, Eagleman, and Pedersen 2012). Although the reported amount of increase of coverage during the Olympic Games varies, based on media selected for analysis and cultural context, it seems to be a general trend that sportsmen and sportswomen receive more balanced attention during this mega event. The so-called Olympic Games effect (Quin, Wipf, and Ohl 2010, 112) is interpreted as an artifact of the presence of cameras, journalists, and equipment that are already there to cover this big international event. In addition, the enhanced coverage of sportswomen during the Olympic Games reflects a prominence of nationalism and success orientation in the media discourses. Discourses of nationalism—that is, the representation of national athletes and their successes, irrespective of gender—are a central news factor in the sports media and seem to override discourses of gender.

However, women’s overall coverage during the Olympic Games is heterogeneous depending on the country and the media under scrutiny. Empirical studies on this topic often raise the question of fairness of media regarding sex equity in sports coverage. Against this backdrop, the methodological discussions and empirical
approaches to measure the (dis-)proportional coverage have become more sophisticated. In order to determine the most appropriate standards to measure whether or not there is gender bias in journalistic coverage of the Olympic Games, it has been suggested several factors be taken into account: (1) the overall coverage, (2) its relation to the representation of each sex in the Olympic Games' teams, (3) its relation to the availability of events for each sex, and (4) its relation to the proportion of successful athletes—that is, medal winners (Delorme 2014). One study with comparative results about newspaper coverage of the Olympic Summer Games 2004, covering a standardized content analysis from eighteen countries all over the world, revealed systematic gender biases and underrepresentation of female athletes with respect to the overall coverage, its relation to team composition, and its relation to medal winners (Bruce, Hovden, and Markula 2010). At the same time, there are variations between the countries with respect to the size of quantitative disparities of the coverage, and few countries display no gender bias at all.

Although the gender bias in the coverage of the Olympic Games is on a smaller scale and (by far) does not mirror the dramatic marginalization of sportswomen seen in daily sports media coverage, longitudinal studies reveal no increase or even a decrease in coverage about sportswomen over the decades since the late twentieth century. For example, Andrew Billings (2008) examined six US telecasts of Summer and Winter Olympic Games in the period 1996 through 2006 and found no significant increase in the amount of coverage afforded to female athletes across the years although their proportion in the teams has risen. In fact, Ilse Hartmann-Tews, Diana Emberger, and Birgit Braumüller (2018) identified decreasing coverage of sportswomen in the newspaper coverage of six Olympic Games (2000–2016) in Germany.

Most of the empirical research of media coverage of the Olympic Games is based on traditional media coverage in newspapers or television broadcasting. Ostensibly, new media have the ability to provide more equitable coverage and a more accurate depiction of events because of their (almost) unlimited space. Findings by Andrea Eagleman, Lauren M. Burch, and Ryan Vooris (2014) about the 2012 London Olympics coverage by news websites in Australia, Brazil, China, Great Britain, Kenya, and the United States support this proposition. The authors identified very few gender and nation-centered biases. At the same time, by contrast, Dianne Jones’s (2013) comparative analysis of the extent and nature of online sports coverage by four prominent national public broadcasters (ABC in Australia, BBC in the United Kingdom, CBC in Canada, and TVNZ in New Zealand) during the 2008 Olympic Games documented that men and their sports dominated the websites.

The huge amount of research done in the sports-media field, including summaries of both traditional and new media in the era since the spread of the internet, has produced consistent results, with conclusions that all point to a marginalization of sportswomen. The occasional increases of coverage during the Olympic Games are mere raindrops compared to the flood in which male sports dominate sports media on an everyday basis—and the implicit signal to the consumer is that sportswomen either do not exist or they have no achievements that are newsworthy (Fink 2015; Bruce 2013).
“OTHERING” FEMALE ATHLETES—EMPIRICAL EVIDENCE FROM QUALITATIVE ANALYSES

Against the backdrop of a general dramatic marginalization of female athletes in daily media coverage and an increased but still lower coverage during the Olympic Games, there is additional huge evidence about gender-biased qualitative differences in sports media coverage. One of the most ubiquitous practices in sports journalism is the use of “gender marking” (Messner, Duncan, and Jensen 1993), which refers to the presentation of women athletes and sports events as something different in comparison to established (male) sports that has to be marked—for example, the FIFA Women’s World Cup, Ladies World Cup Speed Skating, and World Ladies Championship Golf. This journalistic pattern, which is triggered by the federations’ labeling of the events and is transferred to other events, establishes the competitions of men as the standard and the norm, whereas women’s events are marked as other and (often) as of secondary status.

Irrespective of the kind of sports media and the method of coverage—news, features, oral comments, or visuals—overwhelming evidence suggests that media are a crucial agent of the so-called de-athletization of sportswomen (Eitzen and Baca Zinn 1989). De-athletization is the outcome of media professionals’ tendency to frame the athletic performances of men and women differently—and typically in a way that deemphasizes females’ athletic abilities while inflating males’ superiority. A central element of this pattern is embedded in the kind of stories told about the athletes and the bits of information that are included or excluded. Billings, James R. Angelini, and Andrea Holt Duke (2010) found when examining personality and physicality descriptors during the NBC broadcast of the 2008 Olympic Games that women received more comments about their personal and family backgrounds, whereas men received more comments about the size of their bodies. More recent studies about online stories of national sports sites confirm the use of this journalistic pattern (Jones 2013; Yip 2018). New media perpetuate gender stereotypes and sexual difference by framing sportswomen as emotionally weak or less committed than male athletes and by more often portraying the athletic or mental weaknesses and roles outside the sports field for female athletes, foregrounding family and personal relationships.

In addition, several empirical findings document the tendency of sports journalists to refer to highly accomplished and successful adult female athletes as “pretty girls” or “young ladies” or “young things,” whereas skilled male athletes would rarely be referred to as “boys” (Wensing and Bruce 2003). Although this pattern seems to be on the wane, a 2014 headline in the British Daily Mail newspaper regarding the Olympic Winter Games in Sochi read “Curl Power: Girls Sweep Their Way to Bronze” (Fink 2015, 334). The headline comprises terms both of subtle belittlement (“girls”) and of strength (“power”)—a journalistic pattern that is more often used in reports about sportswomen in comparison to sportsmen. Margaret Duncan and Cynthia Hasbrook (1988) identified this element of social construction in the mid-1980s and used the term ambivalence to describe such mixed messages. They include positive narratives alongside negative comments and incorporate representation that oscillates between valorizing accomplishments of sportswomen and undermining or trivializing them. Ambivalence in communication about sports and athletes remains prevalent.
and seems to be a dominant framing technique with regard to sportswomen, as studies about international events and the 2010 Winter Olympics indicate (Poniatowski and Hardin 2012). Yet another way in which media communicate sports’ natural connection to men and masculinity is to represent sportswomen within discourses of femininity and idealized sexual attractiveness. Evidence across a variety of media outlets suggests that coverage of sportswomen tends toward framings of “pretty or powerful,” highlighting sportswomen’s sexual appeal and femininity instead of or parallel to their athletic accomplishments (Bissell and Duke 2007; Rulofs and Hartmann-Tews 2011).

Though text can depict powerful narratives in newspapers and websites, photographs convey a quicker impression and have the power to visually frame the story communicated in the media. Concepts of visual-framing—originally developed in social psychology—have become prominent in media studies through sociologist Erving Goffman (1974), who analyzed pictures and advertisements from a critical theory perspective. Differences in visuals may be constructed in various ways—for example, through the sports they represent, the content they depict, or the camera angle used. The findings of the comparative analysis of newspaper media coverage of the 2004 Olympic Games in eighteen countries (Bruce, Hovden, and Markula 2010) document that newspaper photographs represent sportswomen and sportsmen in substantially similar ways, depicting them most often either in action and competition or in sports-related settings. However, in some countries a gender bias in the visualization of the sports news is identified, as men are more often represented with images of action and competition compared to women. The idiosyncrasy of country-specific patterns in visual coverage are confirmed by the authors Andra Raisa Petca, Eliza Bivolaru, and Timo Alexander Graf (2013), using panel data of online visual representation of athletes from the 2004 and 2008 Summer Olympic Games of Brazil, Germany, and the United States. A longitudinal study on the coverage of German newspapers of the Olympic Games from 2000 to 2016 found that the proportion of photos where male athletes are visualized in a physically active pose was significantly higher than the proportion of female athletes (Hartmann-Tews, Emberger, and Braumüller 2018). These findings are supported by similar results regarding the British and French print media coverage during the London 2012 Olympic Games (Godoy-Pressland and Griggs 2014; Delorme and Testard 2015).

It appears that across a wide range of cultural sites images of masculinity and femininity are changing and are (re-)combined in different configurations that challenge traditional notions of gender difference and sports as male hegemony. Anna Hellborg and Susanna Hedenborg found in their analysis about the equestrian competition at the 2012 Olympic Games that some narratives “can be seen as (gender) norm-breaking, whereas others confirm gender stereotypes” (2015, 248). Toni Bruce (2016) identifies in a variety of media outlets—for example, the Sports Illustrated swimsuit issues that regularly feature elite female athletes or the rise of mediated female heroes like Lara Croft—new discourses of “pretty and powerful” (370). These emerging discourses have to be embedded in the broader perspective of the production process of media.
PRODUCTION-RECEPTION CHAIN

Research on the intersections of gender and sports in the context of mediatization has a strong focus on media coverage, that is, the output of the media as a social system. From the perspective of social construction of sports reality, it seems to be necessary to take the whole process of media communication into account. To do so, researches have to analyze the production-reception chain, that is, study the process of production of news within and outside the newsroom as well as the reception processes of the audience, readers, and viewers of sports news. In contrast to the huge amount of research about media coverage, less attention has been paid to the production materials and resources used by sports journalists to create mass media reports. A central study on Olympic media was conducted by Billings (2008), who completed an extensive review of the production process used by NBC in the creation of its Olympic coverage in the period from 1996 to 2006. As expected, telecast preparation for the stories to be told during the Olympic Games lies in gathering and combing through athletes' profiles to identify interesting stories. Possible sources for journalists are media guides of sports federations or the websites of elite athletes, which have become a central information resource for mass media due to their electronic distribution. In this context, Jennifer Carter, Erynn Casanova, and David Maume (2015) examined the 2008 US Olympic media guide, by which sports organizations present their athletes and teams to various stakeholders, including mass media professionals. Their findings show significant differences in the size and content of the profiles of sportswomen and sportsmen, with women athletes' profiles being longer and containing more personal information—for example, narratives about their family and hobbies—than those of men. That is, the sports federations' media profiles of female Olympians tend to draw more attention to them as women than as athletes, which adds to a more general circle of de-athletization of female athletes.

Only a few empirical studies have addressed the production process and editorial work in sports media (Hartmann-Tews and Rulofs 2003; Knoppers and Elling 2004). Ethnographic and interview research with sports journalists has identified the prevalence of male-dominated working environments as well as on-the-job-experiences of female journalists who experience colleagues, athletes, and consumers communicating that the female journalists are not welcome and probably not in the right place (Schoch and Ohl 2011). Despite the intuitive expectation that more women in sports journalism would create change in the field, evidence to date suggests that the presence of women journalists makes little difference in their work environment, as the powerful social structures of sports journalism have a strong impact on the potential for individuals to make a difference in journalistic work (Claringbould et al. 2004; Hartmann-Tews and Rulofs 2003).

Producers, commentators, and editors usually explain their lack of attention to women's sports with reference to market forces and economic competition in the (sports-)media complex, claiming that their decision about coverage is an immediate response to the demand of viewers and readers and that journalists deliver what the audience is interested in and likes to see or read. They argue with
reference to the nature of the production-reception relationship, but in a simplistic way. The media professionals oversee or ignore the circular nature of this relationship and the fact that media is a powerful institution in shaping values and interests. Empirical studies indicate that the kind of coverage and the way athletes are portrayed has the effect of creating or hindering consumer interest and demand. In experiments and focus groups, participants were provided with images and articles about male and female athletes that either highlighted the athlete’s performances and his or her athletic accomplishments or highlighted the physical attractiveness of the male or female athlete in a more or less (hetero-)sexualized way (e.g., Daniels 2012; Daniels and Wartena 2011; Kane and Maxwell 2011). The participants then had to comment and rate the athlete’s physical ability, talent, and capability and indicate whether they would like to watch or attend competitions in which these athletes were performing. The most interesting and unanimous finding was that images of athletic competence and texts focusing on the accomplishments of the athletes—irrespective of the gender of the athletes—elicited positive comments on the physical skills of athletes, provided higher ratings of talent and athleticism, and increased the participants’ interest in watching or attending competitions. At the same time, the sexualized images or texts focusing on the attractive outer appearance of the athlete led to ambivalent or negative ratings and did not increase the likelihood of the participants’ interest in spending time watching respective events.

FUTURE DIRECTIONS OF RESEARCH

Summaries of both traditional and new media confirm the long-standing gender bias of quantitative coverage (the marginalization and symbolic annihilation of sportswomen) and the differential gendering quality of both types of media, conveying men’s sports as the standard while subordinating women’s sports. The summaries draw similar conclusions about the findings that all point to “a critical marking of sport as male territory” and the naturalizing effects of the traditional gender hierarchy in sports (Bruce 2013, 128; Fink 2015; Meán 2014). It makes sense to go on with this kind of critical research, until media’s coverage turns to a more gender-balanced appreciation of athletes’ performances and accomplishments.

For all the merits of the huge corpus of research done in the field of sports, media, and gender, some limitations can be identified that create room for promising future directions of research:

• Much of the research and interpretation of data on media coverage focuses on differences rather than similarities between women and men. Bruce (2016) ascribes this phenomenon to the liberal feminist position of many researchers in the field of sports media studies, a position that academically constructs identified gender differences to be more salient in comparison to similarities, which are obscured. Future research should be more sensitive—in a theoretical and methodological sense—to potential changes in media discourses, in order to capture the complexity of the mediated reality of sports.
Research on the social construction of gender in sports media focuses on sportswomen and neglects the mediated construction of sportsmen. From a social constructivist perspective, it becomes obvious that this is a one-sided social construction via social science, however well justified by the documented gender hierarchy, exclusion, and construction of inferiority of sportswomen. To draw a more detailed picture of the intersections of gender, sports and media research should open up. It seems to be necessary to gather and (re-)analyze qualitative data that shed more light into the patterns of construction of sportsmen and central ideas of masculinity, thus replacing the generalized reference of hegemonic masculinity by detailed insights not the construction of elements.

An important limitation of the research results from privileging gender as the defining analytical category at the expense of its intersections with other categories of difference—for example, race or ethnicity, age, class, or sporting ableness. Empirical research engaging in intersectionality (gender, race, nationality) has a huge potential to broaden critical analysis of media, sports, and identities (Hundley and Billings 2010).

Strengthening audience reception research would be useful to add to the extensive investigation in sports coverage. Although the current results of the limited number of empirical studies have been relatively consistent, indicating that sex does not sell women’s sports but undermines perception of athleticism, decision-makers will require far more proof from empirically sound evidence before they change their journalistic patterns.

As mass media is a powerful sociocultural institution, critical researchers and sociologists should reflect on their roles and the impact of research. Lawrence Wenner (2015) suggests in his analysis of the development of the sociocultural study of sports and media from Mediasport 1.0 (1975–1989) to Mediasport 4.0 (2007–present) that future research needs more “public intellectuals” who could and should become agents of a meaningful change in media sport and link research (results) to sports and media policy, thus creating the era of Mediasport 5.0.

CONCLUSION

The chapter started with the notion that “whatever we know about our society, or indeed about the world in which we live, we know through the mass media” and has taken a critical theoretical perspective that embeds sports-media research within a social constructivist framework.

Against the theoretical background and the empirical evidence of sports media research, mass media appears as a powerful and largely conservative sociocultural force. Decisions regarding what events and athletes are shown in media coverage, and how they are discussed, “communicate not only what is important, but what is normative, valued, and worth allocation of resources” (LaVoit et al. 2007, 33). Moreover, elements of the media set the agenda and influence what is important when they choose to cover one event over another or a male athlete over a female athlete. Limiting the coverage of women’s sports
legitimizes men’s sports as the most important of the two, and portraying sportsmen and sportswomen differently stabilizes and reinforces stereotypical gender roles for both men and women and taken-for-granted notions about sports as a male terrain. Because these stereotypes are familiar and embedded in other traditional frameworks of gender differences, they have the power to reproduce social and economic limitations that intensify the traditional patriarchal gender order entrenched in the culture.

Bibliography


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