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DIPLOMOVÁ PRÁCE

Media Portrayal of Female Athletes: Presentation in Czech Print Media

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## ABSTRAKT

Vyspělé společnosti tvrdí, že muži a ženy jsou si rovni, ve všem co dělají. Není žádné přesné rozdělení rolí a každý si může dělat, co si usmyslí. Jenže když se na celou situaci podíváme zblízka, uvidíme v tomto pozitivním přístupu mezery. Najednou vidíme, že muži a ženy si nejsou tak úplně rovni, jeden z příkladů je oblast zaměstnání. Ženy prostě nemají stejné možnosti, jaké mají muži. To stejné se děje i v případě sportu, ženy jsou odrazovány od „mužských“ sportů, jako je ragby a to stejné se děje i obráceně, kdy jsou muži odrazováni od „ženských“ sportů, jako je například aerobic. Problém vyvstává, když na scénu vstoupí média. Ta totiž začnou rozhodovat o tom, který sport dostane prostor a mediální pozornost, tím pádem určují, co je společností akceptováno jako norma.

Toto téma je zajímavé nejen tím, že se zabývá nerovností v mediálním pokrytí mužských a ženských sportů, ale také protože tím zkoumá, co je v naší společnosti chápáno jako mužské a co jako ženské. To je něco, s čím se všichni setkáváme, buď přímo nebo nepřímo, každý den. V posledních několika letech se situace žen ve sportu zlepšila, ženy jsou jako sportovkyně akceptovány, uznání společnosti získal i fakt, že do sportovního světa vnáší jiné přednosti než muži, což se také projevilo ve způsobu mediálního zpracování sportovního zpravodajství. To jsou základy do budoucna, kde by se rozdíl v množství mediální pozornosti mužským a ženským sportům mohl minimalizovat. Stejně tak se sjednotí způsob vyobrazení sportovců a sportovkyň v médiích. Nerovnost v mediálním vyobrazení sportovců a sportovkyň reflektuje role, které v západní společnosti přičítáme mužům a které ženám.

Toto je důležité rozebírat také proto, že fyzický vzhled se stal zbožím, které je na prodej. Dění ve společnosti se příliš zrychluje a my zapomínáme analyzovat následky přehnaného důrazu na vzhled. Sport se může změnit na další přehlídku pěkých obličejů a vypracovaných těl. Nemělo by být pravidlem, že mladé dívky říkají: „Chci být tenistka, jako Anna Kurnikovová, protože je hezká,“ ale spíše by měly říkat: „Chci být tenistka jako ona, protože je dobrá sportovkyně“. Lidé mohou říct, že to je pouze detail, ale to je jen protože nevíme, co by se s naší společností stalo v případě, že by se muži posuzovali podle intelligence a sportovních výkonů a ženy by byly posuzovány podle svého vzhledu. Na druhé straně je nutné si připomenout, že právě media silně podporují právě takový obrázek společnosti. Vliv médií na společnost je v dnešní době obrovský, proto je nutné ho sledovat ve spojitosti s vytvářením myšlenek a přesvědčení ve společnosti.

## ABSTRACT

Developed societies claim that men and women are equal at anything they do. There is no real distinction of roles and everyone is free to do what they wish to do. When we start looking closely we see gaps emerging out of this positive approach; we begin to see that males and females are not really equal and one of many examples is the area of employment. Women simply do not have the same opportunities as men do.

The same applies to sports, women are discouraged from some “masculine” sports such as rugby and the same applies vice versa, men are discouraged from “feminine” sports such as aerobics. The problem arises when the media steps on to the scene. Because then they start deciding what gets more coverage, what is shown and repeated in the media, therefore they decide what is accepted in the society as a norm.

This topic is interesting not only because it deals with equality between coverage of male and female sports, but it also looks at what is in nature male and female according to our society. That is something each of us deals with everyday either directly or indirectly. It has to be acknowledged that there have been improvements in accepting women as offering different qualities than men and it has been reflected into the coverage of sports too. These are the building blocks for the future, where the margin between the amount of coverage of female and male sports can shrink, and in ideal circumstances even out. In the same manner the way of portrayal of male and female can be equalized. The inequality of sports coverage in the media can reflect on how male and female roles are set in Western society.

This topic is also essential because the physical appearance started to be a commodity that can be sold. The society seems to speed up too much and we forget to examine and analyze the consequences of focusing on appearance. Sports might turn out to be another display of pretty faces and well build bodies. It should not be a rule that young girls say "I want to be like tennis player like Anna Kurnikova, because she is pretty" but rather say "I want to be a tennis players like her, because she is a good athlete". People might say this is just a detail, but that is because we do not fully understand what might happen in society where males will be referred to and judged according to their intelligence and performance, where as females according to their appearance. On the other hand, it needs to be understood that this is the copyright of media, which created such image. The importance and the effect of media is huge on the society. Therefore it is key to study it with the connection of forming certain ideas or beliefs in society.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The 2006 Winter Olympic Games in Torino rounded off the total number of Czech medals from the Winter Games to 10. The special moment came two days before the end of the Torino Games. The Czech Republic gained its third gold medal in its history, but it was the first gold medal conquered by a female athlete, a cross-country skier Kateřina Neumannová. The thirty four-year-old athlete already had five Olympic medals, but it took her three Olympic Games until she reached for the gold one. In Torino it was the only gold medal for the Czech Republic, so the media attention was mainly on her. This enormous media attention towards Neumannová was expected, there was even coverage by news magazines such as Týden and Reflex, which do cover things that are or should be important to Czechs. So a female athlete making it to the cover of a magazine because of her sporting achievement and being portrayed there just for the achievement is a great success for female sport in general. Of course many kinds of girl magazines had a picture of Neumannová with her medal on the podium on the cover page as well, which is a great way to introduce athletes abilities, the sport itself but also provide a role model.

Neumannová was at the time at the end of her career as a professional athlete so she had plenty of experience with media and knew how to communicate with journalists. She knew how to keep her distance, how to respectfully decline inappropriate question or which poses for the camera are right for athletes. By behaving in such a way she is not just establishing respect for herself in front of the media, but for female athletes overall. If we like it or not we tend to generalize so athletes as well as celebrities or politicians need to know that in the media they do not just represent themselves but also a certain group of society they belong to. The image of themselves that they portray through media is then the image the audience will accept. Neumannová clearly understands this concept, she knows that by establishing respect for herself in media, she sets example to the other athletes as well. Her performance and her presentation in media sets example for young athletes too who are the future of the sport. Athletes are public figures and sometimes they do not understand that their actions and presentation in the media not only have an effect on them, but on the sport itself and also on the future generations of young athletes. Being a public figure carries a load of responsibilities and when athletes do not realize that problems arise and media are keen to present them.

Female athletes like Neumannová are on the right track to make the presentation of female and male sports in media equal. They can of course choose the easier path and go for the short-term attention, when they can accept any offer no matter if it is connected to the sporting environment or if it is in respectable manner. For long-term success it is necessary to establish respect for sport, they need to keep on practicing and show their abilities in the sport and not outside establishing their success on appearance or sex appeal rather than on sporting performance. Yet, there are many more female athletes who do not understand the importance of presentation of themselves in media, since they represent much more than just themselves. That is in my opinion very crucial part. As other studies and my own research show, women are underrepresented in media, so it is important to make the best out of the offered opportunities. Taking a wrong turn sends a message to media makers, who will keep on presenting such offers and also such representations then send the wrong message about female athletes to the audience.

It is important to study the media representation of female athletes because it reflects how our society views female athletes and sports. We can then make conclusion, asses consequences and take actions if we feel that they are necessary. Of course from men's point of view such studies might not be seen as needed, because they might think there are enough female sports and athletes in media. Once you start counting the amount of coverage devoted in media to male and female athletes, you start to see the vast difference. When you study the way of coverage you start seeing the differences in language used, comments made and pictures used for male and female athletes. Your reaction then might be that this is just the reflection of society, of how much men are interested in participating and watching sports and how much women are not. Yet, it is important to first asses and analyze if that is the case, rather than simply assume that. In my paper I will attempt to state and support with resources the actual state of events, look at the history for explanations, use identity formation theories and do my own study to give a full picture of portrayal of female athletes in print media. In my study I will be referring to athletes not in sense as only track and field athletes, but as in sports people over all and taking into consideration wide variety of sports.

In my work I will pay special attention to the print media in the Czech Republic. I will look at six random issues of daily Sport during the 2006 Winter Olympic Games in Torino, Italy and analyze their content with respect to female and male athletes. I will look at how much coverage female and male athletes had, if it was more centered on individual or the sport, what photograph was used to accompany the story and so on. Olympic Games are a good opportunity to compare how media covers different sports and athletes and so I chose

the sports only newspapers in the Czech Republic for my study. Women and men compete in the same disciplines so should not there theoretically be the equal amount of coverage? The argument for my case study is that yes, there should be an equal amount of coverage, but there are other things that need to be taken into account, such as the number of Czech athletes and the sports that Czechs excel at. Main areas of study are number of articles, the language used, the theme (how much concentrated on the actual sport and his/her performance and how much attention was given to private matters) and also the kind of photograph used (was the athlete photographed during competition, during performance or outside of the sport).

In my second study of daily Sport I concentrated on the language used in the articles. By choosing ten adjectives that describe appearance and likeability, I counted how many times they were used and in what context in a time period of one year. My hypothesis was that is journalist felt the need to describe appearance and/or likeability of an athlete, then it should not matter if they use such adjectives in case of male or female athlete. However, majority of daily Sport reporters are male so I took that into consideration, because I know that men are less likely to comment on appearance of same sex person, rather than a person of the opposite sex.

### 1.1 Hypothesis

Czech media follow the global trend and in their limited coverage of female athletes and concentrate more on their physical appearance, rather than on their sporting achievements. Female athletes are portrayed with lesser respect to their professional sporting qualities than male athletes are. This causes inequality, enhances stereotypes and confirms consumerist society in its movement towards superficiality, which undermines the role of females in society. Media are owned by corporations seeking primarily profit and being led by men mostly, this result in covering secure topics, which usually consist of male sports. Such practices then discourage journalists from covering non-mainstream sports, which then gives the audience limited information and therefore limited variety which might result in lesser popularity of certain sports. Women's presence is lacking in the news making process and therefore the media picture of sports is in need of such an element to add to their existing structures. Greater female input in news making would result in a better utilization and understanding of female sports.



## 1.2. Previous studies

Looking at the previous studies most of the resources and news concerning female sports can be found at the Women's Sports Foundation and the Association for Women in Sports Media. There are studies and articles concerning not only how female athletes are portrayed, but also how female sports journalists are treated and accepted. One of the key studies published in August 2007 is a year-long study of online newspaper stories about intercollegiate athletics, conducted by the John Curley Center for Sports Journalism at Penn State. This school also did an interesting study in May 2005, where they tried to find reasons for less coverage of female sports, results showed that the editors usually believed that women are less athletic and not interested in sports, and because many editors have not researched their readers' interests.

Useful study has been conducted by George Cunningham in 2004 which was called "Gender Representation in the NCAA News: is the Glass Half Full or Half Empty?" and was published in *Sex Roles: A Journal of Research*. His thesis was based on the fact that in college sports coverage of males and females should be equal because covering those sports brings no profit, therefore all that matters is the athletes performance itself. His results were opposite though, still male sports had the majority of the coverage and the same applied even to the university newspapers.

As for Czech Republic there are resources in Gender Studies. Most of the studies done in the Czech Republic deal with the role of women in society in general or dealing with work, relationships, domestic work but not sport particularly. Among the FHS students Michaela Šalamounová did a similar paper to mine. Her topic was "Význam konceptů „ženský“ a „mužský“ sport v rámci vybrané skupiny českých sportovců," which she completed in 2006. She dealt with similar issues as I will in my study, mainly concerning gender stereotypes. But her point of view is from inside of the group, how top athletes look at male and female sports. This might be an interesting resource for extra information, but I will concentrate on the media and their portrayal of athletes and on the audience for who the media create their contents.

## **2. MEDIA COVERAGE OF SPORTS**

### **Part I. – General Patterns**

#### **2.1. Male and Female Sports Coverage**

A lot of changes took place between the time women started to perform as athletes until nowadays. Female athletes got more public attention, many started to be professionals at their sport and also media began to have greater interest in their careers and subsequently their private lives too. Now the question is how do the media portray female athletes? Female athletes are portrayed in sport's sections as athletes, but still the coverage of sports featuring women is much less frequent than coverage of male sports. When it comes to non-sport magazines female athletes are many times photographed and presented in sexual postures and in derogatory ways, the same happens with their roles in advertisements many times. Still the way female and male athletes are presented in the media is different; males are getting more respect for their abilities whereas for female athletes the media seems to be more interested in their private life and looks.

It is said that women make up 38 to 42 percent of all sport and physical activity participants. Yet, research of Women's Sports Foundation (2001) indicates that female athletes receive approximately 6 to 8 percent of total sports coverage. At the 2000 Summer Olympic Games 42 percent of the US team consisted of female athletes and they have set 23 out of 39 world records there (Holste, 2000). Women athletes are really top class, well trained and real professionals and their number is almost equivalent to that of the males athletes. Women can never match men in strength, since their body structure is different, but still they can match them in determination, skill, abilities and professional attitude. Women's sport is on a high level, it is no longer amateur, they are well trained and even though they offer different sporting qualities to male athletes, their performance can be equally entertaining to the audiences.

#### **2.2. Presentation of Female Athletes in the Media**

The problem seems to be that media and many times also the ordinary people do not perceive female and male athletes in the same way. The media created the false image of female athletes over the years, showing them as lesbians with male like appearance or overly

sexy, yet nothing in between. In the past few years the trend set by media tried to show all females (not only talking about athletes), as sexy and usually not dressed much, putting the emphasis on their attractiveness to male audience. This is also reflected into sports, since it was “discovered” that many female athletes are pretty and this is worth showing to the public. It is not wrong to showcase that female athletes are pretty and attractive, but female athletes deserve the same respect for their athletic abilities as is provided to male athletes. (Women’s Sports Foundation, 2001). Also the appearance should not come before the fact that female athletes are primarily talented sport professionals. Male athletes are usually not portrayed half naked or in sexual positions since they have the respect for their athletic results and this should be the same in the case of female athletes. This is not to say that no male athletes pose half naked showing of their build body, yet the way they are portrayed and then accepted by the society, makes male athletes still be able to keep respect for their sporting abilities.

As Mary Jo Kane, the director of the Trucker Center for Research on Girls and Women in Sports, said that women are frequently shown out of their sport, in non-uniform clothing and in highly sexualized poses. Kane continued that two decades ago, the image of women athletes was often a “sorority shot” of a women's team dressed formally in long dresses and posed as a group. Now the result is that they take pictures of female athletes in their casual clothing, but not many pictures of them doing the sport.

Mentioning the fact that female athletes were shown and perceived as masculine and as lesbians was many times true in the past. Simply when a female athlete was more athletic, she used to be perceived as lesbian or possibly male. Laura Wackwitz (1996) described a case of a woman that was a long-distance runner and in 1960s trained with men, she was therefore faster and could run more than other women. At the same time a testing begun, where female athletes underwent gender testing. This test is known as the saliva test and it involves scraping the inside of women’s cheek and doing the genetic exams to analyze, if the athlete is really a female, she would have two complete X chromosomes and no Y chromosomes. (Wackwitz, 1996). A similar case took place in 2009 at the Athletics World Championship in Berlin, where 18-year-old South African Caster Semenya won the 800 meter race and because of her masculine body structure and hard face lines her gender was questioned. She was put through many humiliating situations, questions by reporters and subsequently media stories. Her performance was not the story of the day; main focus was on whether or not she was really female. The International Association of Athletics Federations mishandled the whole situation, because they lied to Semenya about the testing, where as the gender verification was

recommended to be dropped from Olympics sports in 1990 and overall instead of protecting the athlete, they exposed her without having adequate proof or right to do so (The Times, 2009).

According to Christeen George et al (2001) people tend to label women who participate in traditionally male-dominated sports as lesbians. The reason for their portrayal like lesbians was the stereotype that if a girl has short hair and has male features then she must be lesbian. Nowadays there is the tendency to exaggerate their femininity, to change that old view of female athletes and so to show how feminine and “normal” female athletes are now.

Female athletes are shown as “wives and mothers” being photographed as holding babies, according to Kane the message behind this is that female athletes have men by their side and so they are not lesbians, as that would “stir anxiety and homophobia” (Holste, 2000). Yet, there are female athletes who are lesbian, same as there are male athletes who are gay.

”Those are private matters best left to individuals rather than advertisers and reporters. A reporter does not go up to a male athlete and ask the gender of who he sleeps with. That question is equally inappropriate for female athletes. The assumption that the public assumes that all female athletes are lesbians and the reporter or advertiser has a responsibility to fix this is absurd” (Women’s Sports Foundation, 2001)

This just shows the inequality that exists between male and female athletes, which was created and still fed by reporters and whole media business.

Once the media got rid of the image of female athletes being mostly homosexual, they did not objectify the reporting, but exaggerated the image of female athlete the other way around. Female athletes were then portrayed as sex symbols, as said by Pat Griffin of the Social Justice Education Program from the University of Massachusetts “when it once was enough to feminize women athletes, now it is necessary to sexualize them for men”. Griffin continued “instead of hearing, ‘I am woman, hear me roar’, we are hearing, ‘I’m hetero-sexy, watch me strip” (Holste, 2000). These are the images that hurt female sports, people go to see women's sport for the same reason they go to see men's sports - because the athletes are good. There are no scientific studies that would show that after portraying women athletes as sexy

and pretty that it would increase the attendance or media interest in women's sports (Women's Sports Foundation, 2001).

### 2.3. Portrayal in Non-Sport Related Context

The main concern is that media show female athletes out of the sport context, such as the Olympic figure skaters in the magazine *People* under the headline "Ice Beauties", but there was not a single picture of them skating (Holste, 2000). Such photographs can imply that female athletes are not strong and highly skilled athletes, one can then hardly demand respect for these athletes, when the audience saw them on pictures not regarded to their sport and so their work. Sometimes you would then recognize a face in the magazine, but not connect the person with a sport, but rather just see them as one of the "celebrities".

The fact is that some of the pictures that are revealing too much of athletes naked body can be perceived as soft porn such as the American female soccer player Brandi Chastain who was photographed in *Gear* magazine, with no visible clothing and holding two soccer balls in front of her (Holste, 2000). Another example from soccer was the Australian female national team who made a calendar before the Olympic Games in 2000 in Sydney, they were posing naked. The same example was followed by Czech Division I women's soccer team of Hradec Kralove, they said the primary reason was to gain sponsors, whether that was successful or not was never mentioned. Since female athletes receive 80-90% less coverage of their sporting achievement in the print and electronic media than the male athletes, female athletes who use this opportunity for non-sport exposure allow the media to continue to marginalize the achievements of the female athlete (Sport in Society, 2000). Coverage of female sport is so little and by using this limited time and space to show the female athletes in other contexts than sport, hurts the whole female sport in return.

The Australian female soccer team got the attention from the media all around the world. Again they got the attention before they started to play, but for example in the United States the female soccer players are in the center of attention thanks to their performance, since they are one of the best soccer teams in the world. Chastain from the U.S. soccer team took those photos on her own, which is a different case but it is not the right way to promote the sport but it could be the "right" way for her to promote just herself. For example, Stacy Dragila, who was a professional athlete in the pole vault took semi-nude photos. After she won the gold Olympic medal in Sydney 2000, she apologized for posing in a calendar clearly aimed at men. She said, she realized she was a role model for girls and regretted her actions

and the implication that women athletes can advance their careers by taking off most or all of their clothes (Holste, 2000). There was another case of naked female track athletes. On the majority of the photos, female athletes were portrayed in high heels and sexy poses with no hint or mention of their athletic ability. No such calendar with soft porn was created featuring the male athlete. The decision to pose in such products and take off their clothes reflects one's personal opinion and influences one's image, but it does not reflect on her or his athletic ability (Sport in Society, 2000). This is very true and it needs to be distinguished, but not many reporters or ordinary people are able or willing to tell apart between the two. Again every athlete should think about the matters in the whole context, because they are famous people who achieved something special and there will be children who will be looking up to them as role models and would like to be like them. Therefore they should be careful about how they are presented in the media. They not only represent themselves, but represent the whole sport. People might then remember in which magazine they have seen some female athlete rather than what was her best performance or what sport does she do.

#### 2.4. Effects on the Audience

Successful athletes are role models for young children and it is important, how they choose to present themselves. Athletes like American female soccer player Mia Hamm was pictured in People magazine. It does not have to be a sport magazine for girls to pick their role models. By seeing Hamm in People, girls see that they do not have to be supermodels, they can be a soccer player and get to the magazine and be famous. As Corralie Simmons the 2000 Olympic silver medal water polo winner said: "It's being able to know that there are other options and choose for yourself" (Holste, 2000). But on the other hand take Russian tennis player Anna Kurnikova, who won only one tournament, yet she is given much more media attention than any other female tennis player (Cíglerová, 2003). This is not to underestimate her abilities, no one can say she is not a good tennis player, because obviously she had to work extremely hard, but at the end it all comes down to physical appearance. She does not have to play tennis ever again and still be on the covers of magazines, which holds true now many years later after she finished her professional tennis career.

Male athletes have the advantage of being respected purely for their abilities and performance, but this seems not to be the case with female athletes. The media somehow

always seems to be taking advantage of their looks. Manon Rheaume was the only woman to ever play in an NHL exhibition game

“In the dozens of hockey cards that were produced while she was playing, only a handful were action shots taken during a game. The majority were of her wearing full makeup, with blow-dried hair and in provocative pose. Her looks were given more attention and even celebrated, rather than her outstanding skill, tremendous potential and unyielding determination to break the gender barrier in hockey. The media's focus is obviously economically driven, as we all know that in North America sex sells.” (Kennedy, 2003)

The media want as many viewers, readers or listeners as possible, and so they rather show a pretty female athlete than a performing female athlete, since that is believed to attract more attention, but is it really true? There are models, actresses and singers who are in television and in newspapers and magazines for their looks, but that should not be the case for athletes. Like Rheaume, who achieved something that no other women managed and so she is very special in that way. As a viewer I would like to see shots from the game, rather than anything else about her. She deserves respect for what she achieved, not for her looks. If her looks get her extra media attention then it is ok, but primarily it should be about her abilities.

The question then is to what extent can the female athletes decide what quotes, pictures or shots will appear in the media? Many times they have no power, like for example Haley Wickenheiser who is a Canadian professional hockey player and she played in the Finnish Division II league. She was presented as though she quit in Finland mainly because she was homesick and so she decided to go back home to Canada. The reason that she was given only about 11 minutes of ice time per 60 minute game was mentioned in media as secondary and less important reason (Kennedy, 2003). Once the athletes are interviewed or photographed, they do not get to choose what will go in the story and what will not. Media presents the stereotypical views of female athletes and portray them as “trivial, romantic or hyper-sexualized” (Holste, 2000), which only enhances the stereotypical views in the society.

It is hard for men not to find high-performing female athletes as a threat, since they are entering the area of sports, which has been dominated by men for years (Holste, 2000). Male

editors are in charge of what sports get coverage and so it should not be surprising then that women athletes get less coverage and if they get media attention they are portrayed in different surrounding than sports. The explanation or excuse of media and advertisers is “this is what the audience wants” and “this is what sells” (Women’s Sports Foundation, 2001). But images that would be showing some racist or anti-Semitic stereotypical content wouldn’t be tolerated so “the position should not be tolerated if the images perpetuate the stereotype of women as sex object” (Women’s Sports Foundation, 2002). The problem is that women athletes sometimes play along (Holste, 2000) like in the example of Kurnikova. The amount of coverage is so little that they are happy for any kind of promotion. The amount of sports coverage of female athletes is limited, however, the amount of coverage newspapers and mainly magazines are willing to give female athletes that are pretty and show their feminine looks is almost unlimited.

What is happening in the media nowadays is something that is hard to describe. On one hand media promote the feeling of the whole society that women are really equal to men, they have the same rights, same abilities and same chances to get any job, it just depends on how good they are. But on the other hand media's images ignore or trivialize females, undermine the importance of women's sports and respect for their abilities (Women’s Sports Foundation, 2001). This is how media portray female athletes but it is not necessary, there are models and artists who should get attention for looks but not athletes, they are special for their sport's abilities and results.

“There are many ways in which women choose to ‘reclaim their bodies’ after being objectified in the media for so many years. Displaying their strength and their muscles is one such method and should be commended. Male and female athletes can do this in minimalists athletic wear, in authentic athletic poses without displaying or attempting to accentuate genitalia in ‘sexy’ ways.”  
(Sport in Society, 2000)

This is an example of how athletes’ body is displayed, yet in a way that the audience can still see the connection to sport and therefore will make the association of this person being an athlete first and a model or subject to advertisement as secondary effect. Athletes



should bear in mind that they have certain responsibilities to their sport and their sport fans not just to themselves.

The majority of people get their information through media, which is constantly feeding them with certain images, after a while people will start to think that after a female sets the world record in the 100 meters sprint, it is perfectly normal for the newspapers to print an article and put her naked picture next to it. Such things would be unthinkable when speaking about male athletes. Since men and women are equal, there is no difference not even in sports, and so it should not be done to female athletes as well. It should not be the gender that matters in the sport story but the respect to the individual who achieved it.

“The media is obligated to reflect and perpetuate that reality - not the homophobia or stereotypes of individual reporters or advertisers - so that sportswomen receive the admiration, dignity and respect they deserve... the same admiration, dignity and respect afforded male athletes.” (Women’s Sports Foundation, 2001)

However, female athletes are not the only ones to blame for being portrayed in non-sport settings. Journalists, editors and media owners are equally to blame for it. They are the ones who are responsible for the media content that reaches the consumers. As in most higher positions, also the media world is ruled by men. Therefore it can be said that television, radio, electronic and print media content, that is targeted to male and female audience, is still created more from a male point of view just because the majority of the newsmakers are male. This is even reinforced when reporting about sport. For example male reports are more likely to comment about female athlete’s appearance than about male, simply because it is alright from the male’s point of view, not so much from female viewer stand point. Yet, this has a deeply rooted history.

## **Part II. - Understanding Media Representation in Czech Environment**

In my work I am trying to show how female athletes are represented in Western media and I am trying to see how that reflects on or affects the way society reacts to such representations. These theories serve as basis for my own studies conducted in the Czech

sport media setting. By talking about media portrayal of female athletes in the Czech Republic I do not mean to generalize to the whole society. I want to show that by closely looking at and analyzing media portrayal of female athletes, we realize how the situation is and we become more aware of the position of women in Czech society. Sport is a good area to examine because it has so many different options and in theory it should not discriminate, therefore anyone can form a relationship with sport. All of us are exposed to sport in one way or another and therefore it is a very powerful field. By combining powerful media with powerful sport then we have a combination of two strong entities that massively influence the society and because of that I feel it is important to study media representations of sports with respect to gender.

Analysis of the relationship between the Czech press and representations of women in Czech society should lead into a more general discussion of women and media with regard to their contribution to the public sphere and an exploration of the ways in which the press might promote or inhibit gender equality. My aim is not to generalize, but rather to give an idea of the current social practices. It is especially important to examine the representation of women in media now 20 years after the fall of the communist regime, since it is impossible to ignore historical factors, in particular the Czech experience of forty years of communist rule and its bearing on society and its media today. The Czech Republic still did not effectively combine its pre- and post-democratic hegemonic structures, which I believe are not particularly advantageous to improving the role of women in Czech society.

The lack of women in public life is not a widely pointed out fact by the general public, so to speak media audience do not see a problem with the gender inequality in the media. There seems to be reluctance by Czech women to involve themselves actively in demanding change. One deeply embedded certainty in Czech thinking is that gender is not an especially relevant factor in the struggle to rebuild a civil society. The society is left to rebuild by itself. Yet, improvements in this sphere will have a positive effect on gender equality in all areas of social activity.

## 2.5. Importance of Sports Coverage

The area of sport is sometimes underestimated by those editors or directors of media who themselves are not interested in sports. The truth is that a great part of the Czech nation is

interested in sports, no matter if they themselves do participate either for fun or in competitions, they follow results of Czech athletes or results of some big sporting events such as the World or European Championships in football, hockey, skiing or athletics or Winter and Summer Olympic Games. This can be observed during the broadcast of some important sporting events where Czechs participate; people who would not watch that sport usually are suddenly keen supporters of Czech athletes. People want to be informed, knowing such information is also a part of the general knowledge of what happens in the world around you. Sport is one of the areas that people talk about. They might talk about results or they might be talking about how some athlete did or even about how some athlete looks like, but sport is area not intellectually demanding and so accessible for everyone, to be able to understand it and talk about it.

The other very important thing that derives from watching sports is the national pride. Evans (2002) study shows that pride in sports matters especially in smaller nations. Yet, it is very important thing that can make the nation come together and feel the pride for their nation and have a feeling of closeness with other citizens. Especially when the Czech football or hockey national teams are playing at some major event, people who do not follow the sport usually watch and cheer for the Czechs. An example of that is the usual gathering of people at the Staroměstské náměstí in Prague when Czech football or hockey teams play at major events and especially when they have done well at the beginning of the tournament, so the people sense that they can be a part of another victorious moment of Czech colors and want to share that with other citizens. They do it because of the feeling of national pride, but also because it is something that you have to know about, since the rest of the society you live in knows about and talks about.

Sport is therefore included in television and radio news but also in programs specialized on different sports. All the newspapers have a special page or pages devoted to sports, so do magazines. Internet sites are either specialized for a certain sport, or they are sport news sites or part of news site with a section devoted to sports. Of course there are television stations, magazines and newspapers and internet sites too that deal with sport only.

Sport is a big part of Czech culture. Czechs like to perform different kinds of sports, but also follow them in the media. Above I have discussed how sports are important as conversational topics and part of basic knowledge, but there are also many people who are

really passionate about certain sports or sport team, those are the primarily audience for sport channels, radio broadcasts and mainly those are the readers of daily Sport.

## 2.6. Overview of Czech Sport Media

### *2.6.1. Television*

The Czech Republic is in the age of digitalization and so the television and radio broadcasting were adjusting to changes. They now have the advantage of a variety of extra services but also the number of channels. Currently the public television, Česká Televize (ČT) has four channels (ČT 1, ČT 2, ČT 24 a news only channel and ČT 4 Sport). There are two private televisions that broadcast all over the Czech Republic, those are Nova and Prima. There are other channels that are available in regions or with the purchase of cable or set-top-box. ČT as a public broadcaster they are by law obliged to give air time to all kinds of programs. ČT 2 was the main program to watch sports and the main events are still available there, but since the digitalization all the people will need to have satellite, cable or set-top-box to be able to watch TV so many sports events are now shown on ČT Sport. Their traditional sport programs are coverage of major ice hockey and football events, national and international. Sunday afternoon usually features basketball, handball or volleyball games, usually male leagues. On Mondays is a Time Out magazine specializing on volleyball, handball and basketball leagues. International competitions in these sports with Czech participation were usually covered, yet not always. An example is the 2005 Women European Basketball Championship, where Czechs won, the only game shown was the final (where it was certain that Czechs will have a medal). There was coverage of the French Open tennis tournament which stopped few years ago, showing the semifinals and finals of male and female programs. The sport programs that Nova and Prima offered were ice hockey, football and formula 1, all featuring male athletes. New competition came with the introduction of satellite and cable TV to the Czech Republic. There is Nova Sport which is a new progressive channel that now belongs under Nova, which shows sports the other channels do not, such as different tennis tournaments or Moto GP races. Then there are Sport 1, Eurosport and Eurosport 2. Still only about 10% of the Czech population has access to those channels (CAKK, 2006).

### 2.6.2. Radio

There is no such thing as a sport only radio. So sport coverage is limited to sport news as part of the news programs or some feature news. Public radio Český Rozhlas, mainly its station Radiožurnál dedicates a lot of time primarily to football and hockey. It is followed by basketball, mainly female, because it is more successful in the Czech Republic recently and mainly concentrating on international competitions. The four major Grand Slam tennis tournaments get regular coverage (Australian Open, French Open, Wimbledon, and US Open). But since it is a public broadcaster time is dedicated to other sports too.

Table A – shows an average number of listeners of radio stations (whole country broadcasters) between 1.10.2007 and 31.3.2008 there were 14 690 randomly chosen respondents (Median and Stem/mark, 2008). Radiožurnál is the fourth most listened to radio.

Stations	listeners per day in thousands
Rádio Impuls	1143
Evropa 2	820
Frekvence	797
ČRo 1 Radiožurnál	709
ČRo 2 Praha	393
ČRo 3 Vltava	60
ČRO 6	22

### 2.6.3. Newspaper/Magazine

There is only one newspaper that specializes in sport, which is called daily SPORT (from now on referred to as daily Sport or newspaper Sport). Other major newspapers have sport sections included. There used to be magazines specializing on different sports, but such magazines did not last long and currently no such magazine is available in the Czech market.

There are magazines specialized on football or hockey or both, popular are fishing and cycling magazines.

Table B – shows the average number of sold issues of the Czech daily newspapers (national newspapers) between 1.4. 2008 and 30.9. 2008 and 15 092 respondents were used (GfK Praha, 2008). Sport is the only specialized newspaper among the top seven and it is on the fourth spot. It is actually the only newspaper that has increased the number of issues sold in the last few years. The topic of sport is therefore definitely important to Czechs.

Newspapers	Average number of issues sold
BLESK	1 460 000
MLADÁ FRONTA DNES	1 066 000
PRÁVO	418 000
SPORT	358 000
AHA!	327 000
LIDOVÉ NOVINY	231 000
HOSPODÁŘSKÉ NOVINY	219 000

Newspapers focusing on sport only do not have a history in all the countries. Big countries with many different regions or states such as the United States has a complex system of newspaper distribution, so they do not have one national newspaper focusing only on sport issues. In Great Britain there used to be a newspaper named Sporting Life, which no longer exists. Yet, most of the other European countries have a history of newspapers presenting only sports content and the mostly exist till today. The most famous European sports newspapers are French *L'Equipe*, *La Gazzetta dello Sport* in Italy and Spanish *Marca*. In 1953 Československý spor a predecessor of daily Sport started to be printed two times a week. In 1965 Československý sport came out everyday except for Sunday and Brno a Ostrava offices were established. From 1993 the newspaper chaged its name to Sport and from 1999 an internet version was made available. In 2001 Ringier buys 51% of shares and in

2003 buys the rest of shares and becomes the majority owner. Every Friday comes out Sport magazine and on Sunday is a special edition of Nedělní Sport (Dias, 2008).

#### *2.6.4. Internet*

The advantage of internet is that everyone can look up things they are interested in. Sport leagues and teams have their web pages, then fans create pages for their favorite teams or favorite players and there are news and information pages that provide hard news, but also feature articles. Internet does not limit itself just to written work, but also audio and visual aspects are becoming part of it. The disadvantage is that not everyone has access to it and once someone enters, he or she looks for specific information, making the audience very active. According to NetMonitor in 2009 there are 6.8 million internet users in the Czech Republic, that is more than half of the population. Even though the number of Czech users rose by ten times in the six years still the Czech population has limited access to the internet, so this is why television, radio and newspapers are said to have a bigger impact, since it has access to more people and can reach more people at home. According to NetMonitor the most visited sport sites are sport.cz and idnes.cz/sport. In September 2009 sport.cz had 1.7 million visitors and idnes.cz/sport had more than 500 thousand visitors. Combining all the sports sites' visitors together in September 2009 there were almost 2.5 million visitors to Czech sports web sites and this number as well as the number of internet users in the Czech Republic is increasing every month (appendix A).

#### 2.7. Overview of Popular Czech Sports

Briefly going through sports covered in the major Czech media, there was a clear repetitive pattern – if sport then hockey or football. These are the two most popular sports in the Czech Republic. According to the NetMonitor website sport.cz had in February 2009 more than 1.4 million visitors, out of that 800 thousand people visited the football site on sport.cz and more than 700 thousand users visited the hockey site. The number of all visitors that clicked on all the other sport's sites on sport.cz combined made up more than 800 thousand. So it seems to prove that football and hockey are the major sports for the sport fans in the Czech Republic. These are sports where Czechs were historically successful at and they became most popular sports thanks to the history but also recent successes. The coverage in media is only of the male version of these sports. Female versions only get to be mentioned if

there is some success, but compared to coverage of the male versions of these sports the difference in the amount is big.

Yet, there are other sports where Czechs have had over time good results and once a Czech is good in some sport the chance of getting live coverage of these sports is quite high especially with the publicly owned media. Czechs have been good at all kinds of sport, but apart from hockey and football the success have been up and down. Those sports were for example cross-country skiing, ski jumping, athletics, basketball, shooting, tennis, kayaking and canoeing. The success of Czech colors is not constant at these sports, once in a while Czech athletes excels at these sports and win medals. The level of their success during the time they perform as professionals, gives that sport a higher chance of being covered in the media in the future as well. People will get used to watching cross-country skiing even when Neumannová will not perform anymore, but it is important that some skiers will compete on the same level with the best. She established herself to the audience, but she established an audience for the sport of cross-country skiing as well and so it is important that someone will be able to compete with the best and follow Neumannová's steps otherwise this audience could be lost again because it is still in a very fragile state. Basically Neumannová's success brought the Czech audience to the sport simply, because of the success itself and the fact that the audience can feel proud for being Czech. With no success there would not be the collective feeling of national pride and so there is a decrease in the number of the Czech people who will be interested in cross-country skiing. Three years after her Olympic gold medal no Czech women is able to follow Neumannová and the audience for cross-country skiing is diminishing, only a male skier Lukáš Bauer was able to succeed but the female version of the sport is losing the Czech audience that Neumannová created.

Separate case is Czech basketball, where women's national team and also clubs have had frequently good results, where as the media coverage was mostly given to underperforming Czech men's clubs and national team. ČT shows Czech men's league live every week, cover Czech men's teams on the international scene even though there has not been any success recently. The women's team from Brno regularly wins the Czech league, they are a level above all the other Czech women teams. They perform in the European league and frequently reach the top four tournament, that they won in 2006 for the first time. Most of their games in the European league do get coverage, but this came as a consequence of their constantly good results. Men's teams needed no good results to reach much wider coverage in media. Men's national basketball team gets television coverage when it reaches the European



or World championship, this is again different for women's national team. Women reached the European championship in 2005, yet there was no television coverage. At that championship they reached the final, which was the only televised game by ČT for Czech audience.

Television, mainly privately owned look for profit in the first place, sports other than football and hockey seem non-prosperous. Couple of years ago Nova started to televise all formula 1 races (even though there are no Czechs, motorsports are popular in the Czech Republic), since it was cover by television Prima before, it already had a group of established viewers so it was easy for Nova to attract viewers. As for the other media, the ones that try to cover as many sport events as possible is the newspaper Sport and radio station Radiožurnál. Daily Sport does cover that because people who buy Sport are probably interested into more sports than just football and hockey. As for the radio station, they either get the event sponsored by a specific company so their advertising pays the trip or if they do not find a sponsor but find the event important they send in a reporter just because they want to have a variety of information as a public radio.

### **3. THEORY OF GENDER REPRESENTATION**

#### 3.1. Understanding Gender: Masculinity and Femininity

To fully understand why female athletes have to fight for their spotlight, appropriate media attention and sponsorship deals with greater intensity than male athletes, the concept of gender, sex, identity in connection with sport have to be assessed. One of the key things is to assess what is masculinity and femininity, how are they understood, accepted and reinforced in society.

More than hundred years ago psychoanalyst Sigmund Freud showed interest in masculinity and femininity and mainly in connection with psychosexual development. He believed that children adopt their gender-role in the Phallic stage which according to him occurs between the age of 3 to 6. The libidinal energy centers on genitals and sexual feeling develops. Yet girls and boys go through a different experience that then determines them. With male children Freud connects the Oedipus complex. The male infant has sexual wishes connected with his mother. He envies his father for being close to mother and fears to be castrated as a punishment for his forbidden wishes. The resolution comes when the boy identifies with his father and wishes to become like him. As for a girls' development, Freud is not as clear as in case of boys and it is more open for different explanations. The most widely known is the Electra complex, where the girl feels she has been already castrated of the penis and so envies her father for having one. She then develops a strong love attachment to her father and identifies with her mother in order to become like her. Satisfactory resolution of the Oedipus/Electra complex results in the child identifying with the parent of the same sex (Malim and Birch, 1998).

Socialization and psychoanalytic theories claim, that gender formation is more problematic for boys than it is for girls. Boys need to break their early identification with mothers because after a certain time they go back to work and so are not in contact with them the whole day anymore. The distancing of males from females can thus be an emphasized reaction based on uncertainty and even anxiety about the development of masculine personality (Bryson, 1990). This is reinforced by separation of girls and boys in the early age through suggested activity or sport based on gender.

For Freud masculinity and femininity were seen as opposites or a dichotomy. The same notion is being reinforced in the society, where femininity is associated with complying

with the norm of pretty, fragile and emotional; masculinity is then seen as strong, aggressive and fast. Yet, that is the main mistake; to try to differentiate both is not the right way to go. People should rather be seen as individuals, then either male or female. However, our society reinforces differences by dressing little girls in pink, boys in blue, girls play with dolls, boys play with cars. Later on in life we read books such as *Men are from Mars, Women are from Venus*, which only reinforce our perception of seeing men and women as dichotomy. These are clear examples of stressing differences; the emphasis though should be on gender relations rather than on gender differences.

Masculinity and femininity are idealized cultural symbols, rather than stable individual characteristics or traits. According to R. W. Connell (2002) there are many groups in society who view gender as a dichotomy using terms as ‘true femininity’ or ‘real masculinity’, but Connell argues that the great majority of us actually combine masculine and feminine characteristics. He continues by saying that it is clear from the current social research that there is no pattern of femininity or masculinity, but that there are multiple femininities and masculinities. These multiple patterns can be the result of class differences and ethnic diversity and they change over the lifespan of an individual.

Whatever we understand by masculinity and femininity may then determine how we see ourselves and how we understand our own identity. In the next section I will talk about the creation of identity and the aspects that influence it.

### 3.2. Creation of Identity

“Gender is a socially and historically constructed set of power relations” states Ann Hall in her work *Feminism and sporting bodies* (1996, p. 223). Gender involves notions of identities, boundaries and expectations that are actively created in a historical and social context. Gender is actively created and re-created through human interaction in social life.

For Judith Butler (1999) gender is an attribute in person, as a fluid variable which shifts and changes in different contexts and at different times. The very fact that women and men can say that they feel more or less like a woman or like a man shows, that through experience people create gender identity, which is also a product of culture. Butler analyzes the category of woman, gender and sex and she finds the whole concept of normative heterosexuality problematic.

Butler believes that gender identity is not given but created. The key idea is that identity is performatively constituted, meaning that gender is a performance, it is what you do

at particular times, rather than a universally who you are. This is influenced by norms and their acceptance in society; this is for example forced heterogeneity. These norms make us behave in a way that we call 'correct'. Butler is trying to find new ways to look at creation of identity in the light of changed discourse which might influence our thinking of the politics of identity.

Certain cultural configurations of gender have seized a hegemonic hold, meaning that some things only seem natural since they were acting as part of our culture. According to Butler subversive action in the present 'gender trouble' is needed, this might lead to proliferation of gender and therefore identity. We all take part in gender performance either consciously or unconsciously; the question is what form does it take? By choosing to be different about it, we might work to change gender norms and the binary understanding of masculinity and femininity.

Butler in *Gender trouble* quotes Simone de Beauvoir, "One is not born a woman, but rather becomes one." Beauvoir says that the category of women is a cultural accomplishment and that no one is born with gender, it is always acquired. Sex does not however cause gender, which compared to sex, can actually be changed.

Sex is cultural and political interpretation of the body and sex is already gendered. According to Monique Wittig it is forced into our social life and even though it is understood as natural order, it is a category that exists in language systems of compulsory heterosexuality. Language holds power over bodies. Through repetition, information can be accepted as fact. In the same way constant repetition of differences between sexes caused that the division seems to be natural. This complies with the division of gender and language, the masculine gender is universal, where as the feminine gender is particular. This means that the core is the masculine; it is the universal to which everything is subjected to. So feminine being particular means that it belongs under the category of masculine and it is in a way a division of it. This is a part of the power keeping for political reasons by means of language. Therefore language needs to be freed from power links and Wittig calls for abolishing binary categories and having one universal gender category. In *Les Guérillères* she seeks to eliminate any he-they (il-ils) conjunctions, and offers elle as the general, universal category. Butler in *Gender trouble* quotes Wittig, "The goal of this approach it not to feminize the world but to make the categories of sex obsolete in language," (Butler, 1999, p. 153).

Therefore language is one of the key aspects of creation of identity. It can be powerful in itself, because the masculine gender controls and holds the power. This masculine dominance in language then influences the way we talk and also the way we think. Yet, Butler

says that even though these assumptions are based on sex, they should not be therefore implemented upon gender. Because there is not a natural connection between sex and gender, only the one that is constructed by the combination of relations and intentions of society, language and power struggle (Butler, 1999).

### *3.2.1. Assistance of Sport in Creation of Identity*

Nancy Chodorow says that male children develop their identities by differentiating themselves from their mothers. As mothers are usually the care takers from the moment the baby is born, their primary interaction is with women. Boys then have bigger difficulty identifying with their fathers. Therefore in developing their masculine identities they differentiate themselves from mothers and women in general. One of the ways they do it is through sport, this is also one of the reasons that men in general are less eager to let females join males at their sporting activity. At sports boys learn to accept pain, express anger or aggression, which are clearly concepts connected with manliness. Accepting girls among themselves undermines this whole process. The blurring of sex roles undermines not only male-only activities, but also creation of identity through sport, at least by the means of differentiating from the other gender (Kidd, 1990).

The patriarchal nature of sport has harmed men too though. By encouraging certain personality traits with participating in sports, has limited options for the evolution of humankind in general. Sport should make participants less emotional, strengthen their body, but also character. Yet, the emotional display is unwanted, because sport teaches one to keep one's inner feelings. Through sports men then learn to cooperate with and be close to other men in the bounds of the sporting environment. However, they are not encouraged to get close to each other emotionally, which is an aspect of character that they are then lacking in everyday situation. Letting a woman participate in sport with men might then change the circumstances and the whole idea of strengthening character through sport would be lost. Men who express their emotions could be suspicious in a sense that, this is not the kind of behavior other men expect from them and might therefore find them emotionally unstable, weak or assume that they are homosexual (Kidd, 1990).

Through sport gender can be not only constructed, but also changed or deconstructed. In earlier studies it has been said that women only face problems while attempting to join male dominated sports such as weight lifting and boxing, more recent studies suggest new possibilities. According to Ilse Hartmann-Tews and Gertrud Pfister (2003) women joining

such sports are putting resistance to the gender order and in result it might be possible to point out or even change the current construction of gender, at least in countries where women are accepted in such sports.

Men need the area of sports to strengthen their masculinity and that is one of the reasons, why it is hard for them to accept females in such a process. Men use sport for strengthening their body, but also to make their relations with other men tighter and therefore it is not only physical activity, but also social activity. Yet, it is a social activity for men only. Women are rejected by men from participating in sporting activities with them and encouraged to find other activities, where they gather and bond.

### 3.3. Gender and Body

One of the main instruments of how we understand ourselves is understanding our sex and that is done though understanding our body. Yet, the body is a construct of our culture, which is not determining the gender, yet it is what society expects us to think (Butler, 1999). It is important to note that there is a difference between sex and gender. Sex is our biological disposition, where as gender is constructed, it does not reflect sex. Gender adjusts to the environment we are in and it is subject of political and cultural constructions. But for Michel Foucault body is a product of modern society, we let our body be checked by doctors. Therefore gender is totally artificial concept which is created by the power relations.

For Butler body is a problematic concept. It is not only ours, but it is also the surface of events, cultural product and imprint of history. According to Butler body is therefore culturally constructed. Body is said to be gendered, because the outside is influenced by the inner essence of the body, meaning the soul. Butler also says, “Acts and gestures articulated and enacted desires create the illusion of an interior and organizing gender core, an illusion discursively maintained for the purposes of the regulation of sexuality within the obligatory frame of reproductive heterosexuality,” (1999 p. 173).

Butler also talks about gender and truth. She says that accepting that inner truth of gender is only an illusion and if true gender is not real then genders can be neither true nor false, but are only produced as the truth effects of a discourse of primary and stable identity. The way we see and understand our body then also plays along with the construct of our gender. Also bodies can be gendered, it is controlled by culture, which creates norms that then serve as the basic manual for us to develop a ‘correct’ gender. Butler says for example, “... gender requires a performance that is repeated,” (1999 p. 178). The effect of gender is

produced through stylization of body. Various movements and gestures constitute the illusion of abiding gendered self. “Genders can be neither true nor false, neither real nor apparent, neither original nor derived. As credible bearers of those attributes, however, genders can also be rendered thoroughly and radically incredible,” (Butler, 1999, p. 180).

Social power dramatically influences our understanding of sex, gender and body, which then shapes up our understanding of one's identity. As Butler (1999) states the concept of two biological sexes is as socially constructed as gender is. She criticizes feminists for talking about men and women as two separate groups which only reinforces the problem. Proliferation of radical gender categorization is necessary to minimize assumptions and stereotyping. Rather than opening up possibilities for a person to form and choose their own individual identity, feminism had closed the options down. The importance of male and female bodies is according to feminists determining whether we feel as male or female.

In sport the body is the main instrument of success and therefore athletes have been encouraged to treat their bodies instrumentally. They take care of their body as if it was an instrument; they undergo treatments, let it be touched and “improved” by medicaments, surgeries or body support systems. Mainly in sport itself athletes use the body as the instrument to wanted victory. They accept pain, but can also inflict it to other people's bodies. Sports were designed to elevate physical activity, but also to harden men psychologically. This then does not correspond with the ideal image of a girl, which should be soft and fragile. Females that then do participate in sports with males are perceived as tomboys.

Sport also displays one's body, therefore athletes' bodies get the attention of the media, but also the crowd. Some athletes might be praised for their fit bodies, others might be called fat, skinny or having too big shoulders. Athletes' bodies are basically on display while they perform, but no matter what athletes wear or how they look, the number one aspect is their performance. Yet, in case of female athletes this does not seem to always apply or at least not in certain sports such as tennis.

### 3.4. Body and Power Relations

According to Hall (1996) body seen as subject underlines all human physical activity including sport. But unlike in other activities, in sport it is essential that the body is able to perform on a certain level and have the skill set that determines the result. Sport is therefore a model of body-subject. Yet, body can also be an object, mainly while talking about female as the “other”. The main idea is though that either if female body is referred to body-subject or

body-object, it just creates the notion that women and sport is not a match. So women have been either excluded from sporting activities and if they participated they were mostly not taken seriously. More importantly the hegemonic male power has been for a long time in control of female bodies and this is the consequence of it.

In patriarchal society men have power over women. The practice of masculine behavior by men and feminine behavior by women is the semiotic instrument of this power. One form of masculine behavior is the development of physical strength, which is mainly displayed through sport. The masculine development and display of physical strength by men in connection with lack of women in sport, embody Foucault's concept of power. Power relations have to contain both sides, the weak subordinate one, to which the dominant one can dictate. The masculine development of physical strength reinforces power relations between men and women. Masculinity and femininity being seen as the two opposite forces like strength and weakness than work as a system that supports the power relations. Development and display of physical strength is one of many strategies that force relations employ??? (Pronger, 1990). Masculinity is a strategy for power relations between men and women; it is the strategy that serves the interest of patriarchal heterosexuality. Athletics is then a sign of masculinity in men and can be an instrument of those power relations.

People tend to accept that men are far better at sports than women, because men are stronger, faster and tougher. If it were not important to be skillful, strong and in particular tough, this misconception wouldn't matter. But these virtues are positively valued not only in sport, but in life in general and this is the basis through which social and economic power is distributed. To be better at sport is symbolically translated into life, so saying that men are better and more capable in other areas of life (Bryson, 1990). Through this process women who are said not to be able to match with men at sports, are therefore inferior and less capable in many other areas of life. This is what the dominant masculinity is based on and it is referred to as hegemonic masculinity.

Sport's very physical nature gives it special significance because of the strong link between social power and physical force. Sport is a major arena in which physical force and toughness are interconnected into hegemonic masculinity. This celebration of men as the stronger beings makes them feel as in a position to dominate (Bryson, 1990).



### 3.5. Masculine Hegemony in Sport

Arguably the area which most strongly represents male superiority and female inferiority is the area of sports. According to Mary Jo Kane and Susan L. Greendorfer (1994) this argument is based on the notion that sport can reflect the biological or physical differences and social and cultural interpretations of gender role expectations.

The importance of talking about male hegemony and sports is not only that sport is the arena where male hegemony is reinforced, also it is the basis of it since all of us have been exposed to sports from very early age. It has been part of our educational background and playing times in school and also outside of it. Sport is therefore an ideal medium for conveying messages of gender dominance. It is also a form of mass reality, with the increasing popularity, media exposure and the notion of reality, it is likely to be even more magnified.

Sports are taught in school as physical education or children can be exposed to different activities outside of school either just with their peers or in organized clubs. Usually boys would play football or some other more physically demanding sport and girls would separate and take on some easier activities such as rope jumping or light athletics. This then helps the reinforcement of hegemonic masculinity. The consequence then is that women agree with male hegemony and in fact accept the biological explanations offered for their “inferior” performances, even when there is no validity for such explanations (Bryson, 1990).

Boys are still taught in a quite straightforward way that sport is a significant part of manliness. The achievement of basic skills of throwing and kicking a ball as well as catching is something boys learn from a young age usually, being introduced to it by fathers but also mothers. Girls are introduced to the same skill, but in a negative manner, as something they cannot do well. Girls then join recommended activities such as rope jumping, which are not highly valued sport activities rather activities of childhood (Bryson, 1990).

Sport is the central agency through which gender identities and relations are constructed. Gender acts as a powerful cultural and ideological force that gently shapes both individual perceptions and group process. Here gender reflects and also frames the realities that are observed. So this then sets what is the appropriate physical activity, which reinforces stereotypes of what is masculine and what is feminine. Cultural values, gender identity development and gender stereotypes are all reflected in physical education in schools. Boys and girls are likely to accept, rather than reject those cultural and ideological messages (Bryson, 1990).

By accepting these notions without ever questioning them, we agree with this construct and even strengthen the male dominance through a complex of ideological processes that link masculinity with valued skill, strength and power. Therefore, sport plays a crucial part in the construction and maintenance of people in the development of gender personality (Connell, 2002).

Hegemonic masculinity can even have negative effect on some men, who do not comply with the image of strong athletic male, but the main target are women, therefore they are referred to as the “other”. Male superiority in sport is a great deal based on the biological preconditions. Ideology that claims to be based on biological differences is exceptionally powerful, because it claims naturalness and denies challenge. Not only that, men have power because of their biological dispositions, but also because of socially constructed power relations. These two combined together make a strong pair. Historically men as a social group have more power than women (Bryson, 1990).

The clear disadvantage for women are then the biological dispositions, so women can never be as strong or fast as men. Yet, these are the criteria athletes are judged upon and therefore male athletes reach faster time, jump higher and further, can lift heavier weight and so claim superiority. Even when women participate separately there is the (many times unspoken) comparison to men, which is in most events not even close. When it comes to gracefulness and rhythm as in aerobics, gymnastics or ice skating, women’s talents may be recognized, but it is not on the same level as the appreciation of male athletes’ attributes in sport. Therefore, it puts these attributes in a hierarchical order, where those possessed by men are more valued than those women excel in and this exposes the ideological nature of(or?) the biological justification of male superiority (Bryson, 1990). There can be no biological basis for admiring more highly those performance criteria thought of as masculine. When the recognition of success of female athlete comes, the female is then celebrated as successful, yet a successful sex object, extending her success beyond just her ability to her appearance. There is no doubt that sport has had historically one main goal and that was enhancing masculinity and women coming into the picture seriously threatens this construct.

Males who comply with the hegemonic masculinity are valued highly in society, praised for being strong and are already considered a strong force. Women who do want to participate in sports are discouraged from tough and rough sports so they can’t demonstrate physical power and aggressive behavior. Women weight lifters and some track and field athletes have their sexuality questioned; just because they have a desire to be good at male dominated sports. Women are not seen as strong and if they try to show or prove they are,

then they are seen as overly masculine. Therefore maybe even unconsciously society is trying to keep women away from sports that are said to be masculine.

Despite recent challenges to power relations, hegemonic masculinity is still demonstrated in the form of the hero who is strong, aggressive and brave. In our society elite male athletes are often perceived as heroes. They have strong bodies, are aggressive, have determination and break records. On the other hand, different characteristics are given to heroines. Jennifer Hargreaves (2000) says about heroines of sport that traditionally they are caring, kind and selfless and these feminine qualities are translated into how we also see female athletes/heroines. Female elite athletes setting world records through strength and aggression may not get heroic status due to the differential treatment of men and women in sport. The achievements of men are being glorified, while the achievements of women are many times ignored or even downgraded.

### 3.6. Creation of Male Companionship in Sport

Sport is not only important as the means of reinforcing masculinity, but also acts like a bonding force. Male companionship allows boys to be boys and men to be men and also allows men to initiate boys into traditions men have shared. Letting women be equal part of the sport's world erodes the importance of such traditions for men. When girls are present in sport teams the team can't be lead in a masculine way and therefore the man-boy relationship can't be established. Yet initiation also occurs in more personal and warmly remembered ways, such as many commercials and movies have used. This is the event of father taking his son to an important sports game. The father and son are depicted as doing something together and the boy, it is suggested, is very happy that his dad is taking him into the world of grown up men.

Other similar examples are when the son and father play sports together or talk about sports. According to Bryson (1990) father and son are in such exchanges sharing emotional responses and it is also the initiation of the boy into a male language and traditions. In these traditions male bonding is encouraged and therefore women must be excluded. Women attending sport with son and father disrupt such formation of a bond. Same happens in a team, when boys are bonding together, then presence of female, acts as a disruptive force. The values that are mainly threatened by the entry of women into male preserves, are opportunities for men to rehearse their ties as men and reaffirm their differences from women. Women have

forged strong bonds with one another in their own athletic quests and men and women have known solidarity together when other struggles, such as labor strikes, have underlined their common interests rather than their differences.

### 3.7. Threat to Masculinity

Men are physiologically better equipped; they are faster, stronger and have better endurance. They have been involved with competitive sports ever since ancient Greece Olympic Games. Women have been historically seen as fragile, sensitive and weak. Over the course of the last century women have been involved with many kinds of sport and such description of women became less true not only in the way women see themselves, but also how the rest of the society accepts them. However, arguably even though there are today many women who do achieve particular combinations of force and skill much more effectively than many men do, the persistence of “normal” differences in empowerment remains one of the main ways in which the superiority of men becomes ‘naturalized’ (Whitson, 1990). Moreover, the regular opportunities for the celebration of male superiority that are afforded by for example “Hockey Night in Canada” may be especially important for men who feel threatened by contemporary changes in gender relations.

A male cliff diver said, “This is a death-defying activity – the men are taking a great gamble to prove their courage. What would be the point if everyone saw that women could do the same?” This happened more than 20 years ago and the referred women legitimately qualified to the race. Time has changed and many men of the younger generations accept women as athletes, but the fact that men do not want to lose to women, especially in the sport context, is still a big threat to their masculinity. A proving ground for masculinity can only be preserved as such by the exclusion of women from the activity (Whitson, 1990).

In other words, it is important from a male stand point to keep the differences between men and women. In reality much has changed on the terrain of gender relations and male dominance has been and is still being challenged on many fronts. Whitson (1990) has proposed that male hegemony is strengthened to the extent that fighting skills and physical powers are honored in society, whereas the same does not happen for women. He also argues that when the differences between sexes are broken down, male advantages diminish and that is why they desperately try to hold on to masculinity as only theirs. Therefore, men feel threatened by large changes in gender relations.

Men are also afraid of loss of the traditional nurturing, that might result if females were socialized through sports and adopt and learn the similar values as men. Therefore, men are determined to keep sports, mainly the ones considered highly physically demanding, as their virtues. It also helps to understand the psychological pressure on female athletes, which are trying to comply with what is considered feminine. As a result some female athletes overemphasize their femininity as for example happens among female tennis players. Men and women then collaborate to maintain the existing gender arrangements (Kidd, 1990).

Yet there are women who want to break the barriers and are good enough to compete with men and ultimately are good at their chosen sport. Some studies even suggest that if women had the same opportunities in money, facility and quality of training that they could compete with the best men (Kidd, 1990). Recent sporting results have shown that at certain sports it is possible, for example in swimming the best women are getting close to the results of best men, but in majority of the other sports it is hard to accomplish. Yet, just the idea of women being better than some men at some sport frightens men. Men fear the changes in the character of sport that would take place if women played with men (Kidd, 1990).

### 3.8. Conclusion

In 1987 a 13 year old Justine Blainey was not allowed by Ontario Hockey Association to play for a boy's team, even though she was successful in the tryouts. The OHA went to court four times in effort to stop her and eventually lost (Kidd, 1990). The importance of the story, even though it is more than 20 years old, is that women were not allowed to compete with men and even though little girls now can play in football, hockey or baseball teams with boys, it is something women had to fight hard for. In this section I have been talking about the theoretical background of understanding of gender, identity, masculinity and femininity with the connection to sport. To know why female sports are seen as inferior to male sports, it is important to look at this background.

Even though there is less prejudice in society than 20 years ago, majority of the boys are still brought up in the masculine fashion and girls in feminine. There is still the notion that boys by nature should be better than girls at sports and from early age there is the separation of activities and only few individuals choose a different path for themselves, others usually comply with the unwritten standards. And since from an early age we create such understanding of what boys should do and what girls should do, we carry these bases further

in life. Then when it comes to careers sport journalists are mostly men, media owners and editors as well, so this then influences what sports get the attention. Ultimately the viewers will be mostly men as well, the same men who did not want to play sports with girls when they were little, are less likely to now watch sports where women perform.

So looking at the start of the problem, it all begins in the childhood and how sports are presented to children. Some experts have suggested that to overcome this early separation of children at sports, the physical education lessons should put boys and girls together and include them in kind of neutral exercise, where they might also need to work together. Barbara Humberstone (1990) in her essay proposes such solution. She says that there is sex segregation in physical education classes and it translates into other areas of children's lives. Just mixing boys and girls does not solve this problem. Humberstone (1990) points out that it is not an easy task to make children interested and engage them all in one activity, but it is possible. She did a study when children (male and female) from ages 10 to 16 for one week visited an outdoor-adventure center. Children participated in mixed groups, having same privileges and wearing uniforms. In the interviews children not only enjoyed the unusual activities, but also learned more about each other. This experience provided the opportunity for boys to rethink their views about girls' physical potentials and competences (Humberstone, 1990). This is a good start to more balanced PE lessons, but also to more balanced view of the members of the other gender.

This does not mean that PE lessons must abandon football or rope jumping, because they are too masculine or feminine oriented activities, but rather offer children some activities where they can bond through similar experience and learn about each other. They might start to better understand the strengths of the other person and rather than seeing themselves divided into girls and boys, they might learn to appreciate each other as individuals. Also such activity might eventually give girls courage to go play football with boys and boys might not feel embarrassed to skip the rope with girls next time. This would be the basis of a change that could not only change physical education lessons, but also the way boys and girls understand each other and in future it might help female sports in form of greater acceptance in society in form of greater coverage and greater viewership.

In this section I stated and assessed theoretical basis for gender formation, but also for formation of our values and opinions. The way we understand ourselves determines our opinions on the world. Therefore, it is that stage of our development that also determines our

relationship with sports, either as activity that we do or something we like to follow. Czech society had always been sports oriented, physical education lesson have been big part of the schooling system and maintenance of the sports clubs has been essential part of the social life. Therefore, we can apply such theories to the Czech environment and then examine the results and see if they comply with results from other parts of the Western societies.

## 4. PORTRAYAL OF FEMALE ATHLETES

### 4.1. History of Females' Roles in Sport

According to Denis McQuail's book *Mass Communication Theory: in Introduction* (1999) there are lesser females in the media business, not only in the top positions but also as journalists too. McQuail then concludes that the television and other media today are more masculine than feminine. This is then reflected in the different amounts of sport coverage devoted to males and females. McQuail pointed out that men are often more active and prominent in areas of politics, war, business and sport.

Looking back in history even in Ancient Greece where the Olympic Games started only males participated and only males could attend the games. The response of women was to create their own sporting games, they established the Heraea Games that were held every four years in honor of Zeus' wife Hera (George, 2001). In the history lessons in school students are taught about the Olympic Games in Ancient Greece but there was hardly any mention that women had their own games, the Heaea Games. From the history the feeling of male dominance in the area of sport is reinforced. Throughout the history society has tried to vindicate the argument that sports are the "natural" domains of men due to the innately different biological and psychological natures of both genders. (George, 2001).

Women participated in sporting events throughout the history. In the United Kingdom upper class women participated in riding, hunting and tennis. For a short period of time during the Renaissance it was thought that in order for women to bear healthy children they should be active. During the Victorian era few women took part in more dangerous sports such as mountaineering. Despite restrictions, women started participating in organized cricket in the eighteen century (George, 2001).

George talks about myths that are connected with negative effects of sport on the female body. These include damage to reproductive organs, menstrual problems, the high likelihood of injuries due to the "fragility" of women's bodily structure and the risk of breast cancer from being hit in the breasts. Women were seen in the society as fragile beings and sport was therefore seen as too dangerous for them. Moreover, men were the heroes in majority of the cases looking back in the history, women had the subordinate role and it was not acceptable in the society for a woman to be the heroine (Joan of Arc was one of the rare



exceptions). Those are the roots of the Western society and the upcoming generations grew up accepting these values and having the social schema for the roles of females and roles of males.

In the United States female athletes reached improvement thanks to a law.

“The Title IX court decision of 1972 requires all federally funded programs, including athletics, to provide equal treatment and opportunity for participation for men and women. The implication for sports programs was that high schools and public universities subsequently were required to spend equivalent amounts of time and money for male and female athletes’ scholarships, recruitment, facilities, supplies, travel, and services.” (Knight, 2001)

Partly because of this the opportunities for females in sports improved and the number of female athletes increased. Knight continues and points out that a longitudinal study of Sports Illustrated articles from 1950s to 1980s featured fewer articles and photographs per article for women’s sport compared to men’s.

#### 4.2. Way of Media Coverage of Sports

In order to perform well, female athletes in many cases became professionals in their sports, which is another improvement for female sports. This shows that there must be enough money in those female sports in order for them to be professionals and so be paid for their performance as in any other job. Sport is no longer just a fun activity for female athletes, yet some do sport on a professional level, but still have to go to work. But at least young girls can have the vision that the sport they are doing might be their source of living one day, which might add to their motivation. In the past only male athletes could have that vision.

It was already mentioned that the coverage of female sports is limited and biased. But how and why is it limited? How and why is the bias created?

“The ability of the athlete should be the criterion by which an athlete is judged. The gender of the athlete should not affect the quality and quantity of coverage that an athlete receives. At present the athletic capability of female athletes is under-emphasized by the media. The characteristics of sportswomen emphasized by the media tend to be physical characteristics and sexual desirability, thus trivializing the achievements of female athletes and reducing them to sexual objects.” (George, 2001).

Comments by George summarize the main problems that the media face when covering male and female sports. They distinguish athletes based on gender, so female athletes have less coverage and the way they receive the coverage is different to that of male athletes. The second important thing is the way they are portrayed; again they are distinguishing between male and female athletes. Male athletes are praised for their performance and achievement; female athletes are praised for their physical appearance and sexual desirability.

What is newsworthy while reporting about male and female athlete is different as well. George talks about that in coverage of female athletes. The attention will more likely be attracted by their marriage, giving birth or some scandal, than it is in the case of male athletes. Therefore it is not surprising that appearance is more talked about subject in connection with females rather than in male sport coverage.

The various analyses have shown how women’s achievements in sport are considered less newsworthy both by the press and by television companies. But no study suggests that the female sporting events and their achievements are less interesting for the audience than male sporting events (George, 2001). By covering less female sports it causes the audience to have the feeling like if there are less female sports in general, it also causes less interest for these sports from the possible audience. When you do not see something often, when it lacks repetition you tend to forget about it. George then says that the audience might assume from the limited coverage that women’s sport is less competitive, exciting and interesting than men’s sport.

#### *4.2.1. Respect to Physical Appearance*

“Sport commentators and writers often allude or explicitly refer to a female athlete’s attractiveness, emotionality, femininity, and heterosexuality (all of which effectively convey to the audience that her stereotypical gender role is more salient than her athletic role), yet male athletes are depicted as powerful, independent, dominating, and valued.” (Knight, 2001)

This goes with the society’s perception of female’s roles. Knight explains this as, “the media coverage of female athletes seems to be trying to protect female athletes from rejection by emphasizing other aspects of their ‘femaleness’, such as their attractiveness.” Getting back to what McQuail (1999) said, men dominate media, they rule them and control them, therefore since most of the journalists are male their way of coverage of sport will be from a male point of view. Still it is unknown how the structure of media and the way of coverage would change, and if at all, if the media had equal influence of male and female journalist or if it would be dominated by females. (McQuail, 1999).

Based on the roles we stereotypically have in the society, men will be tempted to point out female athlete’s physical appearance. The inequality comes when in coverage of male athletes, sport reporters do not mention appearance and comments about appearance are not at the center of attention, as it happens in the case of female athletes. In television coverage of beauty contests comments about appearance are appropriate, but not in area where the main focus is the sporting event and not the appearance. Sport compared to other areas of public life that media cover, has one very special thing and that is the live coverage – sport is the only area in communication that in television broadcasting is happening live and there is instant commentary to it. With other areas there is live coverage but no commentary to it. Sport is dominated by men; media are dominated by men therefore male commentators cover events from men’s point of view, so as in real life they comment on female’s appearance, in this case on female athlete’s appearance. The way sports are presented in television effects the audience, but also other journalists and the way they will cover the certain sport. Journalists can either “copy” televisions approach and language or they can comment on it and point out what is inappropriate and therefore wrong to use in reporting.

From my personal experience working in a sport section in national newspaper Lidové Noviny I know that male journalists have no problem mentioning in their article the appearance of the female athlete calling them “pretty” or “beautiful” but do not do the same in the case of male athletes. Since they are men they do not want to comment about other male’s appearance, in case of female athlete it is natural for them. They even demanded from me to write about female athletes’ appearances and told me that if I want I can do the same in case of male athletes. Yet, they would not say in their article that for example tennis star Roger Federer is handsome. It goes against how they feel as men, but do not understand that if you write about the appearance only in case of athletes of one gender and not of the other, then the reporting is not equal and even can be considered bias.

At the same time the male audience feels offended when the appearance of male athletes could become the subject of attention. As Brooks (2001) points out people are more emotional and tend to react more negatively to sexual depiction of members of their own gender than to those of opposite sex. The example are male Australian Rules football fans who are offended by the idea that women might be sexually attracted to the players’ shorts, for the fans this trivializes the game. (Brooks, 2001).

According to George, if female athletes do not conform to the unwritten rules of pursued femininity then both their gender and sexual orientation may be questioned. Some may be labeled lesbians for not fitting in the “correct” image of femininity. Once again the appearance or sexual orientation should not be key in covering neither female nor male sports.

#### *4.2.2. Disrespect to Sporting Achievements*

By agreeing with the notion that journalists in their coverage of female sports concentrate highly on athletes appearance and femininity, then they must consequently not concentrate enough on athletes’ sporting achievements and performance. This devalues the female sport and athletes themselves. Not all female athletes mind the media attention towards their looks such as tennis player Kurnikova, who thanks to that kind of coverage became a model and a celebrity. This is how she personally took advantage of her looks and did not pursue the tennis career, but there are many other female athletes who want respect for their performance, but it just gets more difficult when the media demand Kurnikova type of attitude to the situation.

People seem to accept the notion that men are much better at sports than women. Looking at the traditional male dominance in the Western society, role of the female then involves subservience and subordination to men. Women are therefore not expected to compete in sports that demand competitiveness and self-exertion (George, 2001). Therefore, it is harder for females to get respect for their achievements, again it comes down to our social role that we inherited from the past and media just reinforce that. Yet, that reinforcement hurts female sports; media could rather use their power to make change towards more equality in the way of coverage. Simply put, the female sports could be covered in the same way as male sports, but they are not, since they are covered from men's point of view. What men commentators say when talking about athletes of their own gender is dramatically different from what they are able to say when talking about female athletes. Commentators use in television the same language they use in everyday life, which is not acceptable when you talk about certain group of people differently than about the other. Television commentators influence with their language not only audience, but also other journalist who might be following the sports program through their broadcasting.

#### 4.3. Advertising and Promotion of Athletes

The way the Western society works suggests that women must fit the acceptable female image and they should even do so when they are athletes. Female athletes have come to realize that they must emphasize their femininity, especially if they wish to gain sponsorship (George, 2001). Sporting achievement is not enough to bring sponsorship, but it is enough in the male sports. Visuals are very important in advertising to sell a product, therefore male athletes can sell based on their popularity from sport, where as for females their sport popularity should just point out their physical attractiveness which then should sell the product (Brooks, 2001).

##### *4.3.1. Sexual Appeal*

Sexual appeal is used as marketing strategy to promote a certain sport. It is frequently seen in both male and female sports. The aim is to play to the sexual survival motive and it consists of three elements: sexual gender, sexual impulse and sexual inhibition. As Brooks

points out such elements in advertising have one general goal and that is to arouse a desire for a product.

According to Brooks male gender products include pickup trucks, cowboy boots and hats, many weight training programs, and sports like football, ice hockey and professional wrestling. Brooks continued that for men strong appeal is the “macho” motive. Feminine gender products include cosmetics, shampoo, flowers, costume jewelry, ballet, gymnastics, figure skating and synchronized swimming. Marketing based on the gender survival motive is quite controversial, mainly because it is based on stereotypes and such advertising is reinforcing such stereotypes (Brooks, 2001). Reinforcing stereotypes is important in advertising, it is the safe way to sell a product, it works particularly well with athletes. Male athletes simply, because they are male and do a sport, which already has a notion of strength, gives them opportunity to sell those products, where one wants to appeal to the “macho” motive. The other end of the problem with stereotyping can lead to extremes such as sexual violence or hostility towards women. Such potential violent consequences can result from objectifying women. Men do not face such threats because men are not in such danger of being raped or harassed by women (Brooks, 2001). However, advertisers start to feel that using women as “objects” might have negative consequences. The advertisers are afraid that they will offend female customers who may stop buying their products, because they might feel that the company has crossed the line of acceptable taste (Brooks, 2001). Still what is acceptable is constantly changing, it depends on the society but also on the personal taste.

The sexual impulse is a common strategy for products targeted at men. An example is car advertisings; the male is in charge and has some seductive and provocative female by his side. It implies his power, but it also plays on her attractiveness and the fact that she is in the subordinate role. However, most sexual marketing to women is at the inhibition level. They appeal to beauty and sensuality (Brooks, 2001).

The sexual impulse images can be further categorized into three common designs. The double-entendre theme is an image with double meaning, one of which can be sexually interpreted. The second theme involves an attractive model also called “decorative model”, it appeals directly to sex stimulus or it tries to transfer the sexy image to the product. The third design theme uses nudity or near nudity (Brooks, 2001). The aim is to get attention to the advertisement and therefore the product. The sexual impulses are considered primarily to catch attention.

“Sports messages and images with a sexual base almost always have a hidden male-dominated power structure in which women are marginalized, subjugated, or in some cases actually implied not to exist.” (Brooks, 2001)

Yet, many times we do not even recognize that, because we are presented with such images all the time and so we might not have a clear concept of how men and women should be portrayed. One way to find out if the message is indeed neutral is to reverse the sexes of the characters. With this method we impose our assumptions of what is appropriate for each gender (Brooks, 2001).

Concerning the sports advertising according to Brooks there are two different value systems: androcentric and gynocentric values. With androcentric values female athletes are portrayed as subservient to the male athlete or may not be present at all. The male is the dominant character and the hero. Females are there to satisfy the Title IX or as “decoration”. The gynocentric values emphasize women, but they take it even further because they usually base the market strategy on the heroine or the main character role and “feminize” her, based on society’s definition of the “feminine”. Her look, life-style and behavior project the culturally accepted notion of the “feminine” athletic body (Brooks, 2001).

#### *4.3.2. Effects on Audience*

Advertising with sexual motives can be pleasurable to a certain extent, but it can be dangerous too. If women are the object, not only can that have an impact on how men see women in general, but also such images can offend the female audience. Experts in the field say that the male and female audiences not necessarily understand the sexual meaning of the messages in the same way it was intended by the message developers, reasons are cultural conditioning issues (Brooks, 2001). Therefore such strong sexual messages can be misunderstood or taken as too offensive and this might negatively influence the image of the athletes, sport and also the product.

Athletes are mostly used to sell products to the same gender. Yet, women are just beginning to pay attention to women's sports enough to recognize that the women in the advertising is a famous female athlete said Sandy Bailey, editor of Sports Illustrated for Chicago Tribune journalist Michael Hirsley (1999). Women could be attracted to products by seeing a famous female athlete but advertisers fear that female athletes are not such celebrities as male athletes are and aren't so publically recognized. Yet, there seems to be an improvement. Fifteen years ago male athletes were the most visible endorsers today their dominance in advertising is shrinking but marketing of female athletes is not fully developed (Hirsley, 1999).

According to Brook's (2001) findings older people of both sexes are frequently offended by advertisements with sexual meaning and so are less motivated to buy such products. Younger people, on the other hand, do not find this marketing strategy quite as offensive. There are not only differences in how male and female audience might interpret the advertisement, but also there is difference between age groups.

For example in beach volleyball the female athletes wear little shorts and sports bras. Brooks points out that for the audience it will be hard to get beyond the sexual aspect of their jerseys and so their athletic abilities will therefore not be perceived and so respected. In the Brooks study about the female volleyball players, she suggests that the sexual nature of the message will be stored in the long-term memory and the consumers will have a hard time seeing the sport as a "true" sport. It will be hard to form sport or any other schema apart from the sexual schema. Sensual female models attract attention of the male audience towards advertisement, but the interest of the audience is more connected to little sexy uniforms the athletes are wearing than their volleyball skills. So, based on such advertisement, if there is any increased interest in the sport, then it is likely to be due to bodies of those female players rather than an increased appreciation of the sport or the athletic ability of the players (Brooks, 2001).

Tom DeCabia, executive vice president with Schulman/Advancers N.Y. sees one big advantage for female athletes emerging now as new marketable faces. He believes that the stigma that was on athletes 20 years ago, that they were not educated compared to movie stars and television personalities, is not here anymore, at least not in such an extent. So there would not be so much negativity against female athletes and so their introduction as new marketing and public life celebrities should be easier (Hirsley, 1999). However, the problem is that the



advertisers took it too far and female athletes are featuring advertising in the same way as models, so their athletic abilities are not the thing that would sell the product, it is their looks as it is with models.

#### *4.3.3. Effects on Sponsorship*

Brooks explains how the audience interprets the advertising of a product using the sexual images, in the case of uniforms of female beach volleyball players. Even when the small uniforms will appeal to the sexual impulse, which can draw attention, there would not be an increase in the recall of the brand name or other attributes of the product. Any information about the sponsor's product, brand or other its attributes would not reach the long-term memory (Brooks, 2001). Using sexual images to sell a product therefore can work in short-term but it may not be profitable in long-term and it can even have negative effect on the product or the sport or both.

Sexual impulses seem not to work when the sexual message is irrelevant to the product being advertised. The approach may draw attention to an advertisement, but such message will only reach the short-term memory and not last very long. (Brooks, 2001). Also commercials that appear sexually offensive negatively influence consumers, so they avoid purchasing the product being advertised. The bad feeling one has from the advertising can transfer to the product. If the uniforms of female volleyball players seem too offensive, then it negatively affects the sponsor of those players, but it can hurt audience's interest into the sport as well. There will be little impact on the level of popularity of the sport; the truth is that it might not gain any popularity for the sport, because the audience will only view the sexual message (Brooks, 2001).

An important thing is that overall female athletes are less recognized by the public and so when they feature advertising they are ranked high in likeability, but not in familiarity. They are not as well known as male athletes are among the public (Hirsley, 1999). Therefore advertisers run higher risks with female athletes. Since female sports do not get big ratings, they are less recognized and the return on an advertiser's investment is not high (Hirsley, 1999).

As for the product and sponsorship, it seems easy to promote a product via sexual impulse. It may gain the attention, but it can have negative effects in long-term. Moreover,

near nudity or nudity is frequently voted as least appealing, the product is regarded of low quality and the company that uses such images is seen as less reputable (Brooks, 2001). So what could be seen as an easy way to promote a product, but it can negatively influence the sport, athletes, company and its product. It can also have negative feedback in a way that female athletes were seen as good object for sexual impulse appeals, but this might limit their future sponsorship and so in long-term it might harm the athlete. Female athletes are not fully respected for their sporting achievements and so basing advertising on physical appearance even worsens the situation. If the sexual advertising does not work then companies might feel that there is nothing more to offer. Those female athletes that accepted to be object of sexual impulse advertising closed the door for female sport to advertise based on the sporting achievement. To advertise based on appearance seems more appealing to sponsors and so they take that route, which as Brooks pointed out will most probably not last in long-term memory of the consumers.

#### *4.3.4. Athletes as Public Figures*

Considering sport specialized and non-specialized media, the line between the athlete as a sport person and the athlete as an all-purpose figure or so called “celebrity”, becomes blurred. A clear example is the football player David Beckham, he is seen as football role model by little boys and a sex symbol for adult women and men. So he can be seen playing football, but also as a guest on some movie premiere for example. What made Beckham a world known person is him being a professional football player, but also his looks, personality, life suited for the spotlight and media attention. He is willing to be the ultimate public figure and he can be that just by being present somewhere, he does not even have to say a word to be a star and in majority of the advertisements he features he is silent. The same or similar happens with many other athletes, male and female (majority male). So not just sport itself, but athletes as celebrities attract people’s attention and interest, therefore media report about these people as athletes, but also about them as public figures. A similar phenomenon is happening to many Czech athletes especially when they marry other public figures, then not just their performance, but also personal life is subject to media attention.

#### 4.4. Effects on Media Representation

Touching upon some of the effects of advertisement of female athletes, there are effects on audience, other media representation but also on the structure of the society and what is acceptable and what is not. As the advertisement is just part of media, then media as a whole have a great effect on our culture and structure of society. The media have a significant influence on the individuals, society and the culture they are part of (Cunningham, 2004). Therefore, how they portray female athletes cannot be only thought about in terms of commerce and profit, since it carries significant meaning with it too. The media shape our understanding of society and tell us what is “important” and “right”. Therefore, the media create, reflect and reinforce the image of female athletes in a culture (Cunningham, 2004).

##### *4.4.1. Stereotypes*

The media have the power to influence public opinion; they can also reinforce it or change it, but can also have an impact on the structure of society and its cultural values. It reinforces set stereotypes regarding the traditional male and female roles. They reinforce those stereotypes so much, that they are treated as “natural” differences between the sexes. Use of gender differences in the media coverage then might have especially strong effect if females are participating in male dominated sports such as boxing, the emphasis is on the other hand if the female athletes perform in traditionally “feminine” sports such as gymnastics or figure skating (Hardin, 2002).

Researchers analyzing the portrayal of female athletes found the coverage to often be framed within stereotypes, which emphasize appearance and attractiveness, rather than athletic skill. Moreover, scholars found that the media tend to focus on female athletes as sexual beings, rather than serious performers (Bernstein, 2002). This “striping” down female athletes to only sexual objects trivializes their achievements and sporting performance and in fact robs them on athletic legitimacy so preserving hegemonic masculinity. Once again an example is how much commentators talk about the appearance of a female athlete in comparison to talking about her performance, compared to how male athletes are being described. This shows that for the female athlete the amount of time media spend on discussing the appearance is longer than for male (George, 2001). This can be influenced by the way men interact with women in the Western culture; they compliment women for their appearance so there could be basis for them doing so in the media as well. Obviously what we

say in our everyday life is how we represent ourselves, but when we pursue these attitudes in media, then it is as if the media had these attitudes, which are inappropriate and not professional.

Schell (2005) noted that the content of sport photographs generally suggests that only the prettiest women athletes are worthy of being pictured. Again mentioning Anna Kurnikova, she is a clear example of the already mentioned phenomena, that the amount of coverage does not correlate with the sporting achievement (Bernstein, 2002). This then reinforces the feeling that the physical appearance is therefore more important. Then again young female athletes might see coverage of Kurnikova, but a coverage that will mainly focus on her appearance. They might then assume that the physical appearance is the main asset that you need in order to be successful.

“Media have a powerful influence on girls’ and young women’s socialization into sport. For this reason, it is imperative that we observe and challenge those media representations that perpetuate the notion that only white, young, physically attractive, non-disabled women can, and do engage in sport.”(Schell, 2005)

So what we see in media might significantly influence our perception of what it means to do a sport, fitting into sporting community and complying with the set standards of how a female should be like. Such belief can discourage potential female athletes from joining a sport. It also restricts the possibility of role models and the range of sports that seem “suitable” for females (Schell, 2005).

#### *4.4.2. Influence on Audience*

Since sport is part of entertainment for people the reason why fair portrayal is so important is that audience should have the same pleasurable feeling watching, listening or reading about male as well as female sport. By having two different standards; one for male and one for female athletes, the audience then creates different assumptions about characteristics of athletes of both genders.

“By portraying sportswomen either as sex objects or as ‘pretty ladies’, the message is that sportswomen are not strong, powerful and highly skilled individuals. Ultimately, images that ignore or trivialize females undermine

the importance of women's sports and respect for the abilities of female athletes." (Media, 2001).

Yet, male athletes are portrayed with respect to their sporting abilities and therefore do not face the problem of disrespect, that female athletes can and do face. It seems natural that male athletes receive the respect where as female athletes have to fight their way through. Western societies are in its nature male dominated and therefore men doing sport (which is in itself seen masculine) is accepted by the society, however, females might be respected for their sport if they do some "feminine" sport, such as gymnastics, otherwise women are seen as challenging the "natural" stereotypical roles of males and females in the culture.

Media can be in great part blamed for the fact that in the eyes of society male and female sports are not perceived as equal. Media can be blamed for the maintenance of such stereotypes but cannot be necessarily blamed for the marginalization. However, the mass media play a vital role in shaping opinion and framing attitudes (George, 2001). People might not even be aware of this happening or because of that reason they might see the difference in coverage as "natural". But at the same time there are no studies that would prove that when female athletes are portrayed as "pretty ladies" that it increases interest in the event, the attendance or media coverage of women sports (Media, 2001).

According to Knight it is still unknown to what extent can media truly influence people's perception of athletes and what are the actual consequences of such representation. Members of the media defend themselves by saying that they simply provide what the public "wants", yet still this area needs to be researched (Knight, 2001). Women's Sports Foundation rejects the assumption that this is what the audience wants. Images or words that would resemble racist or anti-semitic stereotypes would not be tolerated so in the same way representation of stereotype of women as sex objects should not be tolerated either.

The results of Knight's study confirmed that people's perception of athletes is influenced by the gender of the athlete. Also the more successful the female athlete was, the more attractive she appeared to the audience, the same did not apply to male athletes. Knight offers an explanation. The schema for a female athlete might not be as strongly set in people's minds as the schema for male athletes are. So how people perceive female athletes is still unsettled and open to alteration (Knight, 2001). So there still seems to be room for creating a certain image of female athletes and it would not be the one, where the female athlete will be portrayed as a sexual object. It is up to the media and sponsors to research the influences of

the different kinds of representations, because according to the studies done so far, the highly sexual image of female athletes does not attract higher audience's attention, neither can it in long-term sell a product.

Constant reinforcement of a certain image may then get stuck in the audience's mind and be seen as a norm. The public image of a female athlete is defined to a large degree by the media (George, 2001). Therefore, it is in the power of media to present both male and female sports in an equally respectful way. Women's Sports Foundation created a guideline to politically correct portrayal of female athletes, such representations would resemble the respect for sporting achievement and would take the focus away from the physical appearance of the female athletes.

“The media instead of maintaining the status quo so effectively, can challenge it by providing positive images of female athletes and equity in terms of coverage. For as Lopiano (1998) notes there are no differences between male and female athletes in the skill, dedication and courage they bring to their sports. ... Sports commentary and reporting, and photo and video imagery should reflect the fundamental equality of women and men both on and off the field.” (George, 2001)

The studies prove that women are dedicated to their sports as much as men and that their athletic ability is on a high level, so there is then no need to base the coverage on physical appearance. At the same time there is no reason why should coverage of male and female athletes be different in attitude and language when what you see is the same sport, except for the fact that the athletes are of a different gender. Biased coverage only distracts the audience from the sport itself and might make the journalists who do differentiate between the sexes in their report look unprofessional.

## 5. CASE STUDY OF CZECH NEWSPAPER SPORT

### 5.1. Quantitative Study of Daily Sport

The newspaper Sport and radio station Radiožurnál were mentioned above mainly because they are respected for their coverage of a wide range of sports. Same applies to ČT and Nova since with their new sport's channels they can address many more sport fans with a variety of sport coverage. All four media are respected by the audience in terms of coverage of different sports; this can be seen mainly because the coverage increased in amount of time and also variety of sports. Since each of these four entities is a different medium they face different problems. ČT and Radiožurnál are publicly owned so their aim so to bring diverse information and variety of sport coverage. As for Sport, it is privately owned by Swiss company Ringier, which owns in the Czech Republic for example the most selling newspaper Blesk. Blesk is a tabloid newspaper and since it sells for its scandalous content, then some of these concepts were transferred to Sport newspaper. Things like interviewing a football player's wife or revealing some relationship information about players was not part of Sport before. So Sport does not limit itself just to the hard news sport coverage, but it tries to address some different group of readers by including more personalized information and bringing more emotion to the features, as it used not to be in the Sports coverage before. Nova Sport is privately owned by CET 21 company and it looks for profit. Nova Sport is a successor of Galaxie Spor, which was offered on cable or satellite packages so it had a certain number of established viewers. Nova Sport is by its choice of sports trying to fill in a gap, so it does not really compete with other TV channels, but also does not have competition. It shows Moto GP or tennis tournaments that no one else on the Czech market shows.

As for the audience of daily Sport, according to an editor of Sport newspaper Petr Dias, the target group is males from age 15 to 50, lower to middle class with interest in sports. They stress catchy topics, simple language and short sentences. Since the sister newspaper of Sport is the tabloid newspaper Blesk some of topics discussed in Sport try to appeal to women readers too. This includes player's relationship, athlete's home life and their own competitions such as choosing the prettiest player. These issues then translate also in the daily Sport, but many times are part of the Friday Sport magazine. One issue for example featured top 10 prettiest female athletes of the Olympics. So they try to make women read the

newspaper and look at good looking men, but also good looking women. Pictures of beautiful female athletes will appeal to the male audience as well.

### *5.1.1. Aims*

The aim of this case study is to look at Sport coverage of female and male athletes and sports during the winter Olympic Games in Torino 2006 and look how much coverage was devoted to non-Olympic sports at that period. The hypothesis is that since at the Olympic Games both genders participate in approximately the same number of sports, then the amount of coverage of male and female athletes should be equal in media. Yet, it is still important to know that part of Olympic Games is a hockey tournament so that will get a lot of coverage and outside of Olympic Games the football league started after the winter break. Two of the most popular sports in the Czech Republic were in progress and therefore there was an intensive coverage of both in the Olympic and non-Olympic parts. In total there were 83 Czech athletes participating in Torino, 23 of those were members of the hockey team, so representing one sport. Overall there 63 male and 20 female athletes from the Czech Republic participated in Torino Games. So the actual difference in the number of female and male athletes can affect the amount of coverage.

### *5.1.2. Methodology*

For this case study on newspaper Sport during the 2006 Winter Olympic Games, which was a seventeen day event in February, I chose to look at six issues of newspaper Sport (appendix B). Daily Sport at that time came out six times a week from Monday to Saturday (now it comes out everyday). The Olympic Games had an opening ceremony on Friday 10 January. The competitions started the day later. I took six issues, since I wanted to achieve variety, I took the Monday, Wednesday and Friday issues the first week and the second week of the Olympic Games I took Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday issues. I did a content analysis of the Olympic section, looking at the amount of article dedicated to males and females and their placement, at the number of photos and their setting, also looking at the type of advertising used and its placement. In the non-Olympic section I looked at what sports were covered and whether they concerned male or female sport. I have devised a content analysis coding schedule (appendix C) according to which I was assessing the collected data.



### 5.1.3. Way of Coverage

The number of articles and pictures from the Olympic section were counted and recorded in the table. The categories were male, female, both (just as figure skating couples) and miscellaneous. The two major things that affected the results were what sports have been performed at the Olympics the day before, so if there was a hockey game then it outnumbered anything else. This connects to the second thing, which is that hockey is one of the two most popular sports in the Czech Republic, so it got big coverage even if there was no game played. Therefore the results should be looked at as a whole since the individual days can be affected by sports that have taken place the day before or will take place on that day.

### 5.1.4. Results

Results were recorded in table and then counted. Table C shows the counted results.

Table C – Newspaper Sport article/picture (number of pictures is in the brackets) results 13 February – 25 February 2006

	Female article/picture	Male article/picture	Both article/picture	Miscellaneous article/picture
Monday - 13 February	7 (6)	12 (10)	1 (1)	
Wednesday - 15 February	5 (2)	17 (10)	2 (2)	
Friday - 17 February	9 (5)	15 (13)	1 (1)	
Tuesday - 21 February	1 (2)	12 (13)		2 (3)
Thursday - 23 February	6 (5)	8 (9)		2 (1)
Saturday - 25 February	11 (8)	10 (8)		4 (4)
<b>Total</b>	<b>39 (28)</b>	<b>74 (63)</b>	<b>4 (4)</b>	<b>8 (8)</b>

#### 5.1.4.1. Reporting

Results from the Olympic section clearly show the dominance of male articles and pictures. The majority of them 63 (50) is only hockey itself. Some articles are game recaps or talking about non-Czech players, but majority is concerning the Czech team. As for women, the majority of the articles 26 (18) are about Czech cross-country skier Kateřina Neumannová. She came out from the Olympics with a gold and silver medal, so she was the most successful Czech athlete at these games. The Monday's issue reported about her silver medal and on Saturday it was after her gold medal race. The other medal that Czechs got was a silver medal by cross-country skier Lukáš Bauer and a bronze medal of the hockey team. Bauer featured in four Sport articles and there were three photos of him. Yet, he was outnumbered by acrobat skier Aleš Valenta, who won gold medal at 2002 Winter Olympics in Salt Lake City, but in Torino did not qualify to the main race, there were six articles about him and four photos. So someone like Bauer, who participated in more races and reached a medal, was featured in less articles than someone who was successful in the past, but not this time. Again appeal to emotion, presenting a sad story of someone who was up and is now down.

Then there was one fourth place by young speed skater Martina Sáblíková, who featured in articles in the Sport newspaper three times and there were three photos of her. Women were more neglected in the coverage since for example Nikola Sudová who is in the same discipline as Valenta had in Sport two articles and one photo. Yet, she finished sixth in the main competition and there were some disputes about the fairness of the referees concerning her performance.

An interesting fact was that the amount of articles and photos devoted to foreign male athletes was higher, than of female athletes and this time this could not be affected by lower number of females participating, since they only concentrated on the winners. There were ten articles and eight photos of foreign male athletes and five articles and four photos of female athletes. So this suggests inequality in the amount of coverage.

The miscellaneous section includes articles about fans, the arena, fun places to go to, a hockey players wife (there were two of this kind) and medal celebrations among fans/relatives in the Czech Republic, how much money will Olympics make, how Canadian players and how Czech players treat journalist, bad accommodation for athletes, doping and a Czech model attending the hockey game with her Italian boyfriend (a football player).

The fact that out of these six issues there were two articles about hockey player's wives and girlfriends and one article about a Czech model going to a hockey game, then it seems to show that even this newspaper feels it has to include articles and pictures of pretty ladies. A place that could be devoted to female athletes was devoted to females who were not athletes, but their occupation was a wife, a girlfriend and a model. Many studies of different print media and television coverage of sport seems to show that there is a difference in framing sports featuring male and female sports. Feminist scholars say that in the area of sports and mainly in the sports coverage the male hegemony is more reinforced than in any other area of social life (Hardin et al, 2002). That can explain why there is coverage of a female partner of a male athlete but not a male partner or female athlete or male athlete, portraying men in subordinate position to the successful sports women could threaten the male hegemony.

#### 5.1.4.2. Interviewing

There were ten interviews with a female athletes; one was with Neumannová's coach about her. There were 21 interviews with male athletes, again taking into consideration how much hockey is important and that there are a lot of players in the team, so there are more interview options there. Yet, again the number of female interviews is half of those with male athletes. It shows that male athletes are more reported on and more interviewed than female athletes. So coverage of female athletes is according to this case study lower, however, it corresponds with the ratio of Czech male and female athletes there.

One interview that was not included in either category, because it was with the wife of a hockey player. It is not really a sports related story, so its function is probably to attract the female audience of newspapers such as Blesk that would be interested in such personal stories from a public figure's life.

#### 5.1.4.3. Photographs

Looking at Table C the number of photos is recorded there. As there were half less articles featuring female athletes opposed to male athletes, the same pattern applied to photographs. The majority of the photos depict the athletes in their sport environment, either performing or showing their emotions after a race or game or with a medal, if they achieved it. The non-sport pictures were of the hockey wife, then there was one more article about

players relatives coming, so there was a picture of three attractive ladies in Czech jerseys. There were also pictures of fans in the Czech Republic celebrating.

There were two pictures of Czech hockey players packing their hockey gear to go to the Olympics and then another two injured players sitting in the stands. These were non-sport pictures of hockey players. There was a big interview and a series of three photos of how Neumannová lives in Italy during the Olympics. There was a picture of her sitting on a couch, her cooking and the house she lives in. It resembles a life style story with pictures. One picture of Sáblíková was a non-sport picture too. Again more appealing to the possible female audience. Yet, the possible effect of these non-sport representations can devalue the female athlete as a professional athlete, because what people see is a life style story with corresponding pictures.

“While the under-representation and misrepresentation of sport subjects can take place through both texts and photographs, photos are arguably more potent because of their readability and impact. The number of photos, camera angles and activity of photo subjects are ways that photos can frame gender.” (Hardin et al, 2002).

#### 5.1.4.4. Advertising

Advertising that goes into the newspaper Sport is mainly of sport betting agencies, online betting, casinos, sport wear online shop, an Olympic Games book which comes out right after the end of the Games. Their placement was roughly the same throughout those six issues. The biggest advertisements were at page three and once it appeared on page four. On Monday's and Saturday's issues there was Neumannová articles, on the four other issues there were hockey articles, all Czech hockey except for one Canadian article about Team Canada's General Manager Wayne Gretzky. When I was writing for Sport newspaper in 2005, when my article appeared on the top four pages I got paid more than when it appeared by the end on the paper. According to Dias the first few pages contain the top stories therefore the advertisers want to have their advertising there. So assuming that the top four pages are the most important since they are the most read and can decided whether the reader will continue reading or not, so those are the top stories of that issue and top sports for advertising. During

the Olympics the first 12 to 14 pages were reserved for the Olympics, but as for women only Neumannová made it to the top four (she had the stories about her there in Monday's and Saturday's issues) for the rest of the time this was reserved for hockey only. This shows that success brings one to the top pages as in the case of Neumannová, in the Monday's issue it was after her silver medal and on Saturday it was after her gold medal. As for the hockey players, they were on the top four pages even without succeeding, since during their day off, which was Wednesday, they occupied both page three and page four. Valenta's crash during jumping practice made it a top story, but the rest of the story was at page eight. So it was good for catching attention, but what always makes people read this paper is hockey, which came at page three and four.

#### 5.1.4.5. Non-Olympic Section

The non-Olympic section revealed some interesting facts. It was usually ten pages and consisted of two full pages of advertising, other smaller advertising, television program, opinion and letter section and of course sport articles. There was at least one page in each of these issues where was Czech football league, but usually more than that. There was also international football, mainly Champions league games preview and then review. There were basketball articles in four issues, and tennis articles in two, then short notes and results in all issues. All of these articles were only about male athletes. In the Wednesday's issue was an article and a picture of Denisa Ščerbová, who is a female track and field athlete and she set a Czech record in pentathlon. In the Saturday's issue was an article about the Brno female basketball team losing in a European League game, Czech Paralympics skier Jana Kulíšková and a big picture of tennis player Maria Sharapova, who was just mentioned in the results section. So there were three articles and two pictures of female athletes in total in those six issues and therefore about 60 pages of newspaper.

Dias confirmed that football and hockey have the priority in the newspaper Sport, the reason is they need profit (Sport is privately owned medium) and assume to get it by basing their coverage on those two sports. Putting together this almost male only content and the fact that they need profit, it shows that male sports sell better and that is why it dominates TV, radio, newspaper and internet sport's coverage. Almost completely ignoring female athletes is not the right way to establish audience for female sports. It is understood and accepted that there are certain male sports that are very popular and bring media profit, but by giving

adequate space to other sports, mainly female sports that have a lot of economic potential, then it can bring the desired profit as well. It is all about giving a chance and being persistent at it.

#### 5.1.4.6. Effects

Results of the case study have supported the statement from the general pattern section. That is that compared to male sports, female sports get less coverage in the Czech Republic. Also since the coverage is limited it shows that it does not have as many readers and so it does not appeal that much to the advertisers. The results of this study were done on the only one sport only newspaper in the Czech Republic. Still it does not mean that all sport fans are buying this newspaper as Dias said, they are trying to reach female audience, which might make some potential male readers not buy the newspaper, because they just want the hard news, which is not the case with Sport anymore.

Yet, the findings can be generalized to all Czech media, since from my observation female athletes get approximately as little coverage in any other media as in Sport. Knight's study of effects of sport coverage on audience tried to find out how people perceived male and female athletes. The results have shown that due to lesser coverage the audience does not have a clear schema of the female athlete and so that image is open to alteration, therefore the way female athletes are depicted now can make the audience establish the schema in that way. The way female athletes are portrayed in the media is crucial for how we will understand the concept of a "female athlete". People's perception of athletes are influenced by the athlete's gender and by the type of media coverage provided (Knight, 2001).

#### 5.1.5. *Popularity of Female Sports*

Since the process is a two way system, this limited coverage is said to result from the fact that there is not such interest from the people for female sports, but this then does not give the audience a chance to like that sport. There is coverage of female basketball team of Brno in television, radio, internet and newspapers, but they had to deserve the media interest by long-term good results on the European scene. What this woman's' basketball team achieved is a great success and they also persuaded their fans that they are good and so at each game they have a big number of supporters. However, this is a rare thing to achieve. Take the Czech football league; its' level has been dropping as the football experts point out

every time they are invited to Champions League studio of ČT. Still without any major success the football league gets major media coverage every day. This relates to the fact that it is one of the two most popular sports in the Czech Republic, but also the male basketball gets the coverage more easily than any other female sport.

Simply success of a Czech athlete in a sport attracts media attention. Yet, it takes female sports more effort to prove themselves. An example of that is the female national basketball team that participated in the European Championship, but the television coverage came just for the final game. When there was male basketball European Championship in 2003 and 2007 it had the television coverage from start to finish. But the success did not come.

#### *5.1.6. Audience's Respect for Female Sports*

More coverage of female sports can bring more viewers to these sports. The increased exposure can not only bring variety of sports to viewers, but can also make potential athletes have greater variety of sports to choose from, rather than be constantly reinforced to three or four major sports. When the female athletes will have a chance to prove that they are good in what they do and that female sports are of high level, this may again bring more viewers and so even more media attention. Very important is also that people can decide for themselves if female athletes deserve respect for their abilities, rather than be chosen for them by the media. Media are basically telling people we do not cover this sport, so therefore it does not deserve your attention as well. Yet, it all starts with bringing young female athletes to the different sports and that can be helped by media coverage of different sports featuring female athletes.

Media coverage of sports supports not only fans interest in those sports, but also interest of young potential athletes and consequently sponsors, who would even enhance the process. Seeing only hockey and football in the media, it might make most of the children want to play these two sports. If they see a variety of sports, then they have more choice and Czechs can therefore have athletes participating in more sports. Higher number of children participating in a sport will also strengthen the competition so producing better athletes for the future. As one can see by looking at Czech educational system, it is clear that physical education lessons are very important and so is sport life over all in the Czech Republic.

### 5.1.7. Conclusion

The amount of coverage was proportional to the number of Czech male and female athletes at the Olympics. Yet, the number of articles devoted to foreign male and female athletes in Sport showed that still successes of female athletes are valued less than success of male athletes. Hardin et al. did a content analysis of four Florida daily and one national newspaper during the 2000 Olympic Games in Sydney. They concentrated on photographs. Some of their results are relevant to my study as well.

“Sexual difference permeates sports media, making gender “norms” so ubiquitous that it is difficult to remember that they are social construct. By observing images that emphasize their powerlessness, girls the socialize in “feminine appropriate” ways that steer them away from power-laden sporting roles. Values learned in sports translate to decisions about social roles, the argument goes.”  
(Hardin et al, 2002)

The comments made prove that the way media portray female athletes can influence much more than just the profit of that medium, but it sets examples of the social roles that the audience perceives. The role of media is very powerful and it can reinforce or change the way media understand male and female athletes, but it can also have an impact on the perception of roles of males and females in the society as a whole.

Hardin et al. concluded that in those five newspapers were 684 images of female athletes and 741 images of male athletes. That in percentage means 48% female 52% male which they found very encouraging since according to the 2001 Sports Illustrated Sports Almanac 4,254 female and 6,862 male athletes participated at the Olympics. They concluded that the newspapers did well in reflecting the reality of the Games. Yet, same as with my research they found female athletes in more “passive” photos, those where the athletes were not racing, were not in the sporting gear, were not receiving a medal basically were outside of the sport. Media show male athletes as athletes first but tend to represent female athletes as women first and as athletes second (Knight, 2001). So the focus on Neumannová and her daughter celebrating the gold medal as a cover page photo for the Saturday’s issue supports



this view. One sees her as a mother and then as an athlete. Then having the wife of a hockey player does not make you think of him as a father first because the player and his wife are not on the same photo. There is her with children and him in the action playing hockey. Two innocent yet distinct kinds of photos that support those stereotypical ideas as Knight described.

## 5.2. Qualitative Study of Daily Sport

In my second study I have used daily Sport again. As I mentioned earlier it is the only Czech sports only newspaper and so I decided to complete my study of daily Sport by qualitative research.

### *5.2.1. Aims*

The aim of the qualitative research is to assess the language used in daily Sport while talking about male and female athletes. The hypothesis was that since the people that this newspaper reports about are in most cases professional athletes, so they are famous for their sporting achievement, then the difference in language while talking about male or female athletes should not be the issue. At the same time I was conducting this research with my personal experience and knowledge that reporters (who are in Czech Republic in most cases men) do tend to report about female athletes differently than about male athletes. Therefore, I decided to look up 10 Czech adjectives that describe the appearance and likeability and searched for them in the articles concerning athletes. With the different approach of journalist to male and female athletes that I have observed myself from the position of a journalist, I have assumed that my results will show that journalists tend to use such descriptive words more in case of female athletes than in case of male athletes. That is not to say that all male journalists tend to use appearance adjectives in case of female athletes, there are many journalists who do not differentiate in their reporting.

### *5.2.2. Methodology*

As I stated above I decided on 10 adjectives that describe appearance and likeability and searched for them in daily Sport. The time span was one year, from 1.1.2008 until 1.1.2009. I was able to complete this research thanks to my previous employer Lidové

Noviny, where I used software called Newton, which stores articles from all Czech newspapers since 1996. One can search and filter out the desired information. The search is done by author, date, publication but also key words and this is what I used. I searched for the desired word, first in masculine then in feminine version within that year long period of time and then assessed the results. I have noted down the amount of appearances and then looked at each article and the context the adjective was used in.

### *5.2.3. Results*

The results were recorded, counted and then transferred into the table (appendix D). Table D shows the counted results. In the first column is the English translation of the Czech adjective, in the second column is the original Czech adjective, first in its feminine version and under it in the masculine version. The third column indicates the number of appearances in articles that were printed during the year long period that was studied. In the last column I counted how many uses of the desired word were actually used in the context of the male or female athletes. The last word “atraktivní“ (attractive) does not change form when used in feminine or masculine setting.

Table D – The number of certain adjectives used by daily Sport reporters from 1.1.2008 till 1.1.2009.

English version	Czech version	Appearances	Relevant cases
Beautiful	Krásná	118	3
	Krásný	209	0
Nice	Hezká	37	0
	Hezký	146	0
Pretty	Pěkná	49	0
	Pěkný	122	0
Charismatic	Charizmatická	0	0
	Charizmatický	0	0
Handsome	Pohledná	14	8
	Pohledný	33	2
Graceful	Půvabná	8	7
	Půvabný	1	0
Fair	Sličná	1	0
	Sličný	0	0
Pleasant	Příjemná	67	1
	Příjemný	141	0
Lovely	Milá	7	0
	Milý	20	0
Attractive	Atraktivní	207	4

I looked through every single article that Newton filtered as the article that contains the desired word. I tried to choose such adjectives that could be used to describe both men and women, even though some are more likely to be applied to women, yet that might be the case because our society works in a way that men usually compliment women on their appearance rather than vice versa. In majority adjectives were used to describe neutral things such as goals, events, performances, offers and sports and they were used in majority to describe such events in men's sports. In minority such adjectives were actually used to describe a person. In

total 25 adjectives were used to describe people, 23 were used to describe women but only 12 did describe female athletes, the rest was aimed at male athletes' girlfriends or wives. One adjective talked about a female referee and one about a female reporter. The most referred to athlete was Serbian tennis player Anna Ivanovič, who was mentioned five times, two times were mentioned adjectives used in case of Croatian athlete Blanka Vlašič. As for the nonsport people appearance and likeability of Czech model Simona Krainová (exgirlfriend of Czech hockey player Jiří Hudler) was mentioned four times and another model Inna Puhajková (girlfriend of Czech hockey player Jaromír Jágr) was referred to two times.

Only two times the appearance or likeability of male athletes was mentioned. Both athletes were in the article referred to as "pohledný" (handsome), the first case was Czech tennis players and his face was described as handsome, the second case was Czech rower (single sculls) Ondřej Synek, who was referred to as handsome. All of these articles have been written by male journalists because in daily Sport most of the reporters are male, in the Prague office where the core of the newspaper is created all the reporters are male, in September 2009 a female journalist was hired to cover athletics, skiing and some minor sports.

#### *5.2.4. Conclusion*

Appearance and likeability of women (sport or non-sport personalities) is more referred to in the sport articles than the one of male athletes, that is not to say that in the case of male athletes it never happens. Since most of the journalists are male, they are less likely to use such adjectives while talking athletes of the same sex, however, two examples of that happening were noted in my study. Male reporters might feel it is more "appropriate" or more "comfortable" while using appearance descriptive adjectives in case of female athletes. However, the frequency of such adjectives was much smaller than I have expected.

During the year-long study only 12 cases of usage of such adjectives describing female athletes was noted in daily Sport. Almost the same number (11) of adjectives describing male athletes' significant others were noted in the same period of time. Such adjectives might be acceptable while talking about the significant other who is by profession model, singer or actress so they present themselves with their appearance. Female athletes are professional sports people first and therefore their appearance should not be the basis of the story, unless they gained some advantage in their sports thanks to their appearance. If reporters choose to use such appearance or likeability description, they risk that he readers

will put such female athletes on the same level as male athletes' significant other, to who they refer in the same language. This might be confusing to the reader, who might then not see female athletes as high performing sports people, but as models. On the other hand, from my own experience I must say that journalists mostly use such adjectives just to spice up the story with different descriptions on the athlete rather than consciously trying to diminish importance of female athletes. This might actually be the key problem, because reporters should always be aware of what they publish might have negative consequences in a way that audience might form the wrong impression about a certain situation.

I have decided to do case studies on daily Sport in both cases, which has advantages but also limitations. The positive aspect is that newspaper Sport deals only with sport; therefore it suits my research because people that are truly interested in sport will buy this newspaper. Yet, other people that want to read newspapers that will offer them information from more fields will buy MF Dnes, Blesk, Právo, Lidové Noviny or Hospodářské Noviny. By only choosing newspaper Sport I have ignored all those readers of the other newspapers. It is a good thing since in a way I have assessed the one newspaper most of the sports fans will buy if they are interested in the latest news, but the readers might not agree with the writing style, which is influenced by daily Blesk as I have described in the first case study. These readers might then buy the newspaper, even if they do not agree with the writing style, but since in terms of sports newspaper sport has no competition, people will stick with Sport.

Yet, what the audience thinks of the newspaper is not the core of this study. I have attempted to show how the language differs while media present male and female athletes and this has been proved. Female athletes have to constantly prove themselves to get media attention and when they get it, they are many times portrayed as sport people only as secondary occupation. This is shown in my study of daily Sport, where female sports are covered in lesser quantity, they usually do not appear on the front few pages, which are the most read ones and photographs many times do not portray female athletes in their sporting environment. Secondly, in my qualitative study I showed that reporters of daily Sport are more likely to use appearance and likeability descriptions while referring to female athletes than in case of male athletes. Therefore, it feels more natural to them to use such adjectives while talking about women, which clearly shows the inequality in reporting.

## 6. CONCLUSION

### 6.1. Project Overview

In this project I have been trying to show two main things; first is that the amount of coverage of female athletes is limited and much lower than the amount of coverage of male athletes, second is that the actual way of coverage is different for male sports coverage, basically it is biased. I used the available theories to try to understand why this is the case and what are the basis of the problem the society is facing while dealing with female athletes. However, this project also tried to investigate why this occurs and what are the greater effects and consequences.

Female underrepresentation in media has very much to do with the Western society's way of understanding gender roles and then reinforcing or challenging the set roles for males and females. It is also very closely linked with the media interest. If there is sport that is not deeply rooted in the society and does not have many spectators, then the amount of coverage will be low, yet if it has rich history of successes then it will be popular among people and so will receive a high amount of coverage. There might be a case that a sport may be popular among people, but the media did not yet picked up on it, but it will sure do eventually. Whatever interests the audience interests media, because it will then gather greater audience for the sport program and possibly for other programs on that channel. What usually gets television coverage then gets attention of the print media as well, so television is many times responsible for what sports gets bigger coverage in other media. Journalist can watch that program, and even if they are not present at the event they can still write their own report on the game or event. At the same time other media do not hesitate to criticize television for missing on some important sport game or event.

The difference of coverage comes when we divide the sports to male and female, because female sports do not have such a historical background, they are immediately at a disadvantage. The same applies to physical abilities; women are not as strong or fast as men and therefore cannot reach the same results, yet can offer other virtues such as gracefulness. The main problem is that (male) audience is only in the process of learning to appreciate female sports, many times they still see it as a joke or just a display of pretty bodies and therefore it is a long-term project.

At the same time the area of female sports can be the new niche market for the media and the advertisers too. Since female sports are slowly getting the status of “true” sport and the athletes of “true” performers. Female athletes used to be more as a “decoration” in the advertisements, but sponsors found out that such images do not have a positive effect on the market in the long-term (Brooks, 2001). Mainly the female audience and the old people can be offended by advertising with sexual meaning so the new trend can be to promote female athletes as athletes rather than objects. So even though female sports are at a disadvantage due to not having such a rich history as male sports do and have a more difficult time fighting for the spotlight and respect, the trend for media and advertisers is to explore new markets and this is definitely one of them. The important thing now is for female sports and athletes in particular to take advantage of it, but in a smart way, so they do not degrade the sport or female athletes. Meaning that the way athletes present themselves to the public is very important and not only for the athletes personally, but for whole female sport.

According to Cunningham (2004) study of Sports Illustrated indicated that men receive more coverage than women do. Study of ESPN’s Sports Center and CNN’s Sports Tonight showed that female athletes get only 5% of the coverage. Even the study of the NCAA leagues, which are the University sport leagues both for male and female, the study showed that female receive less coverage. Yet, it showed that there was an increase in the amount of coverage in female athletes of NCAA between 1991 and 2001. Similar can be said about the Czech Republic, the majority of the coverage goes to male athletes but female athletes get some amount of coverage too and in fact during the 2006 Winter Olympic Games the amount of coverage was proportional to the number of athletes of both genders. Still women have to “prove” themselves to the media by more constant good results than male athletes. Women might be slowly catching up in the amount of coverage, however, they face another problem and that is biased coverage.

There is not really a demand for some special way of covering female sports. Male and female athletes should be portrayed in the same way and that is in respect to their sporting performance. Women’s Sports Foundation says that the media should simply reflect the reality of women’s diverse sport experience. The focus of the coverage should not be and does not have to be their physical appearance, but physical strength, skills and passion for the game. A balanced and realistic view is absent from the media’s coverage of female sports. This therefore needs to be changed in order to bring a balanced reporting.

So far the stereotypes were being reinforced by media. Media objectify and trivialize women athletes and their athletic endeavors (Schell, 2005). Young girls then see their role models in television while the commentators talk about their physical beauty, with reinforced messages like that the young girls might pick up the sexual meaning rather than the sport meaning. Though this might be mainly created by the dominance of men in the media, there is no proof that the programming and way of coverage would differ with an equal number of males and females in media (McQuail, 1999), yet definitely there would not be major focus on female athletes appearance and attractiveness in the coverage of female sports as it is now-a-days.

The main threat that female athletes represent is that they challenge the traditional stereotypical role of genders. Through a sport they challenge the male dominance in the society and that is why male reporters trivialize female athletes to sex objects, they may feel a threat to the whole concept of male dominance.

“Female athletes are confronting the boundaries that bind social acceptance and gender identity that determines social order and what it means to be feminine. These boundaries have been constructed through a patriarchal society that was, ingrained with sexism and male superiority. Today these values are enforced and maintained through various mediums, though, the most influential of which is media, in particular male commentary of female athletes and the portrayal of women through visual images.” (Hayes, 2005)

This biased coverage is then reflected in advertising. As Brooks (2001) suggests advertisements targeted at male audience work well on the sexual impulse base, but these might offend the female audience, so too much sex apparently does not sell. The female audience seeing highly sexual advertisements that objectifies women, might then repel women to buy such product and the brand might suffer loss of female customers. Too extreme advertisements are dangerous, highly sexual advertisements might be seen as too extreme and therefore risky. Yet, advertisements for sporting gear for example show male and female



athletes in respect to their sport and with the fashionable sporting clothes on which sends a positive image about the brand, the sport and the good image of the athlete.

There are varied effects on the society because of the coverage of female athletes being limited and biased. It effects other media representations of female athletes and role of women in the society in general. It effects advertising, it effects women and how they perceive themselves in the society, it effects the audience so the way male audience looks at female sports and the way female “accept” other females being athletes and also young girls and their understanding of the role of female athletes and their potential choice of sport or a role model.

Since the coverage of female athletes is low, the coverage of ethnic minorities, larger women and women with disabilities is almost nonexistent (Schell, 2005). This would also improve if the amount of coverage of female athletes improved in quantity and quality.

## 6.2. Possible Solution

First of all it is important to state what kind of equality we are seeking. It would be easy just to demand half share for women in everything regardless of any assessment of desirability. This might seem as an easy thing to do, but it would not be and also pushing the agenda with force would not have good results anyway. When we look at the situation of excluded men, the whole system would have to be redistributed. The fact is that dominant ideology within sport just does not go hand in hand with equality. Hegemonic masculinity by its nature works as the dominant force and places the other in an inferior position.

In promoting and respecting the sport as it is today, we also accept the negative as well as positive factors. In terms of political approach the dilemma is to go with the liberal approach or more radical one. In the liberal approach the already set norms are taken as acceptable and the things that rebel or go out of norm are eventually and with some effort dealt with within the process. A more radical approach locates the fundamental problems in the social structure. There is a concern that achieving gender equality should not be at the expense of other areas which also suffer under inequality such as race inequality. But that is why all these areas need to be dealt with together (Bryson, 1990).

Radical change is certainly necessary to secure humane changes, although the level of practical politics liberal solutions will need to be persuaded in the short run as well. Changing

the system is a long-term project. We need to explicitly state our objectives and then pursue changes where opportunities present themselves. Most importantly effort needs to be put up from all the sides because without effort and real interest no change can ever take place.

Looking at the sport itself, it is clear that despite the masculine flavor, sport is not a monolithic institution. As with other sites of social life also in the sport, the hegemonic position has been continually challenged. This is absolutely a natural process. For women to be able to challenge the male hegemony, they need to expand their range of physical ability, range of sporting activities and push themselves to limits and it still might not be enough. They need to find other ways to get the attention, yet using their sex appeal only is not the right way to do it. Even the fact that women stood up to the oppression and made sure that every girl had the right to choose whatever sport she wanted is looking at the historical events, is a big accomplishment. But it is in human nature never to settle for what we have achieved, but want to achieve more, so women do not just want to settle for the same rights like men had for years, but want more respect, more coverage and respectable portrayal of their performance.

Even the participation of women in sport is still problematic. The process that gives women a disadvantage is often deeply rooted and can be maintained in spite of women's participation. Where sporting activity is defined and judged according to the dominant values and on male terms, women's participation can in fact enhance hegemonic masculinity and reinforce women's inferior status. To be able to challenge the hegemonic position women need to play to their virtues. We need to expand the qualities admired by audience such as gracefulness, rhythm and other skills that women excel at. Also important is to de-emphasize competition and concentrate on participation that can then raise the quality of the sport itself. To increase commercialization of female sport would then be the next step, but it would be a long-term project.

Even though commercialization needs to be treated cautiously in terms of the long-term goals for a fair stable society, commercialization may also offer opportunities. One clear stereotypical opinion is that female sports are less interesting than male sports, which is a view clearly based on dominant views of sport. With all the media and audience research that we have today, we know that certain sporting events might not really be interesting, but they are made to seem interesting. Clear example is snooker or bowling which get coverage on television and other media, they are not particularly interesting or intense in pace as compared

to other sports such as hockey, tennis or skiing, but when the hype is created and the marketing campaign is right, then even such inactive sports can be success in media.

It is important that female sports organizations get in touch with other sport organizations and other institutions. This would open up the relevant equal opportunity framework and the possibility to legal challenges. It gives access to clubs and facilities, control of sporting associations, or challenges to unfair rules. Women need to gain greater decision making power over resources for female sport, not only do they need to demand resources but also the right to decide where to use them. This might belong under the liberal approach, but it has one big advantage and that is empowering women and strong beginning for a real structural change.

Sport does not stand on the side as a neutral thing, it is part of web of institutions and the state has interest in sport as well. Therefore, it is important for female sport not only to get in touch with those organizations, but maybe with other minority groups and they can then profit with such a partnership. This can increase the membership in sports, greater popularity and fan base, but can also bring those groups together and with a greater number of supporters a change can come more easily. If female athletes and female sports in general will only try to associate themselves with male sports it will only increase the male hegemony.

There are several different paths for future research in the area of gender representation in sport media and also its effects. The effects of team versus individual sports and the way of coverage should be studied as well as the effects on different way of coverage on the audience and mainly the young potential athletes, how much they are affected by what they see.

Once the Western society claims the equality of men and women it needs to be promoted in every field. The sport should not be excluded since both male and female are capable of sporting performances of high quality and have the skills to entertain the audience with their achievements. In order for the society to accept that, the way of coverage of both male and female athletes should be equal in amount and quality. This is a thin ice situation and dealing with giving female athletes more opportunities needs to be dealt with delicately. You do not want to just equalize everything, because that might disturb male athletes or the male audience. The main thing is to equalize the way of reporting about male and female athletes and then the next step take place. Womens' institutions need to pair up with other institutions, establish relations and set the objectives. Girls need to see that by doing sport

they would not be seen as not feminine and therefore not as girls so they start joining clubs more. More participation will increase the level of quality which will then reflect in competition of the best athletes. Rising the level of quality will be undeniable for the media, which will give women sport more attention. That is only a theory, but simply raising the amount of coverage would not be successful because the whole system or how we perceive sport and the role of men and women in it needs to be readjusted in order to bring female athletes more coverage and more respect.

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