



# Master's degree thesis

**IDR950 Sport Management**

**Gender representation in Communication on Social Media of the Czech Olympic Committee**

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## **Preface**

This master thesis was written in order to fulfill the graduation requirements of the master program at University College in Molde. I was engaged in researching and writing this thesis from December 2018 to May 2019 and it is a conclusion of my two years as a master student of HiMolde.

The topic of this thesis is “Gender representation in Communication on Social Media of the Czech Olympic Committee”, the basic of which is a content analysis of social media communication of the Czech Olympic Committee. The topic is a reflection of my interests: social media communication, liberal feminism, women’s rights and Olympic idea and values.

My research question was formulated together with my supervisor Dr Christos Anagnostopoulos. The research was difficult but conducting extensive literature review has allowed me to fulfill my research aims. I would like to thank all academical staff at HiMolde and to Solveig Straume especially for being helpful during my studies at this institution, without whose cooperation I would not have been able to conduct this thesis.

I also wish to thank Václav Blahout, digital manager of the Czech Team for his cooperation. My parents and my grandparents deserve a particular note of thanks for their extensive support and motivation. Last but not least, I would like to thank my partner for always critically discussing any issue with me and for the unconditional support and patience.

Aneta Grabmüllerová,  
Molde, 2019

## Summary

Social media are becoming an indispensable marketing tool. The popularity of social media has undoubtedly increased in recent years and so did their reach and influence. Only Facebook itself has more than million active users per day. Framing theory explains how media communication affects its audience and has a great influence on public opinion. Differential framing of genders is one of the common issues occurring in mass communication. Differential gender representation occurs in traditional media in quantitative as well as qualitative aspects. Importantly, the occurring within sport environment is not decreasing over the years. Women are still underrepresented in media coverage and portrayed differently than their male counterparts. Based on the framing theory, such unequal representation might have negative effects on the entire society such hegemonic masculinity, sexism, heterosexism and homophobia. Therefore, it is essential, that major international institution and entities with a great global power do not support gender stereotypes and gender inequality. Sport events and sport in general receive a great media attention. Successful athletes, sport organizations, global sport brands have often global impact exceeding sport industry. The International Olympic Committee continuously support gender equality in the meaning of media coverage as well as participation. This study follows the limited contemporary researches on social media communication concerning gender issues. Social media communication of Czech National Olympic Committee around and during the 2018 Winter Olympic Games was analyzed. The findings of this study correspond with other contemporary studies. Drawing from the findings of this thesis overall gender breakdown has been discussed as well as the most common issues extensively described by scholars. This thesis offers quantitative and qualitative approach making use of framing theory and linking it to gender issues occurring in mass media coverage. The findings show that social media are offering equal gender representation in comparison to traditional media where ambivalent gender representation still occurs to great extent. The thesis concludes by giving a reflection on the Czech Olympic Team's communication as well as recommendations to further maintain and improve the situation.

Key words: social media, gender representation, gender equality, Olympic coverage, gender media representation, sport, framing theory, Winter Olympic Games, gender equality

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## 1.0 Introduction

As a professional athlete, I have been competing on an international level since age 15 and I have been member of the Czech national team since the age of 16. Moreover, I went through many sports clubs, local teams and training groups in various sports such swimming, athletics, cycling, cross country skiing and finally triathlon, that eventually became my main focus. As a young female athlete, I have never felt any kind of discrimination or inequality. In my experience, nobody was ever left out of the team, neither based on gender or performance. Even though, I was doing individual sport, youth triathletes were competing in teams of three on international level. It was only when I became a junior, I started noticing some kind of ambivalence. Our junior team consisted of 12 athletes – 3 women and 9 men. Qualification quotas for international events were usually 2 women and 4 men. Even though that the international quotas given by international union were equal for both genders. Important to notice, female and male athletes in the sport were similarly successful at that time. If a female athlete reached a success, it was often accompanied by comments that there is not such high competition as in between men.

As a young athlete, I was used to be in what is believed to be mainly men's environment. I was the only female athlete in my high school training group. My role within the sport environment has changed over the years. I became a student of sport management and I am gaining first working experiences. The environment does not differ much from the athletic one though. As a female student of sport management, I belonged to the minority in the class – similarly as an employee of a sport agency where I am the only woman in the office. Despite all these facts, I was never upset about the inequality, which supposedly rule the sport environment. As a results of media framing, I have never questioned it and simply accepted it the way it is.

Many international organizations claim to fight for gender equality and same conditions for both, female and male athletes. One of the most influential and powerful is the International Olympic Committee, which is responsible for the modern Olympic Games and which associates the national committees all over the world. The International Olympic Committee (further the IOC) runs the IOC Gender Equality Review Project and gender equality is one of the topics of their Olympic Agenda 2020. The IOC Gender Equality Working Group set 25 IOC Gender Equality Recommendations, which are supposed to be implemented by the Olympic Movement – athletes, officials, commissions, federations and executives. Next to the IOC, it is national committees that are supposed to disseminate these values. The IOC

puts great effort in setting gender equality in both communication and representation at the Olympic Games. The question is, to what extent are those values shared by the individual national committees. The goal of this thesis is to analyze gender representation in the communication of the Czech Olympic Committee on social media.

Regarding to researches concerning the topic, gender inequality still occurs in traditional media, not only in quantitative manners (Fink 2015, Trolan 2013, Billings, Angelini and Duke 2010), but also in qualitative aspects (Trolan 2013, Angelini 2008, Greer, Hardin and Homan 2009). Regarding to those researches, gender inequality occurs widely across all kind of media coverage and importantly does not improve over the years. However, the most recent researches show, that new kind of on-line media such social media might bring a change and offers more equal sport coverage. Social media are becoming an indispensable marketing tool. Their popularity has increased in recent years dramatically. Only Facebook itself has more than million active users per day (Socialbakers.com 2019). However, social media are relatively new and only limited amount of academics researches exist in specific areas.

Based on framing theory, gender inequality in media has great effect on the society such hegemonic masculinity, sexism, heterosexism or homophobia (Fink 2015). Therefore, it is essential that powerful institution with a great global power such the IOC and their subordinate organizations national committees do not support gender stereotypes, gender inequality and gender ambivalence. To my knowledge, there are only few researches concerning gender equality on social media and there is no research on the communication of the Czech Olympic Committee on the social media concerning gender equality.

The aim of this study is to analyze gender representation on social media of the Czech Olympic Committee during the Winter Olympic Games in 2018 and answer following research questions: Does gender inequality occur on social media accounts of the Czech Olympic Committee and how do they picture different genders? The purpose of this study is to explore to what extent gender inequality occurs on social media, and secondly, to detect whether the communication of the organization is gender equal. For this purpose, posts published on social media network Instagram before, during and after the Olympic Games in PyeongChang in 2018 will be analyzed. Aspects described by Bruce (2015) will be focused on.

## **2.0 Literature review**

Literature review was conducted based on secondary sources available. The methodology is described in the chapter 3.0. Framing theory explains how media coverage influence society and why is equal gender representation important. The impact of differential coverage of (not only) each gender is summed up at the end of the literature review. Different approaches toward gender presence and most frequently defined issues occurring in relation to gender representation in media are described in following chapters. Different aspects playing key role in gender representation are described. Finally, related academical articles and findings are outlined.

### **2.1 Framing Theory**

Goffman (1974) has defined framing theory as a perception of an individual based on one's experience. Therefore, perception is subjective because each individual has different experiences. Circumstances of the perceived situation play important role. The theory of framing can be understood as a context of circumstances that set the perception. Goffman (1974) gives a following example: Newspaper headline says, that a man was accused for pointing a gun on his partner. After reading such headline, one might think, it must have been a serious crime. However, if we know the circumstances, the perception is changing. The women wanted her partner to point a gun at her, because she had a hiccup and believed, if she will be scared, it will stop. The way message is delivered play key role in individual's perception.

There is no clear agreement of the influence of the frames sin between scholars though. Framing theory is widely used in between scholars in all kind of social sciences. The theory is related to agenda setting, which is in other words creation of public meaning. Agenda setting is based on choosing key topics or giving different importance to the same information. Media often unsuccessfully tell people what they should think, but they are very successful in telling people what issues they should think about. Agenda setting theory is concerned what topics are given space in media and to what extent. While framing theory describes how are information communicated (Vreese 2005).

Regarding to Entman (1993), framing means picking certain aspects from an event and communicate them more significantly than others in order to interpret a message or evaluate the event. Frames define issues, clarify their causes, creates moral judgments and offer

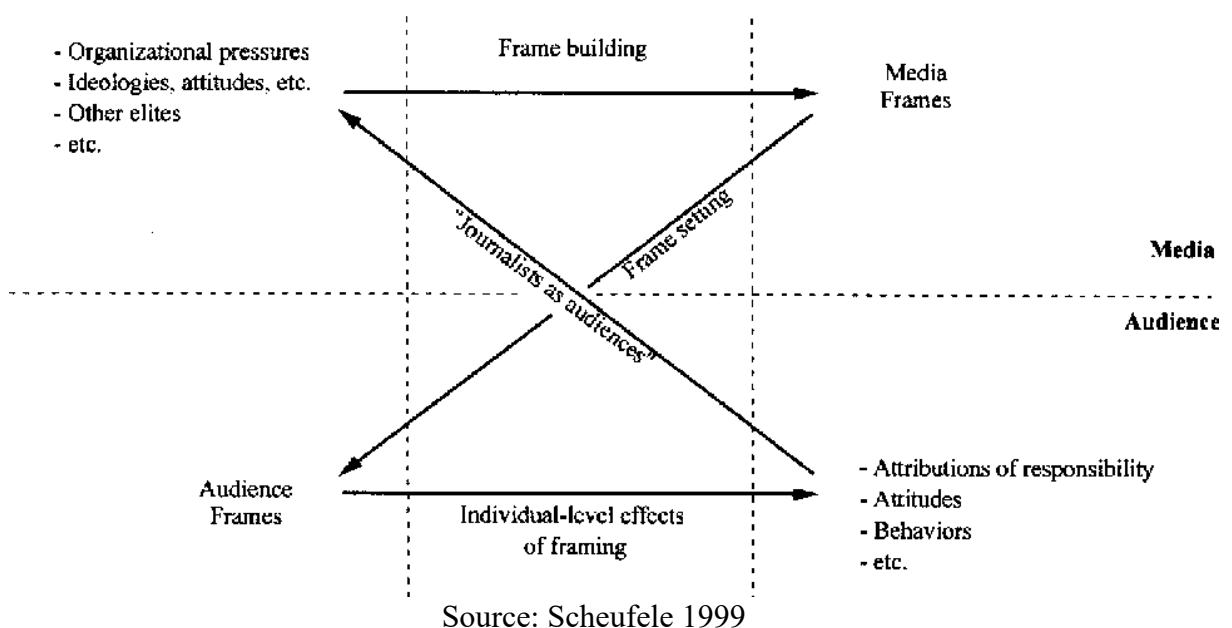
solutions. Media play significantly important role in public meaning creation (Entman 1993).

Goffman (1974) describes framing theory as a situation defining based on organizations' values, which influence social happening and our involvement in them. Cappella and Jamieson (1997) describes framing theory as a way, how is an event described and reproduced, including used words, titles or rhetorical contributions.

These definitions demonstrate the two perceptions of framing theory. The first are frames in communication. Frames are created by words, pictures, phrases and presentation style, which is used to communicate the certain issue (Cappella and Jamieson 1997). Which frame is used is dependent on what author or gate keeper consider as important. McQuail (2009) defines framing theory in communication as targeted influence on individual, using rational arguments, emotional tone of the message or choice of topics. Topics, identity and symbols all together create frames.

From the other way around, framing theory is concerned by individual's ability to understand an event (Goffman 1974). In such a case, the perception is influenced by individual's capability rather than communication style. However, both points of view are concerned by differences in communication and their impact. Anyone, media, political parties, organizations or individuals are creators and at the same time audience of such frames. The main tool is text; certain words, phrases, expressions and contextual links. Furthermore, pictures, videos, provided examples or links to other sources, all together

Figure 1 Framing theory



create a framed message, which each individual perceive subjectively based on one's cultural background. Such frames create constraints, which set a way in which message is supposed to be perceived and interpreted. Context is important key factor in presentation. The same message can have a various meaning in different setting (Hurtíková 2014).

Frames are linked to emotions. Various emotions affect audience in different way. Emotions such love, respect, national pride or values but also hate are stronger triggers than depression, resignation or shame. Used emotions in framed message influence its reach (Tarrow 1998). Mass communication is essential tool of framing. Until recent years, media were the only source of information and therefore the only creators of frames. However, in recent years and in relation to the mass popularity of social media, the trend has changed. Media often take over an information and interpret and frame it, so it fits the audience. However, social media and internet in general gave individuals and organizations the power to communicate their own content with their own frames and therefore to have control over their audience and released information.

Entman (1991) provides an example: American media were informing about two air incidents, which caused death of many. In 1983, Korean plane was shot by Soviet Union. Media framed the event as planned attack and crime and put a great importance into emotions and life stories. In 1988 Iranian civil air shot American Navy. In this case, media were presenting it as unfortunate incident in a neutral style, so it was perceived as a tragedy rather than a crime.

Kahneman and Tversky (1984) provides another example: Researches let a group of people imagine, there is an epidemy of an unusual Asian disease. It is expected that it will kill 600 people. There are two options. The first option is, that it will be possible to save 200 people. Second option is, that there is a one third chance to save everyone, but a two thirds chance that everyone will die. In such interpretation, 72 percent of respondents chose the first option. To other group, the researches have presented the options differently. In a first option, 400 people are about to die. In second option, there is a third chance to save everyone and two thirds chance that everyone will die. In such interpretation, only 20 percent of respondents chose the first option.

Both of the examples demonstrate, how important choice of words is and how differently can be a same message perceived. Mass media and social media have a great power in creation of public meaning.

There are two types of framings categorized by its influence on audience: equivalency framing and emphasis framing. Equivalency framing is concerned by different, but logically

equivalent information and their effect on audience. Kahneman and Tversky's (1984) research is an example of such theory. Emphasis framing explains the effect of different importance given. Emphasis framing effect means choosing, even unintentionally, certain aspects and give them bigger or smaller importance in communication channel.

## **2.2 Gender presence in media**

Media frames have a great ability to affect how individuals perceive reality (Gans 1979, Gitlin 1980, Pan & Kosicky 1993 in Fink and Kensicki 2002). Women athletes have been for a long time underrepresented or undervalued in sport media coverage, which can demonstrate the contemporary status of genders in society. The 1996 Olympic Games was supposedly a promise for women athletes. By many, the games were called as Olympic of women. Women were supposed to be in the middle of the attention and receive more media coverage. However, several studies have shown that there was no improvement in parity for women in the media (Eastman and Billings 1999, Tuggle and Owen 1999 in Fink and Kensicki 2002). Regarding to Whisenant, Pedersen, and Obenour (2002) female athletes are not only underrepresented in media, but also trivialized and sexualized. Furthermore, media support their femininity on the expense of their athletics achievements. The limited amount of coverage conforms their roles as both athletes and women (Whisenant, Pedersen and Obenour 2002).

Fink and Kensicki (2002) examined one of the most read sport magazine Sports Illustrated and Sports Illustrated for Women. The authors have examined both visual and literal texts from 1997 to 1999 in order to discover the representation of female sports and athletes in the coverage. They used established coding method by Kane (1998 in Fink and Kensicki 2002) and distributed all material in four categories: athletic action, dressed but poised and pretty, non-sportive setting and pornographic/sexually suggestive category. They have found that female athletes continue to be underrepresent, portrayed in traditionally feminine sports, or shown in non-sportive scenery in both media. Women athletes are also often presented for their feminine roles such as mothers or wives (Fink and Kensicki 2002, Daddario 1994 in Wensing and Bruce 2003). Similar results were found in Sports Illustrated for Kids by Hardin et al. (2002), women were underrepresented in all editorial photographs, overrepresented in aesthetic sports (such gymnastic or figure skating and framed more likely than men in a minor way (Hardin et al. 2002). Similarly, Weber and Carini (2012) analyzed Sports Illustrated cover from 2000 to June 2011 to find that only 4,9 percent of covers were showing women.

Eagleman and Clavio (2011) analyzed 10 most popular internet-based sports blogs, which have become in the last decade a competitor to traditional sport media. Their research has shown that while 43,1 percent of female images were sexually suggestive only 1 percent of male images was. In overall, the majority of images were picturing male athletes, with only 7,1 percent of images were featuring females. Furthermore, those pictures were often cheerleaders, dancers or models in a sexually suggestive manner.

### **2.3 Gender presence in Olympic Games media coverage**

The Olympics Games are the biggest sport event in the world organized every two years and are widely covered by media. There is no surprise that men's sport played the main role in the history, however it is alarming to what extent is men's sport still upheld. The Olympics and their coverage were the focus of many researches. The most common differences found were following: differences in gender description - female athletes called 'girls' while male athletes commonly described as 'men' (Messner, Duncan, and Jensen 1993); more comments on females' attractiveness, femininity, or sexuality instead of their skills and accomplishments (Eastman and Billings 1999); a focus on the size, shape and strength of male athletes' bodies (Billings 2003); a more praise than criticism for male athletes (Billings 2003); and different attributions for success and failure (Angelini, Billings, and MacArthur 2013 in Eagleman 2013, Billings and Eastman 1999 and 2003). Bernstein and Blain (2003) stated that female athletes are often devalued and infantilized in media. Furthermore, media often focus on female athletes' appearance and attractiveness rather than athletic skill.

The media coverage of the Olympic Games was a focus of many researchers. Eastman and Billings (1999) pointed out that the 1996 Summer Games were referred to as 'the Olympics of the Women.'" However, as they proved in their research, the representation of women in the Olympic media coverage in the U.S. over the years 1994, 1996, 1998 hasn't increased. The researchers focused on women and women's sport mentions in airtime, the amount of time covering each gender and sexual stereotyping of athletes by hosts and reporters. Even though, the proportion of prime-time minutes devoted to women's and men's events did not differ significantly, the mentions of male athletes dominated the television broadcast coverage in all three Olympics. Furthermore, it has been the lowest in the 1996, only 36 percent of athlete's name mentions were women athletes. Same results were shown in analysis of mentions of sporting events by gender. Regarding to the authors, no improvement on women's sports was evident over the time. The analysis of stereotyping has shown there was more emphasis on winning by men while more on the family life of the women.



Furthermore, women athletes were more likely to be described in the manners of their attractiveness than men athletes (Eastman and Billings 1999).

The authors explain that as long as the coverage is scripted or it is a planned promotion, the gender presence is rather equal, however as the coverage became less scripted when events are shown live, it was more likely to contain more gender stereotyping.

The scholars Billings and Eastman (2003) found in their study of the 2000 Sydney Olympic Games that men are more likely than women to have their success attributed to athletic skills and commitment. Furthermore, men's failures were more likely than women explained as lack of concentration.

Billings and Eastman (2003) also analyzed Winter Olympics in 2002 in Salt Lake City and found out, the situation hasn't improved, it has actually worsened. Most of the clock time of coverage went to men, most of the top 20 most mentioned athletes were men, and most of the athlete mentions and descriptors were dedicated to men. The clock time was actually the largest in the last five Olympics (the only ones for which such data are available). In 2002, men athletes received nearly twice as much coverage as women athletes. The trend in gender presence is therefore the opposite than could be expected.

Billings (2007) analyzed prime-time hours on NBC of 2004 Athens Summer Olympics. He focused on the difference in gender presence in different sports. His findings show that even though there are frames identified in the Olympics as a whole, the frames differ in each particular sport. Results of his research indicate that most gender-marked sport of the four major summer Olympic sports is gymnastic and the men and women athletes within the sport are treated differently.

The same Olympics were analyzed by Pratt (2008). The author focused on the print articles in *The New York Times* and *The Los Angeles Times*. The aspects such placement, gender focus and the media regard differed by gender were analyzed. The results indicated that articles on female athletes were more likely inside of the sport section rather than on the front page. Furthermore, articles on female athletes were rather focused on team sports than individual athlete as in the case of male athletes. Men were more likely to be quoted, even in articles focused on female athletes. Female athletes received fewer space and stories than men athletes (Pratt 2008).

Billings, Angelini, and Duke (2010) conducted an analysis of NBC's 2008 Olympic coverage. They suggest that it should not be expected that the same terminology will be describing male and female athletes, however comments on experience or intelligence of the athletes should be equally balanced for both genders.

Jones (2013) have analyzed the online coverage of the 2008 Olympics by four major public broadcasters – ABC, BBC, CBC and TVNZ. The results of his research support the finding of Billings, Angelini, and Duke (2010) and Pratt (2008). Male athletes were four times more likely to be featured than female athletes and were given twice as many lead stories and photographs. Furthermore, the content of photographs and the language used supported gender stereotypes and sexual differences framing female athletes as emotionally weak and dependent. Female athletes' failure was described more often than males' (Jones 2013). In general, women's sports received 41 percent of stories while TVNZ scored the lowest percentage. Moreover, female athletes were often pictured differently than male athletes. For example, swimmer Stephanie Rice was showed in 19 pictures but none of them were picturing her competing while Michael Phelps was shown in 30 pictures mostly in action. Pictures of female athletes were often showing their celebration or posing with medals (Jones 2013). Regarding to Hardin (2002) such framing of female athletes as showing them in non-action setting supports stereotypes and trivializes their athleticism. Regarding to Jones (2013) the Olympics coverage in 2008 was male focused while women were shown in the roles of wives, mothers and partners (not applicable vice versa).

Poniatowski and Hardin (2012) textually analyzed commentary on NBC of women hockey in 2010 Olympics. The results of the research show that women athletes were often compared to their male counterparts while the vice versa doesn't apply.

Burch, Pedersen and Geurin (2012) analyzed new media coverage in the 2010 Olympics. They analyzed three on-line websites covering the Olympics, which were either the official broadcasters or exclusive right holders. 64,5 percent of articles were devoted to male athletes, 35,5 to female athletes. However, when participation in the Olympics was considered, female athletes did not receive significantly less coverage than male athletes.

Another Olympics massively communicated as women's, were the London 2012 Summer Olympic Games. All countries were obligated to have both women and men athletes on their teams. Jacques Rogge, the head of the International Olympic Committee by that time, called it a major boost for gender equality (CNN 2012). The Games had the highest percentage of female athletes (44,3 percent of all participants) and female athletes competed in every sport (Eagleman 2013). However, when it comes to disciplines, men had 30 more events than women (136 women's events and 166 men's events).

Eagleman (2013) has analyzed frames used to describe women's and men's gymnastics in US newspaper coverage of the 2012 Olympic Games. The results show, the description of the women's and men's skills differed greatly. While men's related articles were containing

technical language, women's articles used simplified description. Also, used pictures differed. Only pictures were female athletes were showing joy and happiness during the performance were used.

## **2.4 Gender presence on social media**

Social media dramatically changed the way of coverage of events. Social media have given originations, athletes and events the opportunity to represent themselves instead of being dependent on media coverage. Big organizations such the IOC might have on social media have similar reach as traditional media. This gave them the opportunity to present themselves in a way they intend to. The undeniable advantage of social media is their international and intercultural reach. While media have rather national or even local reach, social media accounts of major sport organizations have often international domain.

For these reasons, the 2012 Olympics were called as "Twitter Olympics." By that time, social media have become largely popular and the IOC launched their online communications communities and the Olympics have gained 24/7 international social media coverage.

Litchfield (2018) have analyzed Twitter accounts of Team GB and Australian Olympic Team during the 2016 Olympics. In general, 42 percent of posts were dedicated to women and 47 percent to men (the rest to both or was neutral). However, when the representation of each gender in Team GB and their successes were considered, the representation in posts was evaluated as equal. Australian team had more women than men on the team and women were more successful in terms of medals won. However, men athletes received more posts than woman.

While, in quantitative manners, the representation of each gender was rather equal comparing to traditional media, qualitative aspects were similar to the findings of traditional media researches. Men were more often pictured in active poses while women were rather portrayed in passive poses. Furthermore, posts regarding to events in which both genders took part were more likely to be accompanied by pictures of men athletes. In some cases, links referring to female athlete were accompanied by picture of male athlete.

Regarding to Litchfield (2018) there is visible progress in women representation in the coverage. However, some common differences are still present such infantilization, underrepresentation, and differential framing. The most common issues occurring in differential media coverage are going to be described in the following chapter.

## **2.5 Differences and similarities in gender representation**

Many of scholars described similar issues in their researches. Based on the previous literature review, the most common issues with differential gender representation outlined by scholars are described in following chapters. Categorization was outlined by Fink (2015), Trolan (2013) and Bruce (2015).

### **2.5.1 Quantitative differences**

Since 2012 London Olympics, all nations are obligated to have women on team. 44,4 percent of athletes at the 2012 Olympics were women. They have taken part in all sports. China, The United States and Russia had more women than men competitors on their teams (Creedon 2014). Despite that the participation of women in sport is at its historical highest, the coverage of women sport did not increase or improved over the time. Actually, the researchers suggest that the trend is the opposite, the traditional media coverage of women sport is decreasing (Billings, Angelini, and Duke 2010, Weber and Carini 2013, Jones 2013, Billings and Eastman 2003). Regarding to Kian (2007) media undervalue women's accomplishments, which lead to general public being unaware of the number of women athletes and their accomplishments.

Women are not only underrepresented in general but also the sports that are covered by media differ. Women are more likely to be shown in 'socially acceptable' sports such gymnastics, figure skating, or synchronized swimming (Trolan 2013, Eastman and Billings 1999, Billings 2007). Synchronized swimming also remains the only sport at the Olympics for women only up to date.

Even though, most of the researches show significant underrepresentation of women athletes in media coverage. There are some results indicating that new media might improve current situation (Litchfield 2018, Burch et al. 2012, Bruce 2015).

### **2.5.2 Qualitative differences**

Not only women athletes and sports are less media covered, the way they are presented differs in many aspects. Researchers show that media representation of women athletes diverge in used language, technological production, and focus (Billings and Eastman 2003, Angelini 2008). Those practices became so common and natural part of women sport coverage that consumers don't even notice them (Fink 2015).

### **2.5.2.1 Gender marking**

Women's World Cup, FIVB Volleyball Women's World Championship, 2019 IIHF Ice Hockey Women's World Championship, Women's Tennis Association. While men competitions make the norm, women's events have to be marked as 'women's'. Gender marking is one of the most common practice (Messner, Duncan, and Jensen 1993). There is not such an event as Men's World Championship. While men's events are considered as the standard, women's events obviously need marking. Furthermore, women's athletes are often recognized for their accomplishments in women's competitions. For example, if a woman succeeds in a match, the commentators often emphasize it was women's tournament. Such labeling doesn't not happen in men's events (Messner, Duncan, and Jensen 1993).

### **2.5.2.2 Infantilizing**

"While the girls' team will be training at home soil, men's team will..." (Český biathlon 2018). While the author was referring to adults' team of women and men, the difference in used terms suggest there is no women's adults' team, only team of girls. Women athletes are commonly infantilized by commentators and sport stakeholders by calling them 'girls' or 'young ladies' while men athletes are rarely referred to as 'boys' (Messner, Duncan, and Jensen 1993). Moreover, women are more often called by their first names whereas men are referred by their family names (Messner, Duncan, and Jensen 1993).

### **2.5.2.3 Differential framing**

Athletes, who are considered by media gate keepers as less pretty and receive less media attention (Trolan 2013). Focus on femininity of women athletes and non-athletic achievements trivialize their athletics achievements (Trolan 2013, Jones 2013, Eagleman 2013). Media often emphasizes women athletes' attractiveness and femininity and moves the attention from their performance and achievements. Commonly we see articles and contest for most beautiful athletes at the Olympics (for example: Benak 2014, Morrill 2016). Regarding to Trolan (2013) referring to athletes' physical appearance rather than performance supports the gender inequality and sexualization of women athletes.

Regarding to Eastman and Billings (1999), the focus of media on female athletes is much more on their attractiveness than achievements. Women athletes often receive attention after they use their bodies for that purpose. Several women sport teams appeared in sexualized pictures. In order to bring media attention to their sports. Female athletes are much more

likely than male athletes to be pictured in sexy suggestive poses (Trolan 2013, Fink and Kensicki 2002).

Media often cover other than athletic aspect of women athletes' lives. Their roles as wives, girlfriends, and mothers and their heterosexuality in general is often in focus of media coverage (Fink and Kensicki 2002). Ambivalence is the most common form of an issue related to media representation of female athletes. Ambivalent coverage highlights traditional femininity and repress sportswomen's physical skill. Examples include sport-focused headlines accompanied by non-competition or sexualized images, or images of sport performance with patronizing or infantilizing headlines or text (Bruce 2015).

Furthermore, attributes describing athletes' failure or success also differs significantly. While men's success is often attributed to talent and hard work, women's achievements are rather explained as luck, result of man's influence, or due to emotions (Eastman and Billings 1999). Similarly, men's failure is accredited to tough conditions and high competition while women supposedly lack skills, commitment, or focus (Billings and Eastman 2003). Moreover, the performance by itself is often described differently. Regarding to Eagleman (2013) reporters use more sophisticated language (such technological terms) to describe men's performance. Women's performance is trivialized and described in simple way. Inconsistency in commentary was found in women's ice hockey competitions in the 2012 Winter Olympics (Poniatowski and Hardin 2012) and gymnastic in US newspaper coverage of the 2012 Olympic Games.

Usage of different kind of pictures in media coverage is also common practice. While men are pictured in action, women are much more likely to be shown in passive setting, for example posing with medals or celebrating (Jones 2013).

#### **2.5.2.4 Our Voice**

Social media gave individuals the power to present themselves. Social media are platforms where individuals can present themselves. Individuals' are aware of the potential reach of audience and careful about their own representation (Marshall 2010). Furthermore, researches prove that athletes and sport organizations are more and more active on social media (Hambrick and Kang 2014, Hambrick, Simmons, Greenhalg and Greenwell 2010 in Geurin-Eagleman and Burch 2016). However, athletes have to have a knowledge of public relations practices and be aware that anything they publish on-line can be further used by media. It can be also an advantage for those athletes who usually do not receive media attention to increase their awareness by themselves.

Geurin-Eagleman and Burch (2016) analyzed Olympians' communication and self-presentation on Instagram. Regarding to the research, athletes are more likely to publish personal life photos. These kinds of photos also received most of the attention and engagement. Furthermore, Geurin-Eagleman and Burch (2016) analyzed athletes appearing in photos, most pictures were non-sport setting with 68 percent, then dressed but posed and only 9,2 percent of pictures were athletic. Furthermore, 5 percent of pictures were sexually suggestive. There are also differences in self-presentation of female and male athletes. Women are more likely to post pictures of themselves as well as backstage photos. These kinds of photos also received a great number of likes (Geurin-Eagleman and Burch 2016). Even though, the online sports media space is still dominated by male and men's sport (Bruce 2015), there is indication that mainstream media are aware of this self-representation of women as well and it became a norm to quote and re-share what was published on-line by athletes themselves. Athletes need to be aware of this and the potential impact on other stakeholders such NSOs and NOCs (Geurin-Eagleman and Burch 2016).

#### **2.5.2.5 Comparisons to men**

Female athletes are often compared to their male counterpart. The researches do not agree whether such comparison is flattering (Bruce 2015) or supports the superiority of male athletes and claim male's sport as the norm against which female's sport is judged (Poniatowski and Hardin 2012). Such comparisons supposedly reinforce male heroism and sexual difference. Furthermore, regarding to the authors (2012), it sets male athletes to be a standard for women.

#### **2.5.2.6 Technical differences**

Finally, the technique used to cover men's and women's sport differ (Billings and Angelini 2007, Billings and Eastman 2002). Different production as greater use of on-screen graphics, more shot variations, or longer duration of video frames make coverage of men's sport events more exciting (Hallmark and Armstrong 1999). Greer, Hardin and Homan (2009) have analyzed 2004 Olympics' track and field competitions. Regarding to their research, coverage of man included more time, more segments, more variations, more slow motion, and more use of rail-cam.

### **2.5.3 Similarities**

Bruce (2015) argues that researchers are often too focused on the differences in gender representation that they forget to highlight the similarities they find. Bruce (2015) suggests that with the liberal feminist focus on equality, gender differences appears more noticeable even though that there is a proof that some media actually pay attention to women athletes and take their performance seriously. Litchfield's findings (2018) indicates that new media as social media might bring more balanced gender representation.

Bruce (2015) found four similarities in international studies reports:

1. Female and male athletes are similarly portrayed in action when it comes to international competitions;
2. Female athletes are increasingly portrayed as serious athletes;
3. Gender differences in media representation decrease when female athlete accomplish international success, they are then often represented as national hero;
4. While local athletes might be treated as national icons, marginalization and sexualization might still occur in coverage of foreign women athletes.

## **2.6 Impact of differential gender representation**

Media are the most powerful and pervasive in how we view men and women (Wood 1994). They influence individuals unconsciously in everyday life and create unrealistic, stereotypical, and limiting perceptions. Current research indicates that different representation of female athletes in media as described previously has a negative impact on audience, society respectively. There are three main issue in gender representation in media:

- Women are underrepresented, and therefore less important and invisible;
- Men and women are shown in stereotypical ways;
- Relationship in between man and women support traditional roles and normalize violence against women (Wood 1994).

Individuals are overwhelmed with media consumption containing stories and visuals saying what it means to be a woman or man and what is the balance and relationship in between the genders. Media have a great ability to make a linguistic choice. The language they use to describe athletes of different gender has a great influence on viewer perceptions (Angelini and Billings (2010). These created frames can unconsciously lead to stereotypical thoughts and feelings about each gender in many social settings such workplace and schools (Billings and Eastman 2003, Hardin et al. 2002).



When it comes to women representation in prime-time television, there are three times more men as women (Basow 1992 in Wood 1994), two times more in children's programming and only 16 percent of newscasters are women. Men are 10 times more often objects of stories than women (Wood 1994). This misrepresentation of men and women creates the assumption that there are more men than women, and that men are the cultural standard and women are the minority (Wood 1994). Furthermore, the above described studies show that the trend hasn't changed in the last two decades, rather the opposite.

Both genders are shown in media in stereotypical way (Wood 1994). Men are typically portrayed as active, adventurous, powerful, sexually aggressive and distanced from relationships while women are pictured as sexual objects, young, thin, passive, dependent, and incompetent. Women's role is supposedly taking care of their appearances, other people and their homes. The main role of women is allegedly to please men and stay by his side. Ambitious women are then often shown as lonely and embittered. Men are rarely shown to be doing housework, cooking or taking care of children. They are presented as tough, sexually aggressive, violent, in control of romantic emotions and independent. They are shown as ambitious, masculine, competent, powerful and in high positions. This creates frames that effect how are genders perceived in reality (Wood 1994).

These differences are even more apparent in sport. Sport events are massively covered and have enormous reach. Women athletes are often viewed as women first and then as athletes while the same does not apply to men (Trolan 2013). Since the Olympic viewers see different genders being treated differently, they tend to employ this schema in other interactions out of sport setting (Billing and Eastman 2003). There is an impact of these embedded biases about gender that goes beyond sport. It creates unconscious frames, which affects nonathletic situations such job hiring, promoting in business and educational world. Utilizing inappropriate stereotypes can have a great impact on society and social relationships (Wenner 1989).

There is a general belief that female athletes are 'naturally' weaker athletically, and therefore the coverage of their performances is less exciting (Fink 2015). However, research has shown that while individuals have been taught to believe so, physiological aspects prove that there is no difference in arousal for watching male or female sports (Angelini 2008). Several researches prove that perception of level of athleticism is influenced by the media presentation. The perception of athleticism is significantly lower when there is focus on appearance instead of achievements (Fink 2010, Knight and Giuliano 2001). These results are based on researches when the participants were exposed to pictures and articles for rather

limited time, the effect of real-life media exposure (and long term proved bias in coverage) will be probably even more significant.

## **2.7 Explanation**

As already mentioned in the previous chapter, it is a general belief that women's sport is less exciting and therefore there is lower interest of audience in the coverage. It is media gatekeepers who influence to what extent women's sport is covered. Many editors share this general belief and do not determine readers' interests. Furthermore, most of the gatekeepers are men, women are rather underrepresented in sport media industry (Hardin 2005). They often behave based on their common sense that tells them that men's sports are much more popular and therefore should receive most of the coverage. While only half of them actually determine readers' interest and only half of that do so systematically (Hardin 2005). These findings suggest that sport media gatekeepers determine content based on their personal sense rather than the audience. Furthermore, significant percentage of editors believes that women are naturally less athletic, and their sports achievements are less interesting (Hardin 2005). Only half of them know who their readers are and what do they want to read. This might be changed by the increased popularity of new media, which provide to authors extensive insights. Social media and websites editors can see exactly who their audiences are, which post receive the most attention and engagement. The question is, to what extent they track it and act regarding to it. Another issue is, these insights evaluate the interaction of the current audience. The opinion of possible readers or those who have turned away from the content because it did not meet their interest is missing (Hardin 2005). It is important to remember, that those available insights are not representative samples.

Several scholars argue that media consciously try to maintain the male superiority (Kane 2013, Messner 2002). Sexism and hegemonic masculinity are perceived as so natural that such acts are largely ignored. Skirts and dresses are so natural part of women's tennis outfits that when Serena Williams dared to wear something else, the French Open, one of the grand slams, announced to bring more restrictive dress code. When 2013 Men's British open was held at course where women are not allowed to be members, very few spoke out against the tournament (Fink 2015). At the same time, there is significant amount of runs and other sports happenings solely dedicated to women.

Flink (2015) describes other reasons for such disparate coverage. She notes that strong heterosexism and homophobia is still current within the sport setting. Successful female

athletes who do not comply with feminine and/or heterosexual prototype are often targets of unclaimed accusation of being unnatural, deviant or lesbians (Fink 2012).

Sex sells - explain media their choice of content. Supposedly, they respond to audience demand. However, as many researches described above indicate, they might not be right.

## 3.0 Methodology

Literature review was conducted based on secondary sources available. Oria database was used to conduct this literature review. Keywords such 'social media', 'gender representation', 'gender equality', 'Olympic coverage', 'gender media representation', 'sport' and 'framing theory' etc. were used. Articles written in last 15 years, and in English were looked for. Anonymous articles were excluded and only articles concerning the issue of gender representation within sport were considered. 33 articles were found. Those academic articles were chosen to compile this systematic literature review. Additional academical sources and internet sources were used in order to conduct this literature review.

Instagram content analysis as data collection was employed in this study. Social media network Instagram was the focus of this study. Instagram was used for its highest engagement rate<sup>1</sup> across social media networks used by the Czech Olympic Team. The fieldwork involved collecting quantitative and qualitative data and employing content analysis. Content analysis is common practice used by scholars studying social media both in sport setting (Litchfield 2018) and outside of it (Riffe, Lacy and Fico 2014).

In addition, an interview with personnel within the sampled organization was conducted in order to gain insight on communication and marketing strategies of the Czech Team. The goal of this phase was to complement the findings and gain some insights from the key actor. Semi-structured interview with the digital manager of the Czech Team Václav Blahout was conducted.

### 3.1 Sample

The empirical setting for this study is the Czech Olympic Committee. According to the Olympic Charter, national committees should develop and disseminate Olympic ideals and represent and secure the participation of the national athletes in the Olympic Games. The Czech Olympic Committee was chosen as a focus of this study for its establishment and as an umbrella organization for Czech athletes participating at the Olympic Games. One of the main goals of the Czech Olympic Committee is to support women inclusion into sport on all the levels, including international and national executive bodies (Czech Olympic Committee 2018). Further, Czech Olympic committee undertakes the values of the International

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<sup>1</sup> Engagement rate is calculated a percentage of interactions per overall number of followers (Socialbakers 2019).

Olympic Committee (further the IOC) and helps to develop them (Czech Olympic Committee 2018). The IOC claims to continuously support gender equality. Thomas Bach, the IOC president wrote: “I firmly believe that sport is one of the most powerful platforms for promoting gender equality and empowering women and girls” (The IOC Gender Equality Review Project 2018). The Olympic Agenda 2020, describing the strategy of the Olympic movement, supposedly commits all stakeholders to gender balance. One of the 25 goals claimed in the review is balanced media portrayal of both genders. “The IOC requires its administration to establish principles and guidelines for fair and balanced portrayal in all its forms of communication” (The IOC Gender Equality Review Project 2018). Moreover, they stress the importance for all media to offer a fair and equal portrayal of sportswomen. This research aims to clarify the practical fulfilling of those claims.

Czech Olympic Committee promote the Olympic Games through their communication channels on daily basis, which are in management of media agency Česká Olympijská Plc (Olympic.cz 2019). Česká olympijská runs the official social media accounts called Czech Team.

The collection of data took place in May 2019 and was retrospective. The official Instagram account of the Czech Team @olympijskytym was analyzed. The method of online fieldwork was adopted for collection of archival data on the virtual platform of Instagram. Instagram is a photo and video-sharing social networking service owned by Facebook, Inc. The app allows users to upload photos and videos, which can be edited, and organized with tags and locations. Users can browse other users' content by tags and locations, and view trending content. Users can interact with content published by other users via ‘likes’ and comments. The data collected are posts published from 23<sup>rd</sup> January to 14<sup>th</sup> March. 477 pictures and videos in 251 contributions were collected. As a contribution is meant a single picture or video or selection of several pictures or videos with one unique caption posted at certain time. Since several contributions included selection of several pictures and videos, a single visual is further called post. One contribution can include several posts. During the period, Winter Olympics in PyeongChang took place. 1,680 men and 1,242 women took part in 102 events in 7 sports (15 disciplines). Men were competing in 49 events while women had 44 events. 7 events were mixed (a mixed event requires a defined number of athletes of both genders) and 2 open (an open event allows athletes of both genders to participate against each other). Women in comparison to men had only one event in ski jumping and do not compete in Nordic Combined (Olympic Programme 2018). Czech Team has sent 93 athletes, 68 of them were men and 25 women. They competed in 13 disciplines and won 7 medals,

ranking 14<sup>th</sup> in the medal table of countries. The medals have been won by 5 women and 1 man. Flag bearers of the Czech team were on both opening and closing ceremonies women. Data or research objects can be collected in real time or as archival data after their posting (Tuncalp 2014). Data was recorded in the form of posts posted on Instagram. They were copied to excel chart, and subsequently manually coded, as detailed bellow. These virtual posts can include photo, or video content, which is accompanied with caption. The posts collected included a variety of information such as results of performances, updates of events happening during the period of time and general news and information related to the Olympic Games and other ongoing sport events. Data included textual, audiovisual and photographic communication. All data were published in Czech. The collection of archival data was unaffected by the actions of the researcher, the researched did not interact with the data (in the meaning of likes, comments or shares).

In line with the research questions, specific interview questions have been outlined (see Appendix). Regarding to the quantitative results, digital marketer responsible for the social media communication of the Czech Team was contacted and on 9<sup>th</sup> of May 2019 semi-structured interview has been conducted. The interview was conducted face-to-face and recorded at the same time in order to transcript it. The interview was conducted in Czech and translated to English afterwards.

### 3.2 Data Analysis

Data was content analyzed in order to provide a description of what was present and a linguistic analyzed to explore the nature of language present in the posts. The gender breakdown of content of the posts was recorded. Gender were coded as male, female, mixed or no gender focus. The gender focus was identified by reading the posts, examining any media attached to it and then assigning the posts to the gender.

Coding sheet was developed based on outlined issues occurring in gender representation in media adapted from Bruce (2015) and are shown in table 1.

Table 1 Coding frame for the Czech Team’s Instagram posts adapted from Bruce (2015)

<b>Theme</b>	<b>Description</b>
<b>Lower Broadcast Production Values</b>	Differences in post’s elaboration.
<b>Gender making</b>	Posts containing gender making of events.

<b>Infantilizing</b>	Posts including referring to athletes in infantilized way.
<b>Non-Sport Related Aspects</b>	Posts concerning other than athletics aspects.
<b>Comparison to Men's Sport</b>	Post including comparison women athletes to their men counterparts.
<b>Sportswomen Don't matter</b>	Quantitatively lower representation of female athletes.
<b>Compulsory heterosexuality and Appropriate Femininity</b>	Posts including highlighting sex appeal, beauty and heterosexuality and personal relationships.
<b>Sexualization</b>	Posts concerning physical appearance of athletes rather than their achievements.
<b>Ambivalence</b>	Posts including visuals, portraying athletes rather in passive or non-sportive setting.
<b>Athletes in Action</b>	Posts portraying athletes in action or competitive setting.
<b>Serious athletes</b>	Posts portraying athletes as legitimate and serious athletes.
<b>Model citizens</b>	Post portraying athletes as model citizens, as symbols of health, having a good body and being socially successful.

<b>Us and Them</b>	Differential portraying of foreign athletes and national athletes.
<b>Our Voice</b>	Athletes and their fans are in control of their own representation.
<b>Pretty and Powerful</b>	Posts valuing both, physical appearance and performance.

The categorization represents a review of the main patterns identified in researches up to date and is representation of several academical collected by Bruce (2015). The limitation of this approach is, as Bruce (2015) mentions, the United States focus as the U.S. studies dominate published researches. Nevertheless, there is an evidence that many of the patterns are replicated in other media across Europe, Canada, parts of Asia and Africa (Bruce 2015). Bruce (2015) further stress the effect of feminism on media coverage researches. He claims that researchers were more focused on the differences rather than similarities. Researchers indirectly normalizes coverage of men's sports and compare women's representation against it (Bruce 2015). Therefore, this study is focused on representation of both genders rather than just female athletes.

Images were analyzed following guidelines set out by Jones (2006, 2013). They were analyzed for portrayals of active and passive poses in sport and non-sportive settings. Active images include those pictures taken during performance depicting movements and showing athlete in action either competing, about to compete or post competition. Passive images include pictures showing athlete in a motionless or static state. This could include portrayers of the athlete, posing for a camera or images in non-sportive setting.

Captions of the posts were analyzed for linguistic differences linked to gender as described by Bruce (2015). The content of the used language was analyzed for its wording and phrasing. Representation of individual athletes in this medium was considered. Descriptors included infantilization, gender making, gender comparison and focus on non-sportive aspects, sexism, links to emotions and focus on appearance as described in table 1.

Collected data were quantitative evaluated as well. Overall, the results provide a 'gender breakdown' for specific themes explored and quantitative representation of each gender.



Interview data were analyzed thematically with the aim to complement and offer explanatory insights of the findings of the content analysis. The entire transcription of the interview is to be found in appendix.

### **3.3 Research Ethics**

Data were collected with regard to the rules and recommendations of the Norwegian Centre for Research Data (further NSD). This project has been notified on 20<sup>th</sup> of April. On 13<sup>th</sup> of May, prioritization of the assessment was required. On 14<sup>th</sup> of May, answer of NSD was received requiring closer explanation of the personal data collection. The explanation and adjustments in the application form were sent at the same day. The project has been accepted on 20<sup>th</sup> of May. The notification form is to be found in appendices.

The digital manager of the account 'Czech Team' Václav Blahout was informed on 23<sup>rd</sup> of April about this study and its purposes. The study was further discussed in person on 9<sup>th</sup> of May before conducting semi-structured interview. There are several ethical aspects concerning face-to-face interviews (Jakobsen 2005). The interviewee has been informed about the consent, right to privacy and the transcription has been authorized by the organization. The interviewee has been made aware of the research purpose and topic beforehand. The interviewee participated voluntarily after being contacted via e-mail. The interviewee has been asked for his consent to record the interview. All information provided were authorized by the organization and the interviewee gave his permission to use his name in this study. I sought to render the transcription of the interviews completely and in the right context. The recording can be requested.

## **4.0 Results**

The results of the analysis are described below. Collected data was categorized by Bruce (2015) and evaluated using the publicly available Microsoft Excel application. The data was compared, and the results were reported and plotted as tables and graphs. All collected data are available in Appendices in chapter 7. Original coding sheet is available on request. Findings are described in the following chapters.

### **4.1 Gender representation**

A total of 477 photos and videos in 251 contributions were collected during the collection period of prior, during and after the 2018 PyeongChang Olympic Games. Most of those posts focused on sports results, upcoming events or general information related to the Olympic Games. The Games has lasted from 9<sup>th</sup> of February till 25<sup>th</sup> of February. The program was divided into 17 days. Same long period was tracked before and after the Olympic Games. There were several posts related to other major events happening around or during the period of the Olympic Games. In the collection period after the Olympic Games, indoor world championship in athletics took part and other international events such junior biathlon world championship and world cups in other disciplines took part. Czech Team was responsible for posting 190 posts prior the games, 240 during the Games and 47 in the same long period after the Games. Out of the overall 477 posts, 427 were pictures and 50 videos.

All pictured athletes were Czech nationality. Only gender non-related pictures were portraying other than Czech team related artefacts such venues, mascots etc. Czech Team took part in 13 winter Olympics sports and all sports were covered in the coverage. Snowboard, speed skating, biathlon and hockey were the most captured sport. These are the three sports (excluding alpine skiing) Czech athletes won medals in. Moreover, the majority of these sports has more disciplines at the Olympics and therefore there are more opportunities to cover these sports. Sports with most participants were ice hockey, xc skiing and same number of athletes had biathlon, bobsleigh and alpine skiing. Other sports such tennis, football or athletics occurred during the analyzed period, especially then in the time after the Olympics.

The breakdown of the total number of posts uncovered in the data collection is outlined in Table 2 below.

Table 2 Gender representation on social media<sup>2</sup>

Period	Total number of posts	Male focused posts	Female focused posts	Posts focusing on both male and female	Gender neutral posts
Prior	n = 190	n = 49	n = 58	n = 44	n = 39
During	n = 240	n = 82	n = 82	n = 64	n = 16
After	n = 47	n = 13	n = 16	n = 17	n = 1
<b>TOTALS</b>	477	144	156	125	56

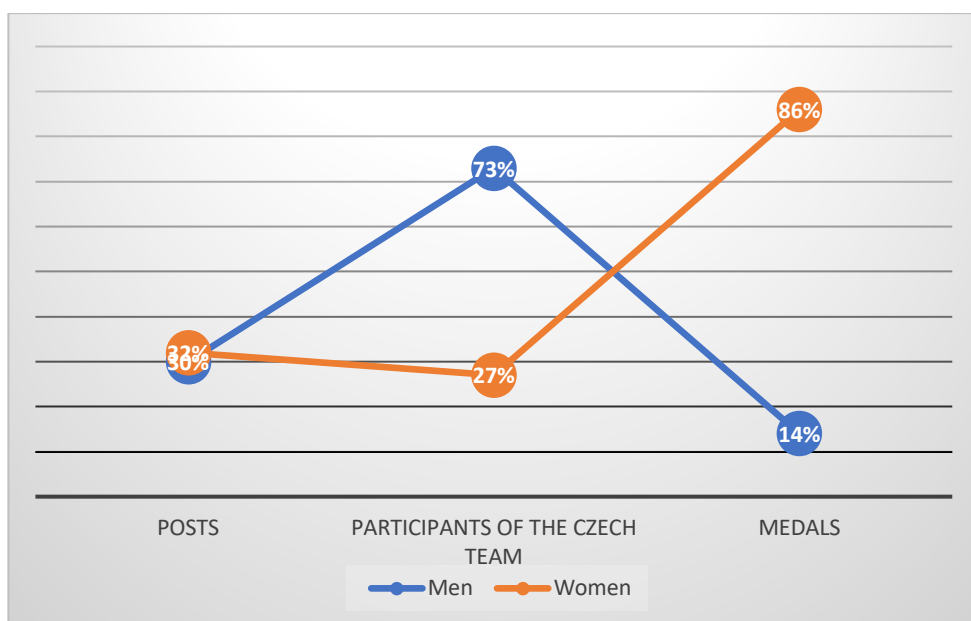
The comparison of posts per gender, participation at the Olympics of Czech female and male athletes, and medals won by female and male athletes is shown on the following Graph 1. As it can be seen, female and male athletes were nearly equally represented on analyzed social media network even though there were significantly more male athletes in the Czech Team. However, when it comes to comparison of medals won by female and male athletes, female athletes dominated winning 86 percent of medals won by the Czech Team. In overall, there was 93 athletes on the Czech team, 25 of them were women, 68 were men. 5 Czech women won 6 medals scoring. Out of the 68 male team members, only one of them won a medal. The comparison is shown on the Graph 1.

As it can be seen on the Table 2, female athletes were more likely to be shown in all three tracked periods with the most significant advantage prior the Olympics. Despite the fact, that Czech female athletes were significantly more successful than Czech male athletes, the representation on social media was almost equal – 32 percent of posts was dedicated to women, 30 percent to men.

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<sup>2</sup> Several posts such videos were portraying both female and male athletes, however the representation had differed and therefore was categorized accordingly. Therefore, numbers of post focused on each gender might not correspond with total number of posts.

Graph 1 Gender representation in different aspects



When it comes to popularity of posts, in average one post received 5358 likes and 19 comments, in case of video, it was viewed by 16 891 people. The most liked post was portraying female snowboarder Ester Ledecka winning her second gold medal. Ledecka won earlier gold medal in alpine skiing and she became the first ever to win two gold medals at Winter Olympics in two different disciplines. The post received up to the date 50 026 likes and 535 comments. The most liked post dedicated to male athlete was portraying Czech Ice hockey team winning quarterfinal match against Switzerland. It has received 25 223 likes and 97 comments. Ice hockey together with football are the most popular sports in the Czech Republic, both receiving the largest attention of both the media and supporters. As it can be seen on table 3, posts received most interactions during the Olympics. While before the Olympics posts dedicated to men athletes received in average more interactions than those dedicated to women, during the Olympics posts portraying women athletes received significantly more interactions - both likes and comments, which correspond to more successful performance of Czech female athletes.

Table 3 Interactions per post

	Prior	Women	Men	During	Women	Men	After	Women	Men
Likes per post	773	1219	1282	8669	14889	6573	6990	9021	7381
Comment per post	1	2	3	32	62	26	19	16	32
View per post	7609	5220	3026	26663	46311	13398	33447	0	33447

After the Olympics, posts dedicated to female athletes received in average more likes, however posts dedicated to male athletes were more likely to be commented. When it comes to video views, videos portraying female athletes were in average more viewed than these portraying male athletes in both analyzed periods were videos dedicated to both genders were published. In the period after the games, only one video which was dedicated to male athlete was published.

Gender representation on social media is more in detail described in the following chapters.

## 4.2 Gender breakdown of posts

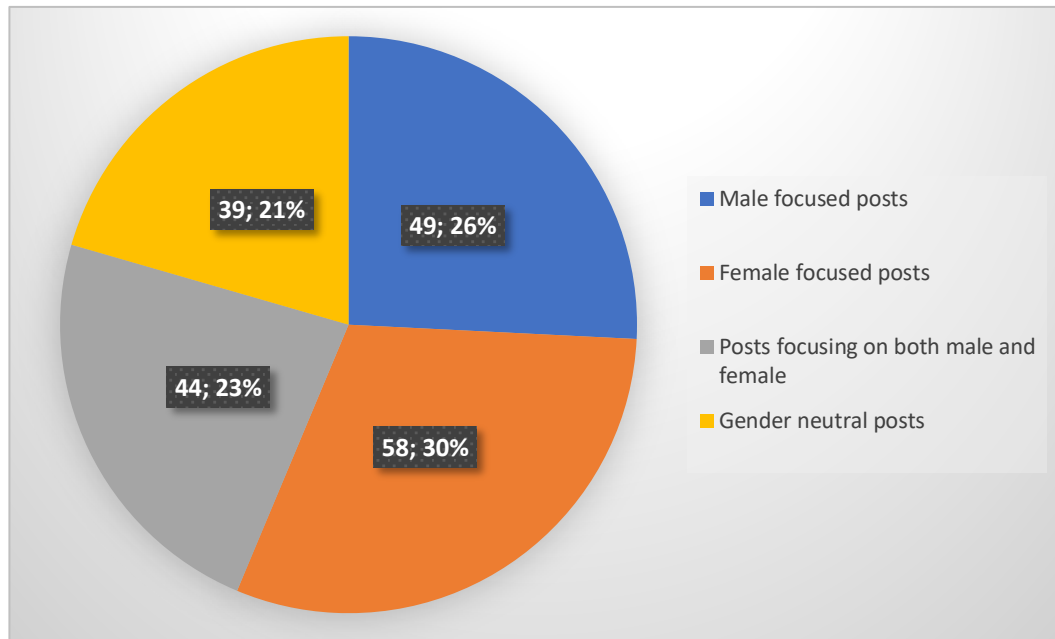
There was a greater number (albeit a small amount) of female focused posts found on the Instagram account of the Czech Team. Overall, coverage of female athletes accounted for 156 of the posts (32 percent), male athletes accounted for 144 posts (30 percent). However, women participation accounted only for 27 percent, 73 percent athletes on the team were men. Nevertheless, 86 percent of medals was won by female athletes. Czech women won 6 out of 7 medals. Considering the relative success of Czech female athletes, one might expect to see greater coverage devoted to them. However, when the lower women participants numbers are combined with the success of the women's team, gender representation on social media corresponds. 26 percent of posts were focusing on both male and female athletes and 12 percent of posts were gender neutral. Gender breakdown for each analyzed period is described further.

### 4.2.1 Gender breakdown of posts published prior the Olympics

Before the Olympics, 30 percent of posts were dedicated to female athletes. 26 percent of post focused on male athletes. 21 percent of posts were gender neutral mostly showing the

area of the upcoming Olympics. 23 percent considered both female and male athletes, portraying mostly group of athletes leaving to the venue. 7 percent (n = 14) posts were dedicated to athletes who historically won Olympic medals. 8 of them were portraying women and 6 of them men. The gender representation on social media of Czech Team is shown in the Graph 2.

Graph 2 Gender representation on social media prior the Olympics



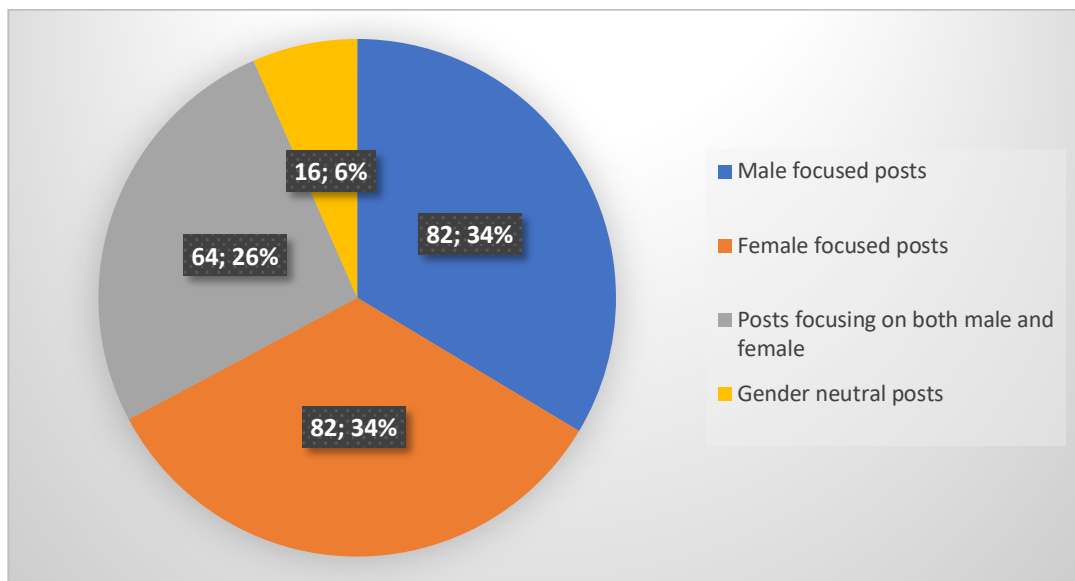
Source: Own processing, n=190

When it comes to different sports covered, the most represented sports before the Olympics were speed skating, biathlon, snowboarding and cross-country skiing. These are the sports, in which Czech team has been most successful in the previous Olympic Games. Posts dedicated to women were showing mostly speed skaters (12 %) and cross-country skiers (10 %). In the previous games, Czech women won medals in snowboarding, speed skating and biathlon. Excluding biathlon, the same medalist from Sochi 2014 were about to participate in the upcoming Olympic Games. In comparison, last Olympic medal won by Czech female athlete in cross-country skiing was back in 2006. Posts dedicated to male athletes, portrayed most frequently biathletes (8 %) and ski-jumpers (8 %). Biathletes were the only medalist at the previous Games in Sochi 2014. At the same time, the same athletes were about to start in the upcoming Olympics. Even though, ski jumpers did not win any Olympic medal in recent history, neither achieved major international success, the historically first ever Czech Winter Olympic gold medalist was Jiří Raška in 1968. In honor of his achievement, the Czech Team in Pyeongchang was wearing a winter hat inspired by the one Raska was wearing at the 1968 Olympics in Grenoble.

## 4.2.2 Gender breakdown of posts published during the Olympics

Similarly, during the Olympic Games 34 percent of posts was dedicated to men and 34 percent to women. 26 percent of posts were portraying both female and male. These kind of pictures and videos were mostly portraying group Czech athletes in different occasions. 6 percent of posts were gender neutral. These kinds of posts were mostly focusing on the area of the Olympic Games and artefacts such medals. However, several pictures were showing a bread that was prepared for the athletes in the Czech house at the venue. After closer examination of language used in the caption and related aspects of the posts, it was found that this bread was named with a man name, it was given an ambassador – male athlete, and its production was presented in a post with a male baker. Even pictures showing its consumption were portraying only male athletes. 20 percent (n = 48) posts were dedicated to the athletes that won Olympic medals. 37 posts were dedicated to women athletes, 5 posts to the only male athlete that won a medal and 11 post were showing both female and male. In average, 6 posts were dedicated to athlete that won a medal. The gender representation on social media of Czech Team is shown in the Graph 3.

Graph 3 Gender representation on social media during the Olympics



Source: Own processing, n=244

During the Olympics, most covered sports were snowboarding (9 %) ice hockey (8 %) and biathlon (7 %). As already mentioned before, snowboarding and biathlon were the sports, in which Czech athletes won medals while hockey is the most popular winter sport in the country. Furthermore, until the last match, the Czech hockey team was playing for a medal-Losing the match for bronze, the Czech Republic ranked 4<sup>th</sup> place. Speed skaters with

2 Olympic medals appeared in 6 percent of posts, ranking 4<sup>th</sup> most frequently covered sport. Alpine skiing, in which Ester Ledecka won her second medal, was covered by 5 percent of posts<sup>3</sup>, ranking 5th. The coverage therefore corresponds with achieved successes by the Czech Team. 25 % of posts dedicated to female athletes covered snowboarding. Speed skating, biathlon and alpine skiing was identically covered by 16 percent of posts. Posts dedicated to male athletes were covering by 31 percent ice hockey and by 13 percent biathlon. The coverage corresponds to athletes' successes and does not differ for each gender.

### **4.2.3 Gender breakdown of posts published after the Olympics**

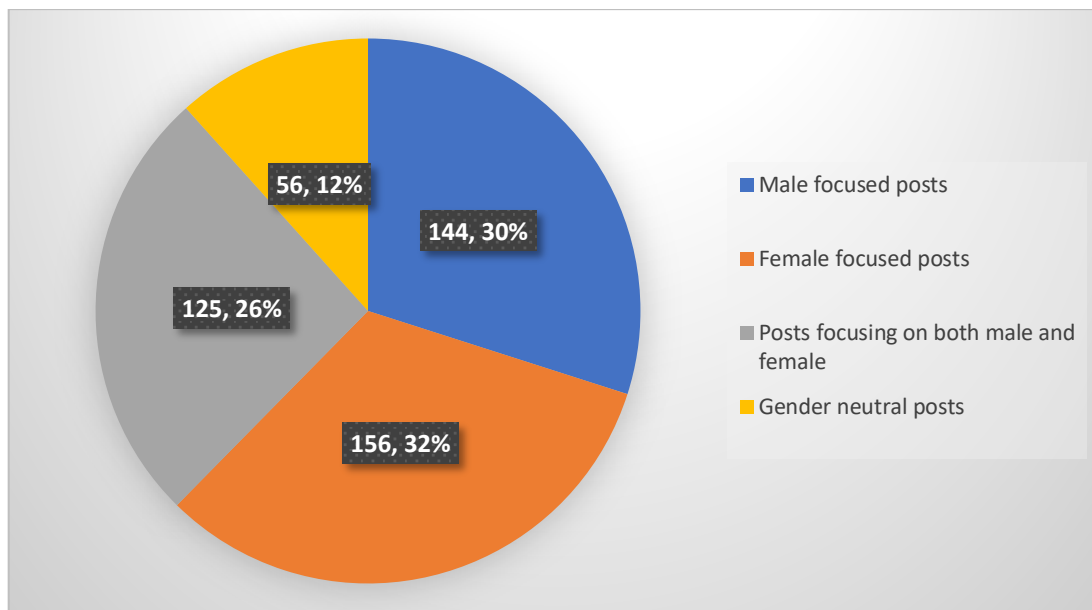
In the period after Olympics, only 47 posts were published. 32 percent of posts were focused on female athletes and 30 percent of posts focused on male athletes. 26 percent posts were portraying both female and male athletes. 12 percent of posts was gender neutral, portraying mostly closing ceremony of the Olympics. 49 percent (n = 23) of posts were dedicated to athletes that won medals during the Olympics. 90 percent of posts dedicated to women after the Olympics were portraying Olympic medalists while only 30 percent of posts dedicated to male athletes were showing the medalist. The gender representation on social media of Czech Team is shown in the Graph 3.

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<sup>3</sup> Ester Ledecka was favorite to win the olympic medal in snowboarding while in Alpine skiing her success was rather surprising (not achieving any major international succes in the sport before). Therefore, pictures portraying her before the competitions were categorized as snowboarding.



Graph 4 Gender representation on social media after the Olympics



Source: Own processing, n=477

After the Olympics, there was not a sport that would be significantly more covered than others. 25 percent of posts were portraying groups of athletes from different sports. However, other sports such athletics, judo or football were covered. Three posts were covering Paralympic Games, which were organized in parallel with the Olympic Games. The Czech Republic had 24 athletes at the Paralympics. The team had 23 male athletes and one female athlete. The best result achieved was Czech sledge hockey team ranking 6th (Česká asociace tělesně handicapovaných sportovců 2018). Two out of the three posts covering the Paralympics were dedicated to male athletes, one was portraying group of athletes at the opening ceremony. Posts dedicated to women were mostly covering sports and athletes of past Olympic Games. 16 percent of posts was dedicated to snowboarding. The only non-Olympic sport covered in the period was tennis. Post dedicated to men were more various. 23 percent of posts were covering athletics and the ongoing indoor world championship. The Czech Republic won at the championship 2 medals; both were won by male athlete. Other sports represented were canoe, football, and judo. Certain differences were notable after analysis of all data. On closer examination, there was a gender inconsistency in relation to active and passive images and videos and gender. Secondly, the language used in posts required a closer examination. Findings are described below.

### 4.3 Images of male and female athletes

All images and videos posted by the Czech Team were analyzed in detail and findings are shown in Table 4, Table 5 and Table 6 below. The tables demonstrate the number of posts that contained images or videos portraying a person. Posts are divided into three analyzed periods. Content which wasn't related to any gender or was portraying a group of athletes without difference in gender representation was not concerned. Percentage of total number of posts was compared.

Table 4 Pictures and videos prior the Olympics

	Active	Passive	Non-sportive	Total
Male focused posts	23 % (n=18)	73 % (n=58)	4 % (n=3)	79
Female focused posts	21 % (n=18)	69 % (n=59)	10 % (n=9)	87

Prior the Olympics, images and videos were portraying athletes of each gender similarly. Male athletes were more likely to be featured in sportive setting in both active and passive poses. These kinds of pictures were portraying athletes in action or in sportive setting such as media interview, medal ceremonies or posing in the sporting venue. Larger difference occurred in non-sportive setting; women were more likely to be portrayed in no relation to sport such as posing in civil clothes, showing their outfits and manicure.

Table 5 Pictures and videos during the Olympics

	Active	Passive	Non-sportive	Total
Male focused posts	56 % (n=46)	34 % (n=28)	10 % (n=8)	82
Female focused posts	26 % (n=21)	66 % (n=54)	8 % (n=7)	82

As it can be seen in Table 5, significant difference in presenting athletes occurred during the Olympics. While more than half of the posts were showing male athletes in action during their performance or training, only 26 percent of posts dedicated to female athletes was portraying them in movement. As follows, 34 percent of posts were showing male athletes in passive setting. Female athletes were shown in passive poses in 66 percent of posts. For example, victory of Ester Ledecka in alpine skiing was communicated in 8 posts, only one of the pictures has shown the athlete in action.

Opposite finding occurred when it comes to non-sportive setting, 10 percent of posts dedicated to male athletes were in non-sportive setting. However, most of these posts were dedicated to former Olympians who attended the games in role of spectator. When it comes to female athletes, 8 percent of posts was from non-sportive setting.

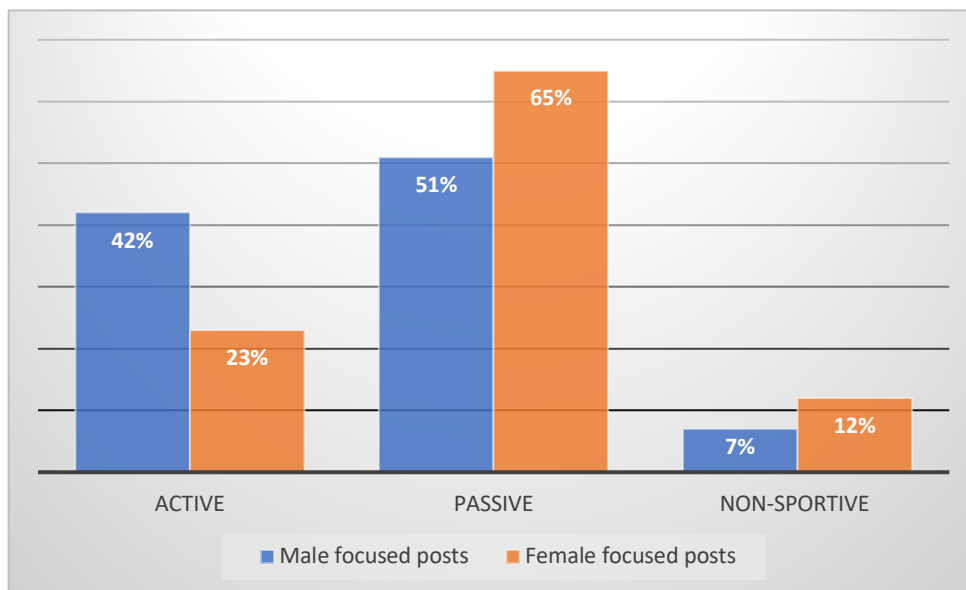
Table 6 Pictures and videos after the Olympics

	Active	Passive	Non-sportive	Total
Male focused posts	69 % (n=9)	23 % (n=3)	8 % (n=1)	82
Female focused posts	25 % (n=4)	37 % (n=6)	38 % (n=6)	82

Similarly, as in previous analyzed periods male athletes were significantly more likely to be pictured in active poses than female athletes. They were also less likely to be shown in passive poses or non-sportive setting. More than half of the posts were dedicated to athletes from other sports than just passed Olympics like football or athletics while pictures dedicated to female athletes were portraying 2018 Winter Olympians. After the Olympics, female athletes were most likely to be shown in non-sportive setting. These kinds of posts were portraying the athletes in after Olympics celebration.

The overall results are shown in the Graph 5. 42 percent of male focused posts featured an

Graph 5 Comparison of pictures and videos



active image of a male athlete, 51 percent featured the athletes in passive pose and only 7 percent of posts were in non-sportive setting. In comparison, female athletes were framed in active poses in only 23 percent, they were more likely to be shown in passive setting (in 65 %) or in non-sportive setting (12 %).

Some instances of this disparity include several examples. In some sports, Czech Team was represented only by female or in contrary male athletes. However, this fact was communicated only in the case of men' teams. Another example, while there was female athlete on the first picture in a contribution, in the caption men's ice hockey team was

highlighted or in contrary, picture communicating a female snowboarder race was picturing a male athlete as a fan at the event. Furthermore, this post was the only post featuring that event.

Before the Olympics, most of the posts were featuring the upcoming Games and members of the team. In two examples, female athletes were pictured posing in outfits with a caption saying they are ready for the Olympics. With similar caption was accompanied a picture of a woman's nails with a new manicure or a picture of naked legs of female athlete. However, these two pictures were taken by the athletes themselves. The Czech Team has shared them and added a caption, which suggested that by having nails ready and being dressed up means they are ready for their performances at the Olympics.

During the Olympics, Czech Team has published a short video with an infographic showing schedule of the upcoming days with athletes' names that will participate. In four cases, these videos have been portraying only male athletes even though there was the same or higher number of female athletes participating. The only video of this kind portraying only women was published by the end of the Olympic Games and was portraying two female medalists from the previous day. Another post communicating the upcoming events was highlighting rather unknown male athlete and did not mention female athletes with high chance for medals. Another post was dedicated to a female athlete who just won an Olympic medal, the post was accompanied with a serious caption however pictured the athlete dancing with no relation to the achievement.

Finally, there was several posts published that has focused on both female and male athletes but has portrayed only men. For example, post dedicated to mixed biathlon team event was picturing only male athlete.

After the Olympics, there was rather differential focus. While female Olympians were still covered in the period, posts dedicated to male athletes were not related to the Olympics. Posts covering other ongoing events were picturing solely male athletes. Posts related to Paralympics and Indoor athletic world championship were featuring only male athletes. However, male athletes have achieved better results in both of the events.

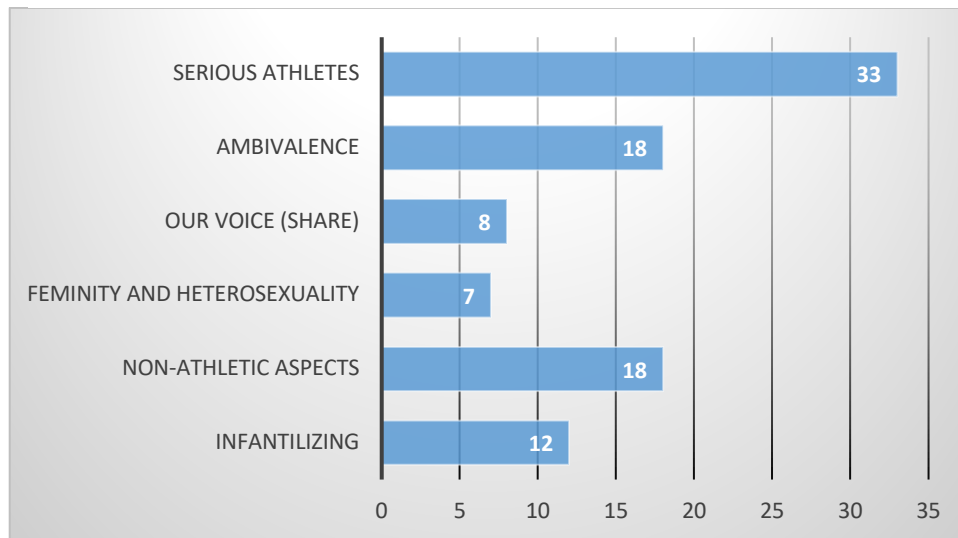
Finally, the Czech Team of athletes was accompanied by several professionals and not performing personas. Popular Youtuber, former Olympian who was responsible for interviews with athletes, ambassador of the already mentioned brand, or social media manager himself were present and occurred in the social media coverage. All of those roles were occupied by men.

Importantly, these examples concern exactly 26 posts, meaning less than 6 percent of posts. There is vast majority of positive examples of how female athletes should be represented by the media. The majority of posts focused on the female athlete's performance, portrayed them as serious athletes and did not sexualize them or did not put the importance on how attractive the athlete was or what sexuality the athlete is.

#### **4.4 Disparity in descriptors**

Differences were notable after detailed analysis of specific aspects. On closer examination, there was a gender (albeit small) inconsistency in the kind of images and videos used per gender and descriptors used in the accompanying captions. The findings are categorized as outlined by Bruce (2015) and described below. Several issues described by scholars which were included in the categorization by Bruce (2015) did not occur in the coverage and therefore are not included in the description below. Any athlete was not compared to other athlete of opposite gender. Also, the coverage pictured only Czech athletes and therefore categorization 'Us and them,' which concern the issue of differential portraying of national and foreign athletes was not applicable. Athletes were praised as good representatives of the Czech Team but not at the expense of their athletic achievements. Model citizen issue as described by Bruce (2015) has not been identified within this study. Gender making has occurred; however, it was in a post dedicated to both female and male athletes and included caption with both male's and female's gender making to highlight the fact that there are biathlon team events for both female and male athletes that day as it is not common in other biathlon competitions. Finally, any athlete hasn't been pictured in sexualized way. The occurrence of disparity in different descriptors is shown on the Graph 6 below.

Graph 6 Occurrence of disparity in different descriptors



Source: Own processing, n=477

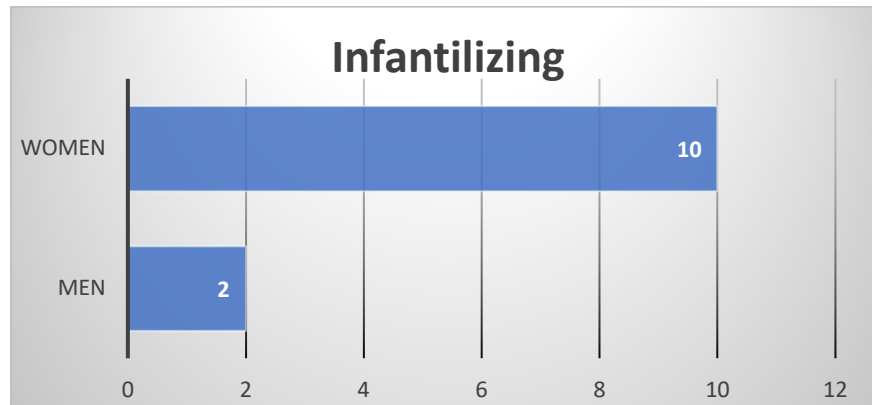
#### 4.4.1 Infantilizing

Even though, there is a fair amount of coverage of female and male athletes, there are also several examples when athletes were infantilized. Yet, these posts were in most cases accompanied with a picture or a video portraying the athletes in serious athletic way. Furthermore, comparing to other studies, infantilizing occurred in posts dedicated to both female and male athletes. All of examples of infantilizing of female and male athletes within this study occurred in the language adopted and not through the pictures or videos. Bruce (2015) refers to ambivalence in sports media in a combination of positive images and infantilizing commentary as negative framing that undermines female athletes, women's sport performance and women's achievements and success. Consequently, positive descriptors or images of female athletes can be used in the media coverage, but the gender hierarchy will remain strengthened.

Infantilizing occurred in 12 cases – 2 before the Olympics, and 10 cases during the Olympics. While male athletes were infantilized in only 2 cases, posts dedicated to female athletes included infantilizing in the remaining 10 cases. Most of these posts were accompanied by a caption which included the word 'girl(s)' or in the case of male athletes 'boy(s)'. As in the case of a female snowboarder: 'It was great at the snowboardcross ceremony, the girls were really happy together!', '@Sarkasnow and @kataryna\_vojackova will be in action, so keep your fingers crossed for the Friday final!', or 'Golden Girl - @esterledecka 🏆🏆🏆🏆 Congratulations!' Similarly, the word 'boys' was used: 'Sure, the

boy in the sea, you say. But here is -4 ° C and guy in jacket and hat is bobsleighter #czechteam 🇨🇪 Jarda Kopřiva' and 'Boys finished at a nice 17th place, motivated to work in the future!' The occurrence in relation to gender is shown in the Graph 6 bellow.

Graph 7 Occurrence of infantilizing



Source: Own processing, n=300

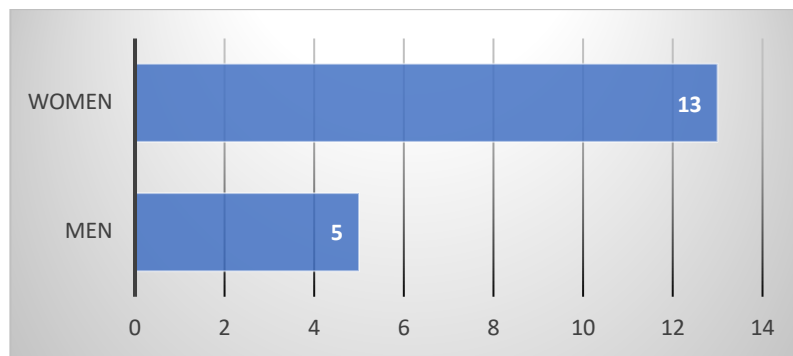
In several cases, female athlete's first name was infantilized. For example, a female snowboarder who has won a bronze Olympic medal was called 'Evka' while her casual name is Eva. Another athlete, who identically won bronze medal, was called 'Kája' instead of her given name Kateřina. While such nicknames are common in the Czech language, similarly infantilized names of male athletes did not occur. Bruce (2015) suggests that infantilizing of female athletes occurs by calling them 'girls', 'young ladies' or using only their first names. In result, it rages the figurative threat posed by successful female athlete. While scholars claim that infantilization of male athletes is rare (Fink 2015), it has occurred in the social media coverage of the Czech Team.

#### 4.4.2 Non-athletic aspects

Another common practice described by scholars is highlighting other than athletics areas of female athletes such family, personal life, their personality instead of focusing on their sport performance and achievement. However, Bruce (2015) argues, such practice is in contemporary coverage less evident.

Several examples were identified within this study. However, non-athletic aspects occurred in posts dedicated to both female and male athletes. In overall, 18 posts were focusing on some aspect that is not related to their sport performance. In 13 cases, these posts were dedicated to female athletes, in 5 cases post was related to male athlete. The occurrence in relation to gender is shown in the Graph 7 bellow.

Graph 8 Occurrence of non-athletics aspects



Source: Own processing, n=300

The examples of female and male athletes within this study that included some non-athletics aspects occurred in both languages adopted and through the pictures or videos. Such examples were portraying athletes posing with the bread: “The patron of Olympic bread Karel is in Korea - @vavrinec\_hradilek! At least in the paper version at the moment, which we photographed our speed skaters with 😊”, drinking beer, posing in non-sportive setting with the caption commenting on their physical appearance: “The figure skater @aninka\_duskova 🛼 definitely does not underestimate preparation for the Olympics! She made her manicure with Czech flag as well as symbols of the anniversary of the foundation of Czechoslovakia 🇨🇪.” Another example was portraying two female athletes showing heart symbol with their hands wishing happy valentine: “Martin and @nikyzdrahalova are sending a heart to Valentine's Day ❤️.”

While posts dedicated to male athletes were related to family or birthday wishes, posts dedicated to female athletes including non-athletics aspects were related to their physical appearance outside and within the sport setting.

#### 4.4.3 Femininity and heterosexuality

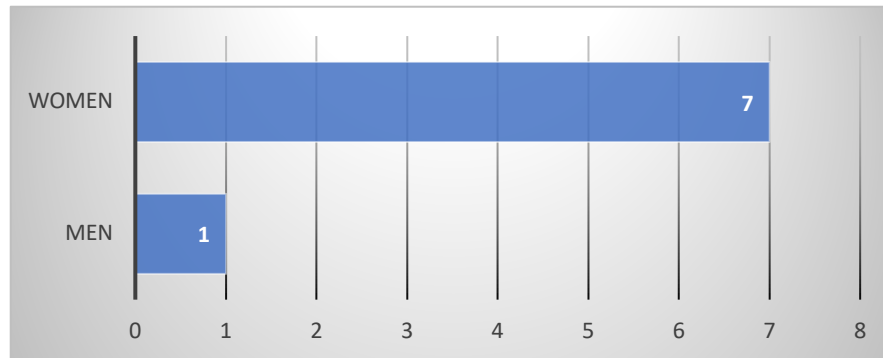
Highlighting female athlete’s heterosexuality is a common issue in sport media coverage described by scholars. Regarding to Bruce (2015) media prefers and highlight sportswomen with sexual or emotional relationships with men. Related to ‘obligatory’ heterosexuality is related stressed femininity appearance supported dominant discourses (Bruce 2015).

Such issue has occurred in 7 posts and it concerned 7 women and 1 man (one post was portraying both female and male athlete). The occurrence in relation to gender is shown in the Graph 8 below. An example of such post was portraying the mixed team of figure skaters



kissing while skating. Other posts were stressing the emotional side of female athletes: “Martina Sáblíková finished fourth in the first 3,000-meter Olympic race! Although she was sad, she is a big hero for us! ❤️ #czechteam 🇨🇪.” While these posts focused on female athlete’s feelings, similar posts dedicated to male athletes were mentioning their physical performance, effort and exhaustion.

Graph 9 Occurrence of femininity and heterosexuality



Source: Own processing, n=300

#### 4.4.4 Ambivalence

Ambivalent coverage contrasts representations of female athletes’ physical skills, strength and achievements against traditional femininity, weakness, incapacity and the hypothetical lower quality of women’s sport. Examples include sport-focused headlines accompanied by non-competitive or sexualized images, or images of sport performance with infantilizing headlines or comments (Bruce 2015). Earlier described issues are therefore all examples of ambivalent coverage. Some other examples of ambivalence occurred. Most of those occurring include pictures or videos where different athlete was portrayed than highlighted in the caption. For example, a contribution including 10 pictures mostly portraying group of female and male athletes together with the first picture showed dedicated to female athlete was accompanied by a caption: “So we're flying again! ✈️ Another part of #czechteam with the first part of @narodnity (ice hockey team)! 🙌🙌” However, such ambivalence occurred nearly as frequently in posts dedicated to male athletes as in posts dedicated to female athletes. Post dedicated to mixed team of figure skaters portraying only a female athlete with her coach was accompanied with a caption: “👩👨👩👨👩👨 What does the coach of a figure skater pair 🛼 @aninka\_duskova & @minibidos13 Eva Horklová says? 🤔😏 Write to us in

comments (also Anička and Martin 🙌) #czechteam 🇨🇪.” Even though, ambivalence has occurred, it affected both female and male athletes equally.

#### 4.4.5 Serious athletes

The majority of posts was portraying athletes as serious sportspersons. Bruce (2015) states there is increasing evidence that sportswomen are portrayed as legitimate and serious athletes. This study supports the claim as the vast majority of posts was portraying athletes in sport setting and did not devalue their sporting performance in any way. Furthermore, the high level of performance was highlighted in 13 percent of contributions and equally frequently in posts dedicated to male athletes as in posts dedicated to female athletes. For example post portraying a picture of a focused goalkeeper accompanied by a caption: “The hero of our advance to the semifinals! Pavel French has done some great work and has taken all the American raids! #czechteam 🇨🇪.” Another example shows a female short track skater in race, the caption says: “@nikyzdrahalova performed for the first time at the Olympic on Saturday in the short track race with a mass start! She won her semi-finals and finished 8th in the final! We are looking forward to Olympic Games in four years! 🙌👏 #czechteam 🇨🇪.” Other post dedicated to Czech hockey team included detailed description of match running: “@narodnitym went straight to the Olympic Tournament Quarterfinals! Let's remind you in the gallery of all nine goals that #czechteam has scored in three Group A matches: 1) The first Czech goal in the tournament scored @jan\_kovar43 and matched the match with home South Korea to 1...” Importantly, such occurring concerned both female and male athletes equally. This finding supports the discoveries of other contemporary researches related to sport coverage on social media.

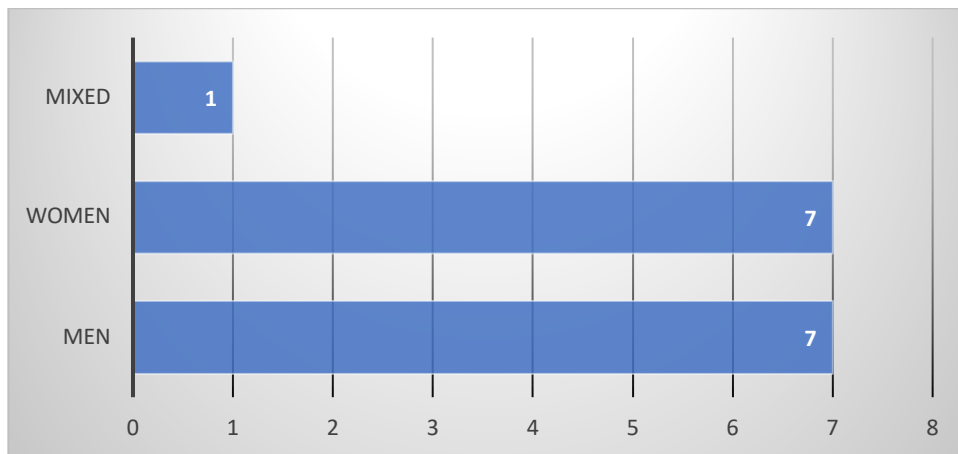
#### 4.4.6 Our voice

As already described above, social media and internet gave (not only) athletes the ability to present themselves in the way they chose to. It became common practice that media takes over this content and quote what athletes have shared on-line. Even though, it is not a fundamental function of Instagram to share content published by other users, external apps provide it. Such pictures are (in most cases) accompanied by a label with a nick name of the original author.

The Czech Team used such function in 15 cases and let the athletes to present themselves as they intended. Importantly, those post were accompanied by a new caption adopted by the

Czech Team. In majority, those captions did not primarily communicate the fact that it is not original content of the Czech Team but production of athletes themselves. Such posts were equally dedicated to 7 male athletes, 7 female athletes and 1 post was picturing a group of athletes of both genders. The occurrence in relation to gender is shown in the Graph 9 bellow.

Graph 10 Occurrence of ‘our voice’



Source: Own processing, n=300

An example of retaken post is a picture of a biathlete before the opening ceremony of the Olympic Games, while the Czech Team shared the picture with a caption: “The opening ceremony is here in a few hours! 🇨🇪🔥 And we are same happy as @makulaa 🥰 #czechteam 🇨🇪”, she posted the picture with a different caption: “We are here 🇨🇪 #czechteam.” All posts of this kind were compared to the original posts published by the athletes and crucially, even if the caption accompanying the content differed, the communicated message was more or less the same. In any of those cases, the retaken post did not disagree with the intended representation.

#### 4.4.7 Pretty and powerful

Bruce (2015) argues that many scholars criticize any commentary on female athletes’ physical appearance even if such statement is aside otherwise serious coverage of their athletics performance. He suggests, that athletes can be both pretty and successful and such comments should not be considered as negative framing. Nevertheless, such approach occurred only in one post in the social media coverage of the Czech Team. This post was dedicated to a female athlete, who placed 14<sup>th</sup> and received praise for her performance and her smile in the coverage of the Czech Team.

#### 4.4.8 Attributes of success

Regarding to scholars, the attributes describing athletes' failure or success also differs significantly. The reasoning for male athlete's success is often different for same quality performance of a female athlete. While men's success was more likely attributed to talent and effort, women's achievements are often attributed to luck, man influence, or emotion (Eastman and Billings 1999). Similarly, the reasons of failure of each gender differ. While failure of a male athlete is often credited to tough conditions or high competition, failure of female athlete is because of lack of skills, or insufficient commitment and focus (Billings and Eastman 2003). Such occurring was identified with this study as well.

Although, only in 11 posts reasoning for success or failure was provided in the social media coverage of the Czech Team, it has differed for women and men. Women success was attributed to a miracle: "Golden finish of @esterledecka 🏆 Miracle on the snow! Let us know in your comments how you reacted! 😍 #czechteam 🇨🇪" and heroism. On the other side, a failure was due to lack of technical skills: "This is @kataryna\_vojackova with unfinished double flip 🤯 Kačka qualified for the Olympics during their ongoing and wanted to show off her best in Big Air. But she recognized that her double was still not 100%, but just under the five circles she wanted to try even at the cost of self-sacrifice..." On the other side, success of male biathlete was 'deserved for the effort': "Finish of great @mkrcmar23! You worked hard and deserved this great success! 🏆 #czechteam 🇨🇪." While, there was lack of success for the Czech men, their performance was often praised for the effort and 'fighting': "We fought, we fought, but unfortunately, we were not good enough for the Olympic Athletes team... But it is not over yet, on Saturday after lunch for a bronze fight! #czechteam 🇨🇪," is an example of such occurring.

Furthermore, the sporting performance is often described differently. In relation to male athletes' performance, more sophisticated and technological language is used while female athletes' performance is described in simple way. There is no sufficient number of examples within this study to support the claim, the only post describing athletes' performance in detail was dedicated to Czech ice hockey team.

Finally, men were more likely to be media covered even though they did not achieve a medal success. Athletes ranking from 4<sup>th</sup> and worse occurred in 11 posts while female athletes ranking 4<sup>th</sup> and worse occurred in 8 posts. Furthermore, the worst result mentioned in the coverage was in the case of men 21<sup>st</sup> place, whereas in the case of women, it was 16<sup>th</sup> (another post was mentioning 23<sup>rd</sup> place, however of an athlete who won two gold medals

in other disciplines). Additionally, men's results were more likely to be accompanied by a caption praising their effort or stressing a high competition: "9th place! Martin Jakš reached in 2x15 km TOP10 in the strong competition of skiathlon. Excellent, @ceskelyzovani! #czechteam 🇨🇪."

Importantly, such occurring has appeared in least of the posts and was rather rare than common practice.

## 5.0 Discussion

Even though some ambivalence has occurred in the communication of the Czech Olympic Committee on the social media network Instagram around and during the Winter Olympic Games in PyeongChang in 2018, in vast majority both female and male athletes were pictured as serious athletes and their performance was not anyhow devaluated. Findings of this study correspond with other contemporary researches concerning social media communication of sport organizations (Bruce 2015, Litchfield 2018). In comparison to traditional media, researches of social media communication report better and greater coverage of female athletes. However, it is important to notice that the medium is not traditional medium but social media account operated by major sporting organization, the Czech Olympic Committee. Even though, such organization has its own interest to promote its own brand and or own product, just like any other National Olympic Committee (NOC), the Czech Olympic Committee is a constituent of the worldwide Olympic movement and is supposed to respect and share values of the IOC. The digital manager of the Czech Team Václav Blahout confirms: “We are not sports journalist; we are much closer to the athletes. The communication is different from traditional media. We are part of the Olympic movement and our goal is to share the idea of being one team and we are communicating accordingly.”

NOCs are responsible for organizing and promoting their people's participation in the Olympic Games with regard to principles, beliefs and values of the IOC. Reporting on their representatives is their interest and best asset. Such reporting is not the same kind as traditional and independent sports media coverage which continually represent female and male athletes disparately.

Social media gave such organizations a great power to report on their own representatives and have the report under control instead of relying on traditional media. The Czech Team has more than 108 thousand followers on Instagram while the major national Czech sport television channel has less than 50 thousand followers, other private sport news media provider has 24 thousand followers. Thus, the Czech Team belongs with its reach and wide audience the most influential sport media in the Czech Republic.

Results of this study support the findings of similar contemporary studies within the sports industry and concurrent increase in coverage of female athletes and sports. While researches of traditional media continuously report stagnating or even decreasing media coverage dedicated to female athletes and sports, on social media they are receiving regarding to

available sources significantly more coverage. Furthermore, the improvement applies not only to quantity matters but also to qualitative aspects. Findings of this study are consistent with Litchfield (2018) research that focused on two social media accounts – Australian Olympic Team and Team GB and their Olympic coverage on Twitter during the 2016 Rio de Janeiro Summer Olympic Games. While Team GB's coverage correspond with number of participants, the AOT's coverage was more dedicated to male athletes despite a greater number of female athletes participating and more women gold medalist. Similar results were found in this study. Czech female athletes have received greater coverage than their male counterparts. Even though, some ambivalence is evident in the coverage, the vast majority of the posts was picturing the athletes in serious way, valued their performance and did not consider other non-sportive aspects. Issues related to gender representation in media extensively described by scholars occurred in negligible quantity. The coverage of Czech Team on Instagram was equally dedicated to women and men during the Olympics. The reporting was slightly more dedicated to female athletes before and after the Olympics. Notably, Czech women athletes were way more successful and their performances were impossible to disregard. The same happening occurred in Litchfield's study (2018) and was also noticed by Billings et al. (2014) in television coverage of 2012 Olympic Games. The positive shift in female coverage in both cases corresponded to their successful sporting performances. Besides, other findings support the hypothesis that amount of coverage correspond to success of the athletes. For example, in this study, sports in which Czech athletes were the most successful received significantly more coverage than sports that did not achieve major success. There was no inclination towards women's and men's sports observed as described by Billings (2007). Hence, regarding to the success of Czech female athletes during the 2016 Olympics, the representation could be expected to be higher than representation of Czech male athletes, but it was not the case. However, the aim of the Czech Team is to cover all sports and athletes rather than focusing solely on the most successful ones.

For all sets of data, male athletes were more likely to be pictured in an active pose and less likely to be shown in a passive pose than female athletes. Female athletes were also more likely to be shown in non-sportive setting with the exception of the period during the Olympic Games. Some other issues outlined by Bruce (2015) occurred in the coverage even if in albeit small amount. Women were more likely to be infantilized and posts dedicated to female athletes were more likely to contain non-sport-related aspects. However, this finding corresponds with Geurin-Eagleman and Burch (2016). Female athletes are more likely to

publish private life and non-sportive pictures by themselves. It is their way of self-representation on-line. Therefore, those findings shouldn't be necessarily considered as negative occurring. Nonetheless, Geurin-Eaglema and Burch (2016) suggest, this kind of differential self-representation might be also the reason why female athletes receive less attention on-line in the meaning of likes and followers. However, this was not the case of the Czech Team. Female athletes received significantly more interactions and engagement. Based on the internal data provided by the digital manager of the Czech Team Václav Blahout, Czech Team has for a long time more women in the audience than man. Women also engage more with the published content. Ambivalent posts equally occurred in relation to female athletes as male athletes. In vast majority, posts were portraying athletes in a serious way and acknowledged them for their performances and achievements. In several cases, athletes have received the space to represent them in their preferred way through shared posts. Regarding to Blahout, re-shared posts are approved or provided by the athlete her/himself and there is a communication behind it to bilateral satisfaction.

In order to reach a greater balance in qualitative matters, better attention should be paid to used material and the way women athletes are pictured. More pictures and videos capturing female athletes in action and sportive setting should be used. Furthermore, infantilization should not occur in the wording. Finally, more attention should be given to wording to avoid infantilization of athletes and differential attributes given to success of athletes of opposite gender.

The specific of social media in general is the real time reaction to ongoing happenings. Audience is used to receive news in a real time. The gate keeper in this case does not necessarily needs to be the person responsible for publishing the content but the visual material processor such photographer or cameraman who provide the material in real time to the responsible social media manager who might not possess any other relevant content to use. In the case of the Czech Team, behind the communication is wide team of professionals who create the content before and during the Olympics. Communication is strategically planned long time ahead and content used is carefully selected with regard to parameters set by the Czech Team. The gate keeper in this case has multiple sources of material from the IOC, internal team of reporters and photographers, and photobank. Furthermore, the final publication must be authorized by the digital manager – in the case of 2018 Winter Olympic Games Václav Blahout. Regarding to Blahout, the goal is to cover all sports instead of focusing on the sports in which Czech athletes are the most successful one. This claim corresponds with the findings within this study.



Media gatekeepers influence to what extent women's sport is covered or in which way. Many editors share general belief that their audience find women's' sport less interesting and exciting (Hardin 2005). Such belief has not been supported in this study. Posts dedicated to female athletes received significantly more engagement and interactions in all kind of aspects such likes, comments and views than posts dedicated to male athletes.

Finally, this study shows that social media have the potential to represent female athletes in media in greater numbers and quality comparing to traditional media reporting. Furthermore, it validates the claims and effort of the IOC to represent female athletes equally in the meaning of media coverage as well as participation in the Olympics.

## 6.0 Conclusion

To sum up, this study corresponds with the latest findings of researches related to the issue of gender representation in media (Litchfield 2018, Bruce 2015). This study sought to examine social media communication on Instagram and gender representation of the Czech Olympic Committee with regard to framing theory. The findings serve as an important point for other sport organizations, media and researchers that seeks to better represent athletes in order to reach social change in the meaning of gender equality. Visual presentations can have a great impact on audience perceptions as well as other stakeholders especially in case of such powerful organization with great reach such NOC.

There are several limitations of the study. The data for this study does not represent any other National Olympic Committee or social media accounts of any other Olympic team. Even though, the finding does correspond with Litchfield's findings on the Team GB and Australian Olympic Team, the results cannot be generalized. Also, the study is limited to 2018 Winter Olympic Games and the period before and after the Olympic Games and the findings do not apply to other major sporting events covered by the site or any other specific period of time. Furthermore, the study is limited to one social media network – Instagram. The coverage of the Czech Team has differed for each social media network during the analyzed time and therefore results of this study are not applicable to other social media networks used. The study is focused on social media coverage instead of traditional media, which were analyzed and described extensively by the scholars.

Importantly, the vast majority of posts focused on athletics achievements of athletes and portrayed them as serious athletes. None of the athletes were sexualized or otherwise devaluated. Bulk of the posts were focused on sport and sports performance. Despite the rather limited occurring of infantilization and ambivalent representation, the difference in representation of female athletes on social media comparing to traditional media is obvious. The findings support Bruce's (2015) claim that there is shift in how sportswomen are represented in on-line media. Even though, the analyzed sample is not traditional media reporting, the reach and influence might be even greater in this particular case. The created framing and the consequential effect on society is excessive. The coverage of the Czech Team might be an example for other media in how to represent female athletes in respectful and informative ways. Furthermore, the engagement of the audience and numbers of interactions dispute the general belief that women sport is less interesting and exciting for the audience.

The IOC is putting great importance into gender equality in sport and female representation in media as much as their participation in the Olympic Games by setting quotas for national teams and the goal to ensure full gender equality in the Summer Olympics in 2024 and Winter Games in 2026. Thus, it is essential that the NOC's take this approach into consideration and represents these values in their communication. While the Czech Republic or previously analyzed Great Britain and Australia by Litchfield (2018) belongs to developed countries with democratic principles and equal gender opportunities, there are members of the IOC where women rights are not equal to men rights and women's sport is in development. With this in mind, it is important to engage these NOCs to represent women and men athletes in the meaning of quantity and quality, to further support women's sport development and their participation in sport events as much as their equal representation in national and local media.

Media has a great power influencing the society, general beliefs and meaning. In order to make changes in society towards gender equality, equal opportunities and rights, it is necessary that media provide their audience the right framing. Beth A. Brooke-Marciniak, member of the USOC Board of Directors, said during IF Gender Equality Forum in Lausanne: *“Supporting women in sport leads to more women leaders across all sectors, stronger communities, and stronger economies. Sport empowers women leaders and contributes to gender equality globally”* (Olympic.org 2019). The findings of this study support the positive outcome of the organization's determination to make a real change that effects not only sport environment but the entire society.

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## 7.0 Appendices

### 7.1 Results of Instagram content analysis

Summarized findings of the Instagram content analysis of the account of the Czech Team are provided below. Full data in the original coding sheet can be provided on request.

#### 7.1.1 Number of contributions and posts per day

DATE	NUMBER OF CONTRIBUTIONS	NUMBER OF POSTS
23. 1. 2018	2	2
24. 1. 2018	2	2
25. 1. 2008	1	1
26. 1. 2018	2	2
27. 1. 2018	1	6
28. 1. 2018	1	10
29. 1. 2018	2	2
30. 1. 2018	3	12
31. 1. 2018	4	18
1. 2. 2018	7	20
2. 2. 2018	5	10
3. 2. 2018	4	4
4. 2. 2018	4	10
5. 2. 2018	6	15
6. 2. 2018	9	29
7. 2. 2018	9	39
8. 2. 2018	8	8
9. 2. 2018	10	10
10. 2. 2018	9	18
11. 2. 2018	11	20
12. 2. 2018	10	10
13. 2. 2018	8	14
14. 2. 2018	8	8
15. 2. 2018	10	17
16. 2. 2018	12	12
17. 2. 2018	13	13
18. 2. 2018	9	18
19. 2. 2018	6	6
20. 2. 2018	7	16
21. 2. 2018	7	16
22. 2. 2018	6	18

23. 2. 2018	7	16
24. 2. 2018	12	12
25. 2. 2018	7	16
26. 2. 2018	3	11
27. 2. 2018	2	2
28. 2. 2018	2	10
1. 3. 2018	2	2
2. 3. 2018	2	2
3. 3. 2018	3	3
4. 3. 2018	2	2
5. 3. 2018	1	3
6. 3. 2018	2	2
8. 3. 2018	3	3
9. 3. 2018	2	2
10. 3. 2018	1	1
11. 3. 2018	1	1
12. 3. 2018	1	1
13. 3. 2018	1	1
14. 3. 2018	1	1
TOTAL	251	477

### 7.1.2 Sports

Bobsleigh	5
Hockey	23
Figure Skating	10
Skiing	4
Snowboard	33
XC skiing	13
Speed skating	23
Mixed	52
Biathlon	24
Alpine Skiing	17
Luge	5
Tennis	4
Nordic Combine	2
Ski jump	4
Kanoe	1
Para	3
Football	1
Athletics	3
Judo	1
Short track	1
Total	229

### 7.1.3 Types of posts

	PRIOR	DURING	AFTER
Photos	164	217	46
Videos	26	23	1
Total	190	240	47

### 7.1.4 Gender related posts

PERIOD	TOTAL NUMBER OF POSTS	MALE OF FOCUSED POSTS	FEMALE FOCUSED POSTS	POSTS FOCUSING ON BOTH MALE AND FEMALE	GENDER NEUTRAL POSTS
Prior	190	49	58	44	39
During	240	82	82	64	16
After	47	13	16	17	1
Totals	477	144	156	125	56

### 7.1.5 Interactions prior the Olympics

	TOTAL	WOMEN	MEN
Likes per post	773	1219	1282
Comment per post	1	2	3
View per post	7609	5220	3026

### 7.1.6 Interactions during the Olympics

	TOTAL	WOMEN	MEN
Likes per post	8669	14889	6573
Comment per post	32	62	26
View per post	26663	46311	13398

### 7.1.7 Interactions after the Olympics

	TOTAL	WOMEN	MEN
Likes per post	6990	9021	7381

Comment per post	19	16	32
View per post	33447	0	33447

### 7.1.8 Difference in portraying prior the Olympics

	ACTIVE	PASSIVE	NON-SPORTIVE	TOTAL
Male focused posts	18	58	3	79
Female focused posts	18	59	9	87

### 7.1.9 Difference in portraying during the Olympics

	ACTIVE	PASSIVE	NON-SPORTIVE	TOTAL
Male focused posts	46	28	8	82
Female focused posts	21	54	7	82

### 7.1.10 Difference in portraying after the Olympics

	ACTIVE	PASSIVE	NON-SPORTIVE	TOTAL
Male focused posts	9	3	1	82
Female focused posts	4	6	6	82

### 7.1.11 Occurrence in descriptors

	INFANTILIZING	NON-ATHLETIC	FEMININITY AND HETEROSEXUALITY	OUR VOICE	AMBIVALENCE	SERIOUS ATHLETES
Men	2	5	1	7	4	15
Women	10	13	7	7	4	18
Mixed				1	10	
Total	12	18	7	8	18	33

## 7.2 Notification form

Notification Form 762335

Last updated

20.05.2019

**Which personal data will be processed?**

Name (also with signature/written consent) Photographs or video recordings of people  
Background data that can identify a person Other data that can identify a person

**Type of data**

**You have indicated that you will be processing background data that can identify individual persons, describe which**

I will be analysing social media posts of the Czech Olympic Committee. Names of well-known athletes and their achieved results will be collected.

**You have indicated that you will be processing other data that can identify individual persons, describe which**

The collected data include link to the original posts published publicly on the social media network

Instagram. These posts might be linked to public personal Instagram accounts of the athletes.

**Will you be processing special categories of personal data or personal data relating to criminal convictions and offences?**

No

**Project information**

**Project title:** Gender representation in Communication on Social Media of the Czech Olympic Committee

**Project description**

The purpose of this study is to explore to what extend gender inequality occurs on social media, and secondly, to detect whether the communication of the most powerful sport organization is gender equal on social media network Instagram. The research questions are thus following:

- Does gender representation occur on social media accounts of the Czech Olympic Committee?
- How does the Czech Olympic Committee picture each gender?

The empirical setting for this study is the Czech Olympic Committee. Czech Olympic Committee promote the Olympic Games through their communication channels on daily basis, which are in management of media agency Česká Olympijská Plc (Olympic.cz 2019). Česká olympijská runs the official social media called Czech Team. The official Instagram account of the Czech Team @olympijskytym would be analysed. The method of online fieldwork was adopted for collection of archival data on the virtual platform.

**Subject area:** Social sciences

**Explain why the processing of personal data is necessary**

To analyse gender representation on social media. Only public data published on social media network Instagram will be used.

**External funding**

**Type of project:** Student project, Master's thesis

**Contact information, student**

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**Data controller**

Høgskolen i Molde / Avdeling for økonomi og samfunnsvitenskap Project leader (academic employee/supervisor or PhD candidate)

Christos Anagnostopoulos, Christos.Anagnostopoulos@himolde.no, tlf: 004771195823

**Will the responsibility of the data controller be shared with other institutions (joint data controllers)?**

No

**Sample 1**

**Describe the sample**

Athletes

**Recruitment or selection of the sample**

The sample is collected on public account Czech Team on social media network Instagram

**Age:** 18 - 40

**Will you include adults (18 years and over) who do not have the capacity to consent**

No

**Personal data relating to sample 1**

Name (also with signature/written consent) Photographs or video recordings of people  
Background data that can identify a person

**How will you collect data relating to sample 1?**

Non-participant observation

**Legal basis for processing general categories of personal data**

A task in the public interest or in the exercise of official authority (art. 6 nr .1 e)

**Explain your choice of legal basis**

I work with publicly available data which were published by a third party. My work is to only observe the data. My aim is to evaluate the communication on social media to reveal the gender representation and its effect on the society with regard to framing theory. Based

on my findings, recommendation will be made for the organization in order to gain more equal portraying of each gender, which again has a great influence on the perception of society and public meaning on genders. My work will be beneficial not only to the organization but could be used as an example for other sports media how to report on female and male athletes' performances and sports. Regarding to Framing Theory media play significantly important role in public meaning creation, framing means picking certain aspects from an event and communicate them more significantly than others in order to interpret a message or evaluate the event. Frames define issues, clarify their causes, creates moral judgments and offer solutions. Frames influence general meaning of society and therefore it is essential that public institutions such Olympic committees respect values such gender equality and communicate respectively.

### **Information for sample 1**

**Will you inform the sample about the processing of their personal data?**

No

**Explain why you will not inform the sample about the processing of their personal data.**

Only public data published on social media of a third party will be used. I have informed and got the permission of the social media manager of the account 'Czech Team' Václav Blahout about my study. The Czech Olympic Committee hold the rights to work with the personal data of the concerned athletes and do not have the obligation to inform the athletes. The collected data contains about 500 pictures picturing public figures whose contact is not a public information and cannot be provided by the Czech Olympic Committee due to GDPR restrictions. I work with public data published by a third party which has the athletes' permission to publish such data. By working with the data is meant observing them, I won't interact with the data and therefore there is no benefit for the subjects to be informed. Furthermore, it would require disproportionate effort to reach those athletes via publicly available communication channels and message received cannot be guaranteed.

### **Third Persons**

**Will you be processing data relating to third person**

#### **Documentation**

**How will consent be documented?**

Not filled in

**How can data subjects get access to their personal data or have their personal data corrected or deleted?**



Only data published by third party will be used in this study, this study won't publish any other personal data than already published publicly on social media account of the Czech Team. The collected data are not linked directly to the personal data but are linked to the original post on Instagram.

**Total number of data subjects in the project**

1-99

**Approvals**

**Will you obtain any of the following approvals or permits for the project?**

Other approvals

**Processing**

**Where will the personal data be processed?**

**Who will be processing/have access to the collected personal data?**

Student (student project)

**Others with access to the personal data**

**Which others will be processing/have access to the collected personal data?**

Anyone, the data are publicly published on social media network.

**Will the collected personal data be transferred/made available to a third country or international organisation outside the EU/EEA?**

No

**Information Security**

Will directly identifiable data be stored separately from the rest of the collected data (e.g. in a scrambling key

**Explain why directly identifiable data will be stored together with the rest of the collected data**

The data are public information.

**Which technical and practical measures will be used to secure the personal data?**

Other security measures

**Indicate which measures**

No security measures, the data used are public.

**Duration of processing**

Project period

01.04.2019 - 14.06.2019

**Will personal data be stored after the end of the project?**

No, all collected data will be deleted at the end of the project

**Will the data subjects be identifiable (directly or indirectly) in the thesis/publications from the project?**

Yes

**Explain why**

Because the data are public.

**Additional information**

### **7.3 Interview guide for the personnel within the Czech Olympic Committee**

1. What is your position in the organization (Czech Team) and towards the IOC?
2. What source of material do you have and use?
3. Were you following a plan during the Olympics or the content was published rather in relation to ongoing happenings?
4. Are you fully responsible for the content or does someone else create it and/or approves it?
5. How do you choose the content? How much ahead do you plan it?
6. If you decide to use someone's else content, do the athletes approve/provide the material?

### **7.4 Transcription of the interview with Václav Blahout**

**What is your position in the organization (Czech Team) and towards the IOC?**

I am part of the media house which is responsible for the digital communication and we are in charge of the communication during the Olympics. We have a team of photographers and video cameramen who create the content. Myself, I was responsible for the management of the digital communication. I was located here in Prague and I was planning the entire content in order to meet our internal parameters. During the Olympics, there is lot of happening - departures of the athletes, ongoing side events such national Olympic parks, Olympic House at the venue. I had to manage wide team of content creators who were in different locations. My task as digital director was the management of the communication of the Czech Team and supervision of the social media communication.

**What parameters of communication do you have?**

Parameters towards the identity of the Czech Team. Czech Olympic Team has always a communication campaign related to the location, for example towards the Tokio we are

currently running 'Road to Tokio' concept. There are several aspects we have to meet in the communication of the Czech Team as a brand in the creative and informational meaning. We have an identity for each of the Olympics, each of the Games have their own graphical visuals and other creative concepts. My task is to control that everything meets those requirements since there is a wide team of people who create the content. I am the one who approves it and makes the final step of publishing it. The vast majority of the content is kept on clouds and on planning platforms and I authorize the wording and make the final push. The entire communication is related to our values of being one team. We don't make difference in between sports or athletes; we are trying to cover all kind of sports including the non-Olympic sports. We are the biggest sports organization in the Czech Republic, and we are communicating accordingly. At the same time, we are trying to make it enjoyable, fun and interesting for the whole audience including young fans. Therefore, we focused on Instagram in the recent years and we managed to increase the audience there. That was for example one of my key responsibilities. During the Olympics we also focused on community management and communication with the audience.

**What material do you use in your communication? What are your sources?**

There are several sources of the material. Some of it is provided by the IOC, but they don't cover many Czech athletes except the internationally successful ones. We also have our own photographers and we have our own photobank. We have several photographers on different locations covering Czech athletes. Secondly, we use photobank Getty Images which works with agencies that have a license of the IOC. It is necessary to have multiple sources since there are always several disciplines running at the same time.

We have limited number of journalists; we coordinate them based on athletics success and general interest. We have specialized photographers for certain sports and one photographer who is coordinating the entire team. We also have our own internal reporters who are at the place in the backstage and are responsible for the press service there, they are also able to provide some material from the inside. We used this material mainly for Instagram stories. The media rights are of course limited, we don't have the recordings of the performances. Therefore, we need to create lot of material around it such live streams, interviews at the venues or from our Olympic house. We interviewed many athletes from different sports no matter what results they achieved.

**What is your main goal - to cover the most successful athletes or all sports and all athletes?**

During the Olympics, our main goal is to cover the Olympic movement and its sports. Otherwise, there is a lot of other major events happening. Our main idea is as already mentioned that we are one team, we are sport, we want to promote healthy lifestyle and sport in daily life. We want to show major athletics success as well as the minor ones without mainstream media attention and focus. We are communicating the Olympic movement, values and ideas. The Olympics help us to get the media attention and share the message. In general, we don't make difference in between sports, we want to cover all sports. During the Olympics, we had a graphic visual with Olympic medal and position. We didn't prepare it only for medal positions but up to 10th place because that's still great success for us. All the athletes that make it to top 10 receive very similar coverage as medalists. Top 10 is a great success for the Czech sport.

**Were you following a plan during the Olympics or was the content published rather in relation to ongoing happenings?**

Each of the Olympics is a progress for us, we are better prepared and plan more and more ahead. Before the 2018 Olympics, the material was prepared up to 10 months ahead. We are trying to plan as much as possible. The athletes are competing all over the world, so it is sometimes difficult, but we want to let them focus on the performance during the Olympics and have everything prepared beforehand.

The communication towards the 2018 Olympics started already in December 2017, already by that time we were communicating the Olympics on daily bases. We are planning day by day what sports are we going to presents and how. The Olympic qualification is definitive 30 days before the Olympics starts so until that we create a lot of material. Before that it is all about strategic planning.

During the Olympics, there are sports such ice-hockey or biathlon, which last for several days and we want to keep our communication consistent. Then there are sports that have only one day competition such snowboarding. We need to take all of that in account.

All of our graphic visuals are prepared beforehand for each of the athlete and for all kind of scenarios. At the same time, we want to use authentic material from the place - not only to be authentic, but we also need to respect advertising rules (Rule 40, author's note).

We are not sports journalist; we are much closer to the athletes. The communication is different from traditional media. We are part of the Olympic movement and our goal is to share the idea of being one team and we are communicating accordingly.

**If you decide to use athlete's content, do the athletes approve or does he/she provide the material?**

We have a contract with all of the athletes, the conditions are clear. During the Olympics we work with their personal rights. Even though, we don't need their approval to work with their portrayals, we always want to make the athlete happy.

When we re-share the content from an athlete, there is always a communication behind it. Sometimes they ask us to re-post their content, sometimes we ask them if we can do so. The athletes are always happy if we repost their content, they are also limited in what they can capture during the Olympics, so we are also trying to provide them some material for own use.