

The Biased Language in
Media Commentary at the
2018 Winter Olympic Games

A Senior Project Presented to
The Faculty of the Communication Studies Department
California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo

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Of the Requirements for the Degree
Bachelor of Arts

By

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Part I: Description

Sports are undeniably a large part of American culture. The world of sports is a context that provides us with a glimpse into the cultural values and power structures embedded into our society at large. It gives us a sense of belonging, builds community, and fuels our thirst for competition. It is not just a game, it is a representation of our society. Sports coincide with our values and helps us make sense of the world. There is failure, triumph, success, setbacks, and obstacles, all of which contribute to it being so exciting, yet demanding. It provides opportunities for growth physically and mentally, which is why it is so fulfilling and popular in our culture. Sports govern much of what we think and what we do, and for this reason, we idolize all that it has to offer.

With this in mind, it is important to note that the mass media plays a significant role in sports and how we view them, as well as the people who participate in them. The media production and coverage of sports affect our attitudes, beliefs, and values about ourselves and the world around us. How we make sense of what is being portrayed is impacted by our own personal experiences and circumstances. In other words, no two interpretations are exactly the same. Therefore, the lense through which the media communicates sporting events is critical in how we form opinions about sports, which transforms into how we view the people around us. The intertwinement between sports and media can have potentially strong and lasting impressions on its audience. Thus, the impact that it has on us is worthy to investigate.

More specifically, it is necessary to study these effects because it can alter our opinions about gender. While women have gained significant progress toward equality in sports, they are still considered women first and athletes second. These inequalities have the potential to become

unconscious and normative in sports, which is troubling in itself. As a result, these biases can carry over into society as a whole, which can be harmful and damaging. By recognizing and challenging discrimination within sports commentary, we can become more mindful about the influences of the gender prejudices in our society today.

For my Senior Project, I chose to rhetorically analyze and discuss key themes in regard to gender bias in the media commentary at the 2018 Winter Olympics, in Pyeongchang, South Korea. The Olympic Games lasted from February 9th to February twenty-fifth. I conducted my Senior Project by studying the media commentary and language at the Olympic Games. I compared and contrasted the female athletes' events versus the male athletes' events to uncover if there was gender bias in the media coverage at the highest level of athletic competition. Of the fifteen sports at the Games, I chose to focus on Women's Snowboarding Halfpipe, Men's Snowboarding Halfpipe, Individual Figure Skating, Pairs Figure Skating, and Curling. I picked these sports and events based on three criteria: the relationship between gender and the events within the sport, the most commonly watched and popular sports at the Winter Olympics, and my personal sport preferences. In analyzing the highest level of sports competition, it is important to examine how gender prejudice affects sports, athletes, and the audience watching.

I executed this project by blogging seven times during the duration of the Olympics. My first blog was an orientation to who I am and what I was going to be writing about. This set up my audience so they knew what to expect in my future blog posts. In my introduction post, I discussed the Opening Ceremony, my reactions to it, and what I expected to see at the Games in terms of gender bias in the commentary. I also touched upon why it was a valid point of analysis. The other four blog posts were content-rich, comprised of my reactions, findings, and research

on this topic. I organized each of the content blogs by sport and shared what I discovered through listening to the commentary and watching the sports that I selected. My final blog post was a wrap up and summary about what I saw and heard at the Winter Olympics. I wrote about what fascinated me about these Games, what surprised me, and what challenged me as a communication student in this context. I also provided recommendations for future communication scholars and researchers as to what they could study next in order to keep progressing toward less gender biases in sports commentary. My blog website and posts were essentially a rhetorical criticism and textual analysis on what I heard and saw within the commentary at the Olympics (see Appendix for full blog posts).

By blogging during the time when the Olympics were airing, my goal was to capture the attention of a greater audience. Moreover, I balanced my tone between being conversational and academic to appeal to my target audience. My target audience was anyone that is interested in the Olympics or sports and gender in general, that was looking for an easy, informational, and fun read. I envisioned my audience to be people that liked the Olympics enough to go online or to a blog website to look at it in more depth. I also presumed that they might have some interest in media and how it influences our beliefs about the world. I expected that they had noticed some gender bias in media commentation previously and wanted to learn more about this or explore the differences between the coverage of women's and men's sports further. I imagined that most of these people were relatively young, probably in their late teens, twenties, thirties, or forties, as blogs are typically produced by young to middle aged people. I had this demographic in the back of my mind as I made choices as how to present my discoveries and what would be best suited

for the people reading it. As a result, thinking about my target audience influenced how I communicated what I heard at the Winter Olympics in my blog posts.

I aimed to appeal to a broad audience by combing both scholarly and non-peer reviewed articles, which would allow for many people to understand and comprehend my findings. By incorporating peer-reviewed articles, my audience could more easily trust me and my credibility as a blogger increased because of this. I wanted my blog posts to be academically rich, yet also accessible for people to understand. This balance of using scholarly articles and non-scholarly sources allowed me to communicate the information in a comprehensible and intellectual manner. This also contributed to why I chose the medium of a blog website.

The value of my lense as a communication student is that I could use rhetorical theories to uncover the gender inequalities in the representations, commentator communication, and interactions between the female and male athletes. I looked at the “who, what, why, where, when, and how” components of speech and the effects that this had on the audience. In order to do this, I had to reason critically and write effectively to accomplish this goal. These skills are ultimately at the core of the Communication Studies Major at Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo, which is why they are significant to practice and utilize in my Senior Project. This is a key feature of what a communication perspective adds to this project and also what makes my research credible and meaningful.

Through blogging and studying the media commentary, I have gained a better understanding of the gender bias present in the field of sports mass media, particularly at the 2018 Winter Olympics. My project was guided by this research question of: "What gender bias is present in the media coverage of the 2018 Winter Olympics?" I found that there was gender bias

and even the most high-performing athletes at the highest level of athletic competition faced discrimination and bias. The media's analysis, commentary, and portrayal of these athletes serve to reaffirm the definition and expectations of gender. This gender bias is everywhere, not just on the sports stage. It is in our society and our everyday life, which is also why it is important to unpack and analyze further.

Part II: Literature Review

Research Question:

"What gender bias is present in the media coverage of the 2018 Winter Olympics?"

Theme 1: Overarching Gender Biases in Sports

The overarching theme of gender bias and inequality in sports media is prevalent and has played a role in sports for an extensive amount of time. This prejudice is significant to study because it is often unconscious or unintentional. Though it does not justify why this bias happens, it helps explain why it is important to evaluate. Because gender stereotypes and expectations have become ingrained into our minds, they have become what we expect to see: "normal." The power that mass media has is great and it influences how people believe they should think or how they should act. Trolan (2013) argues that "the media is one of the most influential forms of socialization in today's society in generating gender values" (p. 215). Thus, what we see and how we see it is largely attributed to the media. The media governs what we think and how we think about it (Eagleman, Burch, & Vooris, 2014). Mass media ultimately displays the gender biases that we encounter. With that being said, by marginalizing women in sports, we evaluate them differently as compared to men. This creates biases and variance in what we expect to see in men's and women's sports events. However, this is not only in sports,

but also in society generally. Therefore, media has the potential to impact larger social practices and studying the overarching theme of gender biases is a valid point of examination.

Moreover, countless communication scholars have studied the overall theme of gender bias in sports. In studying sports communication, Sarah Grieves, a researcher at Cambridge said, “It may not be that people are deliberately trying to infantilize women, but the criticism is kind of bringing to light people who don’t even realize they’re doing it.” Grieves argues that even if people are not aware that they are being sexist, bringing attention to this issue can help sports reporters become more conscious of their choices in wording and coverage. This is the first step in understanding the overarching theme of gender bias. In addition to this unconscious bias, scholars have indicated that the power relations within sports reinforce the ideology that men are superior to women (Greer, Hardin, Homan, 2009). By portraying men’s symbolic authority in sports, the audience creates interpretations that women are inferior to men. This is represented in a variety of ways, including media coverage and the biased language used by the commentators.

The overarching idea is that men are characterized as being stronger, better, and more suitable for sports as compared to women. Gender bias in sports extends to gender bias in society and is thus normalized and supported through media. Building off of this, Trolan (2013) asserts that “despite claims that female athletes are now considered equal to their male counterparts, there is still a fascination on the female body of an athlete rather than on her athletic skill” (p. 216). The media’s analysis and portrayal of these athletes serve to reaffirm the definition and expectations of gender. Coverage of women is sexualized, while coverage of men is focused on athletic skill and ability (Trolan, 2013). This gender bias is everywhere, not just on the sports

stage, but in our society and our everyday life. This is also why it is important to unpack and analyze further.

It is also important to mention that the Olympic Games is “the most watched and global of all international sporting events” (Eagleman, Burch, & Vooris, 2014). Exploring the gender bias and commentary on this stage is significant because it is so popular and receives a copious amount of media and audience attention. Therefore, it is even more crucial that the sports commentary is as least biased as possible. It is also an ideal venue because it removes external factors in studying biases within gender. This is because women and men compete in many of the same events, in the same place, and at the same time (Greer, Hardin, & Homan, 2009). This aids in bringing to light the gender biases throughout sports communication.

Studying this topic and uncovering the overall gender bias in sports media and commentary, especially at the Olympics, is important because sports have an impact on societal norms and values. The media is noteworthy to analyze because it perpetuates gender stereotypes and inequalities and trickles into our society. By studying communication on the sports stage, we can take the active steps in trying to end gender bias and discrimination. Until the media re-examines its portrayal of athletes, inequality will continue to exist.

Theme 2: Media Coverage

As touched upon, the power that the media has is great. Media is a channel through which we see, hear, and read. It is considered one of the most powerful and prevalent socialization influences in our society (Pederson, 2002). As Marshall McLuhan said, “the media is the message.” In other words, the medium influences how the message is interpreted and perceived. It is necessary to discuss the role that mass media has in influencing our perceptions about sports

because it is such a prominent mean of communication. In the article examining gender biases in media coverage of athletes, communication scholar Paul Pederson (2002) defines how hegemonic masculinity becomes reinforced through the media. This communication theory, hegemonic masculinity, legitimizes men's power and justifies why women are subordinate. Pederson (2002) argues that sports affirm male domination and power. He also discusses sports as a hegemonic social institution, which end up naturalizing the power and privilege of men (Pederson, 2002, p. 304). For this reason, sports and media are linked together and are dependent on each other. Through biased media coverage and favoring men, the media minimizes and trivializes women's accomplishments. This reaffirms the theory of hegemonic masculinity, which allows for greater gender biases. The prominence and effect that mass media has warrants us to examine this further and it is a variable that sustains men's power in society.

Media fundamentally produces, reproduces, and sustains hegemonic masculinity. This helps us understand the gender discrimination in sports media. It is also important to note that the media presents traditional expectations of femininity and masculinity (Koivula, 1999). Even though women face biases in media, they are also underrepresented. In her article focusing on gender stereotyping through sports media coverage, author Nathalie Koivula (1999) asserts that women still receive "strikingly less coverage than men, even in sports in which women in fact constitute a majority of the participants" (p. 592). Further, if women participated in sports that were considered a "masculine sport," they were often discriminated and trivialized (Koivula, 1999). Perhaps what is of even greater importance regarding sports is how women are presented. By presenting women as according to cultural stereotypes, women's athletic ability is demolished. For example, by associating women with weakness, emotion, and submissiveness,

the media frames women as less capable and validates men's superiority. Studying mass media is important to unveil how biases are woven throughout what we are exposed to in sports.

Furthermore, there is still a belief that men's sports are better than women's. This relates to the traditional expectations of femininity and masculinity. This is again reinforced with how the media covers sports. Trolan (2013) argues that "the lack of coverage or acknowledgement of women's sports and athletes leads the sport consumer to believe that women's sports and athletes are not important and not worthy of being covered" (p. 217). This is problematic in itself, proving that the media does not value women's events as much as men's. More importantly, this shows the parallel in communication research that scholars have found that women receive less media coverage than their male counterparts.

In addition to less media coverage, women also lack the same level of excitement in their sports competitions. In the article, "Naturally" Less Exciting? Visual Production of Men's and Women's Track and Field Coverage During the 2004 Olympics" authors Jennifer D. Greer, Marie Hardin, and Casey Homan examine this issue by looking at the media's approach to showing these athletes. They found that men's sports were said to be "more exciting" to watch due to the choices that the media chose to make. Greer, Hardin, and Homan (2009) found that this may be due to the camera angles, air time, and special effects during the men's events. How the female athletes are shown to the public affects how they are perceived. Not only is it in the language or headlines of their performance, but also in how much air time they receive and how they are covered. This shows how powerful the media is in shaping our perceptions.

Although women's sports have advanced, there is still significant room for improvement. Biases through media coverage are prevalent and portray women as inferior to men. Women's

abilities are brushed off and often diminished, enriching men's power in sports. This power dominance in sports carries over into our society. This is why the media is so compelling and commanding. Trolan (2013) contends that there is still under-representation of women's sports, which contributes to the gender discrimination in the sports world. Though women's sports have shown growth in terms of media coverage and popularity, females are still considered inferior to males. The way that the media objectifies women strengthens the gender inequality within sports. In other words, it is not just about how they are talked about by commentators, but also how the media chooses to cover them.

The media also highlights women's physical appearance, which perpetuates the hierarchy of masculinity. Not only are female athletes underrepresented, but their femininity is also highlighted and emphasized. Studying the prominence of media coverage is significant for these reasons. What happens between us and the event is ultimately what the media chooses to depict. The media does not communicate reality in a truthful way. Though it offers us a window into what we are trying to see, how we make sense of the situation is governed by our personal interpretations, as well. Mass media illuminates the power of men and favors their accomplishment. As a result, this bias creates societal expectations of how things should be in our world beyond the sports stage.

Theme 3: The Power of Language

With the lack of equal media coverage, women and men are not comparable in how they are covered by sports reporters and other media commentators. When thinking about the Olympic Games, media coverage and commentary is a driving force for how the audience views the athletes. Ultimately, unless the audience is in the arena or at the event, they are listening to

what the commentators are saying about these athletes. This is why the power of language is great and worthy of attention. The ways that people, specifically commentators and news reporters, communicate about these athletes, essentially reinforce how people might perceive them. Furthermore, these words might impact the attitudes of the audience toward that athlete, specifically in terms of their gender, and in turn, their abilities. The commentary of sports has been deeply criticized in the past and continues to be a valid object of analysis in our world today.

The language that television sports commentators use contribute to the construction of gender hierarchies within sports themselves. This is evident in how commentators discuss the athletes' accomplishments. The language used typically reaffirms masculinity within the sports atmosphere. The focus of coverage in women's events were on their attractiveness, femininity, and sexuality. On the other hand, men were discussed based on their size, shape, strength, and power (Eagleman, Burch, Vooris, 2014). This leads to an unequitable coverage and thus shows an inaccurate portrayal of the athletes. By listening to what the commentators say, we are influenced by their words and thoughts.

Along these lines, language is compelling, rhetorical, and can reinforce gender expectations. Koivula (1999) writes, "language used in media is a powerful tool in the reinforcement of gender distinctions" (p. 591). Commentary might create and reinforce cultural and social constructions on gender differences in sports. Koivula (1999) also contends that analysis of language has the potential to expose gender stereotypes and inequalities (p. 600). Language is the foundation of communication and also one of the primary issues in gender inequality. How men and women are appraised by the media, correlates to how they are

differentiated in terms of their gender. Consequently, men's sports become the standard in which women are compared to and marginalized against. By enhancing the difference in men's and women's sports through the choice of language, media commentators subscribe to enhancing gender differences across the board.

Structuring language and studying this method of communication is meaningful because language is at the core of human communication. Media coverage and favoritism of men's sports over women is not a new phenomena. According to Eastman and Billings (2000), announcers have "decades of experience with men athletes and their sports and are familiar with many male individuals' backgrounds...." (p. 194). These biases show that this is rooted in our history, but sexism is also becoming less acceptable in today's public discourse (Eastman & Billings, 2000, p. 192). By uncovering the language used and media broadcast choices, we can explore the current values and power structures regarding men and women at large.

Looking at the big picture, language is a way that we frame a situation. What a person chooses to say, maintains how we form opinions and judgements about them and the situation. It gives the audience a lense in which we can interpret and make sense of what is going on. We cannot look at the media without studying language used by the commentators. By formulating our opinions and judgements about sports through the commentary, we become accustomed to what we should expect to see and how women and men should act . How a story is told holds considerable significance when analyzed through the lense of gender. Sports communication scholars, Angelini, MacArthur, and Billings (2012) assert that "Frames are vehicles for producers to organize viewing experiences and are based on those producers' perceptions of

reality” (p. 263). This shows that what is portrayed is what the media producers want to be shown.

In combination with language, when discussing the athletes, the commentators suggest what is important and what is not important about that specific situation. This selection of what is emphasized and what is excluded parallels what the audience come to believe and what is valued by them. By describing women based on femininity and men on their physical skill, sports commentators are laying out the foundation for representations of gender. How we perceive gender differences on the sports stage relates to how we perceive men and women in society at large. Mediated depictions of athletes and the language that sports reporters utilize is key to uncovering the gender biases that we encounter. It is important to understand how vital of a role that language plays and how that affects the audience’s perceptions of female and male athletes. It is significant to highlight that language can perpetuate an identity group greatly, which contributes to gender inequality and sexism overall.

Part III: Evaluation

After watching the 2018 Winter Olympic Games in PyeongChang and listening to the commentary, I gained a substantial and new perspective into sports and gender and the relationship between them. In applying all of my research, listening to the commentary, utilizing communication peer-reviewed sources in my blogs, and reflecting on this experience, I have discovered that there is still gender bias present today in sports media. This was not only in what the commentators said, but also what they didn’t say. Both the verbal and nonverbal communication of the commentators disclosed their feelings about the athletes. It was also

evident in what the commentators emphasized during the athletes' performances and how they communicated their reactions.

However, instead of hearing blatant sexism, I heard more differences in the language used to describe the Olympians. This was not what I expected to find before watching the Olympics. I anticipated hearing comments that diminished women's athletic ability completely or comments which disregarded their accomplishments because of their gender. I thought I would hear more sexist comments, especially in watching the women's sports. Conversely, what I did observe is that the approach in deliberating about these athletes' performances greatly contrasted. For example, in the women's sports that I studied, such as Figure Skating and the Snowboarding Halfpipe, I found that the language used to describe the women focused on their attractiveness, luck, style, and fashion. On the other hand, in the men's events, such as Figure Skating, the Snowboarding Halfpipe, and Curling, I identified that the commentators emphasized their accomplishments, skills, potential future, strength, and size. These comments were implicitly biased, yet they are still significant to pay attention to because these types of comments can reshape and reinforce traditional gender expectations. What commentators choose to discuss for women's and men's events, is key to identifying the historical sexism present in sports media.

I also found that there was a difference in the overall tone of the commentators. Although this observation was subtle, I discovered that the media commentators were much more excited, loud, and enthusiastic while discussing the men's events versus the women's events. This is important to note because it is still a significant difference in media coverage of women and men. At the Winter Olympic Games, gender bias was still frequent and this shows us the

approaches that sports commentators take in covering men and women. This also exemplifies how men are favored over women.

The bias at the Olympics has the opportunity to trickle into the societal expectations and presumptions that we have of people based of their gender, ultimately affecting how we perceive women and men overall. Although I do think that we have come a long way towards gender equality, there is still room for improvement. Future communication research should tailor their studies toward tone of voice by commentators. There is already research in the field of communication about overall gender bias in sports media commentary, but it would be interesting to see a focus on tracing the tone of voice and how this impacts our views of athletes. In the communication discipline today, there is a lack of studies concentrating on this. This may be due to the fact that much of the research in sports communication, specifically gender inequality, has focused on air-time differences between men's and women's sports and sports coverage in television. Studying air-time is important, but there is a copious amount of research about it. This is why we should gear our discipline towards detecting differences in tone of voice in sports media in the future.

Though this trek to equality will not happen in leaps, I have found that the commentators have made advancements in the way that they discuss these athletes. While doing research in regards to the Olympics, I found that the International Olympic Committee has taken historic steps in establishing an Executive Board that focuses solely on strengthening gender equality ("The IOC Takes Historic," 2018). The goal of this board is to remove any barriers to potential female athletes wanting to participate in sports. This objective extends beyond the Olympic stage and hopefully will impact all levels of sports for women and girls. With this board implemented

into the IOC, I think that the media commentators are much more aware of what they are saying and what they communicate.

With future research being tailored to characteristics of speech that we have not studied in depth yet, I believe that gender bias will continue to be slowly removed from media commentary. Gender bias and discrimination is still a component of the Olympics sports media today and it is by no means absolved from our world. The mass media is also one of the most powerful mediums in our society and the influences that media has are limitless. How the media chooses to portray athletes has a tremendous effect on us, as it reinforces stereotypes and creates expectations for how we think women and men should act. This is why it is crucial to look at the media and how they represent and depict athletes. We can learn why we act the way we do on a greater scale through studying mass media.

Though there is a lot of work to be done in the field of sports communication, through my Senior Project, I have learned that we have made progress toward more gender equality and gender neutral communication styles overall. More importantly, this alludes to the notion that our society is headed towards more equality. Once we start becoming more aware of what is being communicated around us and the power that communication holds, we can peel back the inherent layers of gender discrimination, examine why it is so persuasive and influential in how we carry out our everyday lives, and attempt to terminate it.

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Appendix



FEBRUARY 10, 2016 BY GBARATTOLO

About My Senior Project

Hi! My name is Gabriella Barattolo and I am a fourth year student studying at California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo. I am currently earning my undergraduate Bachelor of Arts Degree in the College of Liberal Arts, majoring in Communication Studies and minoring in Italian Studies. My passions involve running, hiking, yoga, swimming, cooking, and spending time with my family and friends. In my blog posts, my goal is to uncover the gender bias in the media commentary at the 2018 Winter Olympic Games. These blog posts will serve as a rhetorical analysis of the key themes that I find throughout my research of gender bias in the sports commentary. This is a communication project because I will be examining the commentator communication and the language that they use to describe the athletes. I will study the “who, what, why, where, when, and how” components of speech and the effects that this has on its audience.

My overall question of discovery is: What gender bias is present in the media coverage of the 2018 Winter Olympic Games? How are female and male athletes represented in this highest level of athletic competition?

This is part of Senior Project, which is a partial requirement for my Bachelor of Arts Degree. My Senior Project will be presented to the Faculty of the Communication Studies Department at California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo. I am excited to embark on this journey and I cannot wait to share my findings with you all!

xoxo

Gabriella



FEBRUARY 13, 2018 BY GBARATTOLO

2018 Winter Olympic Games: Opening Ceremony

Upon watching the Opening Ceremony of the 2018 Winter Olympic Games on my humble television in my college apartment in San Luis Obispo, California, I became increasingly excited and eager to watch the best athletes around the world come together to compete. Situated in Pyeongchang, South Korea, the Games commenced on February 9th and will conclude on February 25th and will be home to thousands of athletes among fifteen different sports. The Olympics are an extraordinary celebration of the greatest athletes across the globe. Upon the fifteen sports celebrated at these Games, athletes come from all different countries and backgrounds. However, they have one thing in common: a dream. No matter how they got here, where they came from, or why they chose their sport, their stories and dreams have all taken them to the same place, which is the Olympic stage. All of these athletes represent what we can do if we dream. They are all defining something for the people watching them and exemplifying what can happen if we dedicate ourselves to what we want. During an advertisements in between the Opening Ceremony, it said, "Everyone who wants to can dream." Though this is true, it made me realize that sometimes we hold ourselves back because of our fears, fear of failing, fear of not being good enough, or fear itself. But on this platform in South Korea, the Olympians embody what dreams look like and what is possible when we put our minds to it.

Furthermore, the Opening Ceremony was creative, symbolic, and visually stunning. The commentators mentioned that it took the directors two and a half years to complete and master this performance. According to the commentators, the Creative Director of this ceremony also asserted that their goal was to emphasize the special and unique culture of South Korea. It showed the most treasured pieces of Korean history, such as the tiger. Performers in the ceremony danced around with a tiger in the center of the stage. In Asian cultures, the tiger represents something that protects you from evil. Contrastingly, in Western cultures, the tiger symbolizes something to be afraid of. The directors placed significance on the man versus nature dynamic of Korean culture. It portrayed the unity between man and nature and how they can live together in harmony. It is said that Koreans have an affinity for tigers for two reasons, one being that their country looks like a physical tiger on the map and the second being that it is a mountainous country and also a country for hunters. In addition, the tiger is symbolic for peace and hope. In Korean culture, it is a reminder that everything comes from the same source and can live in harmony with each other. However, it is important to note that this peace and hope resonates far beyond the stage. The white tiger on the stage also symbolizes unity and is said to remind people to remain humble. It is white because it is reaching back to the ancient roots of Korea, where people often wore white to illustrate this peace and harmony further. This is especially pertinent for the Olympic stage because athletes are coming to this arena from a multitude of backgrounds and countries, thus the tiger represents the athletes coming together with

unity. Additionally, there are children dancing, running, and playing with each other on the stage, representing the future and peace for all.

Overall, this Opening Ceremony seemed to be hopeful, peaceful, and cheerful. It represented the hardships that South Korea has faced, but also showed that they are hopeful and optimistic for the future. It was symbolic and sent a powerful message of peace to the world. These moments were meaningful to not only the people in South Korea, but also to everyone across the globe watching. It provided light and hope to everyone watching at home that if we dream, we can live in a peaceful and harmonious world!

The Opening Ceremony, a significant component to the Olympic Games as a whole, is important to discuss as it sets the tone for the remainder of the Games. It also gives insight into the host culture, this being South Korea, and prepares its audience for the competition to come. Throughout the Olympic Games, I will be sharing with you my thoughts, findings, and assessments of the media commentation via my blog. Previous research has been conducted in regards to gender differences during the media coverage at the Olympics. Many scholars have published articles investigating this gender bias, some of which I will unpack further in my future blog posts. However, I am mainly interested in looking at the question of: "What gender bias is present in media coverage of the 2018 Winter Olympics?" This is important to pay attention to because the media's analysis, commentary, and portrayal of these athletes serve to reaffirm the definition and expectations of gender. This gender bias is everywhere, not just on the

sports stage. It is in our society and our everyday life, which is also why it is important to unpack and analyze further.

Because we put such emphasis and attention on sports, it has become an influential foundation for representations of gender. How we perceive gender differences on the sports stage relates to how we perceive men and women in society at large. This is why it is such a vital and valid point of examination. I am conducting this blog because the mass media is an influential and powerful tool throughout the world. It is a dominant mean of communication in our modern world today, which impacts our attitudes, behaviors, and beliefs about the world. It is necessary to discuss the role that mass media plays in influencing our perceptions about sports. Furthermore, I am passionate about sports and love studying the complexities of human communication. In my blog, I hope to show you all of these dimensions. My dream for this blog is to bring awareness of the gender bias present in the media, specifically the media commentation on the Olympic stage. As a result, once we are aware of this bias, we can start working toward a more gender neutral and equal world. Thus, other athletes around the world can pursue their dreams without facing gender discrimination.

FEBRUARY 16, 2018 BY GBARATTOLO

2018 Winter Olympic Games: Snowboarding – Halfpipe

Being first included into the Winter Olympics back in 1998 in Nagano, Japan, snowboarding is a relatively new, exciting, and popular sport to watch. Whenever I am watching the Winter Olympics, I always record this sport! There are both women's and men's events and the athletes participate in a Qualification Round and a Final Round. The snowboarders compete to earn the highest possible score that they can. In order to do this, there are many tricks and turns encompassed in their routines, which the judges then evaluate. While watching the Snowboarding Halfpipe women's and men's events, I noticed that the commentators differed in the way that they communicated and analyzed the female and male athletes performances. I also want to point out that both of the commentators were men....just sayin'.

With attention to this, it is important to note that although the commentary was not necessarily negative toward one gender, there were apparent distinctions between the two, which are important to uncover and unpack further. In this blog post, I will discuss these variations in narration and use specific examples to enhance my findings. I will also supplement this with a few peer reviewed sources from the field of Communication Studies.

Commentary, especially at the Olympic Games, is significant to evaluate because how the media presents sports events is influential. As Marshall McLuhan said, "the media is the message." In other words, the medium (in this case, the television

commentary) influences *how* the message is interpreted and perceived. Additionally, studying the commentary at the Olympic Games is an appropriate stage to evaluate because it simultaneously showcases both men and women competing in many of the same events, thus removing external factors.¹ The Olympic Games is also the most watched and global of all international sporting events.¹ This is why I chose to explore the commentation on this stage and share with you my discoveries.

Mass media shapes the way that we, as the audience, see, hear, and critically think, which is why it is one of the most powerful and prominent tools in socialization.² Furthermore, the way that athletes are discussed has an impact on the way that we think and feel about them. While watching the Men's Snowboarding Halfpipe Final, I noticed that the commentators tones were excited, optimistic, enthusiastic, and loud. Though we cannot see them directly, we can hear the tone of their voice while watching the athletes perform. This shapes the way that we feel while watching the athletes. As a result, I found myself feeling more exhilarated and excited for the men, as compared to the women's competition.

Building off of this, when Shaun White launched into the pipe, the commentators articulated that White had "boosted into the pipe!" (*Yes, he is one of the best snowboarders around and yes he is very talented. I would be very excited, too had I seen him in person performing this Gold Medal performance. These are my observations*). After his first trick, the commentators asserted, "WOAH! GIANT frontside 1440 on the first dip. Shawn is pulling all of the punches right now. That was SUCH a big frontside 1440." Upon finishing his run, they claimed, "Shaun White is looking to that

medal with laser focus.” These comments reaffirm our beliefs that men’s events are amazing and very exciting (which they are!). This perpetuates the perception that the men’s events are more action-packed and exciting than the women’s. Furthermore, the commentators were much more animated and electrified after watching White than any other female snowboarder I watched during these Games.

For example, to directly compare the commentary between the men and women, when Chloe Kim began to snowboard into the Halfpipe, the commentators said, “And now Chloe Kim has her opportunity....” This type of comment is not as powerful or compelling, nor did it make me nearly as excited to watch her as did the comments made before White went into the Halfpipe (Lame, right? Come on, commentators, get excited!). This shows us that although it may be unconscious, the narration of these athletes can impact our feelings and beliefs about them. With the commentary being so excited and passionate, we, as the audience, generate similar feelings, too! But when it is not reciprocated in the women’s events, we do not have those same feelings of excitement and accomplishment as we do for the men.

The commentators also conversed about physics and size in the men’s events. For example, Ayumu Hirano, a competitive Japanese snowboarder, was commented on about being 5ft 3in. During his performance, one commentator stated after Hirano had fallen, “When you’re 5’3” it’s hard to get those physics back.” This comment was made after an unsuccessful trick. They commented further, “He’s not a very tall kid. Let’s put it bluntly.” This discussion about Hirano’s size and the physics of the sport supplements

the argument that commentators emphasize size, ability, technique, and strength when analyzing men's events and it can be negative or positive.

Contrastingly, in the women's events, I noticed that there was much more discussion of style and explanation of tricks. By the same token, I was conscious of the fact that the commentators focused more on luck as compared to physical ability. When one of the male athletes fell during the Halfpipe, it was because of "a difficult trick" or it was okay because it was one of the hardest tricks and still "amazing riding." However, when one of the female athletes fell, the commentators said, "And that was right away a throw away. This pipe is massive...." Or she fell because it was a "very subtle move, but very risky because it was so awkward." (Comments referring to Arielle Gold and Liu Jiayu, respectively).

In light of this, the commentators also made a point to explain what the terms of the tricks meant, while this did not happen in my observations in the men's events. For example, there was a comment made that said, "I'll break down the names of these grabs in a moment." The commentators were also much more hesitant before the women were about to go down the pipe, pondering if the women could respond well enough. This proves the ideology that women are "naturally less suited for sports."³ By projecting this belief, the media casts unconscious power relations and puts on us a certain gender sports perception that women are not as capable, strong, or skilled as men.

With all of this in mind, it is necessary to communicate that often time this bias is unconscious. However, this does not make it okay. The gendered power relations that

we encounter while watching the Olympic Games in South Korea are noteworthy because by contributing to the idea that women are “naturally inferior,” we are essentially reinforcing the concept of men having symbolic authority on the sports stage. Once we become more aware of the differences in the way that we communicate between males and females, we can better understand hegemonic masculinity, why it is troubling, and how we can become more gender neutral.

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2018 Winter Olympic Games: Individual Figure Skating

Whenever someone speaks of the Winter Olympics, the first sport that pops into my mind is figure skating. Don't ask me why...maybe because I think it is such an incredible sport. Or, maybe it is because I love that it encompasses the combination of athletic skill and artistic ability. I also love how it has multiple of events: Individual Women's, Individual Men's, Ice Dancing Mixed, Mixed Noc Team Mixed, and Pairs Mixed.¹ This allows for a profusion of varying dances and expressions, which are stunning and unmatched. Though the dancers perform many of the same twists, turns, and jumps, each athlete produces individual performances because their style and personality is often mixed in to make their final finished product. This is what I enjoy most of figure skating.

Upon watching the Women's and Men's Individual Events, sitting next to my roommates on the couch with a pint of peanut butter fudge gelato in my hand (dairy-free gelato that is!), I noticed several differences in the way that the commentators covered this sport. In this blog post, I am specifically choosing to narrow my focus to the Women's and Men's Individual Events and how the language of the commentators differed between them. My aim of comparing the Women's and Men's Individual Events is to explore how the current power structures in media reinforce constructions of femininity and masculinity. In the article titled, "Gender Stereotyping in Televised Media Sports Coverage," author Nathalie Koivula aims to deepen our understandings of the

values embedded in sports. Thus, she argues that studying sports in media "...would increase our understanding of the cultural values embedded in sport as well as the social structures and values based on and related to gender and perceived gender differences" (p. 590).³ Not only does studying gender at the Olympics provide meaningful insights to the gender bias in sports, but it also influences our understandings of how the media creates and maintains societal expectations. *How are men and women supposed to act? Why? Where did these expectations come from?* Sports commentary reinforces and supports cultural norms and assumptions about how women and men should act, which is why it is so powerful. Commentary and our societal expectations are thus interrelated and impact each other significantly.

It is important to note that in our culture, Figure Skating has historically been called "feminine" or been viewed that way. These stereotypical and cultural constraints continue to impact our view and understanding of this sport and the athletes themselves. By realizing that this ideology continues to cycle through our society and culture, we can also better understand why the commentary of this sport differs between the genders. Moreover, communication scholar, Nicolas Delorme asserts that "by ignoring and/or devaluing female sports, the media sends the message that is is not newsworthy" (p. 123).² The consequence of this is that the audience becomes less familiar with women's sports and as a result, favor men's sports. This relates to the mass media and commentators placing greater emphasis and importance on men's events compared to women.

Overall, I found that while discussing the Women's Individual Figure Skating, the commentators put most emphasis on the women's beauty, style, emotion, and fashion. On the other hand, during the Men's Individual Figure Skating, they drew most attention to the athletes technique, strength, power, music choice, and step sequence. While the commentary between the men and women was substantially conflicting, there were also some overlaps and parallels. In this case, for example, commentators often stated that these performances were beautiful and very hard to execute in both of the men's and women's events.

To be more specific, while watching the Women's Individual, I felt as though the commentary was much more quiet and soft. I also felt as though there was a common theme using words such as: beautiful, technically beautiful, perfect, and clean. Furthermore, I also noticed that they compared the women to perfection. For example, when Evgenia Medvedeva was performing, the commentators said, "She is the gold standard. Nothing ceases this girl. She is absolutely breathtaking with not an eyelash out of place." *Say what?* I thought to myself. Is this the standard that women are supposed to live up to? By choosing these words to communicate to the audience watching Figure Skating, we are automatically placing an unachievable standard of trying to achieve perfection. *And by the way, I am sure that she did have at least one of her eyelashes out of place!* In addition to this comment, the commentators literally gasped after Medvedeva did not land perfectly. To be honest, I would have never noticed that her landing was not 100% flawless had they not said anything. But since the commentators non-verbally communicated to me that she messed up or was not

perfect in her landing, I too noticed. This also relates to the standard of perfection that women are expected to live up to.

On the other hand, in regards to the Men's Individual Events, the commentary was much more loud and lively. I did not feel as though there were as many quiet moments in the Men's Individual as compared to the Women's Individual. The commentators were constantly critiquing and complimenting the athletes, basing their comments off of the athletes technicality, intensity, body movement, and step sequence. Commentators often used phrases such as, "bright future" or "young and hungry" to describe the men. Moreover, instead of calling the male athletes beautiful, commentators would often say that they had "grace on the ice." With these differences in mind, I also noticed that when the men would fall, their falls were completely disregarded. None of the commentators said anything when German Ice Skater, Paul Fentz fell. He fell twice in one routine, too! This greatly contrasted to when Medvedeva did not land perfectly. With the stress of technicality, body movement, and routine, the coverage of Men's Individual contrasted with the Women's a significant amount.

Although there were differences in the way that the commentators covered these events, it was ultimately what I expected. There are indeed differences in the way that the commentators covered the Women's and Men's Individual Figure Skating. The descriptions about the athletes and their performance can reveal the unconscious gender bias in media that is present at the Olympic level. My findings reveal that although at first these comments do not seem troubling, they are in fact biased and skewed.

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2018 Winter Olympics: Pairs Figure Skating

Given that I love watching the sport of Figure Skating so much, I decided to analyze and reflect on the Pairs Figure Skating Events in Pyeongchang. In my previous blog, I studied the differences between the Individual Women's and Men's Figure Skating. Although it is much harder to detect the gender bias present in the media commentation when both the women and men are performing in the same event and at the same time, I thought it would be a fascinating lense to look through when examining gender bias. I believe that it is much more difficult to compare and contrast the media commentary, in regards to gender, during the Pairs programs because the commentators talk about both athletes simultaneously. Instead of commenting about one single athlete, the commentators discuss the athletes as a team, which makes it more of a challenge to differentiate between the gender prejudice. But, I like challenges and my curiosity enticed me and inspired me to inspect the media coverage of this specific event. I was eager to discover how the commentators would converse about these athletes. My goal was to find out if there was in fact gender bias in the media commentary during an event that has mixed genders.

To my surprise, I found that there was not as much gender discrimination during the commentary as I had previously hypothesized - which is in fact, a really great thing! Contrary to what I thought, I noticed that the commentators typically spoke about the athletes as a team and as a whole. From what I saw and heard, they did not give great concern to the individual, but instead, deliberated about them in conjunction with one

another. I really liked this because in many other sports, we tend to focus all of our attention into one athlete at a time (minus some sports at the Winter Olympics such as ice hockey and bobsledding, to name a few). But in this event, we get to admire both at the same time, which I think is a wonderful and significant element to Pairs Figure Skating.

So, what I found was this: there were some gendered comments, but not a ton. Broadly speaking, I noticed a similar pattern that I did in the Women's Individual. This being that the commentary during the performance was quiet and not as involved. I am not saying that this is a bad thing, as I love watching the skaters perform with the music in the background anyways. I also noted that the language used was more neutral and generally positive for the Pairs Events. For example, commentators used phrases such as "that was fearless" or "that was outstanding" or "absolutely incredible." This differed from the Women's Individual Event where I found that comments were made about beauty and perfection versus the Men's Individual, where the commentators highlighted their technicality and intensity.

When I did hear gendered comments from the commentators, it was in regards to gendered norms and expectations. To demonstrate this, when Madison Hubbell and Zachary Donohue were in the midst of their routine, the commentators asserted, "A little loss of balance there from Zachary...he was almost too covered in the emotion." In other words, saying that there is a correlation between his emotions and his focus on balance. Exhibiting emotions and being expressive is part of figure skating, but there is also a balance that has to be found. Would this comment have been made if it was Madison

who was off balance? This shows us that gender expectations continue to be reinforced through comments like these.

Comparatively, Madison Chock and Evan Bates experienced disappointment when they fell during their performance. Immediately after Bates hit the ice, the commentators claimed, “Oh no...and that is a disaster.” Furthermore, on their Ice Dancing Short performance, the commentators were quick to judge Chock on her outfit. They stated, “And this is a new dress for Madison Chock for this short dance. It happens to have the colors of the Olympics rings...which she said was not intentional....” Conversely, with Bates, they commented on how this was his third Olympic Games and what he has learned from attending so many Olympics over the years. This shows that the focus is on fashion with women, but with the men, there is an emphasis on previous accomplishments and triumphs. *Lame*. It also demonstrates to us that the commentary does have gendered language when both athletes are performing together. This influences what we focus on from each athlete depending on their gender. In this case, it was the outfit for Madison Chock and previous experience and accomplishments for Evan Bates. Not only does the media impact what we think about each athlete, but also *how* we think about them.

The power that mass media has is overwhelming! Until my experience studying the commentary at the Olympics, I did not truly understand the power that it had over what we believe/hear/see/think and *why* we think that way. Communication scholars have also studied this difference in gendered language with what the media chooses to exclude and what they choose to emphasize. In fact, how the media presents a sport

and how we as the audience understand it, can have profound effects on individuals, nations, and cultures.¹ In other words, it creates an alternative reality and distinct frame from which we view the Games. There is a communication theory that I have also learned about called the Agenda Setting Theory. This theory contends that the media is powerful and has the leverage to persuade. It states that not only does the media convey what people should think about, but how we should think about it.² When I first learned about this theory, I thought, *wow, that is intense*.... I think that this is unknown to the majority of people, which is also why it is important for us as the audience to understand that what we see from the Olympics is what the media wants us to see!

Watching the Pairs Event through this lense of gender bias, I was not sure what to expect or what I would find, but after seeing the segments of Figure Skating, I have become more aware of the implicit gender comments via media commentary. This does not mean to say that they are necessarily bad or sexist, but that the commentary is indeed gender formulated. Hence, what the commentators deliberate about on national television matters and it affects how we perceive those athletes. It also reveals that gender biased comments do not necessarily have to be negative, but this does not mean to say that they are not damaging to our society and influencing expectations on how people should act in regards to what their gender is.

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2018 Winter Olympic Games: Curling

Curling. The sport that everyone disregards. Well, I have to be honest...I was one of those people that thought curling was ridiculous. Yep, I admit it. I thought it was a weird sport that took no skill or physical talent. It is essentially players sliding stones on ice into a targeted area. I thought that when they swept the ice in front of the stone it was the funniest thing. I used to think, *how is this a sport?* But stay assured everyone, I have grown from that ignorance. I now know that curling takes incredible focus, precision, skill, excellent accuracy, and does indeed deserve to be at the Olympic Games. Some people call it “Chess on Ice,” or “The Roaring Game.” It is a teamed event, usually consisting of three or four people per team and they do have mixed curling.

While I was with my friends at the bars in downtown San Luis Obispo on a casual friday night, Men’s Curling was on the TV. I began to watch it to try to learn it as best as I could and also because I enjoy watching it. It was the final match and whoever won this game would win Gold! So people got really into it and once the USA squad won and defeated Sweden, everyone was cheering, chugging beer with their friends, and chanting the classic “USA! USA! USA!” So typical, right? It was awesome to watch them win the Gold medal and the bar was very energetic after that!

Well anyways, over the next weekend, I was scrolling through my Instagram and stumbled upon this meme:



Though we can agree that curling may not be the most popular, buzzing, or exhilarating event at the Olympic Games, Anastasia Bryzgalova has received a significant amount of attention because of her looks, which as a result, has also brought a spotlight to the sport of curling. While watching her (and by the way she represents Russia), in the Mixed Doubles Curling Event against USA, I did not hear any commentary regarding her looks or any of the social media attention that she has recently received. However, the commentators did mention that her and her partner, Alexander Krushelnitskiy, “took their relationship as partners to the next level by getting married.” May I also add that both of the commentators were men....

This meme shows us how these gendered ideals of masculinity and femininity have the potential to feed out into the public and impact our beliefs. These gendered power relations reinforce masculine hegemony. Masculine hegemony is essentially a practice that validates men’s domination in society.¹ It basically perpetuates and contributes to the societal power that men have and are automatically given. According

to sports communication scholar, Paul Mark Pederson, the most influential, prominent and hegemonic social institutions and cultural practices are mass media and sports.¹ This proves that sports and media are interrelated. It also shows that both sport and media has an impact on the perceived power, privilege, and preconceived beliefs and expectations of women and men overall.

Media and sports are both extremely powerful and what they say and portray does have a serious effect on us. How the media chooses to create the meanings of masculinity and femininity, plays an important role in how we understand gender and what we expect to see in everyday life. Not only does the media promote male supremacy, but it subordinates females and their achievements (in this case, focusing on appearance).¹ Thus, focusing on Anastasia's looks essentially minimizes her talents as an athlete and further upholds the masculine hegemony of sports.

In addition, when I typed her name into Google, there were copious amounts of articles written about her based off of her appearance. Though the commentary did not reference this, it is clear that we have placed more attention on her beauty than her accomplishments on the ice. She responded to all of this by asserting, "Yes, it's very pleasant [to receive compliments], but medals are not given for beauty." *Heck yeah, Anastasia!* (And it's also probably true, too). By responding with this, Anastasia is arguing that her looks did not affect her performance nor is it as important as what she can do on the ice. Her physical ability as an Olympic athlete is much more meaningful than how she looks or who she looks like. From this meme and the overall idea of the

power and prevalence of media and sports, we can better understand that sports serve as a rhetorical, hegemonic social institution that naturalizes men's power.

After understanding and respecting the sport of curling, it is disappointing that the majority of the attention that the sport is getting is through Anastasia and her looks. On the other hand, the Men's Olympic Team received a significant deal of coverage after their Gold winning performance. But, we have to note that there was still a great amount of discussion about Anastasia's appearance. This ultimately shows us the implicit ways in which we might favor men in sports and believe that their events are more exciting, valuable, and important than women's. May I assure you that this is NOT true. This is because we place emphasis on the way women look versus the things that men accomplish. This difference in what we highlight through men's and women's events in sports is crucial in understanding why there is gender bias, why it is troubling, and how it continues to be perpetuated into society today. The way that the media and us as a society choose to frame and communicate about these sports events is a strong yet subtle occurrence. We need to be aware that gender bias is still present in our world today, which is why it is significant to study and unpack further.

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2018 Winter Olympic Games: Reflection & Looking to the Future

Wow, I cannot believe that the Winter Olympics are already over! I have thoroughly enjoyed studying the media commentary at this event and uncovering the gender bias within it. More importantly, I am always so amazed and inspired by these phenomenal athletes. With almost three thousand athletes at these Games, there was so much going on and so much talent to witness and appreciate. There were countless successes and also many failures, both consistent components of the Olympic Games. This is what makes the Olympics so relatable to the average person because everyone experiences triumph and failure.

My favorite part of these Games was challenging myself to focus on the media commentary and what these commentators were really saying. What I did find is that the media commentary did have a gender bias. This is significant to note and evaluate because the media is one of the most powerful and influential mediums in our society. However, I thought there would be much more gender discrimination than what I found. This shows that the research that has been done on this topic is potentially having an impact! Though there was gender bias, I found that it was more implicit versus explicit bias.

For example, in studying sports media coverage, Nathalie Koivula, a communication scholar, asserted that in women's sports, discussion of skills were usually omitted. There was generally a focus on femininity, or lack there of it. On the

other hand, the men were analyzed based upon their mental and physical strength.¹ Similarly, she claims that women are often compared and marginalized against men. Men's sports are presented as normal, the standard, and universal, while women's are not. This prompted me to expect to see more explicit bias at the 2018 Olympics in South Korea. By studying mass media and sports simultaneously, Koivula also argues that "...sport and media interaction presents traditional expectations of femininity and masculinity" (p. 590). With women being compared to cultural stereotypes and being framed in terms of their social position, we can see that the language used enforces gender inequalities. Though I did still find some bias at the 2018 Olympics, I did not hear as many instances of commentators completely excluding women's skills or comparing them to men.

What I did hear is the commentators differing in the *how* they described the athletes and *what* they chose to emphasize and comment on. Instead of outwardly and explicitly saying something like, "man up!" or "she is the wife of *so and so*," I heard more differences in their discussions of the athletes (rather than blatant sexism). For example, in the women's sports that I looked at, I found that the language used to describe these athletes was more about their attractiveness, luck, style, and fashion versus male athletes who were described based upon their accomplishments, skills, potential future, strength, and size. This difference in descriptions matter because it reinforces and reconstructs traditional gender expectations. I also found a difference in overall tone of the commentators. Generally speaking, the commentators were much more excited, loud, and enthusiastic while discussing the men's events versus the

women's. This shows the implicit ways in which we favor men over women. Even though they are subtle, they are still there.

This bias in commentary greatly influences how the audience views and forms opinions about the athletes. If the commentators are more excited presenting the men's sports, we too are going to feel more excited watching them. In a study looking at the Visual Production of Men's and Women's Track and Field at the 2004 Olympics, researchers found that men's sports were seen as more exciting because there were more shot types, camera angles, and more motion special effects per minute.² This shows that with the combination of commentary and visual production, women's sports are perceived to be not as exciting and are viewed as less interesting than the men's. As a result, this reinforces men's symbolic authority in sports.² Even something like tone of voice can impact our beliefs about female and male athletes.

Correspondingly, I think that future communication research should aim to study the tone of voice used by the commentators. There is already research in the field of communication about overall gender bias in sports media commentary, but it would be interesting to see a focus on tracing the tone of voice and how this impacts our views of the athletes. Further, much of the research in sports communication, specifically gender inequality, has focused on the air-time differences between men's and women's sports. They have found that men receive significantly more air-time than women do. *Surprise, surprise!* Though I did not calculate the air-time at this Olympics, I do think it would be fascinating for future communication scholars to look back at this for the past Olympic Games in PyeongChang.

Overall, I believe there has been significant strides in terms of gender equality. With all that is going on our world today, like the “#metoo movement” and the controversy with the USA Gymnastics Coach, Larry Nassar, for example, our world is shifting for the better. More women are feeling empowered to stand up for themselves. I believe that if we continue this trek toward more peace and equality, we can reach it. By becoming aware of the gender bias on the sports stage, we are having an impact on humanity, as well. This is why studying the commentary at this Games was so important and rewarding for me. I am delighted that we are improving, but also realize we have a long way to go. I am faithful and I am confident that we can grow into a more equal and unbiased world!

References

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