

# **Women's Sport in Public Service and Commercial Television Programme**

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**ABSTRACT:** Globally women's sport media coverage is repeatedly proved to be lower than men's sport coverage. Even if recently there was significant growth in women's sport, such media strategy keeps unchanged persistently, although, it might differ regarding media private or public embedding. The aim of this paper was to analyse the current situation in Czech broadcasting and determine quantitative proportion of content in selected sport channels' programme. This was investigated by content analysis of television programme including not only live coverage but also detailed attention to news. Quantitative data expose the basis of comprehensive media programming process and the ideological role women's sport has in it together with its production value and commercial potential of its audience. Czech broadcasters cover popular sport disciplines as well as men's sport more often than women's sport despite their public service or commercial embedding. Thus, public service Czech Television has a potential to promote female athletes largely despite lower business value of such media content.

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

Five years ago Messner et al. published a paper summarizing longitudinal research of women's sport coverage in US media and named one of study reports by expressive title 'This revolution is not being televised' (2006). By term revolution they intended to stress out that even if there was significant growth of US women's participation in sports in last 15 years (and we can add that women's sport advocacy is ultimate there, too), television news, highlights and programme overall did not cover it at all. There was slight decrease in women's sport coverage, yet. Mingle within European context and specifically in the Czech Republic we can usually hear that thanks to tradition, basketball silver women's 2010 World Championship medallists as well as new Olympic heroines Sablikova, Spotakova or Zahrobska, Czech sport need not to be afraid of female athlete role models. Nonetheless, even if we have sport celebrities' awareness, we are missing relevant data from overall media sphere regarding gender.

Since modern sport was established as an institution it has been closely connected with media. Nowadays this relationship is very strong therefore we can assume that media play a significant role in messaging about sport. From several analyses we have clear sense of what gender sports media operate with. While masculinity dominates in sport field, feminist

critiques often stress the role of sport in girls' and women's lives and the negative role media play in not spreading this importance in their messages that symbolically construct reality. "No analysis of media sport would be complete without an understanding of how patriarchal structures are constructed through media institutions and their coverage of sport." (Boyle and Haynes 2009: 129) Media are seen as not covering women's sport as often as men's sport. Such quantitative proportion still remains main indicator of significance. Feminist critics' perspective explains that women's athletes invisibility in media is caused by sport perceived as traditionally men's domain. Socio-cultural theoreticians add media domination in sport-media-business triangle relationship, though. Both hegemonic and economic-political explanation matters here. Ideological aspects are supposed to shape the media business and vice versa.

But what if the dominant sport producer in local media sphere operates in public service mode? Does Czech dual broadcasting media system and role Czech Television has on this 'market' change anyhow the situation? As universal definition of public broadcasting has been widely accepted the British model<sup>1</sup> which contains also principle of 'diverse and universal yet good programming rather than numbers.' Nonetheless, the Czech Television has followed a model of competing in the market with commercial broadcasters which is compatible with business objectives. (Volek 2011) Still, can we define public media through sport coverage as different from private media institutions? As there are often cited data overshadowing socio-historical context of sport resp. media in eastern Europe, the aim of this paper is to analyse current situation in Czech broadcasting by determining quantitative proportion of women's and men's sport as well as sport disciplines coverage in selected channels' programme and discuss its possible grounds and consequences emphasising on public service media role. We also tend to analyse programming and audience-building mechanisms together with the role women's sport play in these processes.

## **2. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND**

### **Women's sport media coverage**

There are two types of research on media coverage of women's sport. One is focused on general everyday coverage; the other includes major international sport events such as world

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<sup>1</sup> British model embodies the following principles: universal accessibility, universal appeal, particular attention to minorities, contribution to sense of national identity and community, distance from vested interests. direct funding and universality of payment, guidelines that liberate rather than restrict programme-makers and competition in good programming rather than numbers. (Avery 1993)

championships or Olympic Games. Most of the data comes out of an English-speaking world and is primarily focused on the first type - everyday coverage and on printed media. Bruce, Hovden and Markula (2010) sum up such quantitative analyses as follows: “[...] Female coverage ranges from zero to almost 23% in the research [...] most studies find that women receive less than 10% of routine newspaper or TV sport coverage.” (Bruce et al. 2010: 2) For example, Canadian newspapers allocate around 6% of content to women, US newspapers coverage range from 1% to 14%, UK findings report zero to 12% content and Australian newspapers coverage vary within 5 and 15%. The researchers from North Europe and Germany report that routine women’s sport coverage has not passed 10%. In Czech context Pokorna (2008) followed this trend of research by analyzing content of daily newspapers Sport and Blesk in 2003. Even if the content analysis was focused on top Czech sportswomen respectively sportsmen, there was 17% of female coverage by contrast to 83% of male coverage.

The other trends in research might feminist critics see as more optimistic. If researches take into account major sport events women’s coverage numbers are higher. Bruce et al. summarize that: ”Across a wide range of countries, there is a general trend of increased media coverage of women’s sport during the Olympic Games both in newspapers and on television.” (Bruce et al. 2010: 5) While it was generally lower than 20% in the last decade of 20<sup>th</sup> century, has increased worldwide over 30% since. The important sign here is that coverage is usually relative to women’s participation in the event. According to Slepickova (In Bruce et al. 2010) media routine in the Czech Republic does not defy such practices from abroad. During summer Olympic Games in Athens 2004 the proportion of Czech athletes were 56,3% of men (80 athletes) and 43,7% of women (62 athletes including basketball team of 12 players). When comparing participation with media coverage (in Czech newspaper MF Dnes) women’s sport content was in rate of 5 to 7% underrepresented while men’s sport in the same rate overrepresented. ”However, the coverage was relatively ‘fair’ in terms of the female level of participation and level of success in winning medals at the Games.” (Slepickova 2010: 164) Also Sekot et al. (2004) pointed out similar conclusion when analyzing newspapers during same Olympics. The recalculated results (without mixed content) showed almost similar proportion (40% and 60%) of text and photographs covering women’s and men’s sport stories and results in major Czech newspapers.

## **Masculine sports field**

Media do not reflect reality as such; it is a matter of selection, gatekeeping and both intentional and ideological editors' and producers' choice in terms of agenda setting and its mechanisms. Berger's and Luckmann's (1999) view is known in terms of 'social construction of reality', Stuart Hall (1997) speaks about representation. In the same manner, Phillips (1997) argues that "regardless of what is actually happening, it is the media's interpretation of that event that shapes our attitudes, values and perceptions about the world and about our culture." (p. 20) Proportionality of coverage is an indicator of such content symbolical significance. Low visibility of women's sport in media contributes to social (re)construction of sport as masculine field. (Messner 1990, Creedon 2004, Kane 2007). "As the media preserve, transmit and create important cultural information, they powerfully shape how and what we know about sport in general and women's sport in particular [...] yet, the symbiotic relationship of sport and media benefits some groups and excludes others." (Pedersen et al., 2003)

Routine media coverage of women's sport symbolically reinforces dominant ideological beliefs in the superiority of men and makes it dominant gender order in sport. Such patriarchal assumptions are connected with media-weakened social role of female athletes in sport. „It is crucial to shift from male role models to women becoming sport heroines.“ (WSF 2010) Indeed, symbolically valued roles of females may have relevance in terms of later discussed sport, media and business relation - namely the possibility to get through the presentation in the media access to finances for the operation and development of women's sport. The recognition of the media importance in relation to sport is part of reflected and negotiated symbiosis of media and sports participants. (Numerato 2008) Dramatic change of practices as such would require "critical examination of the ways that sport organizations and media cling to traditional masculine assumptions." (Messner 2006: 38) From different point of view, Boyle and Haynes (2009) see the barrier as 'circuit of promotion': "[...] sports which fail to attract television exposure find difficulty in getting sponsors on board, which in turn make it less likely that 'stars' will be created and given the media exposure which generates the accompanying lucrative endorsement portfolio." (p.126)

Despite the fact that printed media quantitative content analysis is the most common way of research on media, this coverage of women's sport on television should not be neglected. This electronic medium has very close relationship with sport industry.

## **Sport and television symbiosis**

Since the very first steps of television as a new technology sport has played a significant role in broadcasting industry. From the first live coverage of Olympic Games in Garmisch-Partenkirchen in 1936 on German television, through the first live US baseball match at NBC in 1939 and soccer match starting broadcasting of BBC in UK in 1948 up to July 1948 as a starting point of broadcasting technology in former Czechoslovakia – live coverage of Sokol gymnastics gathering – sport was usually the first broadcasted content in developing television industry. This phenomenon is through its ‘make believe sensation’ base closely connected with development of ‘spectator sport’ that had lead to ‘commodification’ of sport. (Tomek 2003) “Central element in the sport–television relationship revolves around the economics of the broadcasting industry, and its use of sport as ‘television product’ in the drive to secure audiences and subscribers.” (Boyle and Haynes 2009: 66) Television transformed sport to mass spectacle connected closely to business principles.

In terms of political economy of media represented by McChesney that reflects the sociological question of how media and communication systems are shaped by ownership, market structures, commercial support, technologies, labour practices, and government policies.”The political economy of media then links the media and communication systems to how both economic and political systems work, and social power is exercised, in society.” (Weiss 2010: 589) The core regarding sport might be seen in what Boyle and Haynes (2009) define as ‘sporting triangle’ – a relationship between sport, television and sponsorship. “This triangular relationship dates back to the initial growth of organised or professional sport, nonetheless last fifty years we have witnessed a tightening of the stranglehold that sponsors in conjunction with television exert on major sporting events.” (p. 44)

The increasingly powerful ‘interlocking forces of television and sponsorship’ (Whannel 1992: 151) shape both sport and its audiences. The changes are seen in sport rules and sport events calendars or as sports media covering selection, television rights or forms of content. In terms of socio-cultural studies represented by Rowe (2004) the power of agenda setting is on media side. Furthermore it includes everything from disciplining huge numbers of spectators, through determining large companies and media corporations to influencing the policies of government. The power of contemporary media is particularly evident in major international sport festivals such as the Olympic Games, in which the symbiotic relationship between the most powerful multinational media corporations and Olympic sport has turned them into global spectacles. (Coakley, 2001)

Transformation of sport by television (Whannel 1992) arises from current media domination in above mentioned triangle. It embodies especially strong selection and framing of sport events. In terms of 'business sport value' concept this means media promotion of popular sport events and disciplines with strong commercial potential. This mechanism was criticised already at International Federation of Journalists Congress in 2004. (IFJ 2011) This is causing both limited sports disciplines covering and men's sport prioritization by contrast to women's sport. In the uneven relationship between sport and media we assume causing above mentioned not changing disproportion in male and female sport content. Also coverage related media audience-building seems to be routine for men's sport. We can assume that is caused primarily by ideological presumption about sport perceived as traditionally men's domain - historically formed stereotype shaping broader social context as well as socio-economic practices of producers.

Broadcasters are forced to invest to TV rights (of men's sport) and then to manage its programme in the way to profit from such content. This preferred mechanism of broadcasting companies is according to Donna Lopiano (2007) the reason why women's sport is not covered more on TV. Women's sport is not what is supposed to generate profit for broadcasters. Therefore, editors do not apply high rating mechanisms to such content that includes prime-time programming, highlighting the content throughout the programme and consistency of time and place (such as Sunday night football on ESPN). "The producers' party line asserts that the daily stream of stories and images of men's sports is simply a rational response to audience demand. This assertion obscures a more complicated reality: Producers actively and consciously attempt to build audience demand for events in which they have a vested interest." (Messner, Duncan a Willms 2006: 37) This audience building techniques are valid also for women's sport but when applied it is according to Messner et al. (2006) only temporary and local due to not developed women's sport market. The question remains whether women's sport can regularly fulfil producer's requirements when symbolically women's athletic performance is less valued than men's sport. (Messner 1990)

This globalizing tendency of modern sport and sports media business aspects might be weakened in case of public service media. In this sense, considering dual broadcasting system specifics we take a closer look to Czech media sphere.

### **Dual broadcasting system and dominant role of Czech Television**

In 1989 the change of the political regime was starting point for transformation of until than unified Czech media system. Government-run television station (established in 1954) was

transformed into public service two-channel television and in 1992 there was by law licensed first commercial television station Nova. Since then, there have been two types of media in the Czech Republic – public service and private. In European context this structural coexistence is considered as dual media system (provider by law resp. provider with licence or registration). This system applies only for television and radio; printed media do not usually operate in public service mode. Czech public service broadcasting is regulated by Act No. 483/1991 Coll., on Czech Television, as amended and by Act No. 348/2005 Coll. on radio and television fees, as amended. Public service broadcasting is mainly financed from public funds - and thus has the obligation to the law.

In March 2002 was under the name Galaxie Sport launched Czechoslovak sport channel which was re-branded in September 2008 to Nova Sport. The private channel is available through satellite, cable and IPTV. Nova Sport appeals mainly to the male demographic aged 20–49 with sporting programs and events helping it achieve a weekly viewership of up to 563,000 during the fourth quarter of 2008. Nova Sport owns rights to broadcasting licenses for international sport leagues and sport events including KHL, NHL, Premier League, FA Cup, NBA, ATP Masters Series, MLB, Le Mans Series, IndyCar Series, PGA European Tour, Formula 1 and Moto GP. (Sledovanost 2011) There are other paid minor sport channels available through satellite and cable such Extreme Sports Channel, Sport 1, Sport 2, Sport 5, Motors TV, ESPN, Poker Channel, Golf Channel, Digi Sport. Since 2006 pan-European sport channel Eurosport is available in Czech language.

Indeed, Czech Television has been dominant domestic producer of sport content following its tradition that started in 1950s. In February 10, 2006 public Czech Television launched CT4 Sport channel. Since 2008 it has been broadcasting in 24hour mode. The law does not specify any regulations of sport content except those regarding advertising<sup>2</sup>. Though, we can find paragraphs regarding sport in Czech TV Codex, article 12 - Sport broadcasting, where firstly paragraph 12.1. seems to be important for analysed issue:

*“In the sport and physical education related programme Czech Television brings top (professional) domestic and foreign sport events, pays attention to informing about other ways of sport including junior categories, amateur (avocational) or new sport disciplines. Individual sport disciplines’ space in TV programming correspond to public interest, which is as well depending on officially registered number of athletes in given discipline in the*

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<sup>2</sup> Recently, there has been a debate about specific role of public service TV in the Czech Republic specifically regarding its financing. This resulted in governmental advertising regulation effective January 2012. Sport channel CT4 will keep the advertisement and so regained financial resources should be used for its sport television content production.

*Czech Republic. However, Czech Television does not neglect so called minority sport.”*  
(Codex 2011)

CT is dominant sport producer in the Czech Republic regarding original content and viewership. The original production reflects the structure of sport news. According to the study of Caslavova et al. (2003) public television presents in evening segment ‘Branky, body, vteriny’ wider range of sports regarding its informative function while ‘Sportovni udalosti’ on Nova channel as well as sport part of Denik on Prima channel focus rather on popular and most viewed sports. (s.6). The popularity of sport and sport celebrities as well as some curiosity (and their viewership) are decisive factors for advertising business and therefore for private broadcasters is most crucial. Broadcasters operating in public service mode should usually manage limited resources across a great number of sports, including minority sports which other commercial channels do not cover. Diversity and original content might be parts of public service media definition through sport. Recent researches from Australia such those cited in Bruce et al. (2010) verified that non-commercial (and also regional) newspapers and television stations tend to give more coverage to women’s sport than major newspapers or commercial broadcasters (Bruce et al. 2010). As the Czech Television is both public service organisation and major producer of sport content in the Czech Republic, we have to investigate its role in women’s sport media representation. The study seeks to identify programming aspects and high rating mechanisms applied to male and female sport. This is in addition to consider whether public service television broadcasting sport comes under commercial character of sport which we see in generating profit from advertising time sales (viewership rating as its indicator) and its correlation with popular-only sport content.

### **TV coverage**

The fundamental indicator of symbolic value of any content in the media is its visibility. (McQuail 1999) The most extensive content analysis regarding women’s sport coverage topic was conducted by Amateur Athletic Foundation in Los Angeles, USA. In June 2010 Michael A. Messner (University of Southern California, USA) and Cheryl Cooky (Purdue University, USA) published research paper *Gender in Televised Sports* (2010) summarizing longitudinal (1989-2009) content analysis of American television channels and their news programme. The results show that within two decades there was no significant growth in women’s sport coverage despite increased women’s participation in sport and relative professionalization of



few sporting disciplines and competitions<sup>3</sup>. In 2009 the proportion of female and male sport was 96% vs. 2% which was the biggest difference since 2004 when women gained 6% of coverage in TV news. Besides, SportsCenter – one of the most important prime-time news programme at sport's channel ESPN appointed only slightly over 1% of it's air time to women's sport (2% in 2004). Every single broadcasting of this high-profile programme started with male shot. The leading story is the most important report, mostly also the longest, playing significant role in symbolic message of what matters. The study also shows that 72% of air time was devoted to three male sport disciplines – football, baseball and basketball. Moreover, these disciplines' events and matches were covered off-season excluding women's sport high-season. (Messner, Cooky 2010).

Considering television coverage we have very limited data outputs in Czech context. One of the fundamental research is from 2001 when as mentioning Taberyova and Zeman (In Knorre, Hogenova 2001) Czech Television appointed at it's CT1 and CT2 channels from total 892 hours of (sport content) airtime 49% to men's sport and 14% to women's sport. For the purpose of further analysis there is intense lack of data taking into account local dual broadcasting system as well as Czech context of women's sport specifics.

### **Czech women's sport specifics**

When considering Czech history of women's sport we have to point out primarily false assumption about emancipation of women before and during communist era. Even if communist proclamation aimed for women's equality, by all means it was primarily in terms of weakened social relevance of public sphere and doubled everyday role for women as workers and mothers/housekeepers. As Osvaldova (2004) points out, the universalism of roles in terms of their no-alternative choice was based on classless citizenship. In terms of sport, from Roubal's (2005) point of view gender played important role in rituals using symbolism of human body. Comparing Czech Sokol festivals which have been taking place since nineteenth century and the communistic mass performances called 'Spartakiada', author proves that also within the communistic mass events there was applied consistent segregation of the gender roles, despite of communist ideology of unity of the working class. The sport field was open to women but women's performance kept stereotypic while success of famous Czech athletes (Fibingerova, Caslavaska, Zatopkova etc.) might be primarily perceived as used for communist propaganda. "Unlike many other European countries, however, Czech sport

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<sup>3</sup> From the implementation of Title IX in 1972 there was 904% increase of high-school girls sport participation and 456% increase of university female athletes participation. (WSF 2010).

has not been strongly influenced by feminist movements, in part because of the rich and highly valued non-competitive female sport tradition. In addition, female competitive sport has never been significantly suppressed; on the contrary, it has been strongly supported at the elite level in the recent past.” (Slepickova 2010: 155)

After 1989 there has been very slow shift in actions (within liberal feminism branch that stresses equal rights and equal opportunities) primarily concentrated in developing gender studies and their centres. “While elite sports support systems have been built in Western Europe since 1980s on the pattern of systems established by socialist countries, the same system in Czechoslovakia was almost liquidated in the period immediately following 1989.” (Slepickova 2010: 155) Currently, sport emancipative actions and institutions are inspired by international initiatives as for example Women’s Sport Commission of the Czech Olympic Committee founded in 1996 motivated by IOC recommendation. Women’s sport in terms of athletes’ participation has developed since then, too, and their quantifiable success is obvious not only in medal collections but also in symbolic acknowledgement in ‘Sportsmen of the year’ – sport journalists’ and other public surveys, where women (Neumannova, Spotakova, Sablikova) dominate in the last five years<sup>4</sup>.

Simple measurement of proportionality can come out of regular team sports season, too. Both genders participate equally at all top-level leagues in the Czech Republic. Media favour men’s versions of these competitions based on their popularity, though. From several surveys (e.g. Caslavova 2003, Statistics CT 2005, Pokorna 2008 etc.) ice-hockey and soccer hold the function of most popular Czech sports whether basketball, volleyball or handball – are behind top two disciplines together with other individual sport disciplines such as athletics, tennis, skiing, swimming, figure skating, cycling or gymnastics. (Caslavova 2003)

Nonetheless, because we follow theoretical tradition stating that media do not show reality but represent or (re)construct it, we do not focus on measuring proportionality regarding regular athletes’ participation or sports calendar. We rather consider gender distinction within media sport field as well as socio-economic consequences of sporting triangle.

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<sup>4</sup> As for the numbers, for example in above mentioned 2001 there were 246 women (and 782 men) participating at European championships, and 272 women (and 469 men) participating at World championships, while the proportion of regular registered athletes in sport disciplines (according to CSTV) was more than 1,370, 000 (983,480 male and 387,461 female athletes including youth). While in 2010 there were out of more than 1,671,000 registered athletes - 1,223,868 male and 447,975 female athletes including youth. (Rocenska 2011) There is also a significant increase of women athletes participating at Olympic Games (from zero in Athens 1896 to 42% in Athens 2004). Czech team had lately 57 females and 76 males in Beijing 2008 plus 18 females and 74 males in Vancouver 2010. (COV 2010)

### 3. METHODS

The article draws on quantitative content analysis of public service channel's programme including coherent samples of live coverage, magazines or documentaries but also detailed attention to news segments both at public service and commercial television channel. It is based on data collected by means of two different techniques: content analysis of news coverage and secondary analysis of programming and viewership measurement data. The choice of two channels – public service Czech Television and private Nova – provided a comparison within dual broadcasting system while programming strategy was in detail analyzed within public service CT4 Sport channel.

**News coverage:** We analyzed three one-week segments of televised sports news coverage on Czech Television (the 7:35 p.m. segment) and Nova (the 7:50 p.m. segment). We applied stratified composite sampling by selecting three 7-consecutive-days period every 3 months over one-year period starting July 2010 and ending June 2011. The periods of July 1-7 2010, November 10-16 2010 and March 20-26 2011 was randomly selected in order to sample different sport season periods when different sports were being played. Amounts of airtime devoted to men's, women's and mixed sports were measured as well as order/placement of news spots and average duration of news reports. We also analyzed closely the content of women's sport coverage in order to find out under what conditions editors focus attention to women's sport. Altogether there were 273 units analysed within CT news 'Branky, body, vteriny' and 128 units within Nova news 'Sportovni noviny'.

**TV Programme:** Furthermore we analyzed three one-month segments of televised sports programme on CT4 (each segment starting at 6 am and ending 5:59 am next day) that corresponded with news coverage sampling – e.g. July 2010, November 2010 and March 2011. Again amounts of airtime devoted to men's, women's and mixed sports were measured. We focused our attention also to different time-periods when the contributions to the programme were broadcasted as well as programme viewership data in terms of its rating<sup>5</sup>. We also more closely analyzed the content of women's sport programme in order to find out what role women's sport has in it together with its production value and commercial potential of its audience.

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<sup>5</sup> In the Czech Republic viewership ratings are measured by agency Media Research on the panel of 1333 households counting 3095 respondents. We have data from July 2010 – June 2011 on our disposal from Department of statistics and viewership research, Czech Television. We count with viewership rating in % or thousands (1% of 15+ audience counts approx. for 88500 viewers) and represents the rate of audience watching TV during selected time period.

We considered content analysis as suitable technique for purpose of our research. Berelson (1952) described it simply as a “research technique for the objective, systematic and quantitative description of the manifest content of communication (p. 18). Shoemaker and Reese (1996) categorise content analysis into two traditions – the behaviourist tradition and the humanist tradition. The first approach is primarily concerned with the effects that content produces whereas the second approach looks backwards from media content to try to identify what it says. Shoemaker and Reese say that social scientists taking a behaviourist approach to content analysis rely mostly on quantitative content analysis, while humanist approaches to media content tend towards qualitative analysis. We decided to engage quantitative content analysis following the behaviourist tradition. Looking at the media content in such way we aim to enhance our understanding of the role of ‘media gendering’ in terms of agenda setting and discuss its social consequences. The content analysis might expose strategy and mechanisms television editors and producers have in programming sport content regarding gender and regarding commercial potential women’s sport respectively men’s sport have. Despite public service or commercial embedding, we assume that Czech broadcasters use high rating mechanisms primarily for male sport. There might be some factors that strengthen women’s sport relevance, though.

#### 4. KEY FINDINGS

When analysing strategy and mechanisms television editors and producers have in programming sport content regarding gender we can in terms of communication product focus on either complete daily programme or its parts. When considering non-sports channel, one of the most important segments in regular channel’s programme is evening news programme. The coverage of women’s sport, within analyzed Czech channels, ranges from 5% to 11% depending on private or public embedding of news producers<sup>6</sup>. While as seen in Table 1 private channel Nova covered women’s sport in less than **5%** of content, public channel CT1 in **11%** (men’s sport 85,5%, mixed content and other topics 3,5%).

**TABLE 1: News coverage at Nova and CT1 channels by gender**

	<b>Nova (N)</b>	<b>Nova (time)</b>	<b>Nova ( %)</b>	<b>CT1 (N)</b>	<b>CT1 (time)</b>	<b>CT1(%)</b>
<b>men’s sport</b>	122	108 min 17 s	95,1%	230	249 min 47 s	85,5%
<b>women’s sport</b>	6	5 min 29 s	<b>4,9%</b>	32	32 min 4 s	<b>11%</b>
<b>mixed sport</b>	0	0 min 0 s	0%	11	10 min 15 s	3,5%
<b>total</b>	128	113 min 46 s	100%	273	292 min 6 s	100%

<sup>6</sup> Private channel Nova has more than two-times shorter sports news airtime including 6 spots on average with their average length of around 53 seconds, public CT1 has wider range of sport disciplines in 13 spots on average with average length of 64 seconds per spot.

While in 'Branky, body, vteriny' there is usually a spot covering men's sport 5 seconds longer than spot covering women's sport, in 'Sportovni noviny' women's sport topic gets usually 12 seconds more. We can explain this trend by looking closely at the content. Nova channel is covering women's sport only when it comes to extra significant international success of Czech female athlete such as in our sample Wimbledon 2010 semi-finalist Kvitova or World Cup Series speed-skating winner Sablikova (which was the only one women's sport leading story in analysed sample). Nova editors pay attention to female athletes in case of controversial or curious topic – such as case of sex-tests of runner Caster Semenya, too. Because of these editor mechanisms we can also see that both women's and men's sports spots have about the same average placing in news segment – 3,5 for women, 3,6 for men. Nova is usually focused to five major sport disciplines – soccer (39%), ice-hockey (22%), tennis (12%), F1 (9%), motorcycling (4,5%) and others (13,5%).

In case of CT1 sports news there is wider range of sport disciplines with dominating soccer (31,5%), ice-hockey (18%), tennis (8%), cycling (4,5%) and skiing (4%) followed by other 35 disciplines (66% in total). When considering women's sport spots they are usually 60 seconds long with an average placing of **7,6** points in contrast of **6,8** points of men's sport spots - 65 seconds long. There were only 2 leading women's sport stories, one about Kvitova at Wimbledon 2010 and one about Czech volleyball team at World Championship 2010 during the sampled period. When covering women's sport there were mostly World Cups with Czech participants in athletics, tennis, basketball, alpine skiing and speed skating but also frisbee, curling or in-line hockey world championships with Czech participation. There were also abnormal topics covered in case of women's sport such as tennis player Navratilova portrayed as mountain climber, the case of Caster Semenya or volleyball team calendar photo shooting.

We can sum up that using univariate and simple bivariate analysis of news-spots content there were overrepresented several sport disciplines as well as men's sport at both channels. Sport editors both at public and private television use different significance level when covering sport by gender, too, with the emphasis on men's sport. Thus, public service Czech Television has a potential to promote female athletes largely than private broadcaster. CT editors focus their attention to women's sport not only when it comes to extraordinary international success of Czech female athlete but also in case of Czech participation in new disciplines (e.g. frisbee) or events taking place in the Czech Republic. This might be related to original content Czech Television produces and therefore should have staff and technique capacity to cover it. In this way public broadcaster satisfies its codex by bringing top

professional domestic and foreign sport events, paying attention to informing about other ways of sport including junior categories, amateur or new sport disciplines. What defines public service through sport news here is majority of domestic related content e.g. information about Czech athletes or Czech events<sup>7</sup>. From this point of view, national aspect not gender contributes to public service principles such diversity here. Anyway, women's sport is seven-times often linked to national context whereas men's sport only 2:1. No broader information about foreign women's sport is mediated within public CT1 news. Whereas men's sport content includes top foreign team leagues as well as Soccer World Cup, Tour de France, PGA Tour, NBA, Euroleague in Basketball etc.

### **Public Service Sports Channel Programming**

Above mentioned results are supplemented with analysis of 24-hour public service CT4 Sport programme schedule. Within total population of 12 months (July 2010 – June 2011) there were 8416 hours and 25 minutes of airtime with average length of more than ten thousand units of 48 minutes and 28 seconds with minimum 7 seconds and maximum almost 11 hours length of single spot. We eliminated promotion, advertisement and other spots without direct connection to any sport discipline or either women's or men's sport out of the data file.

Out of data set there were 78% of live coverage, records or sports reports, 19% of magazines, 2% of documentaries and less than 1% of no-comment spots. Public television covered almost 80 different sport disciplines; most of the air-time was devoted to soccer (16%), ice-hockey (11%), basketball (10%), motor sport (8%), volleyball (5%), golf (4%) and athletics, cycling, alpine skiing, tennis (all 3%) while horses, floorball, handball and table tennis got all 2%. There were 9% of air-time coded as mixed sports disciplines coverage and the rest (17%) took other sports disciplines (categorized by 1 or less %).

To consider whether public service television is shaped by commercial aspects in terms of programming and regarding role women's sport plays in it, we analysed in more detail three one-month segments of televised sports programme on CT4 (each segment starting at 6 am and ending 5:59 am next day) that corresponded with news coverage sampling – which means July 2010, November 2010 and March 2011. Within this sample characterised by 2572 spots in 2120 hours and 41 minutes, with average length of spot of

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<sup>7</sup> Out of 273 news spots on CT1 there were 190 domestic and 83 world-related spots (as for women's sport 28:4 and men's sport 162:77) while Nova released out of 128 spots 60 domestic and 68 world-related spots (as for women's sport 3:3 and men's sport 57:65).

49:28 there were **64,6%** of content devoted to men's sport, **5,7%** to women's sport and **29,7%** to mixed sport.

As for the disciplines (see Table 2) there were dominating sports corresponding with above mentioned 12-month sample. Nonetheless we can sum up that female content only can be identified in **softball** and **speed-skating**, together with mixed content in **athletics** and dominating in comparison to men's sport in **volleyball**. In all other sports disciplines there is dominating men's sport coverage (golf, cycling, basketball etc.) or absolutely dominant men's sport coverage (soccer, ice-hockey, motor sport, rugby etc.).

**TABLE 2: Sum of sports disciplines coverage length (min) by gender**

	<b>total</b>	<b>male</b>	<b>mixed</b>	<b>female</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>total</b>	<b>2120:41</b>	<b>1372:16:00</b>	<b>626:30:00</b>	<b>121:53</b>	<b>100%</b>
soccer	392:05	<b>392:05</b>			18%
ice-hockey	226:01	<b>226:01</b>			11%
various other	177:30	<b>1:34:20</b>	175:56		8%
motor sport	167:08	<b>167:08</b>			8%
basketball	159:45	124:42	15:52:16	19:10:08	8%
volleyball	113:06	17:51:33	51:47:02	<b>43:28:08</b>	5%
athletics	108:02		106:22	<b>1:40:03</b>	5%
tennis	73:27:31	44:31:28	2:41:07	26:14:55	3%
golf	69:01:21	<b>62:22:59</b>	6:38:20		3%
cycling	66:21:35	<b>46:12:53</b>	20:08:42		3%
skiing	63:16:43	17:20:44	43:39:37	2:16:22	3%
horses	41:54:43		41:54:43		2%
rugby	39:17:17	<b>39:17:17</b>			2%
floorball	35:56:43	31:16:01		4:40:42	2%
...	...	...	...	...	...
biathlon	19:08:43	8:58:08	1:25:50	8:44:45	1%
softball	10:01:44			<b>10:01:44</b>	~1%
speed-skating	5:36:55			<b>5:36:55</b>	~1%

When considering specially regular team sports season (except for the most popular traditionally male sport disciplines – soccer and ice-hockey) with emphasis on basketball, volleyball and handball we can see from complete one-year data set (Table 3) that men's basketball is overrepresented to women's basketball even if the sample contains total coverage of Women's World Championship 2010 taking place in the Czech Republic. Czech women's handball has the lowest significance for public broadcaster, while equal coverage demonstrates volleyball programme together with high time-rate of mixed content.

**TABLE 3: Sum of selected team sports coverage length (min) by gender**

	total	male	mixed	female
<b>basketball</b>	873:44	<b>489:43</b>	80:20	303:40
<b>volleyball</b>	406:12	85:56	232:45	<b>87:30</b>
<b>handball</b>	162:27	<b>143:43</b>	1:59	16:44

Within CT4 Sport we also analysed prime-time<sup>8</sup> programming and high rating mechanism together with the role women's sport play in these processes. Women's sport got prime-time coverage only in 9 cases in sampled period (while 173 in men's sport and 74 in mixed coverage) with volleyball, tennis, softball, floorball and basketball – mostly within top domestic events (Czech Championship in beach-volleyball, Women's Basketball League) or international matches (Eurofloorball Tour, Fed Cup, Volleyball Euroleague, Softball World Championship). While men's sport was promoted during the same period in case of either major sport events (e.g. world championships) or regular season competitions (e.g. soccer league). We have to add that in the sampled period the most significant viewership rating of 18,2% (1,602 thousand) was ice-hockey match CR-Russia ending during prime-time. Women's sport most viewed content with rating of 6,1% (540 thousand) was World Championship in speed-skating at 18<sup>th</sup> place in overall top TV rating placement broadcasted before prime-time. Other most viewed (and men's) sport content was broadcasted during prime-time, though.

Indeed, as seen in Table 4, when broadcasting women's sports during prime-time it has lower average viewership rating than in earlier two periods, while both men's sports and mixed sports reached highest average viewership rating during prime-time period.

**TABLE 4: Average viewership during day-periods by gender**

	6am-10am	10am-2pm	2pm-6pm	<b>6pm-10pm</b>	10pm-2am	2am-6am
<b>female</b>	11,73	41,50	<b>78,62</b>	22,33	17,36	7,30
<b>male</b>	8,71	18,76	41,76	<b>69,94</b>	17,59	3,66
<b>mixed</b>	11,99	17,24	21,44	<b>38,86</b>	14,59	3,59
<b>total</b>	10,27	18,98	31,44	<b>58,71</b>	16,64	3,68

Therefore we can assume that editors and producers can disfavour women's sports (in terms of not covering this content in prime-time) due to building high rating mechanisms through men's sports content. However, we should add that especially live-coverage broadcasting depends on start-time defined by sports associations and may differ within week and weekend days (although television industry has the power to change sport sphere as suggested in

<sup>8</sup> We define prime-time period as programme block starting in between 6pm and 10pm which is characterised by most viewers and is generally period where broadcasters reap much of their advertising revenues. There is assigned aim to reach average 5% viewership rating during this period for this public service TV channel.



chapter about 'sporting triangle' concept). Similarly from the above mentioned we can assume that: "Audience-building, grounded in interlocking interests among television networks, news and highlight shows, commercial sponsors, and athletic organizations, is routine for men's sports." (Messner et al. 2006:8) Boyle and Haynes (2009) add also a question of interconnected popularity of sport disciplines: Is undoubted athletic prowess and world-class achievement enough to move athletes' profile into the mainstream media if they are engaged in a sport that lies on the periphery of television's interest?" (p. 129) Both issues in terms of Czech Television are valid despite its public service character. In CT4 Sport programme there are preferred popular sport disciplines as well as men's sport content regarding codex statement saying that individual sport disciplines' space in programme correspond to public interest. Production value of women's sport seems to be stuck with low commercial potential of its audience except for top domestic events or international matches with Czech female athletes' participation. "Narratives built around national identity and gender can also sit equally side by side in particular forms of coverage." (Boyle and Haynes 2009: 128) This can be again sum up as media operating in public service mode consequence, indeed.

## **5. CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION**

In tradition of social constructionism approach to media content and behaviourist approach to content analysis we take into account especially social consequences following numeric expression of analysed coverage proportionality. Regarding the aim of this paper we should get along with an argument that the quantity of units devoted to some topic is showing the quality and significance of such content. (McQuail 1999) When journalists want to emphasize an issue they usually cover the topic and give it relevant space. Media do not show reality, they re-present it. (Hall 1997)

From our news data set we can see that media covered only minority of sports events giving preference to men's sport and to popular sport disciplines such as soccer and ice-hockey. This holds true especially for commercial news segment while we can see that public television plays a significant role in providing coverage to wider range of sports disciplines as well as to women's sport. Such diversity is constructed through national aspect of coverage not gender, though. Women's sport is more often linked to such national or domestic context rather than being normative or conventional. Significance level of women's sport remains lower than men's sport (in terms of length, placing/order of spots or topics). Anyway, public television can play an important role in terms of promoting women's sport comparing with

private channel news editing. Diversity, original content and national aspect might be three main parts of public service media definition through sport.

As for overall programme of public channel CT4, we can sum up that commercial aspects of sports field tend to shape public broadcasting, too. Czech Television favours sports disciplines based on their popularity and selection mechanisms defined by business sport value play significant role also in covering men's sport more often (61.6%) than women's sport (5,7%). There are only few female-content-only sport disciplines dominating in the programme while majority of dominating (e.g. golf, cycling) or absolutely dominant (e.g. soccer, ice-hockey) male-content-only sports. Also when considering equal participation and season calendar of team sports such basketball, volleyball and handball there dominates men's sport over women's sport (except for almost proportionally covered volleyball).

Moreover, Czech Television favours and uses high rating mechanisms primarily for men's sport. This comes out of audience-building techniques that are routine for men's sport respectively popular (men's) sport disciplines from which broadcasters usually generate advertising time sales profit and cover TV rights costs. In our sample few top women's sports events (both domestic and international) got coverage starting during prime-time; they did not reach as high viewership rating as men's and mixed types of coverage, though. In such women's sport covering despite its low viewership we can see public service principle. Czech Television has a potential to promote female athletes despite lower business value of such media content. This might play a significant role in shaping so called circuit of promotion. But, such (prime-time) coverage is only curious and temporary and again based rather on nationality than gender.

## **Discussion**

We tried to analyse sports media content independently of gender equality demand and rather focus in depth on commercial aspects of sport and public service aspects of dual media broadcasting system. Still, there remains a question of how to consider characteristic sample of women's sport. Is 11% of women's sport news and nearly 6% of women's sport programme on public TV channel little or too much? Can we consider argument of equality as feminist critiques usually stress out, participation proportion argument or either disciplines results or sports calendar proportion? In terms of our sample content analysis it is impossible to compare such variables due to the lack of data. We can just remark that in connection with soccer or ice-hockey and mostly also with other team sports or traditionally male sport disciplines (e.g. motor sport) women do not reach any coverage in both public service and

private media. In terms of commercial embedding of contemporary media sport we should consider the real measurement methods of women's sport representation in media. Having all data editor might be influenced by when preparing news segment (e.g. press agency output, sports calendar, all results and participation numbers etc.) we can consider whether women's sport is underrepresented or just not relevant to editors' mechanisms or other production interests. Such practices are shaped by 'sporting triangle'; therefore, the best way how to measure this proportion regarding its ideological implicit meaning might be rather qualitative analysis of editor's daily practices.

Our analysis of content and programming techniques does not deal with qualitative aspects of sports media content itself – "[...] the ways in which men's and women's sport are treated differently in terms of the language used to describe and make sense of them." (Boyle and Haynes 2009: 128) It neither deals in detail with questions of viewership. In terms of ideology there is need to use supplementary techniques such as discursive or self-reflexive analysis to uncover closer motives of television producers and audience regarding gender. Moreover gender might not be the only concept to be considered when analysing sports media sphere. Except for above mentioned nationality - important defining principle regarding public service media, race or socio-economic status should be taken into consideration.

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