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Still not getting a fair deal: The under-representation of
female athletes in television news coverage of the 2006
Commonwealth Games

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ABSTRACT

This research investigates gender equity in New Zealand television news coverage of the 2006 Commonwealth Games. Using content and frame analyses, the study evaluates the prime-time news coverage of the two largest free-to-air broadcasters, TVNZ and TV3. The results demonstrate that the hegemonic masculinity of sport is still reflected and supported by New Zealand's television news media. Women athletes received just 25% of the time spent reporting on the Games with male athletes receiving 43%. This was despite women making up 46% of the New Zealand Commonwealth Games team and winning 53% of the medals, indicating that participation and success had little correlation with the media's decisions about which athletes to report on.

This study also highlights differences in the framing techniques used by the media in reporting on sportsmen and sportswomen. The research found the presence of gender-marking, preferential positioning, reliance on male sources and other framing devices. The ways these were used provided further evidence of the dominant presence sportsmen have over sportswomen in the New Zealand Commonwealth Games television coverage. On a positive note, the research found no sexualisation and very little stereotyping of female athletes, techniques which have been prevalent in international studies.

This thesis outlines the need for New Zealand's television news media, particularly the public service broadcaster TVNZ, to reflect on the inequality they continue to demonstrate in their coverage of sportsmen and sportswomen and to put in place active measures to increase the levels of coverage given to sportswomen by New Zealand's mainstream media.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

The gendered nature of the news has been a commonly discussed topic in media research, with media scholars arguing that there is an absence and trivialisation of women in the news (McGregor & Fountaine, 2001). Tuchman (1978) labelled the absence of female representation a 'symbolic annihilation of women', a concept that is now commonly used by media researchers to describe women's under-representation in the mainstream media (Kane & Greendorfer, 1994).

In the decades since Tuchman made this observation, it appears that little progress has been made. On February 16, 2005, the third Global Media Monitoring Project (GMMP) took place. Researchers from around the world investigated women's representation in the media on a global scale. The findings revealed that women were the subjects of just 21% of the world's news. Not only were women under-represented overall, but news that did focus on women was predominantly in the areas of arts and entertainment, human rights, religion, and celebrity, with far fewer stories featuring women in areas of war, politics, science and sport (World Association for Christian Communication, 2007). It is this latter area, sport, that this research project concentrates on, investigating in more detail the under-representation of sportswomen in New Zealand's media. Although there has been research into the media's coverage of female athletes in this country, there has been no recent investigation into television coverage of women in sport and the previous research in the area was confined to quantitative analysis and has not evaluated the way female athletes are framed by the media. This research addresses these gaps as well as providing insight into the television coverage of female athletes during a mega-sporting event, the Commonwealth Games.

1.0 SPORT, MEDIA AND SOCIETY

The contribution that sport makes to the fabric of society is widely recognised, supporting positive values of participation, health and socialisation (SPARC, 2004). One of the world's key sporting organisations, the International Olympic Committee (IOC), identifies sport as a birthright and an important part of a healthy society. It argues that sport "teaches respect for rules, tolerance and solidarity; helps to develop the body and the spirit; and gives joy, pride and wellbeing" (IOC, 2007, p. 1). The influence that physical activity can have on creating a healthy society has

led to sports promotion becoming a key goal of New Zealand's Ministry of Health (MOH).

The Ministry states that:

Physical activity can reduce the risk of, or improve outcomes for a number of health conditions including coronary heart disease, obesity, strokes, diabetes, cancer, depression, hypertension, osteoporosis, stress and some respiratory conditions. (MOH, 2007, p. 1)

With New Zealand facing a potential obesity epidemic (Ministry of Health, 2008), the promotion of physical activity in this country is increasingly important. However, there is a strong belief that the sports industry reflects and disseminates an idea in many cultures that sport is predominantly masculine territory (Lenskyj, 1998; Weiller, Higgs & Greenleaf, 2004). Kane (1989) argues that masculinity and sport have become almost synonymous terms, leading to what is described by scholars as the hegemonic masculinity of sport. The media play a central role in this hegemonic process, by helping to maintain a perception of sport as a male domain. When media outlets show disproportionate levels of attention to sportsmen, they create discourse suggesting that female athletes are not as important or as valued as male athletes (Alexander, 1994; Kane & Greendorfer, 1994; Pedersen, 2002; Toohey, 1997; Weiller et al., 2004). Recognising the importance of sport, the IOC has become concerned about women's involvement worldwide in both administration and participation in sport (IOC, 2007). With the media playing such an important and influential role in the formation of society's opinions and values, their role in promoting women's participation in sport cannot be overlooked.

Sport may be seen by the general public as a leisure activity providing little more than an avenue to exercise. However, a number of theorists believe that by providing individual and collective social values such as discipline, productivity, sportsmanship, and fair play, sport has the unique ability to influence morale, health, and the economy, enhancing equal opportunities and social integration (Goodwin & Whannel, 1990; Hargreaves, 1994; Lever & Wheeler, 1993; SPARC, 2004; Whannel, 2002). Sport also has the ability to unify groups of people and develop a sense of national identification. In spite of a growing globalisation of sport, Beck and Bosshart (2003, p.1) still contend that athletes' performances are often the "filters through which the world sees a nation," providing citizens with an

avenue through which they can take pride in their country, which Beck and Bosshart argue can provide belonging and a cultural sense of worth.

Sport is a prevalent component of New Zealand's cultural landscape. McGregor and Fountaine (1997, p. 38) argue that it is "integral to both self-identity and self-esteem in New Zealand and may be more sacred than religion". Participation in sport is widespread in this country, with SPARC (2003) reporting that 70% of New Zealanders participate in sport or active leisure on a regular basis. The most recent data available indicates that across the total population of New Zealand, women's participation in physical activity is on par with that of men's (SPARC, 2001). Not only do New Zealand women take part in sport they have traditionally been elite achievers on the international stage (Burroughs & Nauright, 2000).

With relatively equal participation in sport across the genders, one might expect to see this reflected in the New Zealand media with a variety of female and male athletes shown in the mainstream media. However, as Webber (1992) notes, although thousands of New Zealand women take part in sport every week, it would be difficult to know this if we depended solely on the media for our knowledge. Several studies suggest that New Zealand's media follow the trends seen in other countries and are dominated by coverage of sportsmen (Atkinson, 2001; Fountaine & McGregor, 1999; McGregor & Fountaine, 1997; McGregor & Melville, 1991; O'Leary & Roberts, 1985). Burroughs and Nauright (2000) suggest that, like other western societies, New Zealand maintains a resistance against promoting the equality of men and women as athletes, pointing to sport as one of the key areas of society where traditional gender order is maintained, with men higher in the hierarchy than women.

A lack of media coverage of sportswomen is of particular concern when we examine the participation rates for female children and adolescents, who lag behind their male counterparts in their participation in sport and physical activity. Although when looking at the population as a whole, statistics indicate that the number of women who take part in physical activity is equal with men's (SPARC, 2001), this is not the case when considering the participation of girls and young women. SPARC (2003) reports boys' (6-17 years) participation in physical activity at 70.5% and girls' at 62.4%. One of the barriers identified for young women's involvement in sport is the lack of female sporting role models (IOC, 2007). Role models are created largely through media exposure and there is a link from this exposure to

sponsorship opportunities (Olafsson, 2006) — as illustrated in New Zealand, for example, by the heroic status of the All Blacks who receive constant promotion in the mainstream media and are in demand for endorsement of products from breakfast cereals to underwear and deodorant. The media exposure, through both coverage of their sport and advertising of sponsors' products, creates role models among male athletes that are seldom seen amidst female athletes.

It is not only the influence that the media have in creating role models to encourage participation in sport that is of concern, but also the issue of the development of women's sport. Women's sport has not attracted the same levels of investment from sponsors as men's sport. Of the 50 highest earning athletes in the world in 2006, not one was a woman (Forbes, 2006). Shaw and Amis (2001) document sponsors' reasons for not supporting sportswomen or female sports leagues with the lack of media exposure for women athletes repeatedly cited. Sponsors seeking return on investment require their products or services to be promoted in association with sports that reach large audiences through the media's various channels. New Zealand is seeing an increase in the commercialisation of men's sports organisations that is not being experienced in women's (Fountaine & McGregor, 1997; McGregor & Melville, 1991). Sports like rugby, soccer, basketball and rugby league have all established professional Trans-Tasman sports leagues with few equivalent leagues yet established for women, although we have a team competing in the Australian Women's National Basketball League and 2008 will see the commencement of a professional Trans-Tasman netball league. Sponsorship and commercial funding have a direct impact on the resources available to grow and develop sport from grassroots levels through to elite and professional levels and women may be missing out on the opportunities that are offered to male athletes, coaches and managerial staff. A survey of New Zealand sports administrators found that 80% of volunteer administrators, 89% of elected national directors and 79% of executive officers were male (Cameron, 1993). Without adequate media coverage sportswomen lack the attractiveness to sponsors that sportsmen have. Sponsorship in turn impacts resources for building and developing infrastructure to attract players and administrative staff who, in turn, can manage sponsorship relationships and thereby financial resources.

1.1.0 PURPOSE OF RESEARCH PROJECT

This research project studied how the under-representation of women athletes manifests in particularly high-profile contexts such as television and, in particular, the television coverage of the Commonwealth Games. There is limited research investigating the differences in New Zealand television coverage of male and female athletes. This lack of research is concerning due to the strong relationship between sport and television. There is also a current gap in the research of media coverage of multi-national sporting events, therefore the 2006 Commonwealth Games provided an ideal opportunity to study to the representation of women in the news media during the coverage such an event. We know of course in a general sense from other studies (e.g. Fountaine & McGregor, 1999; McGregor & Fountaine, 1997; McGregor & Melville, 1991) that New Zealand's media are critiqued for following the international trend of continued masculine bias in sports coverage overall. This project investigates whether this trend also applies in the coverage of a large-scale international sporting competition featuring male and female events and athletes in roughly equal numbers. It also asks whether, during the Commonwealth Games coverage, athletes were treated equally by the television news media irrespective of private or state media ownership? The research is designed not only to measure the amount of coverage dedicated to male and female athletes, but also to examine whether the ways the television media frame sports news reports varies for athletes depending on their gender.

The study employs textual analysis, a widely used method for researching the content of news media and the representation of women in media coverage. The research uses content analysis to collect quantitative data to examine the amount of television coverage of sportswomen on two channels during the Commonwealth Games. The channels included in the analysis are TVNZ's TVOne and rival network TV3. Both channels are free-to-air and represent the largest viewing audiences of news programmes in New Zealand. The study also investigates qualitative aspects of these mediums' reporting, such as framing techniques, tone, and positioning.

1.2.0 SCOPE OF RESEARCH

This project has been designed to consider the television news coverage only, filling a gap in the current New Zealand-based media research which currently has a focus on press coverage (e.g. Fountaine & McGregor, 1999; McGregor &

Fountain, 1997; McGregor & Melville, 1991). The research seeks to answer the following questions:

1. How much New Zealand prime-time television news coverage on two key channels was given to male athletes compared with female athletes during the 2006 Commonwealth Games and how does this compare to their participation and success levels?
2. Were there differences in the way male and female athletes were framed in the sports news coverage, and if so, what was the nature of these differences?
3. Were there differences between the two television broadcasters in their levels or framing of coverage by gender?

Little research exists on either television news coverage of sportswomen during regular sports news coverage, or the coverage of multi-national sporting events. This study does not consider the wider media—newspapers, radio or internet reporting—and the results cannot, therefore, be applied across the board, however it does provide important complementary detail to supplement existing broad research, by exploring television coverage in depth. As discussed in Chapter Three, the prime-time news coverage of TVNZ and TV3, New Zealand's largest two networks, will be analysed. Together, TVNZ's *One News* and TV3's *3 News*, attract an average of 948 611 viewers every night, approximately 22% of the total population (Marshall, 2007). This research does not analyse the live coverage of the Games, but rather the news media's edited and re-assembled nightly reporting. This is in order to highlight the emphasis and messages constructed by news frames for a prime-time audience, examining the values-based decisions made by the news' editorial teams.

This chapter has provided a detailed overview of the background to the current project's research design. Chapter Two reviews the literature and research on the news media's representation of sportswomen. It discusses findings from both local and international studies, explores the different patterns of media coverage that emerge during multi-national sporting events and identifies gaps in the current literature that would benefit from further research.

The methodology of the research is detailed in Chapter Three. This section explains the rationale for the methods used in the textual analysis in this study and outlines the specific steps taken in the design and implementation of the content and frame analyses.

Chapter Four provides the results of the study, giving a detailed account of both quantitative and qualitative findings for the overall prime-time New Zealand television news coverage of the 2006 Commonwealth Games, as well as the findings for the individual networks studied. To provide a more accurate picture of the representation of female athletes at the Games, the results are compared with the participation and success levels of the male and female members of the New Zealand Commonwealth Games team.

Chapters Five and Six form the discussion and conclusions sections of this research. In these chapters the findings and conclusions of the study are discussed in relation to the current body of research on the under-representation of sportswomen in the media. In addition, these chapters highlight the implications, recommendations and limitations of the study and the scope for further research.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 INTRODUCTION

The media's power to influence public opinion subjects them to scrutiny from researchers interested in examining not only what they select to report on but also how they choose to communicate this information. Historically, media research has been diverse and rich, spanning many forms of media and covering a range of interest areas including politics, crime, arts and sport (Riffe, Lacy & Fico, 1998). This thesis focuses on television news coverage of sportswomen, specifically during the 2006 Commonwealth Games and, consequently, the literature and media research reviewed in this chapter is directed towards media representation of male and female athletes.

This chapter discusses the importance of the media with a particular regard to sport, highlighting findings from both New Zealand and international studies. The discussion also reviews international studies which have shown different patterns of media coverage that emerge during multi-national sporting events and identifies the gaps in the New Zealand research in this area. The review begins by looking at the role the media play in shaping public opinion. It then considers the relationship between sport and the news media. The discussion then focuses on the gendered nature of coverage that has been repeatedly observed in the news media, looking specifically at examples of the under-representation of sportswomen. Attention is also paid to the news media's coverage of multi-national sporting events and the patterns of gendered coverage that have been observed during such events. Finally, the chapter considers the disproportionately small representation of women sports journalists and the impact this may have on coverage of sportswomen.

2.1.0 MEDIA, SPORT AND THEIR ROLE IN SOCIETY

Many theories of media effects suggest that the media are a dominant force in society, shaping our beliefs about the world around us (Creedon, 1994; Croteau & Hoynes, 2000; Pedersen, 2002). One highly influential theory suggests that media serve as a powerful means of socialisation, influencing audiences' thoughts about what is to be valued and celebrated (McCombs & Shaw, 1972). The media are active agents in the construction of meaning and culture and, as such, have the ability, power and resources to create or resist sociological change. The attention

they give to a topic sanctions our beliefs about what is accepted and valued in society, while ignored or trivialised topics end up being viewed as unimportant (Menzies, 1989; Toohey, 1997). Of course, theories about media influence on society must be held in balance. As Scheufele (1999) argues, effects from the media's socially constructed reality are limited by audiences' own schemata of interpretation. Entman (1993) explains this idea further by outlining that the ideas made salient by the media may not be noticed or received by the members of the audience due to their own, existing frames of reference.

Nonetheless, if the media are understood as a powerful and influencing force on society then it is imperative that they are constantly scrutinised. One common and important method of monitoring media influence is through scholarly research that not only reviews what the media are disseminating but the effects this may be having on society. One key area such research has often focused on is the news media, which has been identified as one of the strongest influencers in present society (Philo, Hewitt, Beharrell & Davis, 1982).

2.1.1 The News Media

By reporting current affairs, politics, entertainment, weather and sports, the news media may help shape the dominant cultural, social and political picture of society. Hartley (1982) posited that the British news media, more than any other form of British mass media, have the ability to influence public opinion. He argued that what is reported by the news is widely accepted and believed by society, such that newspapers, radio and television news saturate society on a continual basis and the general public widely regards the information conveyed as an accurate representation of the world around them. Media scholars argue that news, although it appears to be reflecting reality, is presenting filtered and selected information, thereby providing the public with a constructed view of reality. McQuail (2005, p 101) explains:

[T]he picture of 'reality' that the news claims to provide cannot help but be a selective construct made up of fragments of factual information and observation that are bound together and given meaning by a particular frame, angle of vision or perspective.

As McQuail outlines here, the media are conveying a constructed version of reality, influenced by their own values, beliefs and judgements about what is newsworthy

and how news should be interpreted. News media theory suggests that the media follow the theory of social responsibility, proposing that the media should provide a forum for ideas and discussion (McQuail, 2005). This is particularly true for television news, which is the main source of information for many people in the developed world (Comrie & Fountaine, 2005b). Yet in reality the media are also commercially driven and must balance their social responsibility with their need to generate revenue (Norris, 2002).

2.1.2 Theories of Agenda-Setting and Framing

The news has been described as a "sequence of socially manufactured messages, which carry many of the culturally dominant assumptions of our society," (Glasgow Media Group, 1985, p 1). The term 'socially manufactured' in this description is an important one as it alludes to the media's control over the presentation of the news. In constructing the news, the media rely on traditional news values such as timeliness, level of public interest, and uniqueness (McQuail, 2005) but there are also media agendas at play (McCombs, 2004).

McComb's and Shaw's agenda setting theory proposes that the media do not only tell people what topics to think about but also how to think about them (McCombs, 2004). The theory outlines that the news media have a high level of influence on their audience through the stories they select to report on. Central to the theory is the notion that the media transfer an issue's perceived level of importance to the public through what is either selected or neglected in the news line-up. This research project asks whether or not male and female athletes receive an equal amount of news media coverage, i.e. whether they are put on the media 'agenda' to the same extent (McCombs and Shaw's first level of agenda setting). Then, it asks *how* that coverage is inflected with different attributes for male and female athletes (McCombs and Shaw's second level of agenda setting). Chambers, Steiner and Fleming (cited in Strong, 2007) argue that for centuries, the media have used sport to attract audiences in order to secure advertising revenue. The audiences for sport have been loyal, dependable and, traditionally, male (Strong, 2007). However, this research is examining prime-time news coverage, where the audience is expected to be more gender balanced. Using agenda-setting theory it could be argued that if male athletes are receiving more media attention than female athletes, the news-viewing public will not only think more about men's sport than they do about women's, but will also follow the media's lead in *how* they think about male and female athletes

Agenda-setting theory is made up of two levels. First-level agenda setting describes the way in which the media use issues to influence what the public thinks about through topic selection as discussed above. Second-level agenda setting explains the ability of the media to influence how people should think about an issue (McCombs, 2004). In the second level of agenda setting, McCombs argues that the media use two techniques to emphasise particular attributes of a topic: these techniques are priming and framing (Tilley, 2005). Priming refers to introducing a topic several times over a period of days or weeks in order to build audience for it (and usually moving it up a news bulletin or forward in a newspaper each time it is featured). As this technique is not relevant to a short-period single-event coverage study, it is not discussed in this research. Framing, however, is relevant. The televisual media, like newspapers, use framing cues to signal certain things about a topic that they are reporting on — especially to suggest what aspects of it audiences should consider most important (Tilley, 2005).

In constructing specific news stories the media use framing to guide their audience's understanding (McQuail, 2005). News frames can be described as schemata of interpretation, highlighting some information on an issue, neglecting others and encouraging a particular interpretation for the information being conveyed (McCombs, 2004). Entman has been an influential voice on framing and says that to frame is to:

select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation.
(Entman, 1993, p 52)

For example Messner, Duncan and Jensen (1993), in their study of American basketball and tennis television coverage, highlighted the framing of women athletes as inferior to male athletes through the media's tendency to use differential gender marking in their commentary and visual labelling of women's sport through on screen descriptors. They found that such treatment was not as prevalent in coverage of men's sports. Gender marking referred, for example, to such things as journalists' references to women athletes by their first name and male athletes by their surname. Messner et al. (1993) demonstrated the ways in which such framing

can cause women athletes to be perceived as less important or more junior in status than male athletes.

Framing can also include elements which Tilley (2005, p. 149) describes as "contextual cues" which, although not part of the actual content, help the content to be interpreted. Contextual cues give an indication of significance, largely signalled through the amount or nature of space or time the media allocates to an issue (McQuail, 2005). For example, a lead or 'top of bulletin' item is contextually cued as more important, irrespective of content, than one reported later in the news. Duncan and Messner (2005) outline that in sports news coverage, lead stories are always regarded as the most important in the broadcast. In their study of American televised sports coverage between 1989 and 2004 they found that only three percent of the total sports news articles recorded featured a lead story about sportswomen. From these findings they concluded that through this framing technique, the media put a higher priority on coverage of male athletes than female athletes and reinforced the message to their audience that sportsmen are of greater importance. Other contextual cues in television reporting might include captions, for example is the speaker afforded a full name and title, or only a first name, and whether the speaker is shown actively playing sport (making a successful shot at goal, for example) or just talking about sport (pictured at home with the family).

2.2.0 THE MEDIA – SPORT NEXUS

Sport and the media are inextricably linked. Urquhart and Crossman (1999), argue that their relationship is mutually beneficial, with sport helping to sell the media and the media helping to sell sport. Sport gives live media like television an entertainment factor, with competition, drama, celebrity, and the excitement of spontaneity (Goodwin & Whannel, 1990). Rowe (1996) explains that in New Zealand, sport attracts large and devoted audiences; secures advertising revenue; has low production costs; and portrays images of health and national identity. New Zealand has radio stations, television channels, websites and magazines solely dedicated to sport. Beck and Bosshart (2003) link the media's interest in sport to its ability to create celebrities and role models, a trend seen throughout the world. One of the most high profile examples of this can be seen in the sponsorship and media attention surrounding former captain of the English soccer team, David Beckham. Beckham has multi-million-pound sponsorship deals with Adidas, Pepsi, Giorgio Armani and Motorola.

Norris (2002) argues that the news media, as a general rule, are led by commercial interest, manifested in their preoccupation with readership, circulation and ratings. While this is not always the case for a public service broadcaster it is certainly true for privately owned media. Moreover, in New Zealand, state-owned TVNZ, although under the guidance of a public service charter, is almost entirely funded by advertising and is under considerable pressure to perform commercially (Comrie & Fountaine, 2005a). To generate revenue, most media must attract advertisers, to attract advertisers they must attract and retain public interest. In this vein, sport has been a close ally of the media, helping them to attract large audiences, for example the 2004 Olympic Games generated a world-wide television audience of 3.9 billion. These large audiences attract lucrative advertising partnerships which stand to benefit the media.

However, it is not only the media who benefit from the relationship. Sports organisations are now charging the media to secure broadcasting rights, and television networks in particular will pay large sums to secure exclusive coverage (Goodwin & Whannel, 1990). For example, American broadcaster NBC is reported to have paid US\$3.5 billion for the television rights to the 2000-2008 Olympic Games (Billings & Eastman, 2003). Here in New Zealand, TV3 is said to have paid NZ\$12 million for the television rights to the 2007 Rugby World Cup (Vaughan, 2007). With sporting bodies standing to benefit financially from the media's interest in their event and vice versa, it is hardly surprising their relationship is a strong one.

Sport also stands to benefit from the relationship through the lure media attention provides for potential sponsors. Sponsorships driven by media coverage have also been on the increase since television and sport became intrinsically linked (Goodwin & Whannel, 1990). In addition to the revenue received from broadcasting rights, sports teams and individual athletes are often sponsored by companies who benefit from brand exposure to mass audiences through sports media coverage. Due to its visual nature, allowing organisations to have their brands exposed to mass audiences, television has become one of the leading media for sports coverage (Beck & Bosshart, 2003).

2.2.1 Television and Sport

Television's ability to transmit live sounds and images simultaneously to large audiences allows television broadcasters the opportunity to give their audiences a

sense of being present at the event — or perhaps even getting a better insight than live attendance, such as with the 'wired coaches and referees', 'play by play' analytic graphics, 'expert commentary' and other techniques first pioneered by NFL Films in the United States and now emulated by broadcasters around the world (NFL Media, 2008). Television has allowed sport to reach wider audiences than can be accommodated at the actual sports venues, and production techniques such as action replays, close-ups, slow motions and varying camera angles have added value for the sports fan (Whannel, 1992). The relationship between sport and television is very powerful and for some, television is the main interaction they have with sport. As Whannel notes:

Television has become central to the prominence of sport. Major sporting occasions draw enormous television audiences, sometimes over half the population... In becoming central to the world of sport, television has also transformed that world... For most of us, most of the time, sport is television sport. (1992, p.3)

The power of television to deliver mass audiences has resulted in sport being increasingly tailored to fit the media, with particular sports codes implementing changes to make themselves more media-friendly (Beck & Bosshart, 2003; Stevenson, 2002). For example, in recent years we have seen the introduction of 20/20 cricket to international sport. A shortened form of the one-day version (in itself designed for television), Agnew (2003, p.1) describes 20/20 as a "punchier" and "jazzed-up" version of cricket that is designed to fit neatly into a television schedule. Commercial demands have also led to the extension of regular sports seasons beyond their traditional playing months (McGregor & Fountaine, 1997). For example the Super Rugby competition has seen the rugby season abandon its traditional confinement as a winter sport, to an extended season that commences in February and continues through to the last of the All Black tours which typically takes place in November.

Television has also aggressively put pressure on sports to hold their events at convenient times for viewing, to modify rules in order to guarantee results, to prevent overtime, and to reduce dull moments that may tempt viewers to change the channel (Rowe, 1996). An example of this can again be witnessed in the Super Rugby competition which commenced in 1996 and was devised at the request of media organisations (and a \$700 million deal between southern hemisphere rugby organisations and Rupert Murdoch's News Corp) in order to leverage international

free-to-air and pay-TV opportunities (Rowe, 1996). In New Zealand, Super Rugby is broadcast on Murdoch's subscription based network, Sky TV. As one of the world's most powerful media moguls, Murdoch has effectively been able to buy and control the major rugby tournament in this country and indeed the southern hemisphere.

In New Zealand, where sport is a strong part of the culture (Harvey 2002; McGregor & Fountaine, 1997; McGregor & Melville, 1991), sport dominates the prime-time weekend viewing as well as the television news coverage throughout the week. Comrie and Fountaine (2005b) analysed television news and found that in 2003 sports news comprised around one third of the total news bulletin (31.4% of TVNZ's and 37% of TV3's). So dominant was the sports coverage that Comrie and Fountaine (2005b) noted that it accounted for more coverage than the next three topic categories combined. In addition to this, the research also found that sports news was not limited only to the sports segment of the news but often appeared within the first third of the news programme. With such a strong emphasis placed on sports news in this country it is important that what is being broadcast is diverse in its portrayal of athletes.

2.3.0 THE GENDERED NATURE OF NEWS MEDIA COVERAGE

The gendered nature of the news is a long-standing issue in media research. Media scholars argue that there is both an absence and a trivialisation of women in the news (Fountaine & McGregor, 1999; Kane & Greendorfer, 1994; McGregor & Fountaine, 2001).

In 2005 the third Global Media Monitoring Project (GMMP) took place with researchers from around the world investigating the representation of women in the media on a global scale. Researchers from 76 countries submitted data, which were then compared and analysed. In total, 12,893 news stories were included from television, radio and newspapers. The findings revealed that on February 16 2005 women were the subjects of just 21% of the world's news subjects. Although this was an increase of 4% on the 2000 GMMP findings, it still indicates a large gap between men's and women's presence in the media. Not only were women under-represented in the media but they were also disproportionately represented by topic, with more stories about women focusing on arts/entertainment, human rights, religion and celebrity subjects and fewer stories about women in areas of war, politics, science and sport (World Association for Christian Communication, 2007).

The 2005 report indicated that 28% of the world-wide news items in the 'celebrities, art and sports' category related to females. This world-wide average was a lot higher than that recorded in New Zealand on that day, where just 5% of the 'celebrities, art and sports' news items focused on women (World Association for Christian Communication, 2007). New Zealand, then, was considerably less gender balanced than the international average, in that particular study.

2.3.1 Media Representation of Women Athletes: International Findings

Sport is said to have traditionally been viewed as a male domain (George, Hartley & Paris, 2001; Kane & Greendorfer, 1994). Kane and Greendorfer (1994) believe this is the result of sport's physical nature where male physicality and superiority are esteemed. They contend that through biological differences between men and women, men "run faster, jump higher and throw farther than females" (Kane & Greendorfer, 1994, p 31). Of course, in agenda setting terms, the valuing of these characteristics is likely to reflect ways that 'faster, higher, and farther' are the attributes of sporting achievement *selected* for prominence and valuing — sports that valued female physical or biological characteristics might emphasise different physical qualities than speed and strength alone.

The media contribute to the dominance of men in the world of sport through their continued under-representation and trivialisation of sportswomen (Hargreaves, 1994). Historically, the media have not promoted and exposed women's sport. International content analyses of newspapers, television and radio have consistently found less media attention is given to female athletes, implying they are less important than male athletes and their sporting achievements less newsworthy (Hargreaves, 1994; Lenskyj, 1998; Menzies, 1989). There has not been a great amount of research in this area in New Zealand, particularly in the television medium which this study seeks to address.

Numerous international studies of print and televised media have established the consistent under-representation of sportswomen (Alexander, 1994; Boutilier and San Giovanni, 1983; Crossman, Hyslop, & Guthrie, 1994; Duncan & Messner, 2000; 2005; Eastman & Billings, 2000; Kane & Greendorfer, 1994; Koivula, 1999; Lever & Wheeler, 1984; Olafsson, 2006; Pederson, 2002; Theberge & Cronk, 1987; Toohey, 1997; Urquhart & Crossman, 1999; Vincent, 2004). For example Lever and Wheeler (1984) conducted a study of the Chicago Tribune's sports pages from

1900-1975. During this time the researchers found that although the total amount of sports coverage increased dramatically the amount of women's coverage did not increase as rapidly. In 1900 coverage of sportswomen accounted for 1.2% of the total coverage. This grew to 4% by 1950 but had only increased a further 1% by 1975.

Another longitudinal study was carried out by Boutilier and San Giovanni (1983). The researchers undertook a decade-long content analysis of American television channel NBC. They studied live sports coverage only, and found that in the 366 hours broadcast in the sample between August 1972 and September 1983 only one hour was coverage on sportswomen, demonstrating an enormous gap between coverage of male and female athletes. Boutilier and San Giovanni noted that it was common for live sports coverage to be of men's events, broadcast in entirety, whereas women's events were more likely to appear at the end of transmission, shown in edited fragments. They argued that this gave audiences a clear message that men's sport is more important than women's sport. The female events that were broadcast live were what Boutilier and San Giovanni described as gender-stereotyped sports such as ice-skating or gymnastics, coverage of which the authors described as "a mixture of amazement and bemusement, forced seriousness and patronising caution" (1983, p.190).

More recent studies have uncovered similar gender bias towards male athletes. Using content analysis, Duncan and Messner (2005) examined the changes in American television coverage of sportswomen from 1989 to 2004. They found that coverage of sportswomen in 2004 comprised approximately nine percent of all sports news sampled. This was only a four percent improvement on earlier levels, which were static at five percent in 1989 and five percent in 1998. Duncan and Messner found that what coverage did exist often trivialised women and treated them as sexual objects rather than athletes. For example, only three percent of the total sports news bulletins studied featured a lead story on a female athlete or sports team. Lead stories were regarded as the most important in the broadcast: they were often the longest and contained the highest production values, evident in multiple interviews, footage, montages and graphics (Duncan & Messner, 2005). Duncan and Messner (2005) said women's participation in sport had become more popular in the previous decade, with increases in women's participation evident at colleges, high schools and in the community. This, they said, demonstrated that the

excuse commonly used by the media for their lack of coverage, that no one cares about sportswomen, may not be accurate.

Investigations of the media's coverage of sportswomen in other countries have shown similar results. For example Koivula (1999), examined samples of televised sports news in Sweden during 1995/1996, and found that coverage of sportswomen made up less than ten percent of the total time allocated to sport. Furthermore, less than two percent of the coverage was on women athletes participating in what Koivula termed 'masculine sport' (e.g. soccer or rugby).

Examining the BBC television coverage of the 1991 World Athletic Championships, Alexander (1994) also identified a male gender bias in the coverage. Male competitors received 57 minutes of live coverage (58% of the total) with women athletes receiving 42 minutes of live coverage (42%). Although this differential is less than has been observed in other studies, the gender effect was particularly noticeable in the highlights coverage. Alexander's research found men received 20 minutes of highlights coverage (67%) and women only 10 minutes (33%). The difference in the live coverage versus highlighted coverage is significant as highlights coverage has more involvement from the media by way of construction and editing (Duncan & Messner, 2005). The results of Alexander's study show the effect of media editing. In this case sportswomen received 9% less coverage in the edited highlights than they did during live coverage.

Another study of British media investigated the inequalities of newspapers' sports reporting. Vincent (2004) compared the coverage of female and male tennis competitors at the 2000 Wimbledon tournament from three daily newspapers. Articles from *The Times*, *Daily Mail* and *The Sun* relating to Wimbledon were reviewed both quantitatively and qualitatively. Vincent (2004) reported the number of articles on male and female tennis players as relatively equitable with 41% of the news articles on women and 50% on men (9% were mixed gender). However, there was a more significant quantitative difference in the number of photographs printed. Male tennis players appeared in 53% of the photographs and female players in only 39% (the remainder were mixed gender).

Similar patterns of gender bias in newspapers' pictorial coverage were observed by Pedersen (2002). Pedersen conducted a content analysis of photographs featuring high school athletes, which appeared in daily Florida newspapers during one year.

To accurately compare the differences in male and female coverage, Pedersen tested the numbers of photographs against three independent standards: participation rates of males and females in high school athletics; the numbers of sports available to male and female athletes; and the enrolments of male and female students in Florida High Schools. The results found that photographic coverage again demonstrated a gender bias towards sportsmen, with male athletes receiving proportionately more coverage than females when measured against all three standards. For example, when measured against female participation rates, Pedersen recorded 270 photographs of female athletes, which was 23% less than expected when compared with participation rates. However, male photographs totalled 552, 17% more than expected based on participation rates.

Closer to New Zealand, the gender bias in coverage has been even greater in the Australian media. One of the early Australian researchers in this area, Menzies examined the coverage of sportswomen in Australia. In 1980 she analysed the sports coverage in both television and newspapers and found sportswomen to be greatly under-represented. Women accounted for only 2% of the total sports coverage in newspapers and a mere 0.025% of televised sports (Australian Sports Commission, 1985). In other research consisting of a longitudinal content analysis of two major Australian newspapers (*Sydney Morning Herald* and *Newcastle Herald*) from 1890 to 1990, Brown (1994, p 4) determined that women have been "the subject of "invisibility", "containment", and "stereotyping in the sporting press." Brown found that over the course of a century the amount of press coverage female athletes received increased from 0.8% in 1890 to just 13.2% in 1990. However, Brown argues that this increase is not driven by changing media attitudes towards sportswomen but by increases in the total amount of sports coverage. More recent findings from Stoddart's study in 1992 (cited in Toohey, 1997), found that women received 4% of newspaper sports coverage and just over 1% of televised sports coverage. These studies indicate that, twelve years on from Menzies' work, still very little progress can be documented towards equal representation of women athletes in the Australian media. In New Zealand, we do not have a similarly rich body of content analyses over time from which to draw comparisons, hence this study is one attempt to start to fill that gap. However there have been a handful of studies which help paint a picture of the situation in this country.

2.3.2 Gender Inequities of Sports Media Coverage in New Zealand

In New Zealand, sport is integral to the formation of dominant cultural identity (Harvey 2002; McGregor & Fountaine, 1997; McGregor & Melville, 1991), yet there are relatively few studies on the New Zealand media's coverage of sport. Those that do exist have supported international findings. McGregor and Fountaine's (1997) content analysis of six metropolitan and regional newspapers found that coverage of sportswomen had decreased from 12.4% of total sports news in 1992 to 4.4% in 1996. In response to media criticism surrounding the number of days included in previous studies, Fountaine and McGregor (1999) strengthened the 1996 study by including three sample weeks rather than one and also deliberately chose the week of the Women's Rugby World Cup Final. They found coverage of sportswomen constituted 11.4% of the sport sections, an improvement on 1996 but still not at the level recorded in 1992.

There is a lack of published research investigating the gender differences in New Zealand television coverage of sport. This is of concern, given the significance of the relationship between television and sport outlined in the previous discussion. Atkinson (2001), in a content analysis of TVNZ's six o'clock news, found that, over a year, coverage of sportswomen made up only 12% of total sports news. The majority of this content was of international sportswomen. Coverage of international female athletes accounted for 11% of the total sports coverage, leaving only 1% of the sports coverage for New Zealand sports women. Atkinson's study showed no improvement, and indeed a slight decrease in the amount of coverage for women compared with levels recorded in a previous analysis of TVNZ's sport news coverage by O'Leary & Roberts (1985), where 13% of the sports stories were dedicated to female athletes, 69% to males and 18% to mixed gender stories. Further research will indicate whether there has been any improvement in TVNZ's representation of women athletes in the last decade. Research done to date in New Zealand has also not investigated the representation of women athletes on privately-owned TV3, which, unlike TVNZ, is not bound by a public service charter. It is worth examining whether there is any difference in sport news coverage between the public service broadcaster TVNZ and its corporately owned competitor TV3, and whether there have been improvements in New Zealand television's coverage of sportswomen overall. Furthermore, Atkinson's and O'Leary and Robert's studies did not take qualitative aspects of the coverage into consideration. This reveals a significant gap in the discussion of New Zealand television news media's representation of sportswomen, which this research seeks to address.

2.3.3 Framing of Women Athletes

Inequality in the coverage of women in sport is not limited to the quantity of coverage they receive in comparison with males. Researchers have argued that not only have the media largely ignored female athletes but also that where they have featured, women have often been trivialised, stereotyped and sexualised by the media (Daddario, 1994; Duncan & Messner, 2000; 2005; Kane & Greendorfer, 1994; Messner et al., 1993). Across all media, women in sports news tend to be presented, or framed, in 'gendered' ways. Kane and Greendorfer write:

visual production techniques, language, terminology and commentary applied to women's sport are selectively imposed by the media to provide a highly stereotypical, feminised view – one that tends to sexualise, commodify, trivialise and devalue (through marginalisation) women's sporting accomplishments. (1999, p.36)

The framing research literature documents several recurring techniques used by the media to frame female athletes: the use of gender marking, positioning, infantilisation of female athletes, sexualisation and gender stereotyping (Duncan & Messner, 2000; 2005; Halbert & Latimer, 1994; Higgs, Weiller & Martin, 2003; Koivula, 1999; Messner et al., 1993; Weiller et al., 2004; Wensing & Bruce, 2003).

Gender marking, both visual and verbal, is any tendency by the media to identify or label sporting events by gender. For example, speaking about 'women's hockey' while describing men's hockey simply as 'hockey' would be gender marking the former event. Duncan and Messner (2005) argue that gender marking is noticeably more prevalent in coverage of sportswomen and that, through the continual gender labelling of women's events but not men's events, the media reinforce the perception of sport as a man's domain and create a sense of 'otherness' about women's sports events. Messner et al. (1993), in their extensive study of gendered language in television coverage of American basketball and tennis, found that there were repeated incidents of gender marking present in verbal descriptions of women's basketball, while men's basketball received no such marking. The authors also observed the visual use of gender marking, with score updates and captioning of the women's basketball clearly labelled as 'women's' with no equivalent visual indication on screen during the men's basketball. The authors counted instances of verbal gender marking, finding that 16% of the women's basketball games were verbally labelled as women's and none of the men's were labelled by gender.

Infantilisation is the term used to describe media references to women as girls or young ladies, or use of their first names rather than surnames. This technique was identified by several researchers around the world as more common in coverage of female athletes than male (Duncan & Messner, 2000; 2005; Halbert & Latimer, 1994; Higgs et al., 2003; Koivula, 1999; Weiller, Higgs, & Greenleaf, 2004; Wensing & Bruce, 2003). Messner et al. (1993) explain that, subordinates are usually referred to by first names, and dominants by surnames. They argue that in referring to women athletes by their first name and male athletes by their surname, the media elevate male athletes to higher status than female athletes. Richardson (2007) argues that the labels 'women' and 'men' connote maturity but these terms are more frequently used in describing males than females. Women are commonly labelled 'girls' or 'ladies'. Richardson argues that the use of 'ladies' as opposed to women trivialises females, especially as the opposite term 'gentlemen' is seldom used to describe men. Furthermore, she argues that women of all ages are often labelled as 'girls' yet the term 'boys' is usually reserved only for younger males. This, she suggests, connotes an implication that women are immature and lack the power and dominance of men. Duncan and Messner (2000) report that commentators on the US Tennis Open in 1999, were three times more likely to refer to women players by their first names than they were to refer to men by their first names, confirming their earlier findings from coverage of the 1993 US Tennis Open.

Another attribute of framing involves contextual cues about importance. Research indicates that prime positions in news lines up (e.g. early segments of television news, front pages in newspapers and website splash pages) have often been unavailable to female athletes (Brown, 1994; Jones, 2004; Kachgal, 2001; Urquhart & Crossman, 1999). Pedersen's (2002) study found that male athletes not only received more pictorial coverage than female athletes, but their photographs were also better positioned. Only 26.3% of female photographs appeared on the front page (above the crease) compared with 36.8% of male photographs. Positioning of news on male athletes in a more prominent position is an example of how media framing can marginalise women athletes by relegating them to lower profile positions, signalling contextually that their accomplishments are not as important as men's. Urquhart and Crossman (1999) found similar framing discrepancies in their analysis of Canadian newspapers' coverage of the Olympic Games from 1924 to

1992. Throughout this period women appeared in the first two pages of the sports section 7% of the time, and male athletes 41%.

Another marginalising framing technique, identified by Pedersen (2002), was that male athletes were more likely to have their photo printed in colour than female athletes. Pedersen argued that this disproportionate coverage further trivialised women athletes, reinforcing the dominance of male athletes. On a more positive note, Pedersen acknowledged that there was no significant difference in the way male and female athletes were posed in photos. This finding was contrary to other studies (Boutilier & SanGiovanni 1983; Duncan & Messner, 2000; 2005; Vincent Imwold, Masemann, Johnson, 2002) which have found that women are more likely than men to be depicted in a non-sporting context, rather than in an active sport setting. Boutilier and SanGiovanni (1983), for example, reported that 60% of the photographs of female athletes depicted them in non-sporting settings. Male athletes were only photographed in non-sporting settings 40% of the time. Framing women athletes in this way changes the focus from women as athletes to a more passive and sometimes more stereotypically 'feminine' image of women, especially if they are pictured in ways that suggest roles such as home-maker or mother, for example by being shown in their kitchen or with their children.

Numerous studies have documented examples of the media sexualising and gender stereotyping female athletes by portraying them in a family-role (e.g. wife, mother, sister etc.) (Daddario, 1994; Eastman & Billings, 1999; Kane & Greendorfer, 1994; Messner et al., 1993; Vincent et al., 2002). Kane and Greendorfer (1994) argue that although on the surface women athletes appear to be gaining more social acceptance, the messages that many media are portraying about female athletes are sexualised, feminised and stereotyped. For example, the researchers refer to the television coverage of the 1988 Olympic Games and the portrayal of Florence Griffith Joyner (who was demeaningly tagged by the media 'FloJo' and whose fingernail polish and hair styles received as much attention as her athletic results). Kane and Greendorfer (1994) argue that this type of portrayal undermines any athletic achievements female athletes make and again depicts them as less important than their male peers.

In New Zealand to date, there has been no published research investigating any differences in the way the television news media frame male and female athletes. This is a significant gap in the literature. This research's evaluation of this aspect

of media coverage will be beneficial in assessing the media's specific representations of sportswomen in this country.

2.4.0 COVERAGE OF MULTI-NATIONAL SPORTING EVENTS

As an international mega-event on the sporting circuit, the Olympics have been a focus for many researchers looking at the media's coverage of women athletes. Weiller et al. (2004) suggest that elite, international sporting events that are specifically packaged for mass consumption are key opportunities to reinforce ideologies about gender in sport. Analysing multi-sport events, such as the Olympic or Commonwealth Games, provides a basis by which media coverage can be critiqued and potentially improved in order to help bring about equality in the media's everyday coverage of sport (Toohey, 1997; Vincent et al., 2002). Toohey (1997) suggests that through studying the Australian media's coverage of such events, patterns of gender representation can be established and strategies developed for government and sporting organisations to lobby the media in an effort to change the representation of women athletes in regular sports coverage. Tuggle and Owen (1999) say that never has there been so much coverage for women athletes during the last 40 years as there has during the Olympics. Numerous authors (e.g. Brown, 1996; Capranica & Aversa, 2002; Capranica, Minganti, Billat, Hanghoi, Piacentini, Cumps, & Meeusen, 2005; Higgs et al., 2003; Jones, 2004; Toohey, 1997; Urquhart & Crossman, 1999; Vincent, et al., Weiller et al., 2004; Wensing & Bruce, 2003) support the claim that the amount of media coverage devoted to women athletes during the Olympic Games is higher than levels during regular sports coverage.

Urquhart and Crossman (1999) conducted a content analysis of the Winter Olympic coverage in Canadian newspapers *The Globe* and *Mail* between 1924 and 1960. The authors found that during this period female athletes accounted for 18% of the Winter Olympic participants and this was accurately reflected in the amount of press coverage received (19.6%). Furthermore, coverage of women athletes has been improving with time as in five of the eight most recent Games analysed, female athletes received more coverage in relation to participation than was given to male athletes. Although this study painted a positive picture for the representation of women athletes, it was only a quantitative approach and did not consider the qualitative differences that may have been evident in the way the coverage was framed.

Higgs et al., (2003), in their study of the 1996 Olympic Games, found that women received more media coverage in 1996 than they did in 1992. In six out of eleven sports, the coverage given to sportswomen improved. This improvement in the media's coverage was not only noted in quantitative terms but also qualitative, with gender marking, stereotyping and ambivalence in reporting all less evident in the commentary analysed.

There is growing empirical evidence to support the trend of improvement in women's coverage during the Olympic Games, although it must be acknowledged that gender equilibrium in media coverage has not yet been reached. Studies have noted that media coverage of the Games has not been totally free from trivialisation, stereotyping and sexual innuendo (Higgs et al., 2003; Vincent et al., 2002; Weiller et al., 2004).

With no data available on New Zealand's media coverage of the Olympic or Commonwealth Games, it is worthwhile considering studies that investigate the Australian media coverage of these types of events. Analysing the content of Australian television coverage on four networks during the 1992 Olympics, Toohey (1997, p.25) found coverage of women's events "far exceeded those found in previous surveys of regular programming". In 1992, women made up 37% of the Australian Games team and received 29.7% of the television coverage. Those results, while demonstrating an improvement on regular programming, were in fact lower than the results recorded during coverage of the 1988 Olympic Games where women athletes made up 27.4% of the Australian Games team and received 32.9% of the media coverage (Toohey, 1997). However, a problem that arises from these findings is their lack of consideration into the success of female athletes compared with male athletes. If women are more successful in winning medals at the Games than men it stands to reason that the media will pay them more attention than they would were they not as successful. Toohey's study does not evaluate the amount of coverage women received in relation to their success so it is impossible to know if the increased amount of coverage is in response to a successful contingent of female athletes at the Games.

Stevenson (2002) suggests that it is the national identification, fundamental to events such as the Olympics, that has led to women receiving more media attention during such events. Before they are seen as male or female, athletes are identified as a symbol of national identity. This idea is supported by the findings of

Wensing and Bruce (2003), who studied the media's portrayal of Australian gold medallist Cathy Freeman at the 2000 Olympic Games. The study found that the usual gender framing techniques of trivialisation, infantilisation, and stereotyping were absent from coverage of Freeman. The authors suggested her status as a national heroine offset the conventional techniques used by the media to frame female athletes.

Alexander (1994) suggests that it is axiomatic that those who produce television news are going to consider medal winners more newsworthy and therefore coverage will skew towards national successes. Given the importance of national identity in the media's selection and framing of sport, it would be worthwhile to consider the coverage of women athletes in relation to their success at a large event such as the Olympic or Commonwealth Games. To respond to the media's natural tendency to give more coverage to successful athletes, this study not only takes into consideration the participation rates of New Zealand women athletes, but also their medal success when considering the news media's coverage of the Games.

2.5.0 WHERE ARE THE WOMEN SPORTS JOURNALISTS?

Several studies have noted that men not only dominate sports coverage but they are also more heavily represented in sports journalism, television operations, and media management (Duncan & Messner, 2000; McGregor & Melville, 1991; Theberge & Cronk, 1986). Urquhart and Crossman (1999) found, in their analysis of Olympic press coverage that only 6.3% of articles were written by women. Alexander (1994) found a similar lack of female sports journalists in her analysis of sports coverage in the British press, where of the 81 reporters in the study, only one was a woman.

McGregor and Fountaine (1997) comment that although there has been increased participation of New Zealand women in journalism, this has not filtered into sports journalism which remains dominated by men. Females in positions of media management are also not common, particularly in the corporately owned sector (McGregor, 2006). In New Zealand there are a number of female news anchors, both in the general news as well as a handful of female sports anchors, TVNZ's Jenny-May Coffin and former sports anchor April Bruce as well as Prime television's Kelly Swanson-Roe. However, these personalities are primarily responsible for the presentation of the stories and do not necessarily influence the

selection and production of the content they present. McGregor (2006) argues that only by having women in positions of influence will there be an increased female perspective in the news. If McGregor's assertion is correct, more women in management and editorial positions will result in a change to coverage levels. However, McGregor's opinion is not universally shared. For example, Pedersen, Whisenhart and Schneider (2003) argue that female and male journalists, photographers and editors are equally responsible for the under-representation of women athletes. In their study they identified that almost 33% of newspaper articles published under female editors were on female athletes, compared to approximately 31% on sportswomen that were published under the guidance of male editors. Pedersen et al. (2003) argue these findings suggest female media personnel adopt traditional news values and reflect commercial pressures to focus on sportsmen as a priority over sportswomen. This research project will record the gender of the journalists used to report on the Games to investigate whether male journalists are more heavily represented than female.

2.6.0 CONCLUSION

Although research has shown for many years that sports coverage is not gender-equitable, the importance of this topic has not diminished. The media mould and shape public opinion, attitudes and even behaviours through both the content they choose to publish or broadcast and the ways that they frame such content. Traditionally they have focused heavily on the powerful and dominant groups in society, resulting in others, women in particular, being pushed to the background or ignored completely. Research both here in New Zealand and internationally has demonstrated that the media have supported the dominance of men in the area of sport through the under-representation and trivialisation of sportswomen.

Under-reporting of women athletes by the media sends a message that female athletes are not as valued as male athletes. Furthermore, when women have received media attention it is often framed in a way that is trivialising or marginalising. For example, news stories featuring sportswomen are not given the higher profile positions in the news line-up, or they contain gender marking or infantilisation.

In Britain, Canada, America and Australia the media's representation of sportswomen is a widely researched topic by those interested in the media and equality of gender representation. However, in New Zealand there is a paucity of

recent research in this area, particularly investigating television coverage. There has also been little qualitative analysis on the coverage given to sportswomen in New Zealand. This research project seeks to illuminate any gender bias shown by the television media in the way sport is framed.

International studies have found that media coverage of multi-national sporting events has, to some extent, defied the trend of under-representation, with women athletes receiving more coverage than they are generally afforded, although the framing of this coverage has remained gendered. Studies in New Zealand have focused on the media coverage of daily sports reporting rather than international events such as the Olympics or Commonwealth Games. In response to this, this project is designed to bring a New Zealand perspective into the discussion of the media's representation of sportswomen, using the coverage of a multi-national event – the Commonwealth Games.

The following chapter will discuss the methodology employed in the study. It will provide the theoretical framework within which this research operates, the justification for its use, and the process by which the research was carried out.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

3.0 INTRODUCTION

Having identified gaps in the research on women's representation in New Zealand's sports news coverage generally, and large event coverage specifically, 2006 provided an excellent opportunity to investigate the news media's coverage of a multi-national sporting event, namely the Commonwealth Games. The purpose of this investigation was to examine the amount and nature of prime-time television news coverage given to male and female athletes during the 2006 Commonwealth Games. The specific questions directing the research were:

1. How much New Zealand prime-time television news coverage on two key channels was given to male athletes compared with female athletes during the 2006 Commonwealth Games and how does this compare to their participation and success levels?
2. Were there differences in the way male and female athletes were framed in the sports news coverage, and if so, what was the nature of these differences?
3. Were there differences between the two television broadcasters in their levels or framing of coverage by gender?

In response to the first research question, this study employed content analysis to measure the quantitative elements of coverage such as the amount of time spent reporting on male and female athletes. The second research question called for investigation into any differences in the nature of the coverage male and female athletes received. To examine these qualitative differences in the coverage, frame analysis was employed. This chapter discusses both types of analysis in relation to theory, highlights their strengths, limitations and provides justification for their use. The chapter then outlines the specific procedures used in carrying out the research.

3.1.0 CONTENT ANALYSIS

Content analysis is an essential tool in exploring the messages embedded within media content (Frey, Botan & Kreps, 2000; Riffe, Lacy & Fico, 1998; Vincent, Imwold, Masemann, & Johnson, 2002). Developed as a tool for studying mass media and communication, content analysis has its roots in the nineteenth century where it was used to study the religious messages in hymns (Frey et al., 2000). It was later used as a method of analysing quantitative aspects of newspapers and is now one of the most dominant methods of examining the content of mass communication (Frey et al., 2000).

Content analysis has frequently been used as the methodology for investigating the under-representation of sportswomen (e.g. Alexander, 1994; Duncan & Messner, 2000; 2005; Messner, Duncan, & Jensen, 1993; Vincent et al., 2002). It has enabled researchers to analyse the presence and portrayal of women athletes in various media, including magazines, newspapers, radio and television.

3.1.1 Definition

Berelson (cited in Hansen, Cottle, Negrine, & Newbold, 1998, p. 94) defined content analysis as "a research technique for the objective, systematic, and quantitative description of the manifest content of communication". However, there has been a great deal of controversy regarding the notion that content analysis can be objective. Hansen et al. (1998, p. 95) indicate that in this methodology, as with all scientific research, objectivity is an "impossible ideal". The authors argue that in all content analysis certain aspects of the text studied are selected for analysis, and in selecting these aspects the researcher is making a values-based decision, indicating that there cannot be complete objectivity. Scholars have since removed the concept of objectivity from the definition, choosing instead to place the focus on systematic examination. Riffe et al. (1998, p.20), provide the following definition:

[Content Analysis is the] systematic and replicable examination of symbols of communication, which have been assigned numeric values according to valid measurement, rules, and the analysis of relationships involving those values using statistical methods, in order to describe the communication, draw inferences about its meaning, or infer from the communication to its context, both production and consumption.

Within the above definition lie two key ideas, 'systematic' and 'replicable'. To be systematic requires the identification of the key concepts, for instance, what is it that is being researched? The research requires a timeframe within which it is carried out and a medium or media that forms the focus of the research. The concept of content analysis being systematic also encompasses the necessity for reliable and consistent coding, mutually exclusive and clearly defined categories. The second concept, replication, indicates the ability for the research to be carried out by another researcher and the findings to be reproduced (Riffe et al., 1998). In order for content analysis to be replicated, Riffe et al. indicate that the research definitions, research design and operational definitions must be accurately and clearly explained.

Riffe et al. (1998) emphasise that content analysis should be used to identify manifest messages in texts and not to draw conclusions about messages in the communication. There are problems that emerge if analysis goes beyond considering manifest messages as researcher subjectivity comes into play. Riffe et al. assert that symbols change over time and between cultures and the latent meaning that one researcher draws from a communication may not be common to others. However, this view is not held by all theorists, as Krippendorff (1980) argues, researchers may draw inferences about the context in which a message is created as well as the characteristics of those who have produced the message. This research uses content analysis to consider the manifest only, employing frame analysis to look more closely at the message the media convey about male and female athletes.

3.1.2 Strengths of Content Analysis

The advantages of content analysis are outlined by Krippendorff (1980). Firstly, content analysis is an unobtrusive method of research because, as existing media texts are studied, there is no requirement for participants to become involved in the research (as there is with surveys or questionnaire-based methodologies). Secondly, the researcher has the opportunity to capture the data in the context in which it occurs. Even though data may be recorded or collected and analysed at a later date, it can still be analysed in the environment or context in which it was originally presented; whereas methodologies such as interviewing or observation may require researchers to observe participants' behaviour or responses in a

simulated environment. Finally, Krippendorff explains that the methodology is highly effective for handling vast quantities of data. Content analyses have been conducted on large numbers of texts, spanning many years, for example, Boutillier and San Giovanni (1983), used content analysis to examine American television network, NBC's live sports coverage between 1972 and 1983, recording over 366 hours of television, which they were then able to use to evaluate the coverage of sportswomen during this decade.

In addition to these advantages, scholars also point to the ability of content analysis to track changes in mass communication over time (Fountaine & McGregor, 1999; Frey et al., 2000; Riffe et al., 1998). An example of this can be seen in the Global Media Monitoring Project, a content analysis looking at media coverage of women around the world, with the analysis taking place in 1995, 2000 and 2005, allowing for improvements or reductions in the media's representation of women to be monitored over time (World Association for Christian Communication, 2007).

3.1.3 Limitations of Content Analysis

As with all methodologies, there are a series of limitations associated with content analysis, for example, as Holsti (1969) warns, too much emphasis can be placed on the empirical aspects of content analysis. He suggests that if the researcher is not careful this may lead to the trivialisation of mass communication research. Riffe et al. (1998) agree that trivialisation could be a potential limitation but argue that the trivialisation is more likely to come from a triviality in the research questions than through the use of content analysis.

Content analysis has also received criticism from some feminist researchers. These criticisms again surround the use of content analysis in a highly quantitative manner, with the feminist researchers indicating that qualitative methodologies are more informative in uncovering gender bias present in mass communication. For example, Lubeke (1992) has called for scholars to cease using content analysis as a methodology in researching women's representation in the media. Lubeke argues that counting images is no longer enough and encourages researchers to channel their energy into devising ways to teach women how to change media portrayal. However, McGregor (1993), although accepting Lubeke has an important point, takes a different view. She suggests that content analysis should be used as a

means to an end, rather than an end in itself, aiming to “produce knowledgeable action, not just knowledge of the problem” (McGregor, 1993, p1). It is also pertinent to note, as previously discussed, that researchers often combine quantitative methods such as content analysis with more qualitative analyses which allow for more consideration to be placed on the latent messages the media are expressing through their various communications, thereby placing less emphasis on purely counting variables. It is such a combination that this study employs by using content analysis in conjunction with frame analysis.

3.2.0 FRAME ANALYSIS

In presenting the news, media guide their audiences' understandings by using what media scholars commonly refer to as framing. Theory and research on framing is useful to help us understand the nature of the influence the media has on public opinion about particular issues (Entman, 1993). Frame analysis is used in this study to examine the various gendered attributes of sports coverage during the 2006 Commonwealth Games news coverage and infer the dominant messages being communicated, thereby going beyond just counting occurrences. Billings and Eastman (2003, p. 571) highlight the importance of considering the frames used by the media, arguing that “prolonged exposure to television will alter viewers' perception of society”. They argue that the more times television audiences witness repeated treatment of athletes in a particular way, the more likely they are to consider athletes in that way in general.

3.2.1 Definition

Frames can be described as schemata of interpretation that draw attention to a dominant perspective on a particular issue and encourage a specific interpretation of what is being described (McCombs, 2004). They are the central themes or ideas in a story and provide an interpretation of meaning. Entman's (1993) definition, detailed in Chapter Two is useful for understanding media frames in action. Essentially he argues that what the media choose to highlight in the news reported becomes perceived as important, and what they choose to neglect, irrelevant. Journalists or news editors can consciously or unconsciously choose to highlight particular elements of the news they are reporting and, similarly, ignore others. As the literature reviewed in Chapter Two revealed, in sports reporting the media have been shown to most frequently present sport as a masculine activity with male athletes framed in a manner that emphasises their strength and dominance in the

sporting arena. Sportswomen are often presented as being of secondary importance and women athletes not reported on as frequently and framed in a way that positions them as subordinate to male athletes.

Although framing has been shown to be very powerful in influencing public opinion (Entman, 1993; Kahneman & Tversky, 1984) it is important to note that messages highlighted by the media may not always be interpreted by audiences in the way they were intended. Noting this to be the case, Schufele (1999) outlines two types of frames, the media frame and the frame of the individual. Schufele (1999) argues that while the media frame refers to the way in which the media present or package information, also active is the individual frame which he describes as the scheme of reference the receiver uses to understand the information conveyed. This study does not investigate the opinions or attitudes of television news audiences and therefore can only consider the media frames evident in the coverage, but agenda setting studies over the past three decades (Cohen, 1975; Benton & Frazier, 1976; McCombs 1997); Takeshita & Mikami, 1995) have indicated consistently that we can extrapolate from media frames to subsequent audience frames over time. This study makes the assumption, then, that what happens in coverage of sportswomen in the media *is* important for how women and sport will be understood in New Zealand society as a whole.

3.2.2 Frame Analysis in Action

Studies of mass media have used frame analysis to investigate various messages conveyed by the media, including gender representation. One such study was that of Billings and Eastman (2003) who considered the way in which the media's framing of the 2002 Olympic Games was influenced by gender, ethnicity and national parity. The researchers chose this method of analysis because "framing theory supports the claim that portrayals of gender, ethnicity and nationality are altered through a network-controlled shaping function in which discourse and images are manipulated to appeal to the desired or anticipated Olympic viewing audience" (Billings & Eastman, 2003, p 571).

Another example is from Messner et al. (1993), whose study of television coverage of American basketball and tennis highlighted the framing of women athletes as inferior to male athletes through the media's tendency to use gender marking in

their commentary and visual labelling of women's sport. The researchers also found that journalists were more likely to refer to women athletes by their first name and male athletes by their surname, thereby elevating male athletes to a higher status than female athletes. Irrespective of whether journalists' use of these techniques was deliberate or otherwise, they constituted evidence of media framing of a particular subject.

The way that news is framed can significantly affect the way consumers of the news understand or interpret the information conveyed. Frames can include elements that Tilley (2005, p. 149) describes as "contextual cues" which, although not part of the actual content, help the content to be interpreted. Contextual clues give an indication of significance, largely indicated through the amount of space or time the media allocates to an issue (McQuail, 2005). Contextual cues can also be seen in the use of sources or even in the positioning of the news item. For example, Duncan and Messner (2005) outline that in sports news coverage, lead stories are regarded as the most important in the broadcast. In their study of American television sports coverage between 1989 and 2004 they found that only 3% of the total sports news articles recorded featured a lead story about female athletes. From these findings they concluded that through this framing technique the media put a higher priority on sportsmen than sportswomen and sent a message to their audience that sportsmen are of greater importance than sportswomen.

Frame analysis was employed in this study to complement the quantitative aspect of the content analysis with a more qualitative view on the media's representation of women at the 2006 Commonwealth Games. This specific procedures used in the content and frame analyses is explained in the following section.

3.3.0 RESEARCH PROCEDURES

Discussion to this point has been focused towards the theoretical framework supporting the justification of the research methods selected. The remainder of this chapter will concentrate on the specific steps taken in carrying out the research. The coding protocol referred to in the procedure description is included in Appendix A.

3.3.1 Content Analysis Procedures

Content analysis is said to be typically sequential in nature (Krippendorff, 1980) with each step in the process leading on to the next. The first step requires the selection of the texts to be observed (Frey et al., 2000).

Sample

In this research, television news was chosen as the text to be studied. This medium was selected for three reasons; firstly, as highlighted in Chapter Two, due to the symbiotic relationship of sport and television and secondly, television is relatively under-researched in the discussion of the media's representation of sportswomen in New Zealand, and thirdly due to television news' highly edited, framed and intervened coverage as compared with live coverage.

Although the Commonwealth Games was broadcast on television in special programmes outside the news coverage, the text has been narrowed to focus on television news coverage only. As the news is considered highly influential and is widely consumed (Harvey, 2002) it was judicious to use this as the text for the research. With the interest of this research lying in the selection and framing aspects of sport coverage it was worthwhile to select the prime-time news as the key medium to study rather than the less edited special programming on the Games. Using the news as the text is also more comparative with other New Zealand studies on the media's coverage of sportswomen (i.e. Atkinson, 2001; O'Leary & Roberts, 1985). Finally, due to time limitations, the quantity of data needed to be managed, and limiting media coverage to that of prime-time news aided in controlling the amount of data collected for analysis.

Developing Content Categories

Developing appropriate categories is crucial in the design of content analysis research. Categories must be mutually exclusive and defined in such a way as to capture data that reflects what is being asked by the research questions (Frey et al., 2000). Riffe et al. (1998) argue that the simpler, more manifest the categories, the higher the chances are of achieving reliability, as the categories are more easily recognisable and coding can therefore be more effectively carried out.

To evaluate the representation of women athletes during the news coverage of the 2006 Commonwealth Games, this study's coding protocol used the following descriptive categories: date, duration of news item in seconds, network, gender of sport subject, and gender of journalist. These categories were determined from thorough consideration of the literature reviewed in Chapter Two to identify the areas worth analysing in the discussion of the media's representation of sportswomen. Coding the stories by network allows both the public service broadcaster TVNZ and the privately owned TV3 to be reviewed, permitting comparisons in the coverage between these two networks.

The gender of the athlete(s) focused on in each story was recorded as male, female, mixed or background. Stories were coded as mixed if they contained news on mixed team sports, for example mixed badminton. News items were categorised as background if they pertained to the Commonwealth Games but did not report on sporting aspects or specific athletes. These included reports on the opening and closing ceremonies, medal tally disappointment, and political issues brought up by the Games. The length of time spent reporting was recorded for each news item. The gender of the journalist was also recorded to examine the comparative percentage of male and female sports journalists throughout the coverage.

The coding protocol also recorded various elements relating to the sources in the story, including the gender of the source, the number of sources used, and the relationship of the source to the subject or sport code. It was considered necessary to investigate the sources used by the media in reporting on sport to evaluate any differences that existed between the sources used in items relating to female athletes and those relating to male athletes. For example, did the media rely more heavily on male sources than female sources? For the purpose of this research a source is defined as any person or organisation in the sports news story who is interviewed by the journalist or sports anchor or who provides a statement (either written or verbal) to the network.

Determining Units of Analysis

There are four general types of units: physical, referential, syntactical and thematic (Krippendorff, 1980; Frey et al., 2000). Physical units are described by Frey et al.

(2000) as the space and time devoted to particular content. Physical units form the base unit used in this study. Individual news stories are believed to be the most logical unit of measurement for television news (McGregor, 1993) and, as such, formed the base unit for this study. News broadcasts for both television networks were recorded for the duration of the sample period. From these broadcasts, the individual sports news stories within each broadcast formed the individual units of the study. For the purpose of this study, a sports news item was operationally defined as any news report within a news programme, which contained reference to the Commonwealth Games or a participant or team competing at the Games. This may be either within the sports section of the news or the general section of the news.

Within the unit of analysis there is often a unit of enumeration by which a category and unit can be quantifiably measured (Kaid & Wadesworth, 1989). The unit of enumeration used in this research is the duration in seconds of each news item recorded.

Following the development of units and categories, the units must then be appropriately categorised by the coder(s) (Frey et al., 2000). In this research this was completed by the principal researcher through the use of a coding protocol (see Appendix A). It has been noted that, "the protocol's importance cannot be overstated. It is the document record that defines the study in general and the coding rules applied to content in particular" (Riffe et al., 1998, p109). Krippendorff (1980) states that explicitness is critical in the research process in order for peers to evaluate and assess the research carried out. The coding protocol sheet contains details of the categories used in this study, illustrating the way in which the units of text were categorised. The principal researcher carried out a pilot coding on six of the sample's news items before finalising the coding protocol. In addition to the coding protocol, there was a list of operational definitions, outlining the criteria of categories and units in the study. The operational definitions for this study are included in Appendix B.

3.3.2 Frame Analysis Procedures

Framing attributes were examined to evaluate any differences in the way the media portrayed male and female athletes. The framing analysis employed in this study

was largely based on research conducted by Weiller, Higgs and Greenleaf (2004), and considered the presence of gender marking, hierarchy of naming, gender stereotyping, focus of the news item (for example, did the news item focus on sport or was it directed toward the personal life of the athlete?). In addition to these framing attributes the research also considered tone of news items and sources used by the media, based on similar methodologies previously used by Tuggle and Owen (1999) and Olafssen (2006).

Gender marking

Gender marking is used by the media to identify a sports event as either men's or women's. Through the repeated labelling of women's events, placing no such label on men's events, the media reinforce the hegemonic masculinity of sport and create a sense of 'otherness' about sportswomen (Duncan & Messner, 2000). This research required coders to record any occurrences of gender marking in either the verbal commentary or the visual cues on screen. Coders were asked to describe the gender marking and indicate whether it related to male or female athletes. The research also required coders to note whether the gender marking was carried out by the journalists or by the sources or athletes themselves. Although the guiding research design (Weiller et al., 2004) did not investigate this, it was of interest to this study to examine whether or not the athletes or other sources were labelling themselves in this manner or if it was exclusively carried out by the media.

Hierarchy of naming

Infantilisation of women athletes is the term researchers use to refer to the media's labelling of women as 'girls' or 'young ladies' or use of their first names rather than their surnames. Messner et al. (1993) explain that subordinates are usually referred to by their first name and dominants by their surnames. Following the research of Weiller et al. (2004) this study examined hierarchy of naming by looking at the use of the terms 'boys' or 'girls' to describe men or women and the reporters' use of first names rather than surnames. Coders were required to describe any instances of these descriptors.

Gender stereotyping

Investigating gender stereotyping requires analysis of the media discourse used to frame athletes (Daddario, 1994). To carry this out, coders were instructed to look for occurrences of athletes being referred to in a gender typical fashion (i.e. wife, mother, son, father etc). Coders were also required to record and describe any

examples of women athletes being referred to as emotional, weak, or graceful and male athletes as strong, tough and dominant.

Positioning

Pedersen (2002) found photographs of male athletes received more favourable positions in the pages of the newspaper with higher readership than female athletes. In television, the general news section, particularly the first segment of the news, often contains the stories that the editorial team consider to have the highest public interest. Similarly in the sports section, the story which is deemed to be most important is generally the lead sports story (Duncan & Messner, 2005). The positioning of all stories was therefore recorded to examine whether or not male and female athletes were framed differently in this regard. The position of the story in the news programme was categorised into: general news segment; lead item in sports segment, subsidiary sports items after the lead sports item. The general news segment was defined as any part of the news that fell outside the sports section. The lead sports news item was the first in the sports segment which was easily identified through the visual banners presented on screen as well as the segue from the news being presented by the general news anchors to the sport's anchor. The subsidiary sports category was for all remaining news items in the sports section, other than the lead item.

Focus of the news story

As Weiller et al. (2004) also investigated, this study examined examples of personal life stories regarding the Commonwealth Games athletes. News items were categorised as focusing on personal life if it related to family matters, health (although not Games injury related) or the personal life events of the athletes. In addition to this, coders were also required to categorise stories that related to sponsorship matters. This was an additional framing attribute to those used by Weiller et al. (2004) and, given the connections between status, sponsorship and media identified in the literature review, sought to investigate whether male athletes featured more prevalently in news items relating to sponsorship.

Tone

Previous studies indicate male and female athletes have also been differentiated by the tone taken by journalists in their reporting. Male athletes have often been framed more positively through increased praise and less criticism than their female

counterparts (Duncan & Hasbrook, 1988; Olafssen, 2006). As this type of framing can undermine women's performances (Halbert & Latimer, 1994), this study considers the overall tone taken by the journalist in each news item. News items were categorised into positive, negative or neutral. This was a subjective measure based on the coder's own opinion of the tone, however, the Kappa measure for intercoder reliability for this variable was 0.943, indicating strong inter-coder reliability on this variable.

3.4.0 RELIABILITY

Neuendorf (2002) explains that inter-coder reliability is important as it validates the coding protocol, demonstrating its ability to be used by various coders to achieve similar results. Inter-coder reliability was tested in this study using Cohen's kappa. A composite sample of 10% (19 news items) was coded by an assistant coder. The news items coded by the assistant represented a cross-section of the male, female, mixed, and background categories. Reliability was found to be 0.989. As a Kappa level of .75 or above is indicative of excellent agreement outside of that expected by chance (Neuendorf, 2002), the level of Kappa demonstrated through the inter-coder testing of this study indicates a high level of reliability has been achieved.

3.5.0 CONCLUSION

This chapter has provided the rationale for this project's use of content and frame analysis to investigate the media's representation of women athletes at the 2006 Commonwealth Games and overviewed the particular measures applied.

To investigate the quantitative difference in the coverage afforded to male and female athletes, the research employed content analysis. This method was selected due to its systematic and empirical handling of substantial quantities of data. The research investigated the number of news items dedicated to male and female athletes, the amount of time spent broadcasting on each gender of athlete and the gender of the journalist reporting each item of news. Further quantitative aspects were also analysed to contribute to the discussion surrounding the framing of the news, including the number of male and female sources used in news items reporting on male and female athletes.

The second research question calls for a more qualitative consideration of the data. Frame analysis was employed to investigate whether the media treated male and

female athletes differently in their presentation of the news. This part of the analysis considered gender marking, infantilisation, sexualisation, stereotyping, position, tone, and the use of sources.

As this chapter has dealt with the design and procedures of this research, focus can now turn to the results of this study and discussion on the state of New Zealand's television news coverage of women athletes at the 2006 Commonwealth Games. Detailed results from the study are provided in Chapter Four, and these results form the basis for discussion in Chapter Five.

CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS

4.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the results of content and frame analyses carried out on New Zealand prime-time television news coverage of the 2006 Commonwealth Games. Using the coding protocol detailed in Appendix A, all news items reporting on the Commonwealth Games during the 6pm news on TV One and TV3 between March 8 and April 2, 2006, were analysed.

As well as examining the overall television coverage, the results for each television network were compared. The aim was to explore whether there were any differences between the coverage of TVNZ, a state-owned broadcaster bound by a public service charter, and TV3, owned by a large international private media company.

The results were also considered in relation to the number of male and female New Zealand athletes competing at the 2006 Commonwealth Games and their success at the Games, as measured by the number of medals won. By this means the research was able to investigate relationships between participation or success and coverage levels for male and female athletes.

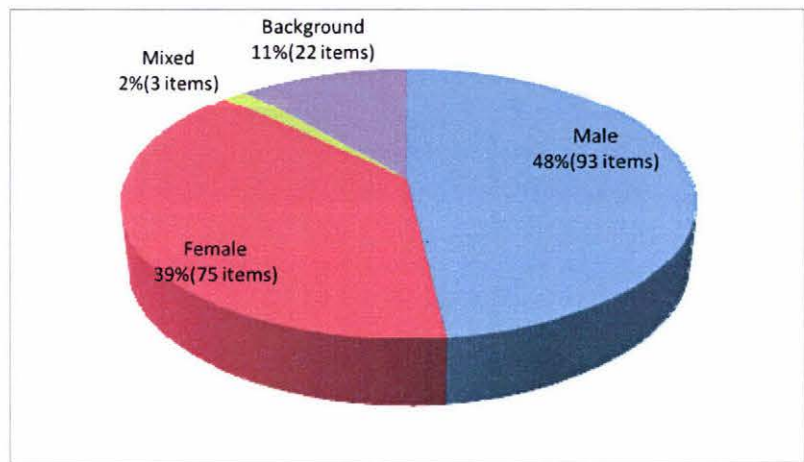
4.1.0 COVERAGE LEVELS BY GENDER

The amount of television news coverage devoted to male and female athletes was measured both by recording the time spent on news reports featuring male athletes, female athletes, mixed teams, and background topical information, as well as by counting the number of news items for each of the above categories.

4.1.1 Number of News Items Broadcast

In the research sample time-frame, the networks broadcast a combined total of 193 news items relating to the 2006 Commonwealth Games. As shown in Figure One, of these news items, 93 (48%) focused on male athletes, 75 (39%) on female athletes, 3 (2%) on mixed gender sports teams and the remaining 22 (11%) were categorised as background news items.

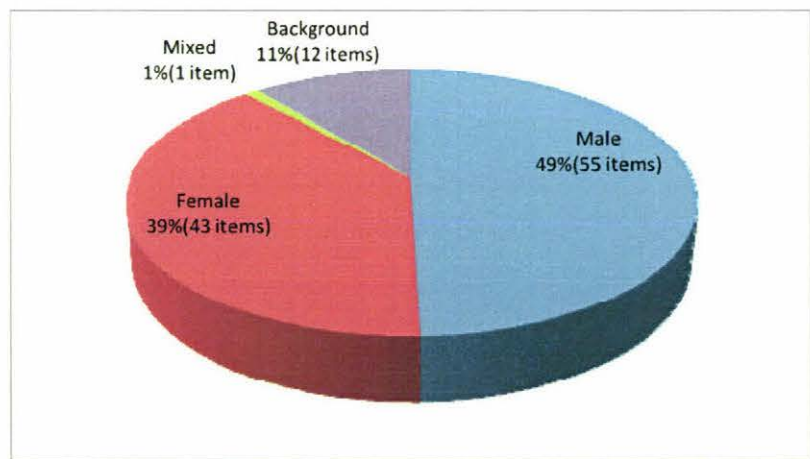
Figure 1: Total number of news items – combined networks



The items in the background category consisted of reports on the opening and closing ceremonies, medal tallies, athletes from Sierra Leone going missing, and reports on the political fallout surrounding New Zealand Prime Minister Helen Clark’s decision not to make an appearance in Melbourne to support the team.

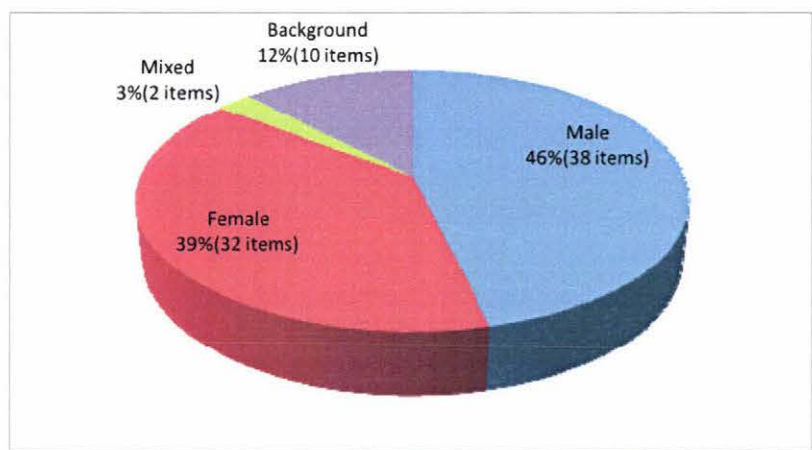
The difference between the percentage of news items focusing on male athletes and those focusing on female athletes did not vary greatly between the two networks studied. Figure Two shows the breakdown of the news items by category for TVNZ and Figure Three the breakdown for TV3. On both the networks 39% of the news items focused on female athletes.

Figure 2: Total number of news items – TVNZ



TVNZ broadcast a total of 111 news items on the Commonwealth Games. The results indicate a bias towards reporting on male athletes with 49% (55 news items) of the news items reporting on this category. The network broadcast 10% fewer news items on women athletes than male athletes with a total of 43 news items (39%) recorded in this category. There was only one mixed category news item included in TVNZ's coverage, on mixed badminton, with the remaining 12 news items (11%) falling into the background category.

Figure 3: Total number of news items – TV3



There were fewer news items broadcast on TV3's coverage of the Games than TVNZ's, with a total of 82 news items recorded. TV3 again showed a tendency to report more on male athletes than female athletes. However, the difference between these two categories was smaller on TV3 with 46% (38 news items) focusing on male athletes and 39% (32 news items) on female athletes. There were 2 (3%) news items recorded in the mixed category and 10 (12%) in the background category on TV3.

4.1.2 Time Spent Reporting

The networks broadcast a total of 180.25 minutes of coverage on the Commonwealth Games. Table One displays the combined time spent broadcasting on each category by both networks. The time spent reporting on the Commonwealth Games shows a significantly greater difference between the coverage given to male and female athletes than was observed in the number of news items. Coverage of male athletes accounted for approximately 78 minutes which was 43% of the total time of Commonwealth Games reporting. Coverage of

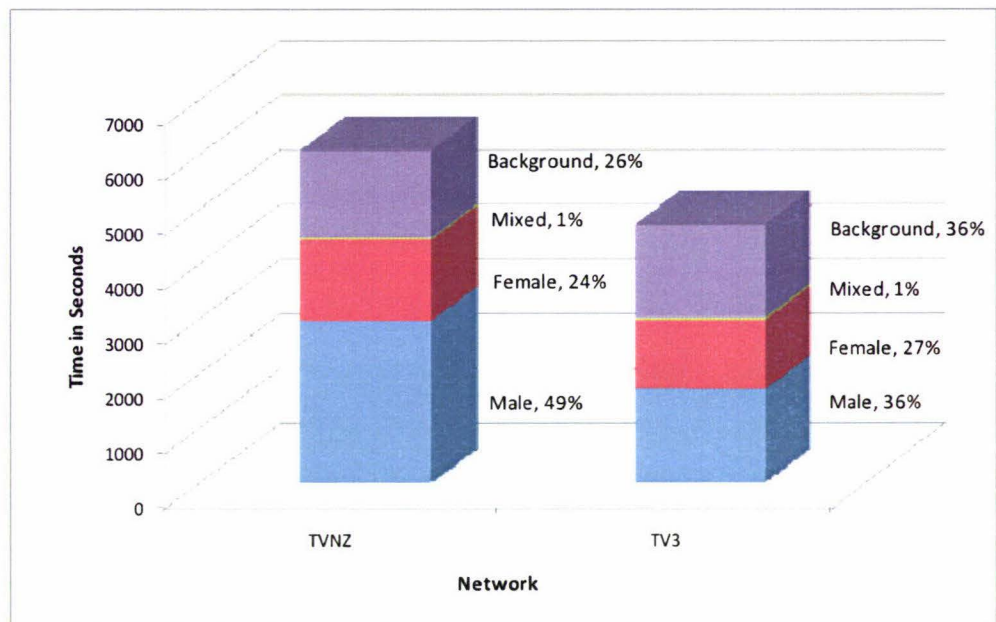
female athletes only accounted for approximately 46 minutes, just 25% of the coverage. 55 minutes (30%) of the time was spent on background reporting.

Table 1: Length of coverage (seconds) – combined networks

Category of news item	Time	%
Male	4695	43%
Female	2747	25%
Mixed	80	1%
Background	3293	30%
Total	10815	100%

Just as TVNZ had more news items covering the Games than TV3, the network's time spent broadcasting was longer with 101 minutes of coverage on TVNZ and 79 minutes on TV3. As Figure Four shows, the gender bias towards sportsmen was more pronounced on TVNZ than on TV3. TVNZ spent approximately 50 minutes reporting on male athletes, which represented 49% of its total Games coverage. This was more than twice the amount of time it spent reporting on female athletes who received only 24% of the coverage (circa 25 minutes).

Figure 4: Length of coverage by network



TV3 had a slightly higher proportion of time spent reporting on female athletes than its rival network with 27% (21 minutes) of the time spent focusing on women athletes. However, this was still less than the time spent reporting on sportsmen which accounted for 36% of the time and totalled approximately 29 minutes. TV3 spent proportionately more time reporting on background news items than TVNZ, TV3 having 36% of its time dedicated to this category and TVNZ just 26%.

4.1.3 Average Length of News Item

Table Two shows the average length of time given to news items in the four categories. Overall, the average length of a news item was 56 seconds, with the background category, at 149 seconds, far exceeding this average. The average length of news items again demonstrates an inequality between the coverage of male and female athletes, with the male-focused news stories averaging just over 50 seconds per news item and the female-focused category just over 36 seconds.

Table 2: Average length of news item (seconds) – combined networks

Category of Item	Time
Male	50.48
Female	36.63
Mixed	26.67
Background	149.68
Overall	56.04

The media’s gender bias towards male athletes was again more evident on the state-owned network when considering the average length of news items. As illustrated by Table Three, TVNZ’s news items focusing on male athletes were an average of 54.11 seconds, nearly 20 seconds longer than those focusing on female athletes (34.35 seconds). While there was still a notable difference between the length of time spent reporting on sportsmen and sportswomen on TV3, the difference was not as pronounced, with male-focused news items an average of 45.24 seconds, over five seconds longer than female-focused news items at 39.69 seconds.

Table 3: Average length of news item by network (seconds)

Category of Item	Time in Seconds	
	TVNZ	TV3
Male	54.11	45.24
Female	34.35	39.69
Mixed	35.00	22.50
Background	133.08	169.60
Overall	54.82	57.68

4.2.0 FRAMING

The research examined differences in the way the news media framed male and female athletes in their reporting. This was analysed by asking several questions in the coding protocol about position in news broadcast, presence of gender marking,

occurrences of hierarchy of naming, topic of the news item, tone of the news item, sexualisation, and gender stereotyping.

4.2.1 **Position in News**

Table Four details the overall breakdown in the positioning of the news items for both networks.

Table 4: Position in news programme – combined networks

Position in news	Number of news items				
	Male	Female	Mixed	Background	Total
General news	16	5	0	8	29
First in sports news	12	8	0	4	24
Subsidiary sports news	65	62	3	10	140
Total	93	75	3	22	193

Of the 29 news items broadcast within the general news segment only 5 (17%) focused on female athletes, compared with 16 (55%) on male athletes. The number of news items focusing on female athletes in this segment was not only less than that of the news items focusing on male athletes but also the news items categorised as background, of which there were 8 news items (28%).

Half (12 news items) of the lead sports news items (i.e. those items on the Commonwealth Games that were broadcast as the first item in the sports news segment during the sample time) were categorised as focusing on males, with only one third (8 news items) of the lead sports reports categorised as focusing on females. The subsidiary sports news category was relatively even in the number of male-focused (65 items) and female-focused (62 items) news items.

Tables Five and Six look at the individual positioning breakdown for the networks where the preference for reporting on male athletes rather than female athletes in the general news segment is apparent on both networks.

Table 5: Position in news programme – TVNZ

	Number of news items				
Position in news	Male	Female	Mixed	Background	Total
General news	10	2	0	2	14
First in sports news	6	3	0	4	13
Subsidiary sports news	39	38	1	6	84
Total	55	43	1	12	111

Table 6: Position in news programme – TV3

	Number of news items				
Position in news	Male	Female	Mixed	Background	Total
General news	6	3	0	6	15
First in sports news	6	5	0	0	11
Subsidiary sports news	26	24	2	4	56
Total	38	32	2	10	82

Of the 14 Commonwealth Games items in TVNZ's general news segment, 10 (71%) of them were on male athletes, 2 (14%) on female athletes and 2 (14%) were background items. Coverage of male athletes also featured more heavily than female athletes in TV3's general news segment. There were 15 Commonwealth Games items in the general news on TV3, 6 (40%) of these were male-focused and another 6 (40%) were background news items. Only 3 (20%) items focused on female athletes featured in general news segment, half as many as male focused items.

The lead news items in the sport segment highlighted a more obvious difference in the networks' framing. TVNZ showed a clear preference towards reporting on male athletes as the lead sports report with 6 of the 13 lead reports being male focused and only 3 female focused. TV3's coverage was more balanced; 6 of its 11 lead sports reports were male-focused and 5 female-focused.

4.2.2 Gender Marking

There were 59 occurrences of gender marking recorded in the combined television coverage. As Table Seven illustrates, there were more instances of gender marking relating to female athletes (34 occurrences) than there were to male athletes (25 occurrences).

Table 7: Occurrences of gender marking

Gender of subject	# of times gender marking occurred		
	TVNZ	TV3	Total
Male	8	17	25
Female	18	16	34
Total	26	33	59

However, when considering each network separately, a gender bias in this framing technique is only evident on TVNZ. Gender marking was used by TVNZ’s reporters 26 times. Of these, 18 of them related to female athletes and only 8 to male athletes. In contrast, TV3 used gender marking more frequently (33 occurrences) but they were more evenly distributed between male and female athletes. In fact, there was one more occurrence of gender marking used for men’s sport (17 occurrences) than there was for women’s sport (16 occurrences).

The occurrences of gender marking all came from the journalists or sports anchors and were descriptive in nature to add clarity to the report. For example:

“The standouts of course here today have been the triathletes, the women’s team producing a superb effort with second, third and fourth.” ¹

“Andrea Hewitt wasn’t the only one, her bronze going with Samantha Warriner’s silver in the women’s race.” ²

¹ March 18, 2006, TVNZ – Wayne Hay

² March 18, 2006, TVNZ – Paul Moor

"This afternoon Russell Mier registered his second win in section play of the men's singles..."³

"More Jamaican celebrations were never in doubt in the men's hundred thanks to the world's fastest man [Asafa Powell]." ⁴

4.2.3 Hierarchy of Naming

Hierarchy of naming was defined as a specific reference to an athlete by her or his first name alone, or a reference to an athlete or group of athletes as 'boy(s)', 'girl(s)' or 'ladies'. Hierarchy of naming was not as common as gender marking with thirteen instances of the framing technique recorded in this research (refer to Table 8).

Table 8: Occurrences of hierarchy of naming

Gender of subject	# of times hierarchy of naming occurred		
	TVNZ	TV3	Total
Male	3	4	7
Female	1	5	6
Total	4	9	13

The difference between the gender categories for this framing technique was not as notable as in the case of gender marking. There were a total of seven occurrences for male athletes, one more than there was for female athletes (six occurrences).

Hierarchy of naming was exhibited in two ways. Firstly, by using the terms "boys" or "girls" for example, "golden girl Libby Lenton led an Aussie clean sweep of the hundred freestyle."⁵ Secondly, there were occasions when athletes were referred to by their first name only: For example "Yeah go Valerie."⁶

Hierarchy of naming was recorded from both the journalist's commentary as well as sound bites from the sources interviewed in the news items. Two instances on

³ March 21, 2006, TVNZ – Wayne Hay

⁴ March 21, 2006, TVNZ– Andrew Potter

⁵ March 19, 2006 – TV1, Paul Moor

⁶ March 18, 2006 – TV1, Neil Waka

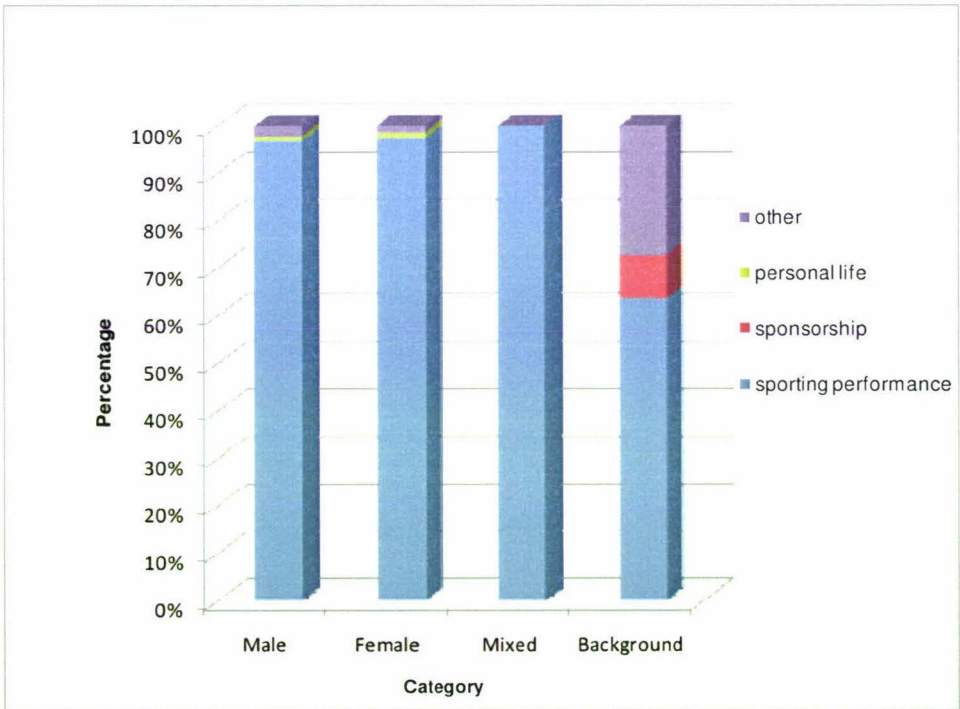
TVNZ originated from news sources, with only one of the instances on TV3 made by a source (the reference to swimmer Moss Burmester as ‘Moss’ by his mother).

TV3 exhibited higher usage of hierarchy of naming than TVNZ, with nine of the thirteen instances occurring during its coverage, compared with only four instances on TVNZ. This was also one framing instance where women athletes fared better than males during a network’s coverage: three quarters of TVNZ’s hierarchy of naming examples were in relation to men.

4.2.4 Focus and Tone of News Item

Figure Five displays the results of the framing analysis question which asked what the topic of each news item was. Categories for topic were made up of: sporting performance or event, sponsorship issues, personal life of athlete(s) or other.

Figure 5: Topic of news report – combined networks



Across the male, female and mixed categories, coverage of a sporting performance/sporting event was the topic of the majority of news items. All of the mixed category items were on sporting performance or events and 97% of both the male and female categories were also on this topic. The topic of news reports

varied more within the background category, with 64% of this category focused on a sports event (this was the opening and closing ceremonies or the build up to them).

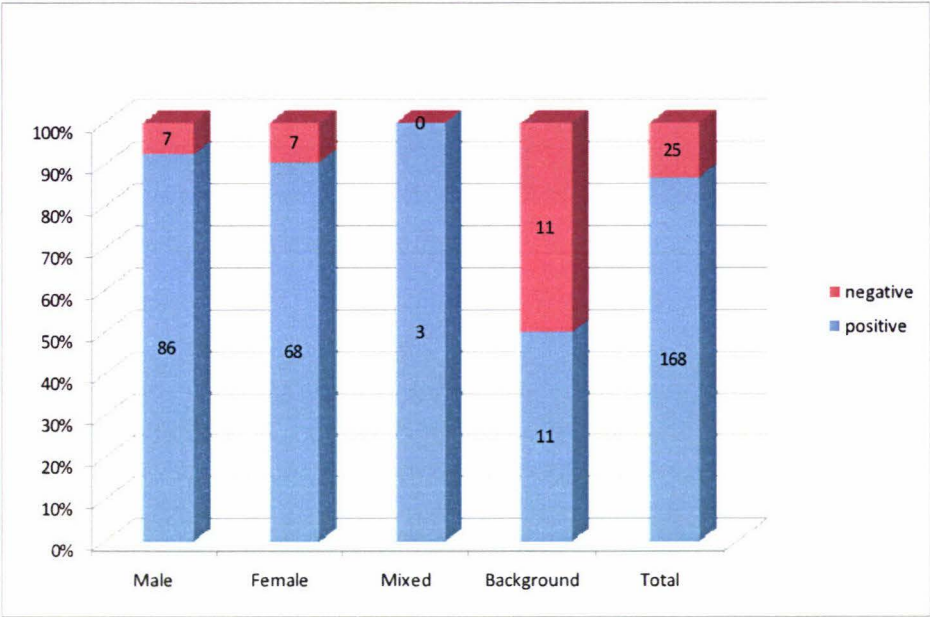
The topic of sponsorship was only covered in background news items. There were two stories in this category, one on each of the networks. These both related to the low medal tally and SPARC's sponsorship of various sports.

Nine news items fell into the 'other' category. The majority of these were background items covering spin-off stories surrounding the Commonwealth Games. For example, TVNZ broadcast a report on Helen Clark's decision not to attend the Games. Another item categorised as 'other' was TV3's report on the Sierra Leone athletes who had not turned up for their event and were thought to be seeking asylum in Australia.

There was very little reporting on the personal lives of athletes, with only two items (both on TV3). There was no difference in the way genders were portrayed in these stories, as one related to a male athlete and one to a female athlete.

Figure Six shows the results for the question that considered the tone of the news items. After viewing the news item in its entirety, coders were required to categorise the item as positive, negative or neutral. Although these categories were subjective to the coder's opinion, the level of agreement using Cohen's Kappa for this variable was 0.943. Examples of news items categorised as negative in tone included the networks' report on the harassment of a female cyclist by two of her male cycling team mates. TV3 broadcast three reports on this incident across two days of coverage. TVNZ also reported on this incident, with two separate news items on the topic. Another item that was categorised as negative in tone was the report from TVNZ on the low number of medals won by athletes at the 2006 Commonwealth Games. This news item was broadcast after the conclusion of the Games and TV3 did not run a similar story on this topic.

Figure 6: Tone of news item – combined networks



The majority (87%) of reports were positive in tone, possibly reflecting the celebratory spirit of the Commonwealth Games. There was little difference in the percentage of negative reports on female athletes (9%) than for male athletes (8%). Most of the negative reports were in the background item category, where half of the reports were deemed to be negative.

Figures Seven and Eight display the findings for tone on the individual networks. TV3 broadcast a higher number of negative reports on the Commonwealth Games (16 negative news items) than TVNZ (9 negative news items). Negative news regarding male and female athletes was minimal on both networks with the majority of the negative news categorised as background items.

Figure 7: Tone of news items – TVNZ

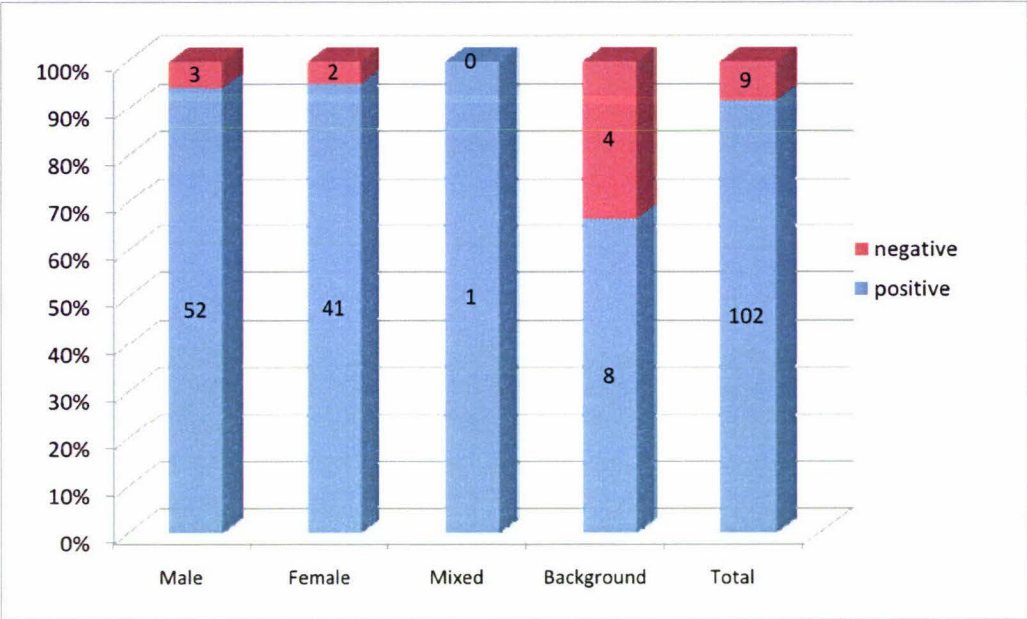
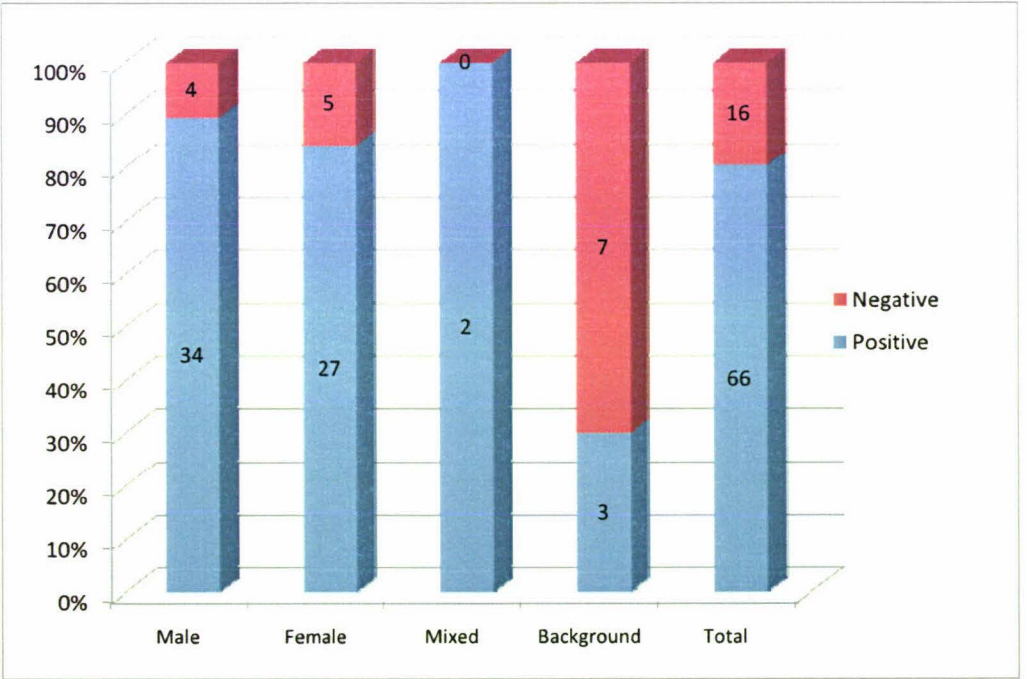


Figure 8: Tone of news items – TV3



4.2.5 Gender Stereotyping

Another question asked whether or not gender stereotyping was observed in any way and, if so, how. Gender stereotyping, as explained in Chapter Three, referred to the portrayal of athletes in a stereotyped male or female manner, depending on their gender. This could have been in relation to the athletes' physical appearance, psychological character, physical strength or athleticism or the portrayal of them in a family role (e.g. mother, sister, brother, son). This research found only one instance of gender stereotyping. This was recorded on TVNZ in relation to the lawn bowls women's pair. Competitors Jan and Marina Kahn were twice referred to as sisters and also as the daughters of famous New Zealand lawn bowl champion, Millie Kahn. This could be construed as relevant sporting background information, given the genealogical link is sports-related, rather than gender stereotyping.

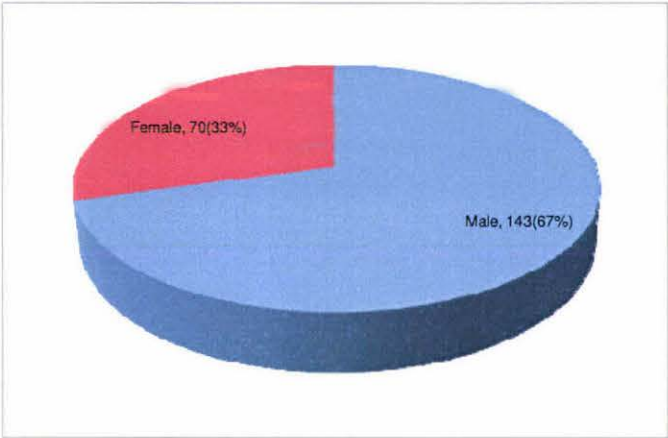
4.3.0 SOURCES

The content analysis considered several aspects relating to the sources used by TVNZ and TV3 to construct each news report. The following section analyses the sources used by the media. Sources included those interviewed on camera as well as those cited off camera.

4.3.1 Gender and Types of Sources Used

In total, there were 213 sources used across 193 news stories. TVNZ used a total of 140 sources and TV3 used 73. As Figure Nine illustrates, there were more than twice as many male sources (143) used by the media than female sources (70).

Figure 9: Gender of sources – combined networks



Although more sources were used by the state owned broadcaster TVNZ, this reflects the greater number of news items reported on the Commonwealth Games on this network than on TV3. The dominance of male sources was observed on both networks (Figures Ten and Eleven), although it was stronger on TVNZ where males represented 71% of all sources used. TV3's sources were split 60% male and 40% female.

Figure 10: Gender of sources – TVNZ

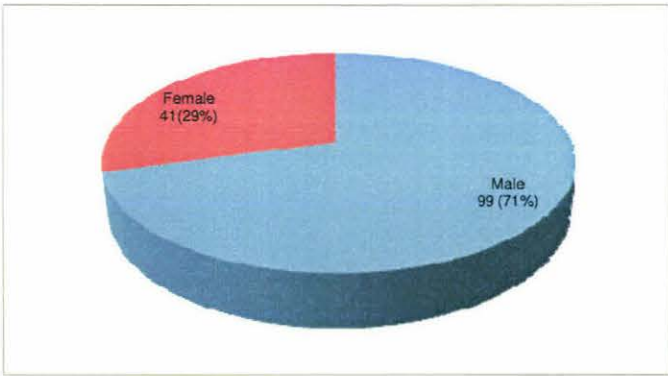
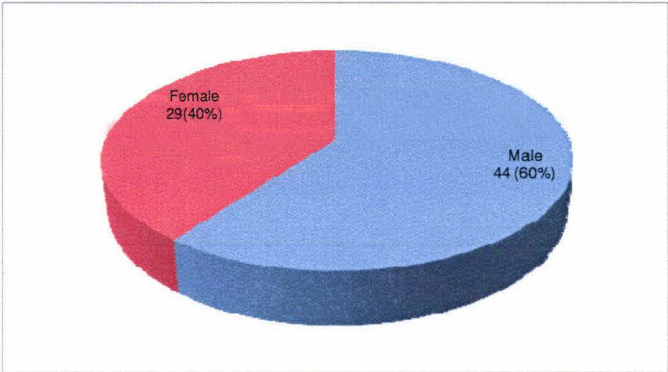


Figure 11: Gender of sources – TV3



TVNZ used a total of 140 sources in its coverage, this was almost twice as many as TV3's 73 sources. As the number of sources varied so significantly between the two networks, it is worthwhile to consider the average number of sources used for each category of news item. These findings are displayed in Table Nine.

Table 9: Average number of sources used in each category – combined networks

Category of news item	Average number of sources
Male	1.17
Female	0.75
Mixed	0.00
Background	2.18
Overall	1.10

News items in the background category contained the highest number of sources, averaging 2.18 sources per item. This was followed by the male-focused news items at 1.17 sources and female-focused news items on 0.75. There were no sources used in mixed news items on either network.

When considering the number of sources used across the combined networks, it was found that on average the media utilised more sources in their reports on male athletes than they did in reports on women. However, if the split by network, the results show this gender bias is only pronounced on one television network.

Table 10: Number of sources used in each category – network split

Category of news item	TVNZ	TV3
Male	1.44	0.79
Female	0.77	0.72
Mixed	0.00	0.00
Background	2.33	0.91
Overall	0.73	0.89

As Table Ten illustrates, the average number of sources used for reporting on sportsmen on TVNZ was 1.44, almost twice the average number used for reporting on sportswomen (0.77). This level of gender difference was not observed on TV3 where news items on male athletes had an average number of sources of 0.79 and news items focusing on female athletes 0.72 sources.

To further investigate the differences in the way genders were framed by the media, the sources used by the media were divided into six categories: athlete, coach, manager, sporting official, family member or other. Table Eleven provides the findings of the types of sources used by the media.

Table 11: Types of sources used

Source type	Male			Female			Total		
	TVNZ	TV3	Total	TVNZ	TV3	Total	TVNZ	TV3	Total
Athlete	44	20	64	35	18	53	79	38	117
Coach	13	5	18	1	5	6	14	10	24
Manager	10	5	15	0	0	0	10	5	15
Sporting Official	16	9	25	2	0	2	18	9	27
Family Member	4	1	5	1	2	3	5	3	8
Other	12	4	16	2	4	6	14	8	22
Total	99	44	143	41	29	70	140	73	213

Athletes were the most commonly used sources, with a total of 117 athletes interviewed by the networks. This represented 55% of the total number of sources

interviewed. Coaches were used as sources 24 times (11% of all sources), managers 15 times (7%) and sporting officials 27 times (13%). Family members accounted for 8 of the sources (4%) and the remaining 22 (10%) were in the 'other' category. Sources categorised as other included politicians, former athletes, commentators, supporters other than family, and the general public.

For both networks, athletes represented the majority of both male and female sources, although they were proportionately higher among female sources, of which they comprised 76%. Male sources were, on the contrary more diversified in their categories with only 45% of the male sources falling into the athlete category.

Coaches were used as sources 24 times in the coverage. Of these, 18 (75%) coaches were male and the remaining 6 (25%) female. Sporting officials were also more heavily represented by males with 25 (93%) of the 27 officials being men, and just 2 (7%) women. Managers were used as sources 15 times and all of these interviews were with male managers. Family members represented 8 of the sources and this category was more evenly split between male (5 sources) and female (3 sources). Finally, the 'other' category had a total of 22 sources, 16 (73%) male and 6 (27%) female.

Although TV3 used half as many sources as TVNZ, there was little difference in the types or gender of sources used by the networks, with one exception. There were 10 coach sources recorded on TV3 and these were split evenly between male coaches and female coaches. This finding was contrary to that of TVNZ who interviewed 14 coaches, 13 being male and only 1 female.

4.3.2 Interviewing Athletes in Sporting Contexts

The framing analysis also asked for the context in which the athlete was interviewed by the media (i.e. whether they were situated in a sporting or non-sporting context). A sporting context showed the athletes actively participating in sport either at their event, pre or post match, or in a training setting. A non-sporting context was interview situations other than the above, for example: media conferences, at the Games village or other non-active or non-sporting settings. Table Twelve displays the overall findings for this variable, indicating that male athletes were shown in sporting contexts 44 (69%) times, while females were only shown in sporting contexts 22 times (42%).

Table 12: Number of athletes in sporting context – combined networks

Gender of athlete interviewed	Sporting	Non-Sporting
Male	44	20
Female	22	31
Total	66	51

Separating the results by network again highlights the difference in the two networks' coverage. As tables Thirteen and Fourteen show, TVNZ had a much higher percentage of athletes interviewed in a sporting context than TV3 and the balance between males and females, favoured the females. On TVNZ, male athletes were shown in sporting contexts 82% of the time and females 95% of the time. TV3 only interviewed male athletes in sporting contexts in 40% of its interviews and even fewer women athletes (11%) were interviewed in sporting contexts. It should be noted that TVNZ was the broadcaster with the exclusive rights to the full television coverage of the Commonwealth Games, therefore may have had more extensive media access to athletes at the specific sports events. Although this may have impacted on the ability overall of TV3 to access athletes at sporting venues by comparison with TVNZ, it cannot account for any difference in the settings in which male and female athletes are interviewed when considering the networks on an individual basis.

Table 13: Number of athletes in sporting context – TVNZ

Gender of athlete interviewed	Sporting	Non-Sporting
Male	36	8
Female	20	15
Total	56	23

Table 14: Number of athletes in sporting context – TV3

Gender of athlete interviewed	Sporting	Non-Sporting
Male	8	12
Female	2	16
Total	10	28

4.4.0 INFLUENCE OF PARTICIPATION AND SUCCESS

As discussed in Chapter Two, coverage of multi-national sporting events may be influenced by factors such as participation and success. As Wensing & Bruce (2003) argue, a sense of national pride in athletes' success may result in the media overlooking any gender bias present in their opinions about what to report on. In response to suggestions of a gender bias in their broadcasting, some media may also argue that more men participate in sport than women, so naturally their coverage will skew towards males (Pedersen, 2002). To review the results in light of these factors, the findings have been compared against two standards: participation levels of men and women in the New Zealand Commonwealth Games 2006 team, and the success the athletes achieved at the Games.

4.4.1 Amount of Coverage Compared with Participation Levels

Men and women have not always been equally represented at the Commonwealth Games in terms of the number of athletes competing. Like the Olympic Games, Commonwealth Games teams have historically been proportionately dominated by male athletes, although the number of women competitors is steadily increasing (IOC, 2007). In 2006 the New Zealand Commonwealth Games team comprised 58 females and 68 males, representing 46% and 54% of the New Zealand team respectively. With slightly more men competing for New Zealand than women, it is acceptable that there may have been slightly more coverage given to male athletes and, therefore, worthwhile comparing the results in relation to the gender of participants. Tables Fifteen and Sixteen summarise the amount of coverage overall compared with the expected amount of coverage. There is no gender bias present in number of news items compared with participation but there is a gender bias evident in the time spent reporting on male and female athletes in comparison to

their participation. For the purpose of reviewing coverage in comparison to participation, news items categorised as mixed or background have been excluded.

Table 15: Number of news items compared to participation – combined networks

Category of news item	Actual	Expected
Male	93	91
Female	75	77
Total	168	168

$\chi^2=0.08$, $d.f.=1$, $p=0.05$

Table 15 shows that the expected level of coverage for female athletes, when compared with participation rates, was relatively equitable when looking at the number of news items broadcast. With females making up 46% of the team, the expected number of news items reporting on sportswomen was 77 and in reality there were 75. For male athletes the expected number of news items was 91, reflecting their 54% participation. The actual number of news items on male athletes was 93, two more than expected, indicating little or no gender bias in the number of news items.

Table 16: Length of coverage compared to participation – combined networks (seconds)

Category of news item	Actual	Expected
Male	4695	4019
Female	2747	3423
Total	7442	7442

$\chi^2=247.44$, $d.f.=1$, $p=0.05$

However, the length of the time spent broadcasting on items featuring male and female athletes when compared with participation rates does not point to such equitable coverage. Based on participation, it was expected that men would receive 67 minutes (4019 seconds) when the actual results showed they received 78 minutes (4695 seconds). This meant women athletes received less attention than expected, 46 minutes (2747 seconds) instead of 57 minutes (3423 seconds),

which represented only 37% of the total time spent on exclusive male or female focused Games coverage.

To test the statistical significance of these results a one-variable chi-square test was employed. The null hypothesis in this case was that the media would broadcast the same percentage of news on male and female athletes as according to the percentage of male and female athletes in the New Zealand team. For both the number of news items and the time spent broadcasting the degree of freedom was 1 and the critical value 3.841. In the case of the number of news items the chi value was 0.08 which means the null hypothesis must be accepted and it can be said that, based on participation, the media gave equal coverage to male and female athletes. However, looking at the time spent reporting, the chi-value is 247.47, greater than the critical value. This indicates that the findings are statistically significant enough to reject the null hypothesis for this variable, indicating that the media showed a bias towards male athletes in the time dedicated to covering their sports.

4.4.2 Amount of Coverage Compared with Success Achieved

Taking the success of athletes into consideration, the amount of media coverage (both time spent reporting and the number of news items) has been tested against the achievement of male and female athletes in the New Zealand team. Success has been measured by the number of medals won by the New Zealand team, which totalled 31. Fourteen medals were won by males, sixteen by females and one by a mixed team. The results are provided in tables Seventeen and Eighteen. For the purpose of this comparison the mixed medal tally has been excluded as have the news items categorised as mixed or background.

Table 17: Number of news items compared to success – combined networks

Category of news item	Actual	Expected
Male	93	79
Female	75	89
Total	168	168

$\chi^2=4.71$, $d.f.= 1$, $p=0.05$

Table 18: Length of coverage compared to success – combined networks (seconds)

Category of news item	Actual	Expected
Male	4695	3498
Female	2747	3944
Total	7442	7442

$\chi^2 = 363.42$, $d.f. = 1$, $p = 0.05$

Although 53% of New Zealand's medals (excluding the one mixed medal) were won by women, the overall amount of coverage did not reflect this level of success. Items focused on women athletes only accounted for 75 of the news items (45%) compared with an expected 89 news items. In terms of the actual time devoted to women athletes, the study recorded 46 minutes (2747 seconds, 37%) of broadcasting as compared with an expected 66 minutes (3944 seconds). Male athletes, on the other hand, received more coverage compared with their level of success. 93 news items reported on male athletes, 14 more than the expected 79 and 78 minutes (4685 seconds) instead of 58 minutes (3498 seconds). Again, these results were tested for significance using a chi square test. With the same number of categories as the previous chi-square, the degrees of freedom remained the same and therefore so too did the critical value of 3.841. For this statistical analysis the null hypothesis was that men and women would receive equal coverage in accordance to the level of success achieved. For the number of news items recorded the chi-value was 4.71, and for the time spent recording the chi-value was 363.42. These results allow for the null hypothesis to be rejected on both variables, indicating the findings of media bias towards male athletes sport when compared to their level of success to be significant.

In summary, while more males than females athletes participated in the 2006 Commonwealth Games and the numbers of stories aired on each gender reflected this, the amount of time spent reporting on female athletes was less than expected should the coverage have been equitable for both genders based on participation rates. Similarly, in spite of the greater level of success achieved by female athletes through their higher medal tally, male athletes still received proportionality more prime-time television news coverage during the 2006 Commonwealth Games than female athletes, exceeding the levels of what was expected were the coverage to

have been based on the success achieved and unaffected by the gender of the athlete.

4.5.0 NUMBERS OF STORIES FILED BY MALE AND FEMALE JOURNALISTS

As previous studies identified lack of female sports journalists as one of the potential reasons for sportswomen being under-represented in the news media, this study recorded the gender of the journalists responsible for filing each news report. These findings are provided in Table Nineteen. Of the 193 news items broadcast, 153 (79%) were filed by male journalists compared with only 40 (21%) filed by females.

Table 19: Gender of journalist filing report

Gender of journalist	Number of news items		
	TVNZ	TV3	Total
Male	106	47	153
Female	5	35	40
Total	111	82	193

However, the findings of the individual networks reveal a substantial difference in this variable. Of the 82 news items broadcast on TV3, 35 (43%) were filed by female journalists. In contrast, only 5 (5%) of the news items on TVNZ were filed by female journalists.

The high use of female journalists by TV3 compared with TVNZ was further highlighted by the networks' choice of Commonwealth Games sports anchor. TVNZ's coverage was presented live in Melbourne by Wayne Hay, whereas TV3's, in contrast was presented by Michelle Pickles, immediately linking a female presence to all its coverage. As some of the sports reporting was performed by these anchors it makes sense that TV3 has a higher percentage of reports filed by a female. Further, TVNZ predominantly used three journalists to report on the Games, Andrew Potter, Paul Moor and Wayne Hay. In addition Jenny-May Coffin was used to report on the Netball. TV3 used a larger number of journalists - four

male journalists and two female journalists. The two female journalists on TV3, Michelle Pickles and Emma Keeling, reported on many sports, not just Netball.

4.6.0 CONCLUSION

The results of this study serve to reinforce the notion that media sports news coverage remains male-focused. The prime-time television news of the 2006 Commonwealth Games shows differences in the amount of coverage each gender received. Males received 43% of the total time spent reporting on the games with females receiving only 25%. Breaking this down into networks, the state owned public broadcaster spent the least percentage of time spent covering female athletes at just 24%, with TV3 slightly better at 27%.

When considering the number of news items devoted to female athletes, the results are more equitable across the networks although they still demonstrate an under-representation of women athletes in the news media's coverage. Male athletes were the focus of 48% of the reports and female athletes only 39%. These findings were consistent across both networks with TVNZ having a slighter higher percentage of male-focused news items (49%) than TV3 (46%) which had a higher percentage of background and mixed gender sports reporting.

The under-representation of women athletes is still apparent when the findings are compared with participation levels for male and female athletes in the New Zealand Commonwealth Games team, and the success each gender achieved. Although women made up 46% of the team, they did not receive a level of coverage reflecting their presence on the team, with only 37% of the time spent reporting on them (with background items and mixed gender reporting excluded). Similarly, women won 53% of New Zealand's medals, yet female athletes received substantially less coverage than male athletes despite their higher medal tally.

This study also reveals differences in the way male and female athletes were framed by the media during the coverage of the 2006 Commonwealth Games. Commonwealth Games stories featuring male athletes received more preferential positioning with half of the lead sports news reports focusing on male athletes and just one third on females. Similarly, in the general news section, items in this section focusing on male athletes made up 55% of the Games stories in the general news during the sample period, and female athletes only 17% (with

background items providing the balance). This preferred positioning for male athletes was more evident on TVNZ than on TV3.

The coverage of male athletes was also subject to fewer incidents of gender marking although they were not exempt from it. This framing technique was recorded 34 times in relation to female athletes and only 25 times in relation to male athletes. This technique was not only more frequently used by TVNZ, it again highlights a gender bias of the networks, favouring sportsmen, with 18 instances of gender marking relating to women and only 8 to men. More positively, this study found few instances of hierarchy of naming present in the coverage and that which was recorded was for both male and female athletes, with no obvious gender bias present. There was also little difference in the tone of the news items for male and female athletes, the majority of these categories were positive in tone with most of the negative news items falling into the background category on both networks.

In terms of the sources used by the media to craft news reports, men (143 times) were used more than twice as often as women (70 times). News items focusing on male athletes used, on average, 1.17 sources per report. The average number of sources used for items focusing on female athletes, in comparison, did not even average one source (0.75 sources per item). Men also featured more highly in the coaches, managers, sporting officials and 'other' source classifications with women sources predominantly limited to athletes only. Again, there was little difference in between the networks' choice of sources with the exception of TV3's decision to interview 5 female coaches across the sample period compared with TVNZ's one female coach. Sources in the athlete category were also more likely to be depicted in a sporting context if they were male.

Overall, women did also not feature strongly among the journalists filing the reports on the Games. Of the 193 news reports, only 21% were filed by women. This gender bias was most visible on TVNZ, where 95% of the news items were filed by men and only 5% by women. By comparison, 43% of TV3's reports were filed by female journalists.

The following chapter discusses these differences in greater depth as well as providing an analysis of the research's overall findings and the implications of these for sport in New Zealand.

CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION

5.0 INTRODUCTION

The discussion below reviews the findings outlined in the preceding chapter, showing how they answer the research questions this study poses. Findings from previous studies in the area of media coverage of sportswomen, particularly in relation to multinational sporting events, are drawn on to show where this study sits in relation to other work, what it adds to the body of knowledge, and to identify future research agendas.

The study's limitations are discussed and suggestions for further research to develop knowledge and understanding of media coverage of sportswomen are included. Implications and conclusions arising from this discussion are addressed in Chapter Six.

5.1.0 RESEARCH QUESTION 1: COVERAGE LEVELS

The first research question asked how much coverage male and female athletes received during the news coverage of the 2006 Commonwealth Games. Previous studies (Brown, 1996; Capranica & Aversa, 2002; Capranica, Minganti, Billat, Hanghoi, Piacentini, Cumps, & Meeusen, 2005; Higgs, Weiller & Martin, 2003; Toohey, 1997; Urquhart & Crossman, 1999; Vincent, Imwold & Masemann, 2002; Weiller, Higgs & Greenleaf, 1994; Wensing & Bruce, 2003) indicated that it was reasonable to expect that female athletes would receive less news coverage than male athletes although not to the extreme levels that have been witnessed in research on general sports news coverage.

The results from this research supported this expectation, with women receiving substantially less exclusive coverage when measured as total time, and fewer stories. Exclusive coverage of sportswomen at the Games received significantly less of the total time spent broadcasting during the news coverage of the Games than exclusive coverage of sportsmen. Only 25% percent of the total time spent reporting on the Games was exclusively devoted to the coverage of women, compared with 43% exclusively devoted to the coverage of men. These findings support arguments that the media report on male athletes and neglect female

athletes, further highlighting the male dominance that surrounds sport (Hargreaves, 1994; Kane & Greendorfer, 1994) and indicating that this imbalance is not a thing of the past in New Zealand. Sportswomen were also trivialised by having less time dedicated to covering female athletes than there was to the background news category. Reports in the background category did not cover sports per se but looked at surrounding topical information – such reports constituted 30% of total time broadcasting compared with the 25% afforded to women. Using Entman's (1993) explanation of framing, this would suggest that the media placed more importance on this type of background news by giving it more attention than they did sportswomen.

In terms of the actual number of news items devoted to the coverage of male and female athletes, the results showed a slightly less skewed outlook. More positively, women received a higher proportion of news items dedicated to their coverage (39%) than time spent broadcasting (25%). However, although this represented a higher percentage of coverage than the time variable, it was still fewer stories than were devoted to male athletes who received 48% of the total number of news items broadcast.

5.1.1 Little Evidence of Improvement

Given the scarcity of New Zealand-based research on television news coverage of either general sports or multinational sporting events, it is difficult to assess whether women received more coverage during the Commonwealth Games than they have historically been afforded during general everyday sports news coverage. It is also hard to accurately analyse whether time has seen any improvement in the amount of coverage given to sportswomen by New Zealand's television news media. This research project addresses this gap and will provide a benchmark for future Games and other major sporting event coverage. However, in the absence of comparative local research, the findings of this study will be compared to past New Zealand-based studies on general everyday sports news coverage before looking at the comparisons between the findings of this project and international studies on the coverage of multinational sporting events.

When compared with Atkinson's (2001) content analysis of TVNZ's news coverage of general sport for the duration of a year, the results of this study indicate an improvement in the coverage sportswomen are receiving. Atkinson found that only 12% of the time spent reporting on sports news was devoted exclusively to

sportswomen, with a massive 79% given to sportsmen. Although the time spent reporting on female athletes during the 2006 Commonwealth Games was 25% of the total time, to more accurately compare the findings with Atkinson's research, it is important to single out TVNZ, whose time spent reporting on female athletes was twice that observed during Atkinson's study. Although this shows an improvement in the amount of coverage afforded to sportswomen, assessment of this finding must still be held in balance given that this study still revealed a significant gender bias with sportsmen receiving 49% of TVNZ's time.

Before drawing definite conclusions that there has been improvement over time in the media's gender bias towards sportsmen in New Zealand, the difference in the type of sport reported on must be recognised. Atkinson's research considered general sports news only, and this research looks solely at the media coverage of the Commonwealth Games, a multinational sporting event. Bearing this in mind, a higher level of coverage given to women athletes during international sporting events is not unusual, and has been found in numerous international studies (Brown, 1996; Capranica & Aversa, 2002; Capranica et al., 2005; Higgs et al., 2003; Toohey, 1997; Urquhart & Crossman, 1999; Vincent et al., 2002; Weiller et al., 2004; Wensing & Bruce, 2003).

In the absence of more New Zealand television data, press coverage can provide some additional indication of trends. The most recent research into press coverage (Fountain & McGregor, 1999) found that in general sportswomen only received 11% of the sports news coverage. This is significantly lower than the results of this study and an indication that the coverage afforded to women at the Commonwealth Games may be an exception to levels given on a daily basis. Bearing these comparisons in mind, the results of this study confirmed the trend found in Billings and Eastman (2002), Toohey (1997), Vincent et al. (2002) and Urquhart and Crossman (1999), all of whom found female athletes received more media coverage during major international events than during regular sports reporting.

The findings of this study are more positive than those of Toohey (1997) in her study on the 1992 Olympic Games coverage in Australia. Although the methodologies of the two studies were different, it is still worthwhile comparing the findings in a general sense. Toohey's study did not use sports news as her sample population but rather another type of highly edited programming, highlights coverage. Her findings were similar to those of this study in terms of the overall

amounts of coverage women received. She found women received 30% of the time spent broadcasting, compared to 64% for male athletes. Toohey's study did not include a background category for news items, and this may have been reflected in the higher percentage of time devoted to male athletes. Likewise Billings and Eastman (2002) recorded better coverage for female athletes during the television coverage of the 2000 Olympic Games with male athletes receiving 53% and female athletes 44% of the clock time. Vincent et al. (2002) in their analysis of American and Canadian newspaper coverage of the 2000 Olympic Games, found that female athletes featured in 35% of the articles and photographs and males in 48%. However, the findings from both these studies are from coverage observed several years ago and, therefore, it could be argued that, on an international scale, New Zealand's media is lagging behind other countries in representation of sportswomen.

The unequal coverage of male and female athletes in this study is disappointing when considered in isolation, but what is of even greater concern is the question it raises about the current levels of coverage sportswomen receive in New Zealand, outside of events such as the Commonwealth Games. If New Zealand's media follow the trends outlined above that have been observed overseas, we could expect that the amount of coverage generally given to sportswomen outside multinational sporting events to be even lower than the findings of this study. An in-depth analysis examining everyday sports news coverage on influential New Zealand media, such as television, is required to verify the amount of exposure our women athletes are receiving on a day-to-day basis.

5.1.2 Participation and Success Go Unnoticed

Women's participation in sporting events such as the Olympic or Commonwealth Games has traditionally not been equal to that of men's (IOC, 2004). The IOC has played an important role in developing women's participation in sport at all levels, particularly in the last few decades, and has put measures in place to not only raise the level of women's participation as athletes but in leadership roles also. As women do not always participate in sport in the same numbers as men, it is important to consider the findings of this study in relation to the number of male and female competitors. If this is not considered, the media may argue that less coverage was given to female athletes in response to fewer women competitors.

In 2006, the New Zealand Commonwealth Games team comprised 68 male athletes (54%) and 58 female athletes (46%). The proportion of women in New Zealand's team was significantly higher than the total proportion of female athletes at the Games which stood at 39%. While female athletes were not as numerous as men in the New Zealand team, the amount of coverage given to female athletes was still less than could be expected if coverage matched participation rates. Looking at the gender-exclusive news items only (i.e. excluding the data for mixed and background categories), the expected number of news items for female athletes was 77. In actuality there were 75 news items, which would suggest no apparent gender bias in the coverage. However, this was not the case when the time spent broadcasting was considered. Although females made up 46% of the New Zealand Commonwealth Games team, only 37% of the total broadcast time was dedicated exclusively to them. Male-focused reporting exceeded expected amounts with 63% of the time spent broadcasting. In light of these results, the New Zealand television news media cannot use the gender split of the New Zealand Commonwealth Games team as a plausible explanation for the paucity of women-focused broadcast stories in Games coverage.

Compare this with Capranica and Aversa (2002) who also checked their findings against participation levels, and the picture is even less positive for New Zealand's female athletes. Capranica and Aversa (2002) found that female athletes received 29% of the total time that Italian television channel Rai3 spent broadcasting on the 2000 Olympic Games. However, of the Italian Games team, only 28% were female, so the level of coverage was roughly equivalent with participation. The results of the present study were also contrary to the findings of Urquhart and Crossman (1999) who found that between 1924 and 1992 Canadian press coverage of female athletes at the Winter Olympics roughly matched their participation rates and in the last two Winter Olympics studied, bettered them. In 1992 women made up 24% of the Canadian competitors and received 27% of the press coverage and in 1994 they made up 28% of the team and attracted 34% of the coverage. This paints a poor picture, by comparison, for the gender equity of New Zealand's coverage, for a country whose team was made up of a greater proportion of women athletes than was recorded in these two other studies.

As Alexander (1994) noted, it is institutionalised common practice that those involved in news production will consider successes and, in particular, winning medals, more newsworthy than general participation. Therefore it was worthwhile

considering the coverage in relation to the achievement of New Zealand's athletes at the Commonwealth Games.

The findings from this study did not show that the success of New Zealand's female athletes correlated with their levels of media coverage: 53% of New Zealand's medals (excluding one mixed medal) were won by women, yet they received only 45% of the total number of news items broadcast exclusively about male or female athletes, and just 37% of the time. Therefore, in spite of the greater level of success achieved by female athletes as shown by their higher medal tally, male athletes still received proportionally more prime-time television news coverage, exceeding the levels expected should coverage have been based on the success achieved. If Alexander (1994) is correct in suggesting that television news will consider medal winners more newsworthy, then it could be argued that the increase in the level of coverage women athletes have received in this study (as opposed to what has been witnessed for coverage of general sports news) may be due to their success at the Games. To discover if this is the case further research is required, examining the coverage levels of women athletes during previous Games where they have not won as many of the team's medals.

5.1.3 Subtly Reinforcing the Male Dominance of Sport

This study has supported claims that female athletes are given more media attention during international sporting events than regular sports news coverage. Therefore, it cannot uphold Tuchman's (1978) notion of a 'symbolic annihilation' of women athletes. However, it has still shown women athletes to be under-represented in the New Zealand television news coverage of the Commonwealth Games. When the media under-represent female athletes they project a message of male dominance in the sporting arena (Hargreaves, 1994) and this in itself is a form of stereotyping. As McGregor and Melville (1991, p. 35) write:

When women are unremittingly invisible in sports coverage by the news media, that invisibility is a form of stereotyping because it implies women are less significant, their sporting achievements less noteworthy, their challenges less dramatic and their disappointments less compelling.

The limited amount of coverage of sportswomen in this study occurred despite a high participation rate of women athletes in the New Zealand team and even though 53% of New Zealand's medals were won by women. With New Zealand

women achieving greater levels of success at the Games, yet still receiving less media attention than men, the media seem to be sending a clear message that their achievements are of less importance because of their gender.

However, as this study indicates, the answer to gender equity in sports coverage does not solely lie in increasing the amount of coverage women athletes receive. If Kane and Greendorfer (1999) are correct in their belief that the way in which media structure or frame the news can influence perceptions and values about sportswomen, then the New Zealand television media risk marginalising and trivialising women athletes, further serving to reinforce the male dominance of sport. This study can only demonstrate the framing techniques used and cannot determine the direct effect the framing has on New Zealand's public, although agenda-setting research as a whole suggests framing will influence societal views. However, further research on television audiences' perceptions of sportswomen and their importance and value in society is required to extrapolate the effect of the media's framing among their audiences.

5.2.0 RESEARCH QUESTION 2: FRAMING

The second research question asked what differences, if any, existed in the media's presentation of sportsmen and sportswomen through the framing techniques used. The expectation, based upon the literature reviewed, was that gendered framing techniques would be present in the media's coverage and that these would be more evident in the coverage of women athletes than male (Duncan & Messner, 2000; 2005; Higgs et al., 2003; Koivula, 1999; Weiller et al., 2004; Wensing & Bruce, 2003).

This expectation was supported, in that framing techniques were apparent in the studied data, and included preferential positioning, gender marking and differences in the context the athlete was interviewed in. News items featuring male athletes received more of the lead sports stories and upfront positioning in the general news than those featuring women. News items on male athletes were also less likely to contain gender marking than those on female athletes and sportsmen were more likely to be depicted in a sporting context than sportswomen. However, these observations were for the combined results of the networks, TV3 and TVOne differing in the way they framed the sports news. These differences will be discussed below. One aspect of framing expectation was not supported: contrary to the findings of previous studies (Duncan & Messner, 2000; 2005; Koivula, 1999;

Higgs et al, 2003; Weiller et al, 2003;) there were very few instances of hierarchy of naming, and these were spread evenly between male and female athletes.

5.2.1 Men Dominate the Top Spots

Frame analysis theory suggests that the positioning of a news item serves as an indication of the value the editor or news production team places on the item. Upfront and lead reports in news broadcasts are important as they set the tone of the news broadcast and signal the items of news that are deemed most important (Duncan & Messner, 2000; 2005). The current study identified three categories of news segment: general news; lead sports item; and subsidiary sports item. Positioning a story near the beginning of the news bulletin overall (i.e. in the general news segment) or as the lead item in a segment such as the sports segment, sends a message that the media think this particular item is of greater importance and interest than subsequent news items in the broadcast or segment (Duncan & Messner, 2000; 2005; Messner, Duncan & Cooky, 2003). Duncan and Messner's (2005) study of American television sports coverage between 1989 and 2004 found that only three percent of the total sports news articles recorded featured a lead story about sportswomen. The current study's findings showed similar preferential positioning, with significantly more of the news items broadcast upfront in the general news segment focusing on men. However, when considering the sports news segment, the study shows significantly better results with one third of the lead sports stories focusing on female athletes. It is probable that the improvement in women's positioning is due to the type of sports news coverage, as Duncan and Messner considered general sports programming rather than an international sporting event. If women are generally afforded more coverage during multinational sporting events then there are more opportunities for priority positioning to be given to them.

5.2.2 Gender Framing in Verbal Commentary

Language is one of the key tools used by the media to convey messages and as Messner, Duncan and Jensen. say, it is "never neutral" (1993, p. 132). Sports sociologists Eitzen and Baca Zinn argue that:

[Gendered] language places women and men within a system of differentiation and stratification. Language suggests how women and men are to be evaluated. Language embodies negative and positive value stances and valuations related to how certain groups within

society are appraised. Language in general is filled with biases about women and men. Specific linguistic conventions are sexist when they isolate or stereotype some aspect of an individual's nature or the nature of a group of individuals based on their sex. (1989, p. 364)

In reflecting the gender-biased language often observed throughout society, as has been observed to a limited extent in this study, sports news media reinforce a message of inequality between male and female athletes (Duncan & Messner, 1994). This study investigated two types of verbal framing that have exhibited gender bias in previous studies, gender marking and hierarchy of naming.

Gender marking

Gender marking was evident in the journalists' commentary analysed in this research and, as expected, was more common in relation to female athletes. Labelling events as 'women's', if men's events are not similarly gender-marked as 'men's' reflects an assumption that men's events are normal, expected sports events and women's events are other, different or marginal by comparison. Linguistic theorist, Stanley (1977), explains that gender marking commonly occurs when women move outside 'traditional' patriarchal roles of wife or mother and into roles that have traditionally been reserved for males. Roles such as doctor, lawyer, chairman or sportsman are deemed to be masculine, therefore should a woman assume such a role, she is often referred to with the addition of a gender label (e.g. female doctor or women's rugby). Duncan and Messner (2005, p. 38) argue that asymmetrical gender marking "impedes the growing legitimacy of sportswomen by subtly supporting the ideological assumption that sport is naturally men's terrain, and that women athletes must be, at best, interlopers into this terrain."

The nature of the gender marking observed in this study was descriptive and in no instances demeaning to women athletes. The structure of the Commonwealth Games may account for the need of a certain level of gender marking to describe the events accurately, as many events have a male competition and female (e.g. swimming, triathlon, track and field, etc.). This observation is supported by Messner et al. (1993) who argue that symmetrical gender marking is sometimes useful for clarity. However, this study still found that the media used gender marking more prevalently when reporting on sportswomen than sportsmen, suggesting that when gender marking was required for clarification the media preferred to use it in relation to the women's competition. In using gender marking in relation to female

athletes more than male athletes, the media are further fuelling the societal ideology that sport is by default masculine terrain. Where gender marking is required for clarity care needs to be taken to do so equally for sportsmen and sportswomen.

Hierarchy of Naming

This research found very few occurrences of hierarchy of naming and, contrary to other researchers' findings (Duncan & Messner, 2000; 2005; Higgs et al., 2003; Koivula, 1999; Weiller et al., 2004; Wensing & Bruce, 2003), these occurrences were found in the coverage of sportsmen as well as sportswomen (seven times in relation to male athletes and six times in relation to female athletes). Previous studies have found that hierarchy of naming has existed in sports coverage, using women's first names rather than their surnames, or using the terms "girl" or "girls" to describe women. Henley (1977) in her research on the sexism present in language, argued that dominant people in society (as determined by race, occupation, socio-economic status, age or gender) are more likely to be referred to by their surnames prefaced by a title (e.g. Dr, Mrs, Mr). Those considered subordinates (often youth, lower socio-economic status, women, ethnic minorities etc.) are more often referred to by their first name alone. Henley (1977) described this as a process of formalising the dominant and in-formalising the subordinate, granting dominants adult status and infantilising subordinates. The relative equality in hierarchy of naming between male and female sports coverage in this study of the coverage of the Commonwealth Games is a positive sign for the framing of sportswomen in New Zealand's television news media. It is encouraging to see that the technique was not frequently used and did not skew towards females as has been observed in other countries. It suggests that, in this regard, the media are willing to present male and female athletes as equals in terms of status in society and do not place female athletes in a position of subordination to male athletes.

5.2.3 The Absence of Sexualisation and Gender Stereotyping

A further technique that has been used by the media has been sexualisation and gender stereotyping of women athletes. Messner et al. (1993) identified stereotyping of female athletes at the 1992 Olympics, and Eastman and Billings (1999) made similar observations in their analysis of the 1994, 1996 and 1998 Winter Olympics coverage. The researchers noted more references were given to women's appearance than men's, and male athletes were twice as likely to be described using adjectives depicting strength and power. Daddario (1994, p. 286)

not only observed references to physical appearance of women athletes but also found females to be portrayed more often in family roles (e.g. "America's little sister" or the "favourite girl next door"). It is argued that describing female athletes in this way detracts from their athleticism and again gives a sense that women are not to be accepted in a role outside the traditional support role that patriarchal society has created for them (Daddario, 1994; Vincent et al., 2002). Contrary to these findings, this study found only one occurrence of gender stereotyping and none of sexualisation of female or male athletes. It was encouraging to witness the treatment of athletes by the media as just that, athletes, rather than portraying them in a role outside their sporting prowess.

This is a positive finding for the state of our television news media's qualitative treatment of women athletes. However, questions must still be raised as to whether the format of the Commonwealth Games has contributed to this level of equality in the treatment of men and women. Wensing and Bruce (2003) argue that international sporting events create a sense of national identification and pride which overrides the effect an athlete's gender may otherwise have on the media's perception and portrayal of them. They write:

coverage during international sports events such as the Olympic Games may be less likely to be marked by gendered (or racialized) discourses or narratives than reporting on everyday sports, at least for sportswomen whose success is closely tied to a nation's sense of self. (Wensing & Bruce, 2003, p. 393)

Further research is needed to examine whether television news coverage of sportswomen in general is also free from sexualisation and gender stereotyping as has been the case for the Commonwealth Games coverage.

5.2.4 Athletes Portrayed in Non-Sporting Contexts

Women have often been portrayed in posed images, away from the sports field, reaffirming the message that sports is masculine terrain (Pringle & Gordon, 1995). Previous studies have found that the media tend to depict women athletes in non-sporting contexts more often than they do male athletes, with women often shown in a way that does not emphasise their athleticism (Duncan & Messner, 2000; 2005; Pringle & Gordon, 1995; Vincent et al., 2002). This study supported these findings with women interviewed in a non-sporting context 58% of the time, versus men at 31%. Visual images are very powerful in conveying a sense of realism

(Duncan, 1990). The findings of this study suggest that New Zealand television media are presenting women athletes as passive by portraying them as less physically active and subtly reinforcing the message that sport is a male domain.

It should be noted that this study did not investigate camera angles or visual framing of athletes beyond the context of the setting used. For example, Lenskji (1998) looked more in-depth at the ways in which female athletes are posed in images, and inferred messages that this may convey. Lenskji found that media imagery concentrated on female athlete's bodies, citing sports such as surfing and beach volleyball as examples of media presenting women as highly sexualised images. She claims that this portrayal of women as sex objects further marginalises them and reinforces the symbolic masculine dominance of sport. Future research on New Zealand's television news coverage of sportswomen could investigate the imagery presented by the media to determine if women athletes are sexualised in this manner.

5.2.5 Tone and Topic of News Items

News items which focused on female athletes in this study were more likely to report on the specific sporting event, rather than other topics such as private lives or sponsorship, which was slightly more evident among the reporting on male athletes. Some researchers argue that reports focusing on women athletes tend to be positive in tone and more likely to focus on the sport itself, rather than topics unrelated to a sporting event (Olafsson, 2006). News that focuses on sportsmen is more likely to focus on external events, such as an athlete's private life or sponsorship issues. Olafsson explains that this is because male athletes are more likely to be framed as celebrities, and media interest in celebrities spans into their daily lives. Women athletes are not elevated to the same status as male athletes and therefore, Olafsson argues any coverage they do receive focuses on the sport itself rather than personal matters or sponsorship issues. She argues that because female athletes are not elevated to the same level as male athletes they are not subject to the same level of criticism and therefore news reports are generally more positive in tone. However, this belief is not universally shared by researchers. Halbert and Latimer (1994) and Duncan and Hasbrook (1988) argue that male athletes are generally treated in a more positive manner, receiving more praise and less criticism than female athletes. The authors contend that this differentiates athletes on the basis of gender and serves to further undermine women's athleticism.

Contrary to both opinions on tone, this study did not support either assertion, observing no difference in the amounts of female and male focused reports that were negatively framed. This study also did not support Olafsson's (2006) assertions about the topic of news items, the findings showing little difference in the topic reported on between the genders. It is possible that these findings were related to the nature of the Commonwealth Games. It may also be possible that coverage of the Games is more likely to focus on the sport itself rather than athletes' personal life or other topics unrelated to sport. Further research is required to investigate whether gender correlates with tone during general sports news coverage.

5.2.6 Where Are The Women Sources?

Sources play an important role in shaping the messages conveyed by the media (Berkowitz, 1987). Research on wider media coverage beyond the realm of sport indicates that women are seldom chosen as sources by the media (Zoch & Turk, 1998). The importance of media sources in the discussion of media framing is highlighted by Zoch and Turk (1998, p. 763) who write, "news is not necessarily what happens but what a news source says has happened because the news doesn't 'happen' until there is an exchange of information between journalists and their sources." The media often seek out the dominant, powerful and influential in society to be sources of news and, in the case of sport, these sources are often men. Zoch and Turk (1998) argue that this type of framing draws attention to men and away from women, suggesting what women have to say is less important than the views of men. If they use men more often than women as sports story sources, the media are again asserting the dominance of men in sport. Sources were defined as any individual or group that was interviewed by the media or provided a comment either on or off screen. This study witnessed twice as many male sources (67%) as female sources (33%). This gender bias towards male sources exceeds that found by Tuggle and Owen (1999) and Tuggle, Huffman and Rosengard (2001) who found women were used as sources 43% and 41% of the time respectively. This comparison is particularly disappointing given the sample analysed in the current study is several years more recent than those outlined above. Although there are no previous New Zealand-based studies to compare the findings to, the results indicate that by international standards, the use of women as sources in sports news is not as equitable as has been observed overseas. This

suggests that, in New Zealand, attitudes towards using females in gathering information to support news reports are not keeping pace with international trends.

There may be specific reasons for men to be interviewed more frequently than women, other than the media's tendency to use male sources across various genres of news. For example, there were more male coaches, managers and sporting officials (67%) in the New Zealand Commonwealth Games team and therefore, it is obvious that these categories would be more highly represented by male sources. This in itself is an example of the systemic under-representation of women in sport, not only in participation levels but at the administration and decision-making levels also. It could be argued that the media are, in relation to administrative sources, simply reflecting what can be observed in reality.

5.2.7 Sports Journalism – A Man's Vocation?

Many researchers interested in women's under-representation in the sports news media have claimed that the lack of female journalists, editors and media management is partially to blame for the lack of attention women athletes receive (Duncan & Messner, 2000; McGregor & Melville, 1991; Theberge & Cronk, 1986). McGregor and Fountaine (1997) commented that while there has been an increase in the number of females choosing journalism as a profession, this had not filtered through into sports journalism. Strong and Hannis (2007) support this statement, outlining that in New Zealand metropolitan newspapers during the study's sample period (July 2005), women wrote 36% of the articles yet in the sports section, which accounted for one fifth of the newspaper articles studied, women only wrote 7% of the articles.

The results of this study seem to support this trend, although only when considered at a holistic level across both networks, with just 21% of the total news items filed by female journalists. The reporting on TVNZ supported the findings from previous studies (Alexander, 1994; Duncan & Messner, 2000; Urquhart & Crossman, 1999) that the overwhelming majority of sports news is reported on by male journalists, with only 5% of the news items broadcast on TVNZ filed by women. However, the results show that TV3's broadcasting of the Commonwealth Games did not support this trend, with 43% of the news items reported by women journalists.

One of the main reasons for the difference in the amount of news items reported by women between the networks was the gender of the sports anchor reporting from the Games venue. Both networks' main sports anchors, TVNZ's Neil Waka and TV3's Hamish McKay did not travel to Melbourne to present the coverage. TVNZ's live sports anchor for Games reporting was Wayne Hay but TV3 used a female sports anchor, Michelle Pickles. This partially explains why TV3 has a greater number of news items filed by women than TVNZ. In addition to the sports anchor, TV3 had another female journalist, Emma Keeling, who reported on several different sports, including the high-profile triathlon where New Zealand won three medals. TVNZ also had a female reporter, Jenny-May Coffin, but her assignments were confined only to Netball. One can only speculate as to why TV3's representation of female journalists was higher than TVNZ's, but the Games did fall in the same year as the 2006 Rugby World Cup, to which TV3 had exclusive coverage rights. It is possible that more male journalists were involved in travel to France to cover this event, leaving the female journalists to attend the Commonwealth Games.

The greater number of reports filed by female journalists on TV3 is not reflected in any increase in the amount of coverage female athletes received on the network. Although TV3 spent slightly more time reporting on female athletes compared with TVNZ, it still had the same percentage of news items dedicated to sportswomen as its rival network, which had fewer female journalists reporting on the Commonwealth Games. These findings support the claims of Ferguson (cited in Hardin & Shain, 2006) and Pedersen, Whisenant and Schieder (1993) that journalists' gender has little or no influence on the content of stories or gender of athletes selected to report on. These findings support this claim in regards to the amount of coverage given to women athletes but the study did reveal significant differences in the framing techniques used by TVNZ and TV3, with female athletes framed more positively on the latter network. These differences will be discussed in the following segment.

5.3.0 NETWORK DIFFERENCES

A secondary objective of this research was to compare the reporting from the country's two major networks. Because TVNZ is a Crown-Owned Company and run under the principles of a public service broadcaster and under the guidance of a charter, one would hope that the network would be the leader in terms of gender equity in sports reporting. However, the findings of the study indicate otherwise,

with TV3 outperforming TVNZ in terms of the amount of coverage given to sportswomen and the way male and female athletes were framed.

McQuail (2005) describes the goals of a public service broadcaster as to: put public interest before financial objectives; provide balanced and impartial information, and; achieve diversity in catering for all main interests, opinions and beliefs. The fact that TVNZ's charter does not explicitly state that the broadcaster should provide balanced coverage inclusive of gender highlights an inadequacy in the charter itself. Given that it is clear from the results of this study and previous studies (Atkinson, 2001; O'Leary & Roberts, 1985) that gender equity has not been achieved by TVNZ in relation to sport, perhaps this should signal to the Government that it is necessary to include specific reference to gender in the charter objectives.

Regardless of the absence of any specific gender reference the charter still indicates TVNZ will fulfil its objectives by:

- enhancing opportunities for citizens to participate in community, national and international life
- featuring New Zealand and international programmes that provide for the informational, entertainment and education needs of children and young people and allow for the participation of children and young people
- reflecting the role that sporting and other leisure interests play in New Zealand life and culture (TVNZ, 2003, p. 2).

However, in spite of the charter's guiding principles to provide impartial coverage and enhance opportunities for participation of adults and children in New Zealand society, the findings of this study show that TVNZ under-represented female athletes, gave greater priority placement to news on male athletes, and used gender marking more in relation to female athletes than male. It was also less likely to use women as sources, and was less likely to interview the athlete reported on if the athlete was female. The network also predominantly used male journalists to file news reports and had a male presenter as the live sports anchor in Melbourne.

Gender bias in a public service broadcaster's sports coverage is not a new observation. Alexander (1994) identified the same scenario in her analysis of Britain's public service broadcaster, BBC, in its coverage of the 1992 Olympic Games. Alexander (1994, p. 644) found that the message the British television

network was sending was that “women’s sport on television is not to be encouraged.” While the differences in treatment of male and female athletes noted in TVNZ’s coverage are of themselves alarming, it is of even greater concern that there should be such substantial differences in coverage when compared with TV3. Although the amount of coverage given to female athletes was similar for both networks, gender bias in the framing of women athletes was not as strong for the private broadcaster’s coverage as it was for the public service broadcaster. The results also showed TV3 as exhibiting less gender bias in framing, with more lead sports news stories featuring women athletes, no gender bias evident in gender marking, more female sources utilised and more news items filed by women journalists. These findings suggest that when it comes to sport, TVNZ is not driven by values of diversity and equal opportunity such as the charter proclaims but instead follows traditional historical trends in sports reporting by sticking closely to what is familiar – the male athlete. TV3, although only marginally better, seems more willing to break the mould of sports reporting with slightly more attention and appreciation for female athletes, sources, and journalists.

5.4.0 LIMITATIONS

This analysis of the media’s representation of sportswomen is limited by several factors. First, the narrow focus of the research on New Zealand’s two major free-to-air networks, TVNZ and TV3, limits the findings to the field of free-to-air television news. Although these two networks hold the majority of the audience share (Marshall, 2007) they do not represent the entire television news media environment in New Zealand and therefore findings from these two networks cannot be extrapolated to other networks which offer news programmes (such as SKY TV or Prime). However, the combined audience capture of these two networks is 952, 263 people (Marshall, 2007), indicating almost a quarter of New Zealand’s population will be exposed to the style of reporting and levels of coverage discussed above. As the study only considers television news media the results cannot be generalised across other media. However, television, along with other forms of non-print news media, is becoming more and more dominant in penetration. Much of the previous research investigating the media’s representation of sportswomen, particularly in New Zealand, has focused on newspaper coverage (e.g. Fountaine and McGregor, 1999; McGregor & Fountaine, 1997; McGregor & Melville, 1991). With newspaper readership declining over the last two decades from over 80% of New Zealanders to around 50% (Young, 2006), television and online media are perhaps the most important areas requiring researchers’ scrutiny.

New Zealand has witnessed the move by metropolitan dailies into the online playing field (e.g. NZ Herald and Stuff) in an effort to translate printed media into digital and capture a younger audience. Future research should address these online newspapers as well as the wider Internet-based resources to which the New Zealand public increasingly turn for their news.

Secondly, the findings only relate to news coverage of the 2006 Commonwealth Games. As several researchers have found (Brown, 1996; Capranica & Aversa, 2002; Capranica et al., 2005; Higgs et al., 2003; Jones, 2004; Toohey, 1997; Urquhart & Crossman, 1999; Vincent et al., 2002; Weiller et al., 2004; Wensing & Bruce, 2003) media coverage of international sporting events attracts very different coverage than daily sports coverage. Therefore, the conclusions drawn by this study cannot be applied to the coverage of regular sports news coverage outside multinational sporting events.

5.5.0 SUMMARY

This chapter has discussed the results of the research investigating New Zealand television news coverage of the Commonwealth Games. The chapter has reviewed the under-representation of women athletes throughout the coverage and discussed in detail the different techniques used by the media to frame female athletes in a way that positions them as less important and newsworthy than male athletes. These techniques included preferential positioning for news items on male athletes, more prevalent use of gender marking during coverage of sportswomen and the tendency to show more female athletes in passive, non-sporting contexts.

It has also revealed that this gender bias towards male athletes is more evident in the state-owned broadcaster TVNZ's coverage than the privately owned television network TV3. Strong differences between the networks were not observed at a quantitative level but became apparent through the examination of the ways the networks framed male and female athletes in their coverage of them.

The following chapter provides the conclusions for the research, analysing the implications of the findings and offering direction for future research into the gender differences present in New Zealand's media coverage of sport.

CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSIONS

6.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter summarises the key implications of this study and shows why the aggregated results – which show that despite differences between broadcasters, overall female athletes received significantly less coverage than male athletes, and were framed differently – are important for our ongoing understanding of gender and media. It also highlights important areas for further research that arise from this research.

6.1.0 CONCLUSIONS

This study has found conclusively that New Zealand's television news media coverage during the 2006 Commonwealth Games under-represented women athletes. The amount of time spent reporting on women athletes fell far short of that spent on male athletes and did not reflect the participation or success levels achieved by women. Furthermore, the research found that the studied media used techniques such as gender marking, preferential positioning and situational framing differently, sometimes in ways that promoted a sense of 'otherness' for female athletes. Perhaps the most unexpected finding was that not only did the two broadcasters differ markedly both in their levels of under-representation and in their uses of framing, but that the privately owned broadcaster was actually less biased in several ways.

Halbert and Latimer (1994) made the bold statement that gender equality in sports would not be achieved until television commentary treated sportsmen and sportswomen with parity. An encouraging finding revealed by this research was the absence of any infantilisation or sexualisation of women athletes by the media as has been previously observed in similar studies overseas. The absence of infantilisation, sexualisation, and for the most part gender stereotyping, is positive and an indication that the story is not altogether negative for the portrayal of our country's sportswomen. This study indicates that the New Zealand television media may have made steps towards improving some of the historical inequalities of male and female athletes' treatment by the media in these areas.

However, overall the findings did not paint such a positive picture. The lack of total coverage time, and the gendered framing of sportswomen observed in this study further emphasises male dominance in the sports industry. This serves to reinforce the idea that sportswomen are 'other' or 'less' than sportsmen, minimising the importance and significance of female athletes' achievements. The New Zealand television news media must not only review the quantity of coverage of sportswomen they are choosing to report on but, as the evidence from this study suggests, they must carefully examine all the ways in which they construct and present their reports on women athletes, avoiding not only obvious bias such as sexualisation but also more subtle types of framing. Overall, the two television media's treatment of the Commonwealth Games did not reflect balance or equality between the genders and there is a need for this to be addressed. As Lopiano explains:

Female athletes are no different than male in the skill, dedication and courage they bring to their sports. Sports commentary and reporting, and photo and video imagery, like the use of the English language in general, should reflect the fundamental equality of women and men both on and off the field...The media should simply reflect the reality of women's diverse experiences – from grace and beauty to physical strength, endurance and power. Taking a balanced and realistic view is the media's ethical and professional responsibility. (1998, p. 51)

The gender order of sport has traditionally accepted that the sports field belongs firstly to males and is less acceptable terrain for females. However, as George, Hartley and Paris (2001) note, gender order is not unchangeable; rather it should be constantly challenged. This research has added to the wider body of research in this field that has overwhelmingly demonstrated that various media have supported, reinforced and, in some instances created, the male dominance within sport. Yet, as George, Hartley and Paris are careful to point out, the media are also one of the most powerful and influential forces of societal change and can help balance the playing field when it comes to women and sport. The Charter for TVNZ would suggest that the public broadcaster in particular has a responsibility to redress such an imbalance.

6.2.0 IMPLICATIONS

The implications of these findings are significant, particularly if such inequality is found more widely in New Zealand sports reporting in general. As has been observed by other researchers from various developed countries (Alexander, 1994;

Boutilier & San Giovanni, 1983; Crossman, Hyslop, & Guthrie, 1994; Duncan & Messner, 2000; 2005; Kane & Greendorfer, 1999; Koivula, 1999; Lever & Wheeler, 1984; Olafsson 2006; Pederson, 2002; Theberge & Cronk, 1987; Toohey, 1997; Urquhart & Crossman, 1999; Vincent, 2004), the gender bias of media coverage for multinational sports events is far less evident than it is for general sports reporting. Bearing the international trend in mind, this research raises an important question; if the coverage researched here uncovered a gender bias, how much more evident is the gender bias in regular television sports news coverage?

The under-representation of women athletes in the New Zealand media undermines the importance of sport and physical activity in the lives of females. Participating in an area of society where women are the minority can lead to women, particularly young women and girls, internalising an ideology that they don't belong in the male dominated world of sport (What Works for Women, 2007). Research conducted by SPARC (2003) shows that girls under the age of 18 do not participate in physical activity to the same level as boys. In 2001, approximately 62% of girls participated in sport compared with 71% of boys. In fact participation levels do not equalise across the genders until the age bracket of 35-49 years, where 66% of both males and females are participating in physical activity.

Billings and Eastman (2002) argue that children and teenagers are the most impressionable age group and for many, much of their exposure to sport is via television. They argue that, "lacking a larger frame of reference the identity of stereotypes embedded within the television coverage can readily influence this young audience's perception of reality setting expectations about gender ethnicity, and national similarities and differences" (Billings & Eastman, 2002, p 368). Girls and young women need the inspiration and modelling provided by role models to give them the confidence and belief that they can be successful in sport (Women's Sports Foundation, 2003). The media are crucial in providing visible role models, therefore if young people are repeatedly exposed to sports media coverage that under-represents, trivialises and marginalises women athletes, they are at risk of perceiving sportsmen as more important and more valued than sportswomen. With the media's portrayal of sport as masculine, girls are without the role models to encourage them to continue participating (Olafsson, 2006). This study has shown that New Zealand's two main television news media channels did not, in their coverage of an important sporting event, help to create these role models, rather they served to reinforce the perception of sport, first and foremost, as a masculine

activity. The attitudes and beliefs that sport is predominantly a male domain may contribute to females participating less in sport, particularly at the higher, more visible levels.

Reduced participation levels in physical activity can have serious, perhaps in extreme cases even fatal, ramifications. Inactivity contributes to other, long-term societal problems such as the obesity epidemic New Zealand faces. The 2002/2003 New Zealand Health Survey (Ministry of Health, 2008) reports that one in five New Zealanders is obese and as many as one in three is overweight. It also estimates that 11,000 deaths each year are related to obesity and, of these, 2000-3000 are linked to sub-optimal levels of physical activity. The report goes on to outline that males are significantly more likely than females to be physically active. While there are several barriers that prevent women from engaging in physical activity (SPARC, 2003) the media can play a crucial role in improving the visibility of women athletes which will contribute towards positive outcomes for the health and well-being of New Zealanders.

In a country that upholds the value of equality (Ministry of Women's Affairs, 2007), sportswomen deserve to be given an equal opportunity to thrive and female athletes to be provided with the same opportunities as male athletes. Women were active participants in the Commonwealth Games and this was not reflected in the coverage studied. The role the media plays in helping sporting organisation achieve public interest and sponsorship revenue is crucial. Without adequate media exposure, it will be difficult for sportswomen to operate in the increasingly commercial environment the sports industry now faces. Female athletes will continue to struggle to attract the same level of resource and status attained by many male athletes.

Media coverage also affects women's sporting participation in other ways. In addition to not encouraging women's participation by not providing role models, the media's framing of female athletes as marginal reduces sponsorship opportunities (Shaw & Amis 2001). In marketing, image is paramount, meaning sponsors are drawn towards images of power and success that can in turn be transferred to their products. Shaw and Amis argue that this kind of imagery is more commonly found in the framing of male athletes. If women athletes are depicted as weak, less important and with a sense of 'otherness' they are not as attractive to sponsors. Researchers have already noted the higher level of commerciality held by male

sports teams in comparison to women's in New Zealand (Fountain & McGregor, 1999; McGregor & Melville, 1991). Unless female sports teams can attract sponsors they are unlikely to have the financial capability of their male peers and will struggle to fund their sporting activity (Shaw & Amis, 2001).

These findings have important media and policy implications. Sports organisations have expressed concern over the gender bias in sports media coverage and the influence this has on both the development of women's sport and the sponsorship secured (New Zealand Olympic Committee, 2005). The increasing commercialism of sport has fuelled an influx of public relations activities, predominantly in the realm of sports played by men (McGregor & Melville, 1991). In an increasingly commercial environment, female athletes and sporting officials may need to up-skill themselves to be able to form better relationships with the media. Admittedly there have been murmurings from national sporting bodies about helping improve the media exposure of sportswomen. Organisations such as SPARC and the New Zealand Olympic Committee claim to have put in place measures to support female sports teams in up-skilling themselves to deal with the media. For example, one of the key recommendations from the Oceania Olympic Committee's Women in Sport Workshop in 2005 was to encourage women and sporting bodies to work more closely with local and national media to get fairer coverage (New Zealand Olympic Committee, 2005). However, the results of this study and previous New Zealand research in this area (Atkinson, 1995; McGregor 1993; McGregor & Fountain, 1997; McGregor & Melville, 1991) suggest these measures are not sufficient enough. Without significant pressure from political sphere, the media seem willing to continue to provide token snippets of women's sport and ignore the gender inequities that exist in their coverage.

The neglect to strive for, let alone achieve, equality in relation to sports broadcasting ought to be unacceptable from a public service broadcaster. Such a broadcaster should provide balanced, impartial information that puts the public interest above commercial goals (McQuail, 2005). TVNZ cannot claim that in continuing to under-represent sportswomen and, furthermore, marginalising and trivialising female athletes in its reporting style, it is meeting the goals of the charter. These goals require TVNZ to provide comprehensive and impartial coverage that not only reflects women's participation in sport but also that encourages the participation of women in sport. Perhaps this research reveals that there is a clear need for the charter to state more clearly the expectations of gender

impartiality. The parliamentary select committee charged with the oversight of the charter should consider addressing the obvious gaps surrounding the fair and balanced portrayal of men and women the next time the charter is revisited. If the public's expectation of the public service broadcaster to provide a more accurate reflection of women's participation in sport is spelled out, maybe this will encourage the broadcaster to turn more attention to female athletes

One step that some scholars (Alexander, 1994; Duncan & Messner, 2000; Theberge & Cronk, 1986; Urquhart & Crossman, 1999) have concluded will enhance the coverage of sportswomen is to encourage more women to become involved in sports journalism. As the results from this research show, male sports journalists were used significantly more than female sport journalists. However the findings from this study do not indicate that this suggestion will be beneficial in the New Zealand media landscape. This study showed that the greater number of reports filed by women journalists on TV3 had little impact on the amount of coverage that was given to sportswomen. As McGregor (2006) explains, to influence the content of the news, women need to be in positions of management. McGregor argues that having women in positions of influence will result in an increase in the female perspective in the news. This study did not investigate the demographic profile of the editorial team or the news values and attitudes held by those responsible for the production and editing of the sports news at either television network and therefore cannot draw conclusions about the impact more women in the editorial teams would have. Further research is needed to investigate whether any gender bias is ingrained within the culture of the personnel behind the production of our country's sports news. Initial work by Strong (2007) suggests that there is a cultural problem in newspapers, but greater understanding of the situation across a range of media is needed if change is to be achieved.

There are commercial arguments for moving to more balanced coverage, not just altruistic ones. As Whannel (1992) underscores, television has used sports coverage to its commercial advantage for decades, attracting large audiences and advertising revenue. Although traditionally that audience has been male, Strong (2007) suggests that this audience is shifting and women are becoming increasingly more interested in media coverage of sport. This claim is supported by observing the television audience of major international sporting events. For example the most watched televised sporting event during 2006 was the FIFA World Cup Final, of which, women accounted for 41% of the global audience, a

larger share of women viewers than ever before witnessed. Similarly, the 2004 Olympic Games' television audience was higher in women (54%) than it was men in both Britain and Germany (Dawley, 2007). If women are becoming increasingly more interested in televised sport, as these figures suggest, it may be timely that the media consider ways to attract and retain this segment of their potential audience by improving the representation of sportswomen As Webber (1992, p 186) writes:

The main thing women want from the media is to be in it. We don't just to be firsts, best and only[s], sex symbols, wives, mothers or victims. We want to be recognised in both our complexity and diversity. We also want it acknowledged that we have a perspective that's different.

Through the continued under-representation of women athletes by television media, the New Zealand public are not given the opportunity to celebrate and commiserate with the triumphs and struggles of women athletes and sports teams to the same extent they are with male sports. This is even more evident on our own national, state-owned television network. The public can only make a choice as to which media they choose to engage with and cannot determine the content that is presented to them. The media has a responsibility to ensure that they provide the public with a balanced and diverse reflection of our society (McQuail, 2005). Based on the findings of this research, perhaps the time has come for the New Zealand television news media to ask themselves if they are providing the New Zealand public with this balanced portrayal of sport.

6.3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

McGregor (1993, p1) suggests that research should be used as a means to an end, rather than an end in itself, aiming to generate "knowledgeable action", rather than just identify the problem. In response to the findings of this research recommendations are made to help facilitate the process of turning knowledge to action. These recommendations are designed to use the findings of this study to prompt a change in the media coverage female athletes receive in this country. Suggestions are made for sports organisations and athletes, the media, and government. The recommendations are as follows:

- The parliamentary select committee charged with responsibility for reviewing the TVNZ charter includes reference to gender balance and equity in the TVNZ charter at the next review. As the charter is only reviewed every five years with the last review having been completed at

the time of this research, this is a long-term recommendation yet one which is critical for improving the visibility of sportswomen on TVNZ

- Government sports organisations such as SPARC use this research, in conjunction with the wider body of research in this area, as ammunition to help lobby government and media to bring about a change in both media governance (i.e. TVNZ's charter) and in the media's sports reporting
- Sports journalists and editors undergo professional development to help them understand the affects of media framing. This will allow them to identify ways in which they may be negatively framing female athletes. Increasing the profession's awareness of media framing may gradually lead to a change in the culture and traditional news values in the newsroom of sport as male terrain
- Sportswomen, their management and administrative staff reflect on their skills in dealing with the media and, if necessary, take steps to develop these with the goal to build and maintain positive media relationships. As noted in the previous discussion, funding any formal training may be an impossibility for some sports groups and therefore athletes may need to take an informal and self-led approach to their training.

6.4.0 FUTURE RESEARCH

To gain a more accurate picture of the media's coverage of sportswomen in New Zealand requires further, deeper analysis. If, as the results of overseas studies suggest (Capranica & Aversa 2002; Capranica et al., 2005; Higgs et al, 2003; Toohey, 1997; Weiller et al., 2004), women are given more attention during multinational sporting events such as the Commonwealth or Olympic Games, then the question must be asked as to what levels of coverage sportswomen are currently receiving outside such high profile events. To answer this, there is a need for a wider study of the mainstream media, such as television, press and online media environments to investigate whether the levels of coverage of regular sports are any more or less equitable for female athletes. With the introduction of a new, commercially driven, international netball competition in 2008 which follows a similar format to Super Rugby, this would be an excellent time to review the news

media's coverage of a female equivalent of the Super Rugby competition as women take the next step in the commercialisation of netball.

To provide ammunition for sporting organisations to lobby the media to show more coverage of female athletes, research is needed that investigates levels of New Zealand's public interest in seeing more sportswomen in the media. If public interest in watching women play sport is strong, then the media, who are heavily reliant on advertising which is driven by ratings, readership and listener figures, may be more willing to pay greater attention to the coverage of sportswomen.

Finally, to date, there has been little research investigating whether the mass media have increased the visibility of female athletes through online news coverage. As the Internet is such a powerful medium that has the ability to reinforce or contradict the normal socialisation messages rife throughout traditional media (Robertson, 1997), it may also be time researchers moved from studying traditional news media into the digital platform. Netsafe (2001) reported that 68.5% of New Zealand girls aged 11-19 use the Internet on a daily basis. With so many young people using this form of media everyday and the ability of the media to influence attitudes and reinforce gender stereotypes (Creedon, 1994; Croteau & Hoynes, 2000) it would be worthwhile concentrating further research on the representation of female athletes in Internet coverage.

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APPENDIX A: CODING PROTOCOL

Page 1

Coding Protocol

Content & frame analysis of New Zealand television news coverage during the 2006 Commonwealth Games

1. Story identification number: _____

2. Story date: _____

3. Length of story (seconds): _____

4. Channel:

- | | |
|-----|---|
| TV1 | 1 |
| TV3 | 2 |

5. Position in news:

- | | |
|--------------------------------|---|
| General news segment | 1 |
| First in sports segment | 2 |
| Subsidiary sports news segment | 3 |

6. Gender of subject:

- | | |
|--------|---|
| Male | 1 |
| Female | 2 |
| Mixed | 3 |

7. Gender of journalist reporting:

- | | |
|--------|---|
| Male | 1 |
| Female | 2 |

Coding Protocol

Content & frame analysis of New Zealand television news coverage during the 2006 Commonwealth Games

Source:

1. How many sources are used in the article? _____

2. Is the source a(n):

No source /not applicable	0	0	0	0	0	0
Athlete	1	1	1	1	1	1
Coach	2	2	2	2	2	2
Manager	3	3	3	3	3	3
Sporting official	4	4	4	4	4	4
Family member of subject	5	5	5	5	5	5
Other (specify)	6	6	6	6	6	6

3. If the source is an athlete, are they interviewed in a sporting context

(e.g. on courtside)?

Not applicable	0	0	0	0	0	0
Yes	1	1	1	1	1	1
No	2	2	2	2	2	2

4. What gender are the source(s)?

Not applicable	0	0	0	0	0	0
Male	1	1	1	1	1	1
Female	2	2	2	2	2	2
Unknown	3	3	3	3	3	3

5. Is the source(s) referred to in a gendered way?

Not applicable	0	0	0	0	0	0
Yes	1	1	1	1	1	1
No	2	2	2	2	2	2

Coding Protocol

Content & frame analysis of New Zealand television news
coverage during the 2006 Commonwealth Games

Framing:

1. Are there any instances of gender marking in the story?

Yes	1
No	2

If so describe and indicate who did the gender marking
(i.e. source or journalist):

2. Hierarchy of naming:

Is hierarchy of naming present, if so is it in regards to a:

Not present	0
Male athlete	1
Female athlete	2

Number of times athlete referred to by first name only: _____

Number of times athlete referred to as boy/girl/lady: _____

3. Are there any instances of sexualisation or gender stereotyping in the news item?

If so please describe:

Coding Protocol

Content & frame analysis of New Zealand television news
coverage during the 2006 Commonwealth Games

4. What is the focus of the story?

Sporting performance/event	1
Sponsorship issue	2
Personal life of the athlete	3
Other	4

5. The story is predominantly:

Positive	1
Negative	2
Neutral	3

APPENDIX B: OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS

Sports news story	Any news story which features a sports team or athlete competing at the Commonwealth Games. This may be either within the sports segment of the news or the general segment of the news.
Mixed	This category is used to define sports stories that feature both male and female subjects regardless of the time devoted to either gender.
Background	This category is used to define sports stories that deal with issues arising from the Commonwealth Games that are not focused on sport or a particular athlete or team (e.g. Opening Ceremony, Political agendas etc).
General news segment	For a story to be classified in this category it must be broadcast at any stage in the news other than in the sports segment.
Sports news segment	For an story to be classified in this category it must be broadcast in the 'sports section' of the news which is presented by the sports anchor which for both channels in this study is typically broadcast between 1840 and 1850.
First in sports segment	This category is used to classify the first story of every 'sports news segment.
Source	A source is any person or organisation in the sports news story who is interviewed by the journalist or sports anchor or who provides a statement (either written or verbal) to the network.
Sporting context	Any environment in which sport has been or is being played. For example on the sports sideline, in the locker room, at training, medal ceremonies.

Non – sporting context	That which is not a sporting context, includes press conferences, hotel venues, home, office settings or newsroom settings.
Hierarchy of naming	This describes any instances when a journalist or sport anchor refers to an athlete by their first name rather than surname or uses the terms 'boys' or 'girls' to describe men or women.
Gender-marking	This is either the verbal or visual labelling of a sports event as 'women's' or 'men's'. For example "the winner of the women's basketball..."
Gender Stereotyped	Any reference made to a stereotypically feminine or masculine. For example: wife, husband, mother, daughter, son, sister, brother.
Positive	The term positive is used to classify any story which frames a story in an obviously positive fashion. Classify a story as positive if the journalist reporting gives praise to the athlete or team in question.
Negative	The term negative is used to classify any story which frames a story in an obviously negative way. Classify a story as negative if the focus of the story is critical towards an athlete or team or if the story focuses on an event which detracts from athletes or team's reputation, e.g drug scandal, crime, harassment.
Neutral	Use to describe stories which do not fit either the positive or negative framing categories.