

# Passing It On: The Reinforcement of Male Hegemony in Sports Journalism Textbooks

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In the past decade, participation in athletics and consumption of sports media in U.S. culture have grown by almost every conceivable measure. As sports media have grown, so have collegiate programs and classes to train sports journalists. Sports media have traditionally marginalized women and women's sports; whether college courses and textbooks have reinforced male hegemony has not been explored. A key component of the college classroom is the textbook; textbooks play a role in the culture through their power to confer legitimacy to certain groups and reinforce marginal status for others. This study examines the status of women in 8 sports journalism textbooks. Overall, the books do not encourage aspiring journalists to address gender inequities in sports journalism.

During the past decade, participation in athletics and consumption of sports media in U.S. culture have grown by almost every conceivable measure. As sports media have grown, so have collegiate programs and classes to train sports journalists. An informal look at Web sites for Association of Schools of Journalism and

Mass Communication-accredited schools during 2003 indicated that almost one-quarter offered sports journalism courses.

Such classes and programs must address, by accounts from sports scholars, persistent problems in sports coverage, especially in relation to gender. Sports media generally exclude women from coverage, dedicating only 5–8% of total coverage to women's sports, even though 40% of sports participation is by women (King, 2002). By neglecting and marginalizing female sports, the media reinforces a value system that discriminates against women, both as athletes and as sports journalists. Such discrimination as presented in sports media leads to discrimination in the wider culture and to an overall "symbolic annihilation" of women (Tuchman, 1978, p. 11). Pederson, Whisenant, and Schneider (2003) called for changes in the practices of sports journalists:

There is a need to change the culture of hegemonic masculinity in the sports newsroom through training. ... Newly trained, mentored, and hired women and men must see sport as a domain where women and men receive equitable coverage. (p. 388)

It seems that a charge to "change the culture of hegemonic masculinity in the sports newsroom" must involve instruction at the college level, where students receive foundational instruction for their careers. Such training, if it provides young men and women with an enlightened understanding of sport and gender, might help change the patriarchal culture in sports departments (Pederson et al., 2003). This is especially critical in light of hopes that young people entering sports journalism bring more progressive ethics and values to the practice (Garrison & Salwen, 1989). Aspiring journalists learn, ideally, to reject news values that position one demographic group as more worthy of coverage than others. Another goal of many journalism educators is that students reject practices that encourage them to cover groups in stereotypical ways. It would be reasonable to expect these values to apply to sports journalism.

This study examines the primary course material for sports journalism students—sports journalism textbooks. Journalism students learn values about coverage, at least in part, from their textbooks. Textbooks are considered a powerful part of the educational process; students see texts as truth (Wright, 1996). For this study, we evaluated text and photos in sports journalism textbooks to ascertain whether they reinforce or argue against hegemonic coverage of sport and whether the texts encourage students to cover sports in ways that discourage stereotyping and exclusion.

### CULTURAL HEGEMONY, MEDIA, AND SPORT

Cultural critics have used the theory of hegemony to explain media framing of women and of minorities in sport (Hardin, 2005; Pederson, 2002). Hegemony theory

posits that the culture's most powerful groups obtain consent for their leadership through the use of ideological norms (Condit, 1994; Croteau & Hoynes, 2000). Social structures, presented as natural, help the powerful (able-bodied White men and their primary institutions) but disadvantage others (women and racial minorities). Mass media are key to the function of hegemony in the United States (Croteau & Hoynes, 2000; Herman & Chomsky, 1988). By sheer repetition, power structures that privilege the elite are presented as universally valid (Artz & Murphy, 2000; Condit, 1994).

Sports media have been indicted as perpetuating a hierarchy that privileges men and denies women equal exposure and opportunity. Such images, scholars have argued, reinforce notions that women are deserving of lower overall status in the culture (Lont, 1995; Schell, 1999; Tuchman, 1978). Studies charge all types of media with reinforcing the hegemonic notion that sport is a rite of passage for men (Duncan & Sayaovong, 1990; Hardin, Lynn, Walsdorf, & Hardin, 2002; Lumpkin & Williams, 1991; Pederson, 2002; Salwen & Wood, 1994). For instance, several studies of the influential publication *Sports Illustrated* (*SI*) found that men dominate from cover to cover—in photographic images and in feature articles (Bishop, 2003; Kane, 1988; Lumpkin & Williams, 1991; Messner, 2002; Salwen & Wood, 1994). A study by Bishop found that *SI* has not increased its coverage of women since the 1970s, but has decreased some elements of its coverage of female athletes. The trend in *SI* is representative of that in other sports media outlets, including *ESPN*, *USA Today*, and *The New York Times* (Eastman & Billings, 2000; Shugart, 2003). Almost every study has demonstrated that females have been vastly underrepresented in coverage (Bernstein, 2002; Pederson, 2002).

The marginalization of female athletes in mainstream media is one way to reinforce the notion that women are naturally less interested in and suited for sport than men (Duncan & Sayaovong, 1990). One longtime sports columnist argued in his book that women are naturally lesser athletes than men are; all hopes that women's sports will reach equal billing with men's will founder, he wrote, because they cannot attain "overall equality" (Koppett, 1994, p. 213). Sports editors who differ—"who ask you to believe that women's basketball is as interesting as the men's games"—are questioned (Seligman, 1998).

Besides being marginalized as athletes, female athletes are stereotyped. Griffin (1998) pointed to several categories of media-created images that perpetuate gender stereotypes: the hetero-sexual beauty queen, the wholesome girl next door, the cute pixie, and the wife and mom. Women are also presented as naturally less active than men by being depicted more often in passive (motionless) poses in sports photographs (Duncan & Sayaovong, 1990; Hardin, Dodd, & Chance, 2005; Hardin, Lynn, et al., 2002).

Women are also stereotyped as less athletic than men through depictions that favor aesthetic sports—those that emphasize feminine ideals of grace, beauty, and glamour, such as figure skating and gymnastics (Daddario, 1994; Duncan, 1990;

Kane, 1988). Such sports allow for traditional images of feminine behavior (Kane, 1988; Koivula, 1995; Tuggle & Owen, 1999; Vincent, Imwold, Johnson, & Massey, 2003). Team sports with an element of contact, such as baseball and football, are rated as masculine; sports that focus on individual performance and are judged on aesthetics, such as gymnastics and figure skating, are rated as feminine (Matteo, 1986). Women who participate in individual sports that do not involve body contact but are not judged by aesthetics (such as running and tennis) might also receive more coverage because these sports do not involve overt demonstrations of power (Matteo, 1986).

### Mediation Versus Reality

Images of women as nonsporting or as participating only in feminine sports, however, do not match reality. When Title IX was signed into law, 1 in 27 girls participated in high school sports; in 1998, one-third of American high school girls participated in organized sport (*Sports Illustrated for Women*, 2002). During the 1990s, participation by teenage girls on their school sports teams increased 31%, and female participants on National Collegiate Athletic Association teams increased 38% (*Sports Illustrated for Women*, 2002). The highest-growth sports among women are team sports such as soccer, and the most frequently found college varsity sports for women are (in rank order): basketball, volleyball, cross country, soccer, softball, tennis, track and field, golf, swimming, and lacrosse—none of which is an aesthetically oriented sport (Acosta & Carpenter, 2004).

### Women In Sports Journalism

Because of gains in women's athletics since the inception of Title IX, the number of women with sports experience and a desire to write about sports has risen exponentially. The number of women in sports journalism, however, has not mirrored the Title IX gains. Women have faced marginalization and discrimination in their pursuit of sports journalism careers (Etling, 2001, 2002).

Women covering sports have, however, seen progress. The number of women in the field has climbed steadily since the 1970s (Creedon, 1994). In the early 1970s, for instance, the Associated Press estimated that only 25 females worked in U.S. newspaper sports departments, and just 5 worked in sports broadcasting. An informal survey of 50 sports departments in 2001 showed that women constituted about 13% of employees, most working as clerks, reporters, and copy editors (Etling, 2002). Several years ago, Association of Women in Sports Media estimated the number of women in such careers at 500 (Ricchiardi, 2004). This increase in the percentage of women in newspaper sports departments is still far below the roughly 38% of newsroom employees who are women (*Editor & Publisher*, 2004).

## HEGEMONY AND AMERICAN EDUCATION

Critics have indicted the U.S. educational system for reinforcing values that privilege the powerful and perpetuate stereotypes about weaker groups (Artz & Murphy, 2000). Textbooks carry the cultural messages embedded in educational discourse. They are a staple in almost all college classrooms; the average student will have read about 30,000 textbook pages before graduation, and college students consider textbooks an integral part of their courses and learning (Besser, Stone, & Nan, 1999; Kern-Foxworth, 1990). Textbooks also help instructors design their courses, provide uniform content, and provide the basis of class discussion (Besser et al., 1999; Starck & Wyffels, 1990).

Textbooks are powerful indicators of what is legitimate class material for a given course (Wright, 1996). Textbooks signify constructions of reality and ways of selecting and organizing knowledge; they screen knowledge, providing selective access to ideas and information that are interpreted by students as natural, fixed structures (Apple & Christian-Smith, 1991; Sleeter & Grant, 1991). The tendency of students to use early learning experiences in a particular field to interpret later information gives textbooks even more power (Hogben & Waterman, 1997; Stocking & Gross, 1989).

Photographs also play a key role in textbooks. Research demonstrates that students can recall the photos that appear in texts (Apple, 1986; Goldstein, Bailis, & Chance, 1983; Low & Sherrard, 1999). According to Low and Sherrard, photographs should not be seen as merely "livening up a textbook" (p. 311) or clarifying points in the text; they carry memorable messages, especially about gender.

Much of the knowledge that textbooks deliver to students involves cultural values (Apple & Christian-Smith, 1991). Symbolic representations in textbooks are often used to confer legitimacy on the dominant social or ethnic groups in the same way that other types of knowledge receive dominant treatment or are ignored (Sleeter & Grant, 1991). Textbooks are important determinants of perceptions that students formulate about individuals in minority groups (Kern-Foxworth, 1993). Although this transmission of cultural values is perhaps the most important function of textbooks, relatively little critical attention has been paid to the source or power of texts' social messages (Apple, 1986; Hogben & Waterman, 1997; Sleeter & Grant, 1991).

### Diversity In Textbooks

In a culture in which attention has been placed on diversity issues both by the media and those in education, it might be tempting to think that textbooks help university instructors communicate diversity values to their students (Sleeter & Grant, 1991). Recent studies demonstrate that, for the most part, this is not the case, even in textbooks in which such diversity might be considered integral to the

topic. For instance, a study of diversity content in college textbooks about special education found the quantity and quality of such content varied greatly (Sileo, 1998). Other studies reflect the same or worse results. An analysis of textbooks for Marriage and Family classes found reinforcement of rigid gender distinctions (Low & Sherrard, 1999). A 1997 study of Introduction to Psychology textbooks revealed little attention given to minority groups and the virtual nonexistence of people with disabilities (Hogben & Waterman, 1997). Another study, of public speaking textbooks (Hanson, 1999), found that men were featured in photographs more often than women in all texts.

Besides ignoring the opportunity to sensitize students to the diversity they will encounter in the larger world when they graduate, textbooks also fail to prepare them for the diversity they will find in the workplace. For instance, Foxman and Easterling (1999) found that marketing textbooks, by underrepresenting women, people with disabilities, and racial minorities, present images of the workplace that do not match reality.

### Journalism Textbooks

In the study of journalism, texts that do not reflect diversity or that present biases and stereotypes as fact do not properly prepare students for balanced, fair reporting; therefore, emphasis on diversity is perhaps more important in these texts than textbooks in other fields of study (Hogben & Waterman, 1997; Kern-Foxworth, 1990; Starck & Wyffels, 1990). Few studies have addressed the messages about diversity in texts for journalism students, and none has examined sports journalism texts (Besser et al., 1999; Kern-Foxworth, 1990). Only one has examined journalism textbooks for their presentation of women (Wilmot-Weidman, 2001). Wilmot-Weidman's analysis of 12 journalism texts found that they vary widely in their presentation of gender-related issues and of bylines by female writers. She suggested that instructors supplement textbooks with material that recognizes the contributions of female journalists and with material that helps students recognize gender bias.

It appears that symbolic representations in journalism textbooks are often used to reinforce cultural hegemony in the same ways as the general mass media (Brennen, 2000; Sileo, 1998). Furthermore, Brennen (2000) wrote, U.S. journalism textbooks do not broach the idea that mass media "may contribute to inequality within society" (p. 111), thus steering students away from critically thinking about how journalists' decisions about photos and stories impact the culture.

## METHOD

This study used content analysis to ascertain the treatment of women in sports journalism texts. Like news reporting texts (but perhaps more so), sports journalism

textbooks use anecdotes about newsmakers (athletes, coaches, and team owners, for instance) and advice from journalists in much of their material. Such material accumulates to provide an overall impression about the nature of sports and journalism.

The following research questions guided the research:

1. What is the overall ratio of women to men in the text?
2. What is the ratio of women to men in references to sports journalists and to athletes in text?
3. How are men and women presented in relation to sports? Are they presented in stereotypical fashion (women as invisible or associated with traditionally “feminine” sports; men with “masculine” sports) or in more realistic ways?
4. Do photographs in sports journalism textbooks depict women? If so, how are they depicted—in ways that are stereotypical (posed in individual, aesthetic sports) or in more accurate ways (as active in team sports that involve contact)?
5. Are newer textbooks better than older titles relating to the inclusion and framing of women in sports and sports journalism?

Content analysis, a method that involves the quantifying of elements within a text, was used to answer the research questions. Through content analysis, relationships of the most salient clusters of images and information are gauged to accurately represent the dominant messages (Entman, 1993). Content analysis has also been determined as an effective way to examine media images of minority or historically oppressed groups (Hocking & Stacks, 1998; Wimmer & Dominick, 1991).

### Textbooks

Sports journalism textbooks were identified through inquiries on a journalism mailing list and a search of syllabi and sports journalism sites on the Internet. Relatively few sports journalism textbooks have been published; we found only eight. The newest book is *Real Sports Reporting*, edited by Abraham Aamidor and published in 2003. Other new books are the *Associated Press Sports Writing Handbook* (Wilstein) and *Sports Writing: A Beginner's Guide* (Craig), both published in 2002. The other books are *The Sports Writing Handbook* (Fensch, 1995.), *Sports Reporting* (Garrison, 1993), *Sportswriting: The Lively Game* (Fink, 2001), and *Contemporary Sports Writing* (Anderson, 1993). Although it includes chapters about public relations and advertising, *The Mulligan Guide to Sports Journalism Careers* (Mulligan & Mulligan, 1998) was included in this study because 12 of its 15 chapters are related to sports reporting or writing. Of these

texts, three use photos (Anderson, 1993; Garrison, 1993; Wilstein, 2002), and two used photos on their covers (Craig, 2002; Mulligan & Mulligan, 1998). All photographs in these books were coded.

### Data Collection

Recording instruments were used for analyzing text and photos. The instrument for analyzing text was adapted from categories used by Duncan and Sayaovong (1990). Distinct references to individuals were units of analysis. The categorical variables for each unit of analysis were: (a) gender (man or woman); (b) role (media, athlete, sports leader such as coach or owner, or "other"); (c) type of sport (individual, team, or "not applicable"); and (d) category of sport (power, contact, noncontact/nonaesthetic, aesthetic, or "not applicable"). Power sports were classified as those that used overt demonstrations of strength, such as weightlifting, football, or boxing, and contact sports were other sports considered "male" (for their element of contact or risk) such as basketball, baseball, and hockey. Examples of noncontact/nonaesthetic sports included golf and tennis, and aesthetic sports included figure skating and gymnastics.

Individuals were coded once per story, anecdote, or reference. (If a reference to a person went for several paragraphs, the person was coded once although his or her last name might have been mentioned again in the story, anecdote, or reference.) A total of 4,996 individual references were coded among all the textbooks.

The instrument to analyze photos also used categories from the work of Duncan and Sayaovong (1990). Individuals in photographs were units of analysis. The categorical variables used for each unit of analysis were: (a) gender (man, woman, or "can't tell"); (b) type of sport; (c) category of sport; (d) level of motion (active or passive); and (e) role (leader, player, or other). Artistic models (computer-generated figures such as drawing of athletes or graphic representations) and crowd shots were not coded. Persons who were members of background crowds in photos, or whose heads were not clearly visible, were not coded. A total of 183 images were coded.

### Data Reliability

A critical component of content analysis is ensuring that coding is reliable so that the data reflect consistency in the application of the coding schemes. Two of the three researchers involved with this study were trained to serve as coders. Holsti's reliability formula was used to assess coder reliability (Hocking & Stacks, 1998). Coders completed a reliability test using about half of the photo images in the study sample. The coders were in agreement between 88% (motion) and 99% (gender) of the time, depending on the variable. The average agreement for all categories was 96%. Coders also tested reliability using slightly more than 10%



of the sample text. They agreed between 89% (role) and 95% (gender) of the time. Average agreement across all categories was 92%.

## RESULTS

RQ1: What is the overall ratio of women to men in the text?

In the overall sample, men outnumbered women almost 5 to 1; 89% of references in all books were to men, and 11% of references were to women. Cross-tabulations showed that individual textbooks demonstrated roughly the same percentages; the Fink (2001) text showed the largest disparity, with 91% of its references to men, but it was only slightly ahead of Anderson (1993), Wilstein (2002), Garrison (1993), and Mulligan and Mulligan (1998). The most equitable ratio was found in Craig's (2002) text, in which 69% of the references were to men. These differences were significant ( $\chi^2 = 56.987$ ;  $df = 7$ ;  $p < .01$ ).

RQ2: What is the ratio of women to men in references to sports journalists and to athletes?

Of all references to sports journalists, approximately 89% were to men; 11% were to women ( $\chi^2 = 56.600$ ;  $df = 3$ ;  $p < .01$ ). This pattern was followed by individual texts, with the exception of Aamidor (2003). One anecdotal difference among the types of references: Most references to female sports journalists were to a few women, most often Christine Brennan; references to men included many old-school writers such as Red Smith but also included a variety of modern writers. Similarly, of all references to athletes in the texts, about 88% were to men, and 12% were to women ( $\chi^2 = 56.600$ ;  $df = 3$ ;  $p < .01$ ). Of all references to men, 45% were to athletes; a slightly higher percentage of all references to women (47%) referred to them as athletes. Again, the references to women as athletes were to the same core group, including Jackie Joyner-Kersey, Mia Hamm, and Marion Jones. Among individual textbooks, two stood out: Aamidor (2004) and Craig (2002). Both included a higher ratio of female athletes and a variety of names.

The biggest difference in references to women and men was in the leadership category (references to coaches, owners, and officials). About 14% of references to men were to men who are sports leaders (e.g., Jerry Jones), but only 4% of women were sports leaders (e.g., Pat Summitt). Ninety-six percent of references to sports leaders were to men. The disparity was made up in part by more references to women as neither journalists nor sports figures (e.g., wives or mothers of athletes) than to men as such. Of references to women, 14% were to them in a role outside that of journalist or sports figure; 7% of references to men were ( $\chi^2 = 56.600$ ;  $df = 3$ ;  $p < .01$ ).

RQ 3: How are men and women presented in relation to sports? Are they presented in stereotypical fashion (women as nonsporting or associated with traditionally feminine sports; men with masculine sports) or in more realistic ways, with women and men both participating in a variety of team and individual sports?

The sports journalism textbooks studied most often presented women as not affiliated with a sport (48% of total references to women) and men as involved with team sports (46% of references to men). When women were presented as sporting, they were most often depicted in relation to individual sports (31%); just 13% of male references involved individual sports ( $\chi^2 = 175.994$ ;  $df = 3$ ;  $p < .01$ ).

Women were more often referred to in relationship with noncontact (e.g., golf, tennis) or aesthetic (e.g., gymnastics, synchronized swimming) sports than were men; 34% of references to women involved these types of sports compared to 9% of references to men. Conversely, men were far more often depicted in relationship to power or contact sports; almost all references to power sports involved men, and 94% of references to contact sports involved men ( $\chi^2 = 425.331$ ;  $df = 4$ ;  $p < .01$ ).

Only Craig's (2002) book presented women's sport through emphasis on team athletics, depicting a higher percentage of women in team sports than men in team sports. Further, most (75%) female athletes in the Craig text were associated with contact sports—and to the same degree as men in the book were. This is a sharp departure from other texts. The Fink (2001) and Mulligan and Mulligan (1998) books presented more women than the average in team, contact sports than in individual, noncontact sports, but to significantly lesser degrees than they did men.

RQ 4: Do photographs in sports journalism textbooks depict women? If so, how are they depicted—in stereotypical or more realistic ways?

Images in these textbooks were overwhelmingly of men. Of all images, 81% were of men. Texts varied in the percentages of men and women they presented; at the high end, 89% of the depictions in the Garrison (1993) text were of men. Of images in the Wilstein (2002) text, 75% were of men.

Women were more often depicted in individual, noncontact sports with an aesthetic component than were men. Of depictions of women, 42% were in individual sports, versus 15% of men depicted in individual sports. Women were also far more often depicted in aesthetic sports than were men; 27% of women were depicted in traditional feminine sports such as figure skating or gymnastics. Women were also never depicted in any kind of leadership role in sports; 8% of depictions of men were in leadership roles. Men were also far more often coded as not being associated with a particular sport than women were; this might be because almost all shots of journalists were of men.

RQ 5: Are newer textbooks better than older titles in relationship to the inclusion and framing of women in sports and sports journalism?

Newer texts, such as those written or edited by Aamidor (2003), Wilstein (2002), and Craig (2002), reflect some differences in relation to older texts. In terms of photos, for instance, the Wilstein text uses more images of women (25%) than either the Garrison or Anderson texts, both written in 1993.

The differences in the text, however, are subtle to nonexistent. See Table 1 for overall distributions of men and women by role in each textbook. An example of the lack of change between older and newer texts is demonstrated with the Anderson (1993) and Wilstein (2002) texts; 10% (58) of the total references in the Anderson text are to women, and a slightly lower percentage—9% (53)—of references in the Wilstein text are to women. The same may be said for the Garrison (1993) book, in which 9% (83) of the total references are to women, in comparison to the Fink (2001) book, in which 9% (86) of the total references are to women.

With the notable exception of Craig (2002), the newer textbooks do not refer a higher percentage of female journalists or athletes than do the older texts. However, both the Craig and the Aamidor (2003) texts offer smaller disparities in the percentage of references they provide to journalists and athletes than do the other texts; both of these were published in the past several years.

Further, the newer texts were, for the most part, no more realistic than older texts in their presentation of women and sport; all texts except Craig (2002), Fink (2001), and Mulligan and Mulligan (1998) featured sport-associated women more often in individual sports than in team sports ( $\chi^2 = 117.208$ ;  $df = 14$ ;  $p < .01$ ). All texts except Fink and, most notably, Craig, also presented sporting women as most often participating in either noncontact sports or in aesthetic sports (e.g., tennis and gymnastics), rather than sports such as basketball and soccer ( $\chi^2 = 193.43$ ;  $df = 28$ ;  $p < .01$ ).

A look at the books for descriptive examples demonstrates other ways new textbooks do not deviate significantly from older texts. Examples of good sports writing are almost all by male writers. In Garrison's (1993) *Sports Reporting*, of 34 sample articles, 2 are written by women reporters. Wilstein's (2002) *Sports Writing Handbook* contains 15 model articles. Of the 15, 12 are written by men. Further, women sports writers are more likely to be included only to comment about issues related to gender and not as sports writers who happen to be women. Of the three articles by women in Wilstein's text, two are about gender—"Women in the Locker Room" by Nancy Armour and "Women Athletes Need to Keep Their Clothes On" by Brennan.

## DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

The dramatic increase in sports participation by women since the inception of Title IX has not resulted in a similar increase in sports journalism by women.

TABLE 1  
Distributions of Journalists, Athletes, Sports Leaders and Others by Gender in Each Textbook

Text	Journalists				Athletes				Sports Leaders				Other			
	Men		Women		Men		Women		Men		Women		Men		Women	
	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n
Anderson (1993)	23	135	2	13	44	263	6	37	17	104	<1	5	6	35	<1	3
Garrison (1993)	39	357	5	41	32	290	4	33	13	122	<1	3	6	58	<1	6
Fensch (1995)	21	158	3	25	39	295	6	42	15	110	1	7	12	94	4	27
Mulligan (1998)	67	300	9	39	15	67	<.5	2	7	30	0	0	3	12	<.5	1
Fink (2001)	26	253	2	23	51	498	6	55	11	104	<1	3	3	26	<1	5
Craig (2002)	13	8	2	1	38	24	27	17	11	7	2	1	6	4	3	2
Wilstein (2002)	33	193	4	23	42	241	3	16	8	48	<1	3	7	44	2	11
Aamidor (2004)	21	138	5	30	44	293	9	58	11	73	<.5	2	9	61	3	17

Note. Percentages are rounded; thus, they may not add to 100.  $\chi^2 = 727.55$ .  $df = 49$ ,  $p < 0.01$ .

College courses can be a catalyst for helping female students develop the competency and confidence to enter sports journalism careers. But, with one possible exception (Craig, 2002), the eight textbooks reviewed for this study do not help foster a sense of “that’s a job for me” in women who would be reading these books.

These texts, to varying degrees, reinforce the idea that sports and sports journalism are masculine; they are enterprises for men. Thus, these texts do not meet the call by Pederson et al. (2003) to train journalists to treat sports as a domain for equitable coverage of men and women. These texts promote the gender stereotypes of sports, sports writing, and sports writers and, therefore, provide a model for students to maintain those patterns rather than promoting the realities of women’s sports, the reporting and storytelling possible for men and women in covering women’s sports, and the opportunities for women sports writers. Considering both the power of textbooks and the (ideal) role of journalism, these textbooks are not presenting student journalists with the reality of the sports journalism world that they will enter as beginning sports writers.

These findings also seem to support Tuchman’s (1978) assertion that media (textbooks are media) are not up-to-date with changing cultural norms and values and with the reality of the sporting landscape. The findings reflect a time lag between the books and the reality of sports created by Title IX: that women’s sports have exploded, especially at the high school and college levels.

Almost all of the books depict outdated stereotypes of women’s sports; as Acosta and Carpenter (2004) pointed out, the sports with the greatest growth in the past decade have not been “pretty” sports but team/contact sports such as basketball. Only the Craig (2002) text seemed to recognize this. To continue to emphasize women primarily in noncontact, individual sports does not reflect reality. The newer texts also seem to suffer from a time lag.

One way that these books are, perhaps, realistic is in their presentation of men and women in sports leadership. As Acosta and Carpenter (2004) also pointed out, women continue to struggle to gain jobs in coaching and administration—even in female sports.

## Women In Sports Journalism

The textbooks also reinforced the idea of sports departments, by their symbolic annihilation of women as sports journalists, as pillars of patriarchy. Although the percentages of women in sports journalism have not reached parity with other parts of the newsroom, they might be, in reality, higher than these texts would suggest. Textbooks should reflect the actual world of sports competitions and sports departments. Ideally, one might argue, these textbooks should go beyond a descriptive role and model the ideal, where women play a significant role in sports journalism. Such presentation would be a positive step in encouraging

more female students to see sports journalism as a viable option. Meanwhile, male students would see female sports journalists more as the norm, less than as a “deviant” in sports departments.

It is also important to remember the power of the visual. The dearth of women journalists in the text was reinforced by photos in some of the books. Textbook authors need to think about the messages they send to students with these choices.

### Recommendations for Textbook Authors and Course Instructors

As is the case when selecting textbooks for any communication course, the instructor must evaluate the book and then both select those portions of the book to use and determine additional materials to help provide the full picture the instructor is presenting in the course. Instructors using any of these books, with the exception of the Craig (2002) text, may need to compensate for the lack of female representation in the text by adding a focus on women’s sports, such as identifying and including strong story examples by female writers, including examples of stories written about women team sports, and inviting writers who cover women’s sports as guest speakers. Only through such efforts can journalism educators help students resist hegemonic masculinity and, as Pederson et al. (2003) suggests, help change the culture in sports newsrooms.

*Examples of good sports writing.* Authors of sports journalism textbooks may also need to consider making a conscious effort to include articles that illustrate that women can be effective in reporting and writing about sports. More articles written by women need to be included and serve as examples illustrating the more typical day-to-day sports writing—coverage of sports events (i.e., games, meets, and tournaments), legal issues (i.e., drug testing and arrests), and sports business (i.e., salary negotiations and trades)—the kind of articles by male writers included in the texts.

*Domination of male professional sports.* The overwhelming majority of all sports stories and all athletes included in the eight textbooks are from men’s professional sports, primarily football, hockey, basketball, and baseball.

Getting to be the beat writer for the local NBA or NFL team might be many college journalism students’ ideal job. But the reality is that covering men’s professional sports is not an entry-level job for college graduates. Remembering that sports journalism textbooks are targeted for individuals trying to enter the profession, having significant discussion of entry-level sports reporting would be helpful to the student journalists and would be more inclusive of women.

Oftentimes, beginning sports writers are assigned to cover high school sports because every community newspaper covers high school teams and must do its own reporting. That coverage is of girls’ and boys’ teams—and in many communities the girls’ teams generate more wins and fan interest than their male counterparts do.

By including more discussion of high school and collegiate sports, the textbooks will help prepare students for the kinds of assignments they will have in internships and beginning jobs. The only text that seemed to provide students with that view of sports writing was the Craig (2002) text, which included samples of the author's coverage of women's college basketball.

The most important part of any course development is the course instructor. A key to the whole process of presenting sports writing without gender bias is for the instructor to be attuned to the reality of women's sports, to assess the examples of writers and writing included in the course (i.e., textbook, supplementary materials, guest speakers, class assignments that require sports coverage, etc.), and to strive to promote class activities and discussion to help make students aware of the potential for and current challenges in covering women's sports and being a woman sports writer.

### Future Research

A limitation of this study is that it employed content analysis, which can reveal certain manifest qualities of a text, but not its latent qualities. Textual analyses of these textbooks might be useful to ascertain more fully how women are presented in relation to sports and sports journalism.

Another useful study might be to survey instructors of sports journalism courses to see how (or if) they integrate coverage of women's sports into their classes and how they use texts and other course materials that might influence how female students perceive the profession.

It would follow, then, to also interview or survey journalism students to ascertain how they perceive sports journalism to see how male and female students assess the importance of covering women's sports and to see whether female students see sports writing as a long-term career option. These kinds of studies might help those running college communication programs to more effectively help young women develop the competency and confidence they need to enter sports journalism and to help both male and female students be better prepared for covering women's sports as part of their sports writing duties.

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