

SPORT, WOMEN AND MEDIA:

A MATCH AGAINST

LGBTQIA+ STEREOTYPES



DID YOU KNOW IT?

20% OF PEOPLE IN THE LGBTQIA+ COMMUNITY REFRAIN FROM PARTICIPATING IN SPORTS BECAUSE OF THEIR SEXUAL ORIENTATION AND/OR GENDER IDENTITY.

"We All Play" documentary, Rakuten tv (2024)



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A vibrant rainbow flag is depicted in the top left corner, with its stripes flowing across the top of the slide. The flag is partially obscured by a yellow rectangular box containing the title.

INTRODUCTION

- Contribute to the revision of the Beijing Platform for Action
- Examine LGBTQIA+ representation in sports media
- Focus on portrayals of queer female athletes
- Investigate how these portrayals:
 1. Reinforce or challenge traditional gender norms
 2. Reinforce or challenge traditional sexual norms

CONTRIBUTION TO BEIJING PLATFORM FOR ACTION



SECTION J - STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE J2

This project intends to contribute to the revision of Section J of the Beijing Platform for action by proposing itself as a necessary and additional action to strategic objective J2:

"Promote a balanced and non-stereotyped portrayal of women in the media".

METHODOLOGY

ANALYSIS

- **Comparative analysis** of the **language** used to represent women as LGBTQIA+ athletes
- from the **2020 Olympics until now**
- **4 countries** (Italy, Spain, Iran, Germany)
- approx. **8 articles** per country (national newspapers/sports newspapers).
- Based on **Media Monitoring Tool**

RESEARCH GOALS

- Understanding how **media representations of LGBTQIA+ athletes influence societal attitudes** toward sexuality, gender, and athleticism.
- Highlighting areas where **sports media can become more inclusive** and supportive of diversity.



RESULTS: SPAIN

1

FOCUS ON CONTROVERSY

2

EMPHASIS ON BIOLOGICAL FACTORS AND REGULATORY ISSUES

3

CRITICISM FROM EXTERNAL PUBLIC FIGURES TO FUEL POLARISATION

4

LIMITED EXPLORATION OF TRANSGENDER ATHLETES' RIGHTS AND INCLUSION

5

NEED FOR A BROADER AND MORE NUANCED DEBATE

RESULTS: ITALY

1

FOCUS ON: LGBTQIA+ athletes' struggles (both personal and professional), identity/private life over athletic achievements, "coming out" story

2

INAPPROPRIATE LANGUAGE (particularly for transgender athletes)

3

ASSOCIATING ATHLETES WITH THEIR ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIPS

4

LACK OF INSIGHTS ON BROADER CULTURAL AND SOCIETAL ISSUES

5

CELEBRATION OF LGBTQIA+ ATHLETES AS "HISTORY MAKERS" AND INSPIRATIONAL FIGURES





RESULTS: GERMANY

1

FOCUS ON IDENTITY OVER ATHLETIC ACHIEVEMENTS:

- LGBTQIA+ athletes' gender identity is emphasized more than their athletic accomplishments.

2

TOKENISM:

- LGBTQIA+ athletes are often portrayed as pioneers or symbols of progress rather than fully integrated athletes.

3

REGULATORY FOCUS:

- Articles focus on eligibility issues and fairness, framing transgender athletes as challenges to traditional gender categories.

4

LACK OF INTERSECTIONALITY:

- Limited coverage of broader social factors affecting LGBTQIA+ athletes.

RESULTS: IRAN

1

LACK OF INFORMATION IN NATIONAL MEDIA

2

CRIMINALISATION OF LGBTQ+ IDENTITY

3

NON-GOVERNMENTAL RESOURCES:

- 6rang is a non-governmental organisation providing resources for the LGBTQIA+ community in Iran, does not specifically focus on women in sports



SIMILARITIES

FOCUS ON IDENTITY OVER ACHIEVEMENTS

- Trend of emphasising LGBTQIA+ athletes' gender identity over their athletic achievements

TOKENISM

- LGBTQIA+ athletes often portrayed as symbols of progress or as pioneers rather than being integrated into mainstream sports media

REGULATORY FOCUS

- Media addresses issues of eligibility and fairness in relation to transgender athletes, framing them as disruptive forces in traditional gender categories in sports

CRITICISM AND BACKLASH

- Criticism faced by LGBTQIA+ athletes, especially around transgender athletes' inclusion in women's sports

INTERSECTIONALITY

- Significant gap in intersectionality, with limited coverage of broader social factors affecting LGBTQIA+ athletes

DIFFERENCES

LANGUAGE AND TONE

- Italy: use of inappropriate language, particularly for transgender athletes
- Spain and Germany: more balanced and respectful in terms of tone

LACK OF COVERAGE IN IRAN

- Unlike Germany, Italy, and Spain, Iranian media largely ignores LGBTQIA+ athletes, particularly women

LACK OF BROADER DISCOURSE

- Unlike German media, Italian and Spanish media lacks a broader insights on the cultural, political and societal factors that influence the way LGBTQIA+ are perceived and presented

FOCUS ON PRIVATE LIFE

- Italian media focuses more on queer athletes' private life and associates them with their romantic relationships, whereas Spanish and German media doesn't

CONCLUSION

- Italy tends to focus more on private life and identity
- Italy and Spain have a notable lack of attention to the broader societal, political and cultural factors
- Germany, Italy and Spain lack intersectionality
- Spain focuses more on biological fairness in sports
- Iran stands apart with its complete lack of LGBTQIA+ representation in sports media
- Based on these results, there's a great need to focus on education about LGBTQIA+ women athletes in media

FINAL OUTPUT: THE PODCAST

**TWO-PERSON
INTERVIEW
FORMAT**

**EDUCATIONAL
PURPOSE**
(14-19 y.o. audience)

**RELIABLE
CONTENTS BASED
ON SECONDARY
SOURCES**

With the aim of providing content that is as realistic and reliable as possible, the interview in the podcast is based on a secondary and existing source of an LGBTQIA+ woman athlete.



**THANK YOU FOR BEING PART OF
THIS IMPORTANT CONVERSATION**



Beatrice Borrini - Aitana Francisca Lopez Cambra - Maria Francesca Folgieri - Katharina Handke

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