

Portrayal of Female Athletes in the Media

- Michaela Taylor -



Why did I pick this topic?

Female athletes are subjected to:

- Infantilized
- Sexualized
- Gender-marking
- Less media opportunities
- Unequal pay



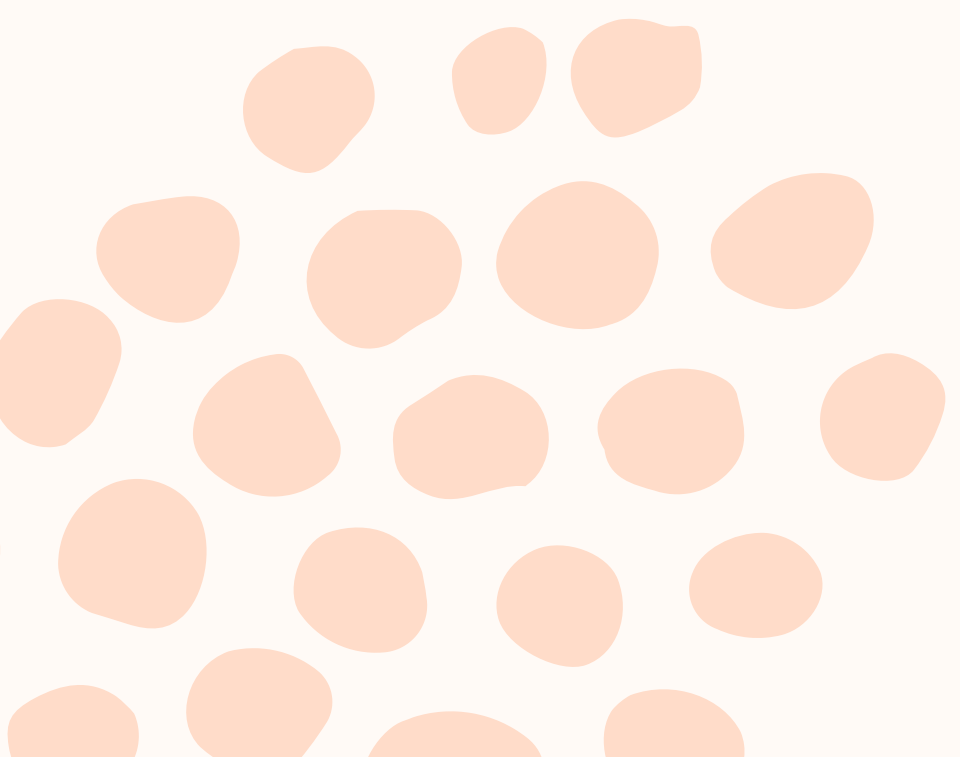
Journal Title: Sport in society

Rio 2016



Article Title:
NBC's televised media portrayal of female
athletes in the 2016 Rio Summer Olympic
Games: a critical feminist view

By: Christina, Villalon;
Karen, Weiller-Abels



Purpose of the research

"Mass media plays a major role in influencing societal views of female athletes and in shaping the relationship between women and sport" (Villalon, 2018, p.2).



What was studied & How?

NBC'S BROADCAST COVERAGE OF THE 2016 SUMMER OLYMPIC GAMES - QUALITATIVE AND QUANTITATIVE DATA

International Olympic Committee data such as:

- the television stations
- hours of programming provided
- viewership numbers, percentages of women participation in the Olympics
- the percentage of medals received by women

Quantitative: socially acceptable female sports during prime-time coverage

Qualitative: focus on the narratives that emphasize feminine characteristics, sexy outfits and heterosexual relationships.

Main Findings



- the use of social media and its influence in the 2016 Olympics was staggering
- broadcast commentary received backlash that was specific athletes' bodies and behaviors
- Male privilege, ex. Ryan Lochte damaged property and made up a story of a robbery vs Gabby Douglas not smiling and being called unpatriotic
- Female athletes being compared to male athletes, ex. Simone Biles, after repeatedly being called the 'Michael Jordan/Kobe Bryant of gymnastics' responded that she was 'the first Simone Biles'.

Takeaway

Critical feminist theory plays a major role in how female athletes are seen through the media's lens.

“The misogynistic portrayal and representation of female athletes continues to suggest the lesser value of women in society and as true athletes” (Villalon, 2018, p.3).

