SPORT ON AIR WITHOUT WOMEN – THE PRESENTATION OF FEMALE ATHLETES IN THE SPORTS COVERAGE

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During the last 30 years many authors criticized the discrimination of women in the sports press (Wernecken 2000, Capranica 2002, Vincent et al. 2003, Sattlecker 2005, Hartmann Tews & Rulofs 2007). Among other authors Loosen (1998, 13) stated that regarding the presentation of women in the sports coverage one could speak about a huge misbalance and a distorted representation of the sports reality. Mostly television programmes and newspapers were analysed, while surveys of the sports coverage in the radio and its presentation of female athletes were rather sel-dom. Schaffrath (2002, 347) showed that only 10,4 percent of the sports reporting in the radio have women as their theme. This discrimination could be stated in all radio programmes of Schaffrath’s study (16 public and 39 private radio stations).

The aim of this study is to analyse the sports coverage in the radio regarding the presentation of female athletes. In this connection not only the volume of sports news about women is of our interest – also the central reasons for the lack of female athletes in the sports coverage of radio stations should be analysed. This study em-ployed a content analysis of the main Austrian radio station (Ö3), which is the only relevant radio programme in the whole country with a coverage of 37 percent (2005) (no other station reached more than ten percent). In total four days in November and in December 2005 were part of the analysis: One weekday (Monday) without big sports events, one weekday (Tuesday) with a relevant event (Champions League match of an Austrian team), one weekend-day without big sports events and one weekend-day with relevant sports events for Austria (World Cup skiing, ski jumping and nordic combined). The study showed that Ö3 only offered sports news in times of relevant live events. Schaffrath (2002, 347) had a sim-ilar result in his survey – 85 percent of the radio sta-tions he analysed did not have fixed times for the sports coverage. In the four days of our analysis only 41 broadcasts picked out sport as a central theme. 29 of them (70,7%) dealt with men’s sport, while 12 (29,3%) informed about both male and female athletes. None of the sports news had only women as a theme. In the litera-ture several rea-sons for the discrimination of women in the sports coverage can be found. Two of them are obvious in this study: 27 of the 41 transmissions informed about so called men’s sport, in this case football, ice hockey and ski jumping. The announcer of the radio programme was 17 times female and 24 times male, but none of them commentated on the sports news in any way. In 26 of the 41 broadcasts separate sport reporters commented – all of them were male. A third reason for the lack of women could be the listeners of sports news: Schauerte and Schwier (2003, 6) illustrated that men (3:57 hours per week in all mass media types) are more inter-ested in sports information than women (2:19

Keywords: Sociology