

## **Lincoln University Digital Thesis**

### **Copyright Statement**

The digital copy of this thesis is protected by the Copyright Act 1994 (New Zealand).

This thesis may be consulted by you, provided you comply with the provisions of the Act and the following conditions of use:

- you will use the copy only for the purposes of research or private study
- you will recognise the author's right to be identified as the author of the thesis and due acknowledgement will be made to the author where appropriate
- you will obtain the author's permission before publishing any material from the thesis.

# **MEDIA PORTRAYALS OF SPORTSWOMEN:**

## ***An Analysis of Six New Zealand Magazines***

---

A thesis

submitted in partial fulfilment

of the requirements for the Degree of

Master of Parks, Recreation and Tourism Management

at

Lincoln University

by

M. Anderson

---

Lincoln University

1996

# ABSTRACT

Abstract of a thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the  
requirements for the Degree of M.P.R. & T. M

## **MEDIA PORTRAYALS OF SPORTSWOMEN:**

### *An Analysis of Six New Zealand Magazines*

by M. Anderson

This research examined the portrayal of sportswomen in New Zealand magazines during the period January 1, 1991 to December 31, 1993. Qualitative content analysis was conducted on feature articles in six magazines: two general circulation, three women's and one sports magazine. Four questions were examined: the affect of target audiences on media portrayals; the portrayal of the 'gender-appropriateness' of sport; the use of language within articles and the meanings within photographs.

Previous New Zealand media research has focused on the quantity of coverage accorded to women in sport and has determined that women receive less coverage than their male counterparts in both television and newspaper media. Research into the coverage of sportswomen in magazines is, however, limited, as is qualitative examination of media coverage. The current research addressed this shortcoming.

The results illustrate that magazines portray sportswomen differently according to their target audiences. Women's magazines focused on personal issues rather than sporting achievements. General and sports magazines portrayed sportswomen in a more comprehensive manner. Photographs accompanying text had a non-sport emphasis. There was evidence of role conflict for athletes participating in sports classified as 'gender-inappropriate'.

Portrayals of sportswomen in New Zealand magazines reinforce traditional notions of appropriateness and femininity. While the quantity of media coverage is slowly moving towards parity, the quality of coverage within magazine articles continues to reinforce conventional understandings of women's place in sport.

**Keywords:** *sportswomen, qualitative, magazine portrayals, content analysis, photographs, feature articles, 'gender-appropriateness'.*

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

In the long process of undertaking this research there have been many people who have in various ways helped me.

First to my supervisors, Pip Lynch and Clare Simpson. Thank you for your energy and your invaluable supervision. I have an enormous amount of respect for you both and I have truly appreciated your guidance, friendship, and, of course, your laughter over the course of four years.

The camaraderie and support I have received from staff and friends at Lincoln University has been tremendous and greatly appreciated, particularly when I left to begin life in the working world. To Liz Parkin, Chrys Horn and many others, thank you for your hints, advice and comments and most of all for making graduate life lots of fun. A special thanks to Stephen Espiner who has been a great friend and critic.

Thank you to my colleagues at Sport Canterbury - Hillsy, Julyan, TH, Rob, Sheryn, Helen and Lou. Without knowing it, you all helped in some way. I am extremely grateful to Ian Penrose who allowed me the flexibility I required to complete this thesis and to Carolyn McKenzie for her support.

To my parents, and my brother and sister for their eternal support, and to Jo, Derek, Heather, Phil, Mary, Anna, Fi and Janeo for each helping me achieve this goal, thank you. Your support always came at the right time and strengthened my resolve to finish. I am lucky to have so many wonderful friends.

I would also like to acknowledge the Marketing Department at Otago University for allowing me to access their store of *New Zealand Woman's Day* - a magazine not to be found on any library shelf!

And finally to my partner Craig, I owe the biggest thank you of all. Without your constant faith in me and support for what I do, I am not convinced I would ever have finished. You have always believed in me even when that light at the end of the tunnel was at its very dimmest. It does not seem enough to simply say thank you.

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract .....	iii
Acknowledgements .....	iv
List of Tables .....	viii

## Chapter One

<b>INTRODUCTION</b> .....	1
1.1 Media Research .....	2
1.2 Organisation of Thesis .....	3

## Chapter Two

<b>LITERATURE REVIEW</b> .....	4
2.1 Introduction .....	4
2.2 Women in Sport - Quantity and Quality of Media Coverage .....	4
2.3 New Zealand Research on Media Coverage of Women's Sport .....	5
2.4 Women's Sport in Magazines .....	8
2.4.1 Magazine Covers .....	8
2.4.2 Magazine Advertisements .....	8
2.4.3 Magazine Articles and Photos .....	10
2.4.4 Magazine Research Summary .....	15
2.5 Appropriateness of Sports for Women .....	15
2.6 Current Research Needs .....	17
2.7 Chapter Summary .....	18

## Chapter Three

<b>METHODOLOGY</b> .....	20
3.1 Introduction .....	20
3.2 Content Analysis .....	21
3.2.1 Definition of Content Analysis .....	21
3.2.2 Advantages and Disadvantages of Content Analysis .....	22
3.2.3 Interim Summary .....	23
3.3 Terminology .....	23
3.3.1 Quality of Coverage .....	23
3.3.2 Feature Article .....	24
3.3.3 Sport .....	25
3.3.4 Sportswoman .....	26
3.3.5 Individual or Team Sportswomen .....	26
3.4 Sampling .....	26
3.4.1 Textual Analysis .....	30
3.4.2 Analysis of Photographs .....	32

3.5	Methodological Issue - Research Subjectivity .....	33
3.6	Chapter Summary .....	34
 <b>Chapter Four</b>		
	<b>HOW TARGET AUDIENCES AFFECT THE PORTRAYAL OF SPORTSWOMEN</b> .....	35
4.1	Introduction .....	35
4.2	Article Type .....	35
4.3	Type of Sport .....	37
4.4	Magazine Themes .....	39
4.4.1	Women's Magazines .....	40
	Personal Life .....	40
	Relationships .....	40
	Motherhood .....	41
	Sexuality and Scandal .....	42
	Exercise and Pregnancy .....	42
	Pressure .....	43
	Summary of Women's Magazines - The Search for the Sensational .....	43
4.4.2	Other Magazines .....	44
	Major Theme - Comparisons with Sportsmen .....	44
	Minor Themes - Influences and Comments .....	47
4.4.3	Themes Across All Magazines .....	48
	Sports Career .....	48
	Family Background, Childhood and Education .....	50
	Other Interests and Employment .....	51
4.5	Chapter Summary .....	51
 <b>Chapter Five</b>		
	<b>THE PORTRAYAL OF THE 'GENDER-APPROPRIATENESS' OF SPORT</b> .....	53
5.1	Introduction .....	53
5.2	'High-Risk' Sports .....	53
5.3	'Strength/Endurance/Overpowering' Sports .....	57
5.4	'Aesthetic' Sports .....	58
5.5	Team Sports versus Individual Sports .....	59
5.6	Chapter Summary .....	61
 <b>Chapter Six</b>		
	<b>THE USE OF LANGUAGE</b> .....	63
6.1	Introduction .....	63
6.2	Physical Descriptors .....	63
6.3	Character Descriptors .....	66
6.4	The Use of Metaphors and Similes .....	66
6.5	Chapter Summary .....	67

## **Chapter Seven**

<b>MEANINGS GENERATED BY PHOTOGRAPHS</b>	68
7.1 Introduction	68
7.2 Quantitative Analysis of the Use of Photographs	68
7.2.1 Number of Photographs	68
7.2.2 Photograph Area and Type of Photograph	70
7.2.3 Accompanying Subjects	72
7.2.4 Camera Angle	73
7.3 Qualitative Analysis of the Use of Photographs	75
7.3.1 Relationship of Photograph to Article Text and to Context of the Sport	75
7.3.2 Body Parts Revealed in Photographs	77
7.3.3 Focus of the Shot	79
7.3.4 The Importance of Religion	83
7.4 Chapter Summary	84

## **Chapter Eight**

<b>SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH</b>	87
8.1 Introduction	87
8.2 Results Summary	87
8.3 Future Research Suggestions	89

Bibliography	92
Appendices	97
Appendix A - Magazine Issues Analysed	98
Appendix B - Articles Included in the Data Set	100
Appendix C - Quantitative Results	103
C.1 Articles	103
C.2 Authors and Photographers	104
Appendix D - Additional Information about <i>NZSM</i>	105

# LIST OF TABLES

TABLE	PAGE
2.1 Summary of New Zealand Research . . . . .	6
3.1 Editorial Policies on Women's Sport and Target Audiences of Magazines Surveyed . . . . .	28
3.2 Magazines Surveyed and Statistical Information . . . . .	29
4.1 Sport Articles Covered by Different Magazines . . . . .	36
4.2 Sport Type by Magazine . . . . .	37
5.1 Team and Individual Sports by Magazines . . . . .	60
7.1 Number of Photographs in all Magazines and Average Number of Photographs Per Article in Each Magazine . . . . .	69
7.2 Percentage of the Article Area Containing Photographs and Percentage of Photographic Area of Each Photograph Type . . . . .	70
7.3 Types of Photographs . . . . .	71
7.4 Accompanying Subjects within Photographs . . . . .	73
7.5 Camera Angle . . . . .	74
A.1 Magazine Issues Analysed . . . . .	98
B.1 Articles Included in the Data Set . . . . .	100
C.1 Number of Articles Analysed from Each Magazine . . . . .	103
C.2 Authors' Gender by Magazine . . . . .	104
D.1 Additional Information about <i>NZSM</i> . . . . .	105



# *Chapter One*

## INTRODUCTION

*"I think I should admit something up front. I am a sports fan"*

(Wenner, 1989, p. 7)

The central tenet of this research is that the portrayal of sportswomen in New Zealand magazines reflects the value placed on women's sport by society in general. To examine the language used, the chosen themes and photographic interpretations contributes to an understanding of how women's sport is covered in magazine media. This, in turn, fosters a deeper understanding of how the media, in general, portray and thereby value women's sport.

The fundamental question addressed by this research was: *how do New Zealand magazines portray sportswomen?* This question generated four related questions, and so formed the basis of the research:

- \* How do magazines with different target audiences portray sportswomen?
- \* Are there differences between magazines in the portrayal of the 'gender-appropriateness' of sport?
- \* How is language in magazines used to describe sportswomen?
- \* What meanings are generated by the photographs of sportswomen in magazines?

These questions were designed to guide this examination of the particular ways in which magazine media portray sportswomen.

To begin this thesis with the words of Wenner reveals the origin of the impetus for the research. I enjoy all aspects of sport, including supporting, playing and spectating. My interest in sport began when I was young. From the age of six I tap-danced; at school I participated in netball, swimming, gymnastics, volleyball and basketball. Perhaps because of my successes I never felt physically inferior to the boys in my class. I never believed that any real barriers existed to my participation in sport, and I tried everything.

As an undergraduate student in sport sociology, I became increasingly aware of the issues surrounding the coverage of women's sport in the media. I remember watching a documentary on Erin Baker which featured an interview with an advertising agency chairman. In response to a question regarding Erin's lack of sponsorship, despite her outstanding results, I remember this man saying that one reason Erin received little financial reward was that she "...looks a tough dame [and he did not] think a tough dame gets marketable (sic)" (Palmer, n.d). Looking back, this documentary, along with the need to question everything, sparked my interest in the ways in which a sportswoman's image can be marketed. This led me to question how images of sportswomen are created in the media, and in particular within magazine media.

## **1.1 Media Research**

Researchers generally agree that the media have a powerful ability to reach many people and to influence and direct attitudes, behaviours and knowledge (Ferkins, 1992). One has only to watch young children emulate the actions of our sporting heroes to appreciate the impact media have on our society. Feminist scholarship, however, holds that sport, as a social construct, has been defined by the media as an exclusively male preserve (Messner, 1988).

Over recent years the adequacy of women's sport coverage has been the focus of many studies. Because the media attention sportswomen do get is potentially counter-hegemonic (Messner, 1988), they are often marginalised and trivialised by being portrayed as sex objects or freakish exceptions (Boutilier and San Giovanni, 1983). In New Zealand sport is considered important in defining who we are (Phillips, 1987); it is therefore important to examine the ways in which women's sport is portrayed in all media.

The focus of media research in New Zealand has largely concentrated on the quantitative coverage of sportswomen in newspapers and on television. The approach in this research is qualitative and interpretive. While New Zealand research in this area is limited, extensive research has been carried out on *Sports Illustrated* and, to a lesser extent, on other magazines in the United States and Australia. Such research has shown that women are afforded lesser status than men and are treated in stereotypical ways.

This thesis concerns itself with sportswomen and for this reason media representations of sportsmen are not given consideration here. Comparative analysis of the portrayals of

sportsmen and sportswomen is neither intended nor attempted. What this research provides is an insight into the nature of the magazine coverage which sportswomen receive, from which a deeper understanding of how women's sport is valued in society can be gained. Future research might test whether the same representations of sportsmen are found.

## **1.2 Organisation of Thesis**

Following the Introduction, Chapter Two examines the current body of media research literature, with a particular focus on magazine coverage of women in sport. This chapter also examines the notion of the 'gender-appropriateness' of sports for women.

Chapter Three discusses the method used to answer the research questions and highlights the issues relevant for this study. Reader interpretation is an important factor in this type of research and, therefore, subjectivity will always pose a problem. The extent to which such subjectivity represents bias has been minimised through the stringent methodological process described.

Chapters Four to Seven respond to the research questions by drawing on interpretations of the data collected. Where relevant, previous research findings are included in the analysis, providing a critical context for the results of the present research. Given that this research analyses the portrayal of sportswomen in the early 1990s, it is possible, though unlikely, that since then the coverage of sportswomen in magazines has changed.

This research deals with published material; pseudonyms therefore were not deemed necessary for preserving anonymity. The interpretations made are not attempts to embarrass, nor be disrespectful to, any individual or group. In order to make statements about the portrayal of sportswomen in magazines, meanings were drawn from the text and inferences made based on the language used, the photographs taken and the themes discussed. The purpose was to focus on how the texts invite certain readings, some of which are stereotyped against women.

The final chapter summarises the research findings and draws conclusions. To complete Chapter Eight, future research recommendations are made.

## ***Chapter Two***

# **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1 Introduction**

Media research consists of three dimensions - newspapers, television and magazines. While television and newspaper coverage of women in sport has been well researched, the portrayal of women's roles in magazines is under-represented. Further, while gender images have been the subject of overseas literature, New Zealand literature has tended to focus only on the amount of coverage afforded to women in sport (Ferkins, 1992). In order to provide background to the current study, this chapter examines research which specifically focuses on the portrayal of women in sport, women's roles in magazines and, in particular, studies conducted on the quality of media coverage. First, a distinction between two approaches to media research is made. This is followed by an examination of New Zealand research. Section 2.4 describes research which examines aspects of magazine coverage, while section 2.5 discusses an additional research theme. Finally, current research needs are identified.

### **2.2 Women in Sport - Quantity and Quality of Media Coverage**

Research into media portrayals of women in sport has taken two approaches, examining the quantity or quality of coverage. The quantity of coverage refers to the *number* of articles or photographs, or the *amount* of coverage in column inches or centimetres. These units of analysis are often correlated with a range of variables such as the type of sport covered, the level of competition, or the location of the item on the page. Qualitative measures, on the other hand, refer to the *nature* of coverage. Interpretations of both photographs and text are

made using a range of themes, such as how sportswomen are described, references to their personal lives or what they do outside of sport. A quantitative study would examine how much coverage sportswomen get, while a qualitative study describes *how* women are represented in this coverage. While it is a qualitative approach which is employed by this research, some quantitative data is collected in order to provide background information about the magazines being analysed. The primary focus here is on *how* sportswomen are portrayed in magazines, rather than *how much* coverage they receive.

## 2.3 New Zealand Research on Media Coverage of Women's Sport

The majority of media research in New Zealand has been quantitative in its approach. This is summarised in Table 2.1.

O'Leary (1984), conducted a six week survey of sports news on television, and was interested in determining how television operates as a socialising agent for women. She examined the frequency, duration and visual support of sports news items, and item placement. Female sport accounted for 13 per cent of all sports items, while male sport comprised 69 per cent. In television sports news, 80 per cent of action film documented male sport, while 14 per cent was women's sport. While the primary focus of O'Leary's research was quantitative, a small aspect of her analysis examined the language used in the sports items. Her findings reported that the language used reinforced sport as inherently male unless otherwise stated. For example, references were made to women's teams as the 'New Zealand Women's Sport Team' while the male counterpart was the New Zealand Team (emphasis added). Female athletes were usually referred to as 'girls' or 'ladies', while male athletes were referred to as 'men' or 'young men', not 'boys' or 'gentlemen' (O'Leary, 1984). Overseas literature (Duncan and Hasbrook, 1988; Duncan, Messner and Williams, 1990 cited in Sabo and Jansen, 1992) supports O'Leary's results. O'Leary (1984, p. ii) concluded that the disproportionate coverage accorded to female and male sports news "...creates and reinforces a false picture of the reality about sports participation by women".

Similarly, Snell (1989) surveyed television coverage of women's sport, as well as newspaper coverage. His focus was on the proportion of sport covered which focused on women. Women's sport rated less favourably in both television and newspaper coverage when compared with men's sport. Eleven per cent of television coverage was of women's sport, compared with 89 per cent of men's sport. In newspapers, 92 per cent of coverage was

**Table 2.1 Summary of New Zealand Research**

Research	Sample	Percent Television Coverage	Percent Newspaper Coverage
Cooper (1980) <sup>1</sup>	one week survey, two newspapers in Wellington	N/A	F: 7.0 M: 93.0
O'Leary (1984)	television sport news over two week period	F: 13.0 M: 69.0 Mxd: 18.0	N/A
Snell (1989)	two daily papers and television over two week period	F: 11.0 M: 89.0	F: 8.0 M: 92.0
Hillary Commission (1991) <sup>1</sup>	survey two newspapers	N/A	F: 8.0 M: 91.0 Mxd: 1.0
Ferkins (1992)	two week survey of 7 newspapers and 3 television channels	F: 20.0* M: 67.8 Mxd: 11.7 Unid: 0.5	F: 11.3 M: 72.5 Mxd: 12.7 Unid: 3.5

<sup>1</sup> As cited in Ferkins (1992)

\* 50% of which was Olympic coverage

Key:

F: Female

M: Male

Mxd: Mixed coverage

Unid: Gender unidentified

N/A: Not Applicable

of male sport compared with eight per cent of women's sport.

The most recent research conducted in New Zealand is Ferkins' (1992) investigation of television and newspaper coverage of women's sport. Ferkins' results concurred with

previous studies and revealed that the coverage of women in sport has not significantly increased in the last twelve years. In her study, women received 11.3 per cent of total newspaper sports coverage and men received 72.5 per cent; while in television coverage, women received 20 per cent and men 67.8 per cent.<sup>1</sup>

While television and newspaper coverage of women's sport in New Zealand has been the subject of several studies, magazine coverage of women in sport has been virtually neglected. Furthermore, the quality of coverage has been treated as supplementary to quantitative examinations of the media. It is not clear why magazines have been a neglected aspect of gender and sport research. It may be due to the limited number of New Zealand-produced magazines. Until very recently the principal women's magazines in New Zealand (apart from the *New Zealand Woman's Weekly*) were Australian produced, for example *Australian New Idea* and *Australian Woman's Day*. There are now, however, New Zealand versions of these magazines. Perhaps researchers have felt that, because these magazines were not solely 'home grown', it was impossible to isolate New Zealand values and perceptions of sportswomen from overseas influences. Thus it is possible that magazines have not been perceived valid for research purposes. This argument, however, could be used about research concerning television and newspaper coverage of women in sport, which are also subject to considerable overseas influence. The abundance of television research may be due to technological advances which allow video recording, thus making data collection relatively easy. The fact that some of the articles in magazines surveyed are from overseas sources is not problematic for the current study. The fact that they are in New Zealand magazines suggests that editors have chosen them because it is believed they will appeal to the New Zealand market. This in itself can reveal something about how sportswomen in general are valued in New Zealand.

The absence of magazine analyses in media studies could be attributed to the expense of undertaking such research and the impossibility of purchasing back copies of magazines. Back copies are only kept on computer disk by publishers, not as hard copies. Additionally, not all libraries subscribe to all magazines, or keep long runs of back copies.<sup>2</sup>

The remainder of this review is concerned with literature which examines magazines as

---

<sup>1</sup> Ferkins acknowledges that the Winter Olympic Games were included in the research period which may have contributed to an abnormally high percentage of coverage focusing on women - 50% of the reporting of women's sport focused on the Olympics. An interesting comparison is that male Olympic sport accounted for 26.4% of overall men's sport coverage.

<sup>2</sup> At the time this research was undertaken *New Zealand Woman's Day* was unavailable in any public library. To obtain copies of this particular magazine, travelling to Auckland to access the computer disk copies of each issue seemed the only option. However, a source outside the library institution closer to home was eventually found.

a dimension of media research. Much research has been done on the portrayal of sportswomen in magazines overseas, particularly in the United States (Lumpkin and Williams, 1991; Kane, 1988; Rintala and Birrell, 1984). The present research expands on the existing body of knowledge about magazine coverage of women in sport and will help develop a more comprehensive picture of the representation of sportswomen in New Zealand media.

## **2.4 Women's Sport in Magazines**

Several aspects of magazines have been the subject of media research. Magazine covers, advertisements, articles and photographs have all been the focus for analyses. Each will be reviewed in the following sections.

### **2.4.1 Magazine Covers**

The cover of a magazine is said to be its most important feature. According to Ferguson (1978), magazine covers perform a variety of functions, the most basic of which is to sell the magazine and to distinguish it from its competitors. Magazine covers represent an editorial identity and also reflect the "...ideological implication of content that in turn reflects the producer's perceptions of culturally agreed upon rules, goals and values" (Ferguson, 1978, p. 99). Magazine covers also display the "...appropriate identities and attributes" of the potential reader (Boutilier and San Giovanni, 1983, p. 208).

Reputed as America's largest national weekly sport magazine *Sports Illustrated* has been the subject of many studies in America (Boutilier and San Giovanni, 1983) and is considered a cultural phenomenon (Davis, 1993). An examination of the covers of *Sports Illustrated* by *Women's Sports* (1979; cited in Boutilier and San Giovanni, 1983), found that of the 1250 covers from 1954 to 1978, sportswomen were featured on fewer than five per cent (Boutilier and San Giovanni, 1983), reinforcing the message that sport and *Sports Illustrated* is for men. When women did feature on the cover, they appeared in predominantly 'socially approved' sports, a theme which is discussed later in this chapter.

### **2.4.2 Magazine Advertisements**

A second avenue for research into how magazines portray women has been the analysis



of the advertisements which appear in them. [Despite an increased involvement of women in sport and the advent of a health and fitness movement, magazine advertisements still generally depict women as less powerful and less active than men.] A strong heterosexual message is apparent in the depiction of women's involvement in sport and leisure, implying that women's leisure rarely happens without the presence of men (Bolla, 1990). Women are shown in traditional, passive roles alongside their male counterparts who actively display valued masculine traits (for example, muscularity, aggression, physical force and competitiveness). The fashion industry exerts great influence on the advertising industry in this respect (Duquin, 1989). Where women are shown after exercise, it is in designer tracksuits or in swimming costumes which co-ordinate with their towels. There are constant reminders of those "...nasty little imperfections" (Duquin, 1989, p. 106) and 'troublesome parts' which comprise women's bodies, such as bodily hair and cellulite. Thus, exercise is viewed as one means of 'self re-creation' and attaining a 'new improved image' rather than being enjoyable in itself.

Ingram (1976), examined the advertising content of four New Zealand magazines to determine the extent to which the advertisements generated sexist attitudes. [Like overseas literature, her results found that advertising continued to oppress women by reinforcing a particular kind of image. The advertisements suggest that an important goal for women is to win a man, look beautiful, and run a good home (Ingram, 1976, p. 134). Ingram concluded that advertisements were oppressive because they appealed to, and reinforced, stereotyped sexual roles. Women were painted primarily as "...auxiliaries to men, as sex objects, housewives and mothers" (Ingram, 1976, p. 140).]

Although Ingram's research is now twenty years old, more recent literature suggests that many of these stereotypes still exist, both in advertising and in other media forms. For example, [Luebke (1989) found disparities between the roles in which men and women were portrayed in newspaper photographs. Of the 22 per cent of photographs depicting sports figures, 6.7 per cent were of women, while 93.4 per cent were of men (Luebke, 1989, p. 126).] The only pages of the newspaper where photographs of women outnumbered those of men were on the 'lifestyle' pages. However, as Luebke noted, 50 per cent of these photographs depicted women in the role of spouse compared to 20 per cent of photographs of men pictured in this role. These findings are a little confusing given the lack of explanation in Luebke's research about how this role was defined. That is, how can a photograph of a man and a woman place the woman in the role of spouse without also positioning the male figure there? One would assume this is defined according to the captions accompanying the photographs, but it has not been made clear.

Luebke's findings are supported in Miller's (1975) work which examined men's and women's roles in news photos. Miller defined a spouse role as one in which the person is "...portrayed as a *newsmaker's* spouse, or as making news by getting engaged, married or divorced" (Miller, 1975, p. 71; original emphasis). Like Luebke (1989), Miller also found that women were predominantly shown in the roles of spouse, as well as socialites or entertainers (50 per cent of all photographs), while men were most often shown as politicians, professionals or sports figures. Assuming that the same definition of spouse applies to Luebke's methodology, both Luebke's and Miller's results indicate support for Ingram's research which revealed the portrayal of limited roles for women, not only in sport or recreation, but in society in general.

Based on the evidence cited here, it is reasonable to conclude that women are shown limited role models of their sport and leisure options in magazine advertisements. (Women are characterised as decorative objects which supplement men's participation, rather than as participants in their own right.) (Further, they are more often depicted in roles which conform to societal expectations - such as being a spouse - than those which challenge these expectations.) The socialising power of media that continually offer women stereotyped role models tends to stifle challenges to those roles, leading women and girls to accept them as natural.

### 2.4.3 Magazine Articles and Photos

An analysis of the articles in magazines reflects the amount and nature of coverage given to women in sport. Again, *Sports Illustrated* has been the target of much United States research and the conclusions reached are the same, i.e., that in their feature articles, *Sports Illustrated* reflects traditional attitudes towards women in sport.

Lumpkin and Williams (1991) analysed the gender and race equality of feature articles in *Sports Illustrated*. There were, however, a few definitional problems in their study. Some ambiguity surrounds the definition of key variables such as 'feature article' and the denotation of 'most overt' personal traits used to describe sportswomen, both of which increases the subjectivity of their methodology and decreases its reliability. Although they make important acknowledgements of the bias in *Sports Illustrated*, these methodological problems give little credibility to their research. By comparison, Kane's (1988) vigorous definitional system and chosen methodology, yield stronger conclusions and her study is more replicable. Kane's

analysis of feature articles in *Sports Illustrated* in light of the Title IX<sup>3</sup> time period, attempted to determine if there had been a shift away from negative social stereotypes traditionally associated with women's participation in sport. Although there was a significant increase in the coverage of women in athletic versus non-athletic roles over this period, the articles still gave significantly more coverage to women in 'sex-appropriate' sports such as tennis. Kane concluded that while the social atmosphere surrounding women's athletics contributed to a shift in media emphasis, *Sports Illustrated* still sent clear messages about the sports in which it was acceptable for women to participate.

Bryant (1980) investigated articles and photos in *Sports Illustrated* and other magazines as one aspect of his examination of the paper media (newspapers and magazines) over a two year period. While the primary focus was on the quantity of coverage, Bryant also examined qualitative aspects in terms of the 'sexist commentary' in the articles. However, the definition of what constituted 'sexist' is unclear. He found that 85 per cent of all magazines articles examined over the two year period were male orientated. Further *Sports Illustrated* continued to ridicule the existence of women in sport, while *Runners World* and *Tennis* contained less stereotyped portrayals of women (Bryant, 1980, p. 39). Like Kane (1988), Bryant concluded that the impact of Title IX does not appear to have changed how the paper media treat women in sport.

Other studies draw similar conclusions about the coverage of women in the paper media. Brown (1992) examined the changing representations of the female athlete in the Australian print media in an historical analysis of one newspaper. Brown found that while women receive greater coverage now than in the past, they still receive considerably less than men. Women are increasingly reported in a greater range of sport activities but, in the search for 'human interest' stories, their sporting achievements are still presented in the context of their social or biological roles. The search for human interest features is pervasive in magazines, thus Brown's findings may also apply to magazine articles.

Hilliard's (1984) character analysis of professional tennis players in magazines is one of the few purely interpretive, qualitative pieces of research. Articles were read as 'texts' in an attempt to identify the major themes which depicted players. Three themes were recognised; first, character portrayals reinforce traditional concepts of masculinity; second, for the female players, the status of female overrides the status of athlete; and third there is a constant necessity to confirm the femininity of the female athlete within article texts.

Hilliard noted that the flaws, or imperfections, in the character portrayals of men and

---

<sup>3</sup> Title IX was American federal legislation prohibiting sex discrimination in sport.

women tennis professionals differed in line with traditional masculine and feminine role characteristics. Notably, the supposition of clear-cut masculine and feminine role characteristics is, in itself, a problem. Hilliard's findings suggested that male athletes were flawed because they "...exaggerate[d] masculine characteristics: they [were] too determined, too aggressive [and] too independent" (Hilliard, 1984, p. 260). Comparatively, female athletes were flawed because they were too feminine, portrayed as weak, emotional and dependent. Additionally, while the portrayals emphasised the compatibility of masculine roles and athlete, the role of athlete was incompatible with being female. A major theme in the portrayals of women players was a tendency towards dependency and emotional difficulties which were "...tied to relationships with men and to questions concerning the compatibility of athletic and more traditional female roles" (Hilliard, 1984, p. 256). By comparison, in the portrayals of male players, it was suggested that marriage and family life were compatible with, and contributed to, success. Men were portrayed as independent and self-reliant even when they, too, had important social support systems outside of tennis.

Hilliard also suggested that the necessity to confirm the femininity of the female athlete is a result of the commercial interests of sponsors involved in professional sport. According to Hilliard (1984, p. 261), it is now "...of great economic interest [to sponsors] that the athletes participating in the events they sponsor, be perceived as feminine by the potential buyers of their products". However, it appears that sponsors of male athletes do not have the same concern. Because sport is considered inherently male, male athletes reaffirm their masculinity merely by participating. Hilliard's analysis suggests that economic pressures are gaining increasing prominence in determining which sports are covered by the media and how this is done. Boutilier and San Giovanni (1983) argued that the degree to which corporate sponsorship determined a magazine's profit determines the nature of the magazine content. The content, and subsequent images which are portrayed, will be shaped by the pressures, interests and values of the corporate sponsors. While magazines may have the potential power to challenge the status quo, economic interests prevent them from doing so.

Duncan's (1990) qualitative investigation into the meaning of sports photographs from the 1984 and 1988 Olympic Games identified two categories of photographic features as conveyors of meaning - the content within, and the context of, the photograph. Within these categories, features of the photograph such as the camera angle, visual groupings, and physical appearance of the athlete enable patriarchal readings which emphasise sexual difference. Camera angle, for instance, can invoke notions of superiority or inferiority which can heighten sexual difference. A photograph taken from above, looking down, is suggestive of inferiority; the subject is in an inferior position relative to the viewer. Conversely a

subject photographed from below, looking up, places the subject in a dominant, elevated position, suggesting superiority. (Duncan (1990, p. 38) suggested that female athletes are more "...often portrayed in below-eye-level angles, emphasising their smallness and their inferiority; while male athletes are often portrayed in above-eye-level angles suggesting their height and superiority".) An example cited in her research juxtaposed photographs of two divers where in relation to the viewer of the photographs, the male athlete was pictured above while the female diver was pictured below. Duncan concluded that sports photographs function as a site of struggle to maintain patriarchal relations. { While the increase of competent, powerful sportswomen threatens male sporting superiority, the manner in which women are photographed suggests sexual difference, which in turn devalues their achievements as sportspeople. }

At issue in any interpretative work such as Duncan's is the problem of subjectivity. Meaning is created in an interaction between the text and the reader and each reader brings different experiences, history, social and cultural contexts to his or her interpretation. Duncan (1990, p. 27) stated that "...responsible textual studies do not assert with certainty how particular texts are interpreted...but they suggest the likely interpretations". Although the lack of such an acknowledgment in Hilliard's analysis may appear to be a limitation, this is not necessarily so, for the analysis of a text would appear to be somewhat less subjective than photographic evaluation. Duncan clearly states her position and her aims for developing a framework for analysing sport photographs and suggests that hers is only one interpretation.

A second photographic analysis was Duncan and Sayaovong's (1990) examination of the images in sports photographs in *Sports Illustrated for Kids (SIK)* with a focus on whether there were gender differences in the way athletes were visually portrayed. Both qualitative and quantitative differences were found in the depictions of female and male athletes. Photographs featuring males outnumbered those featuring females by a 2 to 1 ratio (Duncan and Sayaovong, 1990, p. 101), and the number of males appearing on *SIK* covers outnumbered females. (Compared with males, females were more associated with individual sports, while males were shown as more physically active than females and more often in team sports.) Duncan and Sayaovong classified sports as 'strength/endurance/overpowering', 'aesthetic', 'risk' and 'neutral' according to a typology developed by Metheny (1965) which examined the 'sex-appropriateness' of sports for women (this typology is further explained in section 2.5.1). Their results found that females outnumbered males in the 'aesthetic' category while males were more dominant in sports classified as 'strength/endurance/overpowering'. Interestingly, more females than males were depicted participating in 'risk' sports by a ratio of 2:1 (Duncan and Sayaovong, 1990, p. 105). This finding could be a reflection of a freak

effect whereby females who do participate in 'gender-inappropriate' sports receive media coverage due to the unusual nature of their participation. Further, while including 'gender-inappropriate' sports may appear to be contesting understood notions of appropriateness, the quality of this coverage may act to reproduce such notions by focusing on issues which undermine their participation.

Duncan and Sayaovong (1990) also examined whether there were gender differences in the use of camera angles, as suggested in Duncan's (1990) research. They found that while photographs in which the camera was angled up (above eye-level) occurred more frequently when the subject was male, the greatest number of photographs depicted male and female athletes at eye level. Thus, contrary to Duncan (1990), while there were more males photographed from above eye-level than females, there were not more females photographed from below eye-level.

Rintala and Birrell (1984) investigated the availability of female athletic role models in *Young Athlete* magazine. Like *SIK*, *Young Athlete* has the potential to act as a socialising agent by presenting new images of females in sport or by reinforcing old ones. In the pages of *Young Athlete* males and females receive differential treatment ("An adolescent reader would quite likely conclude that [the world of sport] is mostly a place for boys and men") (Rintala and Birrell, 1984, p. 245). While *Young Athlete* does perpetuate stereotypical images of women athletes, the authors concluded that, generally speaking, the magazine gives 'fair' representation to female athletes - fair in a quantitative sense (that is, female athletes represent 32.7 per cent of all high school athletes and the same proportion of athletes depicted in high school sports in *Young Athlete* were female); but unfair in terms of the stereotyped portrayals. This distinction is important for future research, raising the question whether presenting the status quo is 'fair treatment' (Rintala and Birrell, 1984).

Finally, an Australian report for the Sport and Recreation Ministers' Council (1992, p. 8), revealed that the quality of coverage of sportswomen in magazines has altered little since 1988, suggesting that this indicates a key area for further research. This study examined *Inside Sport* and *Sports Illustrated* (an Australian magazine modelled on the American version, with little recognition of women's sport). According to the Sport and Recreation Ministers' Council (ibid.) the editors of *Inside Sport* "...openly admit to using sexual images to sell copy to male readers". In one issue a woman "... 'modelled' ski gear on which zips appeared not to work and apparently, frilly bras, fishnet singlets, bikini and body suits were compulsory" (ibid.). While it might be argued that there has been an improvement in the coverage of women's sport in other media forms, the Sport and Recreation Ministers' Council (1992, p. 14) concluded that the approach taken by new sports magazines, like *Inside Sport*, is

degenerative. They suggested further research examining the coverage and portrayal of women's sport in specific sport magazines as well as general women's magazines and also the portrayal of women in sport advertisements.

#### **2.4.4 Magazine Research Summary**

Various aspects of magazine coverage have been the subject of research, including magazine covers, advertisements, articles and photographs. Much of this research has been undertaken on *Sports Illustrated* and within the United States. Overall, the results show an under representation of women on magazine covers, in advertisements, and articles. Furthermore, the portrayal of women's participation in sport in magazines has been steeped in conservative notions of what physical activities are appropriate for women.

### **2.5 Appropriateness of Sports for Women**

A major theme within media research on women in sport is the portrayal of the appropriateness of sport. A key researcher in this area has been Metheny (1965), whose typology of appropriateness of sports participation for women appears to have initiated interest in this area.

Metheny (1965) believed that society defines certain forms of sport as appropriate for women's participation on the basis of the characteristics of the physical activity involved. Women's involvement in sport is socially sanctioned only when they participate in 'feminine' or 'sex-appropriate' sports. The 'gender or sex-appropriateness'<sup>4</sup> of a particular sport is determined by the extent to which the behaviour challenges the traditional stereotyped behaviour of men or women and relates specifically to the physical and structural characteristics which surround the activity. According to Kane and Synder (1989, p. 81), at the "...heart of gender consistency for Metheny is what the female does with her body". That is, whether she performs in a physical or a non-physical manner:

If she uses her body in aesthetically pleasing ways or uses light instruments to overcome light objects her body is essentially performing in a 'nonphysical' way.

---

<sup>4</sup> Although the term used by Metheny is 'sex-appropriate', the term used in this research will be 'gender-appropriate'. The term 'sex' refers to biological functions, while 'gender' is recognised as a social construction - which is of concern in this model.

If, on the other hand, she uses her body as an instrument of physical power, she is behaving in a 'typically male' and thus gender 'inappropriate' fashion (Kane and Synder, 1989, p. 81).

Barriers restricting women's involvement in a sport will be weakest in sports involving grace and form, and which have an absence of face-to-face confrontation with an opponent in which there is bodily contact (Coakley, 1978, p. 246).

While it has been suggested that the general public are in agreement with Metheny's typology for classifying the appropriateness of sports (Synder, Kivlin and Spreitzer, 1975), a question arises about its relevance to today's sporting environment. However, several researchers have adapted Metheny's original model to make it fit sporting experiences in the 1980s and 1990s (Rintala and Birrell, 1984; Kane, 1988; Kane and Synder, 1989; Duncan and Sayaovong, 1990). The model which will be used in the present research is taken from Duncan and Sayaovong's (1990) research. This approach to classifying the 'gender-appropriateness' of sports identifies four categories of sporting activities, as follows (Duncan and Sayaovong, 1990, p. 104):

- (1) *high-risk*: sports in which the danger posed to the athlete is produced primarily by the physical environment (e.g., race car driving, rock climbing);
- (2) *aesthetic*: sports wherein success is determined primarily on the basis of grace and proper form and is often subjectively judged (e.g., gymnastics, diving, dressage);
- (3) *strength/endurance/overpowering*: contact sports in which one opponent overpowers another by superior physical strength and greater endurance (e.g., heptathlon, boxing, football);

The fourth category, "neutral", includes all other sports (e.g., basketball, swimming etcetera).

According to Metheny's original research, activities in categories (1) and (3) contain characteristics which make them inappropriate for women. Kane and Synder's (1989) use of the physicality/power dimensions of sport helps to clarify why these two categories contain sports which are unacceptable for women. They suggested that the notion of male power through physicality determines which sports are suitable for women, stating that "...we can allow women to be involved in sports as long as they remain in 'lesser than', 'feminine' sports" (Kane and Synder, 1989, p. 80). At the same time, men can continue to maintain their dominance in sport because of the importance attributed to the most physical sports.<sup>5</sup> Because categories (1) and (3) of Metheny's typology involve an expression of power or

---

<sup>5</sup> Kane and Synder (1989:80) noted that to retain this exaggerated status, men must continually be "...on guard against female intrusion". This casts an interesting perspective on the debate which occurred in New Zealand when women first started playing rugby.



strength, sports within them are deemed unacceptable for women.

Finally, research has shown that there is a dearth of media coverage, and under representation, of women's participation in team sports (Duncan and Hasbrook, 1988), even sports in which they dominate (Rintala and Birrell, 1984; Duncan and Sayaovong, 1990). Duncan and Hasbrook (1988, p. 4) suggested that the mass media "...discourage[s] female participation in team sports by labelling it unfeminine and by ignoring women's team sporting events". A similar occurrence is noted for women participating in certain individual sports deemed more appropriate for males than females "...because of the 'unfeminine' demands made on strength and endurance or because of the risk involved" (ibid.). Their research goes on to suggest that through the ambivalent commentary accorded women's participation in these sports, such coverage symbolically denies power to women. Of relevance to this section are the ways in which media act to exclude women from team sports by labelling it inappropriate for participation. The current research is interested in whether the coverage of women participating in 'gender-appropriate' sports is different or similar to those involved in 'gender-inappropriate' sports, as categorised by Duncan and Sayaovong (1990).

## 2.6 Current Research Needs

The current literature on media coverage of sportswomen is not without limitations. First, it is questionable how far it is possible to generalise many of the research results. Newspaper analyses acknowledge the importance of accounting for seasonal variation in the coverage of certain sports. It is possible that magazine coverage is susceptible to the same influences. However, this has not been acknowledged in the methodologies of previous research. Second, as outlined earlier, a major limitation of qualitative, interpretative research is reader interpretation. There is, undoubtedly, always some degree of subjectivity, but the researcher can minimise the effect of this through emphasising the framework and definitional system from which he or she works and acknowledging the potential for bias. In that the interpretation of a text is only the representation of one reader, the use of reader studies which examine the public's perception of a text can be of benefit. To date, research in this area appears to be limited.

Perusal of the literature cited above and consideration of its limitations provides an indication of topics needing further investigation. Those topics relevant to the New Zealand context include the following:

1. An examination of magazine coverage. This aspect of media coverage lags behind those of television and newspaper coverage. The influence of *Sports Illustrated* is acknowledged and has been well documented in United States research. Parallel research on New Zealand magazines is still to be undertaken.
2. Research into the portrayal of sportswomen in magazines, including textual and photographic analysis. The majority of work in New Zealand has been on the quantity of coverage accorded to women. An analysis of the quality of coverage would add to the limited body of literature in the area.
3. An understanding of public reaction to the images of women portrayed in magazines.

The present study aims to address aspects of (1) and (2) by examining the qualitative coverage of sportswomen in New Zealand magazines, focusing on *how* sportswomen are portrayed.

## 2.7 Chapter Summary

According to the literature discussed here, media portrayals of women in sport remain steeped in traditional stereotypes. Women are more often portrayed in 'gender-appropriate' sports and characterised by conventional means - as objects and extras to men's participation in sport and leisure. Traditional notions of femininity are reproduced in media coverage which portrays women predominantly in the context of their social or biological roles. There is a lack of media coverage ascribed to women's participation in team sports as well as an attitude that certain individual sports are 'unfeminine' according to the characteristics displayed (Rintala and Birrell, 1984; Duncan and Sayaovong, 1990). New Zealand research has shown that over the past 10 years the coverage of women's sport on television, and in newspapers, has altered little. The most recent research reveals that sportswomen receive less than half of what their male counterparts receive in both television and newspaper coverage (Ferkins, 1992). Interestingly, New Zealand media do appear to treat women more fairly than their Australian counterparts. Research undertaken in 1992 (an Olympics year) indicated that Australian sportswomen received 1.2 per cent of television sports coverage compared to 20 per cent received by their New Zealand counterparts (O'Rourke, 1994).

Through an examination of literature about the coverage of women in the media, this

chapter has highlighted areas where further research is needed. In New Zealand, qualitative media studies are limited and, in addition, research into the portrayal of sportswomen in magazines is understudied. In order to understand more completely the nature of the media portrayal of women in sport, research into magazine portrayals of sportswomen is required. The prevailing lack of such research provides justification for the importance, and direction, of the current research.

## *Chapter Three*

# METHODOLOGY

### 3.1 Introduction

The previous chapter identified a gap in the literature concerning how sportswomen are represented in the media. An investigation of magazine coverage will help provide a more complete picture of media portrayals of sportswomen. This chapter outlines the research questions and discusses the methods by which they were addressed.

This research examined the quality of coverage of sportswomen in six New Zealand magazines from January 1, 1991 to December 31, 1993 (inclusive).<sup>6</sup> The primary research question was: *How do magazines portray sportswomen?* In order to answer this question, four sub-questions provided a structure for the research. These sub-questions were:

- \* **How do magazines with different target audiences portray sportswomen?** (i.e., Do photographs convey similar meanings in different magazines? Is the language used to describe sportswomen the same?)
- \* **Are there differences between magazines in the portrayal of the ‘gender-appropriateness’ of sport?** (i.e., Do women who participate in ‘gender-appropriate’ sports receive the same media representation as women in ‘gender-inappropriate’ sports?)
- \* **How is language in magazines used to describe sportswomen?** (i.e., Does it trivialise, patronise, marginalise or masculinise sportswomen? Does it make exceptions for their involvements? Does it emphasise, validate or include sportswomen?)

---

<sup>6</sup> The past tense is used here to denote the fact that this research has already been undertaken.

- \* **What meanings are generated by photographs of sportswomen in magazines?**  
(i.e., To what extent do photographs emphasise the sportswomen's sexuality, muscularity, athleticism or femininity?)

These questions were addressed through the use of content analysis to examine magazine feature articles. Consistent with this focus, neither advertising images, nor magazine covers, were examined. The next sections will provide further detail on the method used.

## **3.2 Content Analysis**

Content analysis is a method of studying human communications such as film, television, books and magazines (Babbie, 1989, p. 322). The units of analysis are usually words, paragraphs or whole books. For this research, however, the units of analysis were feature articles.

### **3.2.1 Definition of Content Analysis**

Given the qualitative emphasis of this research, Krippendorff's definition of content analysis was adopted: "...a research technique for making replicable and valid inferences from data to their context" (Krippendorff, 1980, p. 21). This definition suggests that the major concern of content analysis must be in drawing inferences, which was appropriate for the current research. Additional support for the use of the term content analysis here was drawn from Reinharz's (1992) work. Reinharz (1992) suggested that there is no terminological consensus for content analysis. Depending on the academic background of the researcher, the term used to describe such research can vary from 'archival research' for historians; to 'text analysis' for philosophers; while "...discourse analysis, rhetoric analysis and deconstruction are additional terms that refer to the examination of texts" (Reinharz, 1992, p. 148). My sociological background, referred to in Chapter One, influenced my decision to use the term content analysis in this research. The use of this term is supported in Reinharz's (1992, p. 159) discussion of the successful qualitative content analyses undertaken by feminist sociologists. While the use of this term for the qualitative nature of this research may be debated by academics from other disciplines, it is important to recognise that the nature of the research does not alter by using a different name. This was an interpretative piece of

research, using the fundamentals of the method of content analysis to make inferences from texts.

It is acknowledged here that other researchers have defined content analysis in a quantitative sense. Berelson (1952, p. 18; cited in Krippendorff, 1980), for example, initially defined content analysis as "...a research technique for the objective, systematic and quantitative description of the manifest content of a communication". This definition, however, places limits on how a communication can be studied, implying that only the manifest content of a communication warrants examination. Manifest content refers to the directly visible, objectively identifiable characteristics of a communication, while latent content refers to the meaning within a communication and examines the underlying or hidden meaning within a text.

The suggestion that content analyses only examine the manifest content of a communication has led many researchers to believe that latent contents are excluded from analysis. Babbie (1989) provided a good illustration of the difference between manifest and latent content, in his determination of how erotic a novel is. According to Babbie (1989), if one were to examine how erotic a novel was, one might, for example, simply count the number of times the word 'love' appeared, which would be an examination of the manifest content of the communication. While it has high reliability (one can count and re-count the identified variable), the validity of such a measure of 'eroticism' would be under question because it is determined by more than the appearance of the word 'love'. The latent content of the same research would assess the whole novel to obtain an overall picture of how erotic it is. This would require the researcher to make a subjective judgement, in comparison to an objective measurement associated with assessing the manifest content of a communication.

The basis of this research was an examination of *how* sportswomen are represented in the magazine media. Inherent in the research was the use of an interpretative, qualitative framework as the latent content of each article was examined. Thus Krippendorff's definition of content analysis was adopted.

### **3.2.2 Advantages and Disadvantages of Content Analysis**

Content analysis as a research technique has several advantages. The first of these is that the data is 'safe'. If data is lost, the communication source is usually still available for repeat analyses or re-coding, a safety feature not found with other social research methods

where the object under observation, usually people, changes over time. Potentially consistent results from re-coding also increase the reliability of the coding process. Another advantage of content analysis is its unobtrusive and non-interactive nature, meaning the researcher has little effect on the artifact under study.

Aside from potential difficulties of accessing the material being studied, (see Chapter Two, section 2.3) content analysis has relatively few weaknesses. One weakness it can have is in its validity. For example, are the variables which are used to measure how erotic a novel is, the best measure of 'eroticism'? Problems with validity can be minimised by providing a framework through which other researchers can test the findings at a later date. Due to the unique nature of this research a pre-tested framework was not used; however the validity of these results can be tested by other researchers using the framework established here.

Inherent within content analysis, particularly qualitative, interpretative content analysis, is the subjectivity and previous experience the reader brings to the analytical process. The issue of reader subjectivity and interpretation was a concern of this research and is addressed later in this chapter.

### **3.2.3 Interim Summary**

Content analysis was used in this research as a way of making inferences from a text. People who undertake content analyses can study a set of objects or events by systematically counting them, or interpreting the themes contained in them (Reinharz, 1992). This research focused on the second aspect of Reinharz's perspective of content analyses, that is, the interpretation of themes within a communication. The emphasis was on the qualitative examination of feature articles within magazines.

## **3.3 Terminology**

### **3.3.1 Quality of Coverage**

In the previous chapter, the difference between the terms quantity and quality of media coverage was discussed. It is necessary to further expand on the use of the term *quality* as it

was used in this research.

The Collins Dictionary and Thesaurus (McLeod, ed, 1990) contains two definitions of quality. First, it is defined as the basic nature of something, and second, as a standard of excellence. The second of these definitions implies some sort of judgement and pre-determined standard of excellence. This research did not use quality as a judgement about whether the coverage of sportswomen in magazines is good or bad. Rather, it described the relative nature of the coverage of sportswomen. In simplified terms, a quantitative study would examine how much coverage sportswomen get. This research described *how* women are represented in this coverage.

### **3.3.2 Feature Article**

A second issue concerns the definition of a feature article. For the purposes of this research, a feature article was defined as:

any article listed under "Contents" on the table of contents page which focused exclusively on sportswomen and which was not previewing or reviewing a competitive event.

This definition is consistent with Kane's (1988) and was chosen because it excludes articles which focus on specific sporting competitions. As such this definition negates the 'journalistic obligation' to cover women's sport (Kane, 1988, p. 91), which can result in unusually high amounts of coverage of women's sport due to specific, high profile competitions. For example, in Ferkins' (1992) study of newspaper and television coverage the research period included the Winter Olympic Games. While 20 per cent of television coverage during the period of Ferkins' study, was on women's sport, 50 per cent of that was derived from coverage of Olympic sports. If it were not for the Olympic Games, the coverage of women's sport would probably have been significantly lower and a more accurate representation of the general coverage of women's sport. Thus, in order to make the results a valid representation of the coverage of women's sport in general, feature articles which focused on a specific competition were not analysed in this research. Articles which appeared under the 'departments' headings of magazines were likewise not examined. Finally, articles which focused on men and women but gave greater, or equal coverage to the women, were included.



### 3.3.3 Sport

An issue central to this investigation was the definition of sport. What determines a sport differs from person to person, reflecting individual experiences, expectations and perceptions. This can result in ambiguity concerning exactly what constitutes sport.

One definition, forwarded by Coakley (1978, p. 12), suggests that sport is defined as

any institutionalised, competitive activity that involves vigorous physical exertion or the use of relatively complex skills by individuals whose participation is motivated by a combination of intrinsic satisfaction associated with the activity itself and the external rewards earned through participation.

This definition has been debated. Meier (1981) critiqued two components of this definition, challenging the assertions that sport requires a high level of skill to participate and that the prerequisite of institutionalisation is necessary. Despite the inadequacies Meier's argument highlights, his critique still leaves many unanswered questions about *how* to define a sport. Interestingly, the criterion of competition is not something with which Meier takes issue, yet it is my belief that competition can be difficult to determine in some activities, particularly where an individual could be playing by himself/herself.

Contrary to Meier, this research believes that it is the criterion of institutionalisation which helps to differentiate between two individual activities. The examples of golf and climbing will be used to illustrate this point. Whether golfers play alone or with others, there are rules to be followed. Golfers know that if the ball goes out of bounds, they must add a stroke, or that when they tee off, they must not be in front of the markers. The element of competition exists even when golfers play by themselves as they try to improve their best score. By comparison, a mountaineer does not abide by any institutionalised rules when climbing a mountain - unless he or she is competing in a climbing event. The fact that controversy surrounds some claimed ascents (e.g. Lydia Bradey's ascent of Mt Everest in 1988) attests to the lack of agreed rules in this activity. For this reason, two feature articles on Bradey could not be included in the data for this research. A climber could be competing against himself/herself or other climbers to get to the top of a mountain, but it is the prerequisite of institutionalisation which helps to determine whether this activity is a sport. Conversely, sport-climbing - competitive rock-climbing - usually takes places on artificial climbing walls, is institutionalised and therefore can, as its name suggests, be considered a sport.

Despite the potential problem in determining the existence of competition in an activity, for this research, Coakley's definition of sport was accepted. The criteria of

institutionalisation (in terms of rules, an organisational body and historical background), and competition, were helpful determinants in the inclusion or exclusion of magazine feature articles as was the criterion of competition.

### **3.3.4 Sportswoman**

In this research a sportswoman was defined as:

any woman who participates in a sport (as previously defined) and whose inclusion in the magazine is determined by her status (past, present or future) as a sports performer.

This definition did not mean that the article was, or had to be, about a woman's *ability* as a sportsperson, but, rather, that the reason she was in the magazine was a direct consequence of her achievements as a sports performer. This definition included emerging sport stars as well as sportswomen who were locally, nationally or internationally recognised. It neglected those women who may define themselves as a sportsperson merely because they participate in sport. Only articles about sportswomen who participate in a sport as defined by the established criteria were eligible for analysis.

### **3.3.5 Individual or Team Sportswomen**

In this research, the status of a sportswoman as a team member did not affect their inclusion in the analysis process. Previous research has noted that women participating in team sports receive different coverage to those participating in individual sports (Duncan and Sayaovong, 1990; Rintala and Birrell, 1984). Thus, differences in the reporting of sportswomen from team and individual sports was noted for analysis.

## **3.4 Sampling**

The main emphasis in sampling for content analysis is on ensuring a representative sample. In this research, a form of *purposive* sampling was employed. This is a type of non-probability sample in which units to be analysed are chosen on the basis of the researcher's judgement about those which will be the most useful or representative (Babbie, 1989). This research was purposive for two reasons. Three categories of magazines were identified as

being of interest to this research - women's, general circulation and sporting magazines. These categories were defined according to the identified target markets of the magazine. For example, a magazine which identified its target market as "...all women over age 20" was considered a women's magazine. It was hypothesised that each category of magazines would provide different information about sportswomen, therefore each was considered important to the research, making the sample decision purposive. This information was also used to examine whether the target markets of different magazines affected how they portrayed sportswomen.

A second purposive element was that specific criteria were used to choose two magazine titles from within each category. Two criteria were examined: circulation size and editorial policies. Circulation size was a criterion for selection based on the premise that magazines with larger circulations reach more people. Thus such magazines will supposedly have the greatest influence on a greater number of readers through the messages they portray. The more people who read a magazine, the more widespread the images portrayed in that magazine. Additionally, this research endeavoured to obtain a variety of editorial policies on the coverage of women's sport, from the conservative to the radical, and to note differences between magazines. However, this was not easy because it was impossible to determine whether or not the magazines positively exaggerated their policies in order to portray their magazine in a favourable light.

Using this information the following magazines were chosen for analysis in this research:

Women's Magazines:	<i>MORE</i> <i>New Zealand Woman's Day (NZWD)</i> <i>New Zealand Woman's Weekly (NZWW)</i>
General Circulation:	<i>New Zealand Listener</i> <sup>7</sup> <i>North &amp; South</i>
Sports Magazines:	<i>New Zealand Adventure</i> <i>New Zealand Sport Monthly (NZSM)</i>

It was originally intended that two magazines from each category would be selected. The final sample, however, included *three* women's magazines because each represented a different niche of the women's magazine market. Table 3.1 highlights the editorial policies and target audiences of the magazines chosen for analysis, while information on circulation size and other statistics are highlighted in Table 3.2. This information was obtained by communicating with publishers of the magazines concerned.

---

<sup>7</sup> During the period analysed the *Listener & TV Times* changed its name to the *New Zealand Listener* which is how it is referred to in this research.

**Table 3.1 Editorial Policies on Women's Sport and Target Audiences of Magazines Surveyed**

Magazine	Target Audiences	Editorial Policy on Women's Sport
<b>MORE</b>	"...young 'thinking' women", who are "...active and adventurous", "...aged between 18 and 39", who "...enjoy a good level of income, probably pre-mortgage and pre-family [and] enjoy the finer things in life"	"...no set policy...no conscious rule...depends on who's around and newsworthy...look to profile inspirational women or for stories that will provide insight or discuss new trends in sports".
<b>NZ Adventure</b>	" 'outdoor lifestyle' market - i.e., active healthy New Zealanders aged 18-55 for whom outdoors enjoyment and recreation are lifestyle pursuits and values"	"...if it's a story, it's a story, regardless of sex".
<b>NZ Listener</b>	n/a	"...even handed...not discriminatory ...important sports at the moment, what doing well at present"
<b>NZSM</b>	"New Zealand's active sportsmen and women, sports fans, and readers interested in a variety of sport"	"...endeavour to be as even handed as possible...an indication is the special supplements we have published on women's sport"
<b>NZWD</b>	"women aged 18-39"	n/a
<b>NZWW</b>	"all women 20-plus"	"...happy to consider stories on any newsworthy sportswomen"
<b>North &amp; South</b>	"intelligent middle New Zealand - people who are interested in the people and issues which drive this country"	"...cover sport regularly and have no specific policy...bottom line is public interest...good story is a good story regardless of the sex of the interviewee"

**Key:**

**NZ Adventure:** New Zealand Adventure  
**NZ Listener:** New Zealand Listener  
**NZWD:** New Zealand Woman's Day  
**NZWW:** New Zealand Woman's Weekly  
**NZSM:** New Zealand Sport Monthly  
**n/a:** information not available

The inclusion of *New Zealand Adventure* arose from the recognition that outdoor recreation is important in the lives of New Zealanders. This acknowledgement is reinforced in the work of Cushman, Laidler, Russell, Wilson and Herbison (1991). According to Cushman et al. (1991) 17% of the New Zealand population 'enjoyed weekly' participation in

**Table 3.2 Magazines Surveyed and Statistical Information**

Magazine	Circulation	Readership	Percent Women Readers	Launch Date
<i>MORE</i>	39 761	340 000	70	1983
<i>NZ Adventure</i>	13 000	75 000	21	1982
<i>NZ Listener</i>	115 570	n/a	n/a	1939
<i>NZSM</i>	26 000	74 000	22	1992
<i>NZWD</i>	204 166	n/a	n/a	1989
<i>NZWW</i>	150 633	1 026 000	note 1	1932
<i>North &amp; South</i>	39 904	379 000	53	1986

**Key:**

NZ Adventure: *New Zealand Adventure*

NZ Listener: *NZ Listener*

NZWD: *New Zealand Woman's Day*

NZWW: *New Zealand Woman's Weekly*

NZSM: *New Zealand Sport Monthly*

n/a: information not available from magazines

note 1: only information available notes that 43% of women aged 20+ are readers of *NZWW*.

Source: *The New Zealand Audit Bureau of Circulations (Inc)*, six months ended 30 June 1993.

outdoor recreation activities. This was the third highest activity type they identified, behind individual or small group sport (first) and visiting/entertaining friends (second). In the same research, outdoor recreation activities ranked second for activities 'enjoyed monthly'. Given the apparent dominance of outdoor recreation in many New Zealander's lives, it was decided to include *New Zealand Adventure* in the sample. Without the inclusion of this magazine the sample risked being skewed towards 'traditional' activities, and would have failed to reflect the national interest in outdoor recreation and 'outdoor' sports.

However, upon analysis of *New Zealand Adventure* it was realised that the feature articles did not cover sport as defined for this research. Such articles focused on the adventures or exploits which people had accomplished, described adventure activities people could do, and reviewed meetings and conferences. These activities are 'lifestyle experiences' rather than competitive institutionalised sporting events and thus they were not eligible for inclusion in this research. Where articles about sport, as defined in this research, were included, they were referred to in other sections of the magazine, such as the 'Exploits'

section which profiled athletes. While articles about women in the outdoors were included, relegated as they were to a special feature, they did not focus on sportswomen as defined in this research and so did not contribute to the analysis. Thus, given the focus of this magazine, it was decided not to analyse *New Zealand Adventure* further. Consequently, the following sections do not include reference to this magazine.

From the magazine titles eligible for analysis, magazine issues were chosen using a simple random sampling technique. From each magazine 25 per cent of all the issues produced from January 1, 1991 - December 31, 1993, were selected for analysis. This resulted in 39 issues of each weekly magazine and nine issues of each monthly magazine.<sup>8</sup> This proportion (25 per cent) of the total sample was chosen for two reasons; it was large enough to be representative; and it produced a manageable volume of data.

### 3.4.1 Textual Analysis

Feature articles in each issue were analysed primarily using the computer programme NUDIST (Richards, Richards, McGilliard and Sharrock, 1992). NUDIST is a package designed to handle non-numerical unstructured data in qualitative research through the processes of indexing, searching and theorising. The text of each feature article was scanned into the computer, entered into NUDIST, read and coded for themes. These themes then aided in the construction of nodes -the indexing categories which form the basis of NUDIST. Other data from each article was recorded on a data collection form and entered into Q&A (Kamins, Beeler, Walden and Watkins, 1988) - a computer database programme designed for storing data. The data collection form and NUDIST indexing consisted of the items listed below.

- (1) **Background information about magazine:** Information relating to the magazine issue was collected to provide background to the magazine being profiled. This included issue number, year of publication, number of pages per issue and gender of the author and photographer (where known). Appendix C documents the results from this analysis.
- (2) **Article title/Photograph caption:** This information was recorded as a qualitative measure of the language used to describe sportswomen.
- (3) **Article type:** Each article was categorised as either 'sport', 'sport-related' or 'personal'. A 'sport' article described the sportswoman's development as a player, her current

---

<sup>8</sup> This is with the exception of *New Zealand Sport Monthly* which only began publishing in March 1992. Twenty-five percent of the issues of this magazine resulted in 5 issues.

standing or her future performance. 'Sport-related' articles described issues surrounding the sport but not about the sportswoman's actual performance. For example, articles which dealt with getting sponsorship, media coverage or other things affecting her performance, were considered 'sport-related' articles. 'Personal' articles focused on some aspect of the athlete's personal life, such as getting married or having a baby. The difference between the categories was not always as clear cut as is suggested here, with some articles falling under more than one category. When this happened, the articles were recorded under both categories.

- (4) **Type of sport:** This variable related to the research question concerning coverage of women in 'gender-appropriate' or 'gender-inappropriate' sports. Sports were categorised in accordance with Metheny's (1965) typology (and as adapted by Duncan and Sayaovong (1990)), as either 'high-risk', 'aesthetic', 'strength /endurance /overpowering', or 'neutral' (see Chapter Two, section 2.5.1).
- (5) **Individual vs team sports:** Data was collected on the representation of sportswomen participating in individual versus team sports.
- (6) **References to the personal life of the athlete:** Phrases which referred to aspects of the athlete's personal life, used by the author or by the sportswoman herself, were elicited from the article text. References to childhood, employment, marital status, motherhood, relationships, sexuality and other non-sport activities were noted, as were instances where references to these aspects of an individual's life were not reported. The fact that they were not mentioned may indicate something about the type of coverage sportswomen receive in particular magazines.
- (7) **Descriptions of sportswomen by physical appearance:** Phrases used to describe the sportswoman by her physical appearance were drawn from the article text.
- (8) **References to capabilities/skill/ability:** Phrases used to refer to any aspect of the athlete's ability or skill level were recorded.

Although these categories formed the basis for the indexing, several other themes arose out of the data during analysis. These included references to issues for female athletes, such as femininity and appearance, a focus on their sport careers (past, present and future), and other sport-related issues such as retirement, sports psychology, funding and injury. Each of these added categories was important to the analysis. By analysing articles in this manner, it was possible to answer the research questions which examined the use of language to portray sportswomen, and the differences in the portrayal of the 'gender-appropriateness' of sport.

### 3.4.2 Analysis of Photographs

In order to examine the latent meanings within accompanying photographs, the following factors were examined.

- (1) **Number of photographs:** The total number of photographs per article was recorded as was the proportion of the total article area devoted to photographs. This latter variable was determined by estimating the amount of the page the photograph(s) covered. It was originally intended that the percentage of the article devoted to photographs would be determined by measuring the total article size (i.e., number of pages and page size) and subtracting the size of each photograph. However, this became too difficult due to inconsistencies in the shape of the page borders. Estimates were therefore recorded. The percentage of the total number of photographs which were 'sport-action', 'sport-profile' and 'non-sport' were also recorded. 'Sport-action' photographs were defined as an action shot of the sportswoman in the sport environment. A head-and-shoulders or posed photograph of a sportswoman in the sport environment was considered 'sport-profile'. It should be noted here that this categorisation assumed that 'sport-action' photographs were taken in a practice or competition context. Some 'sport-action' photographs may have been contrived (posed) action shots, but were included. Finally, photographs which were of anything else, were labelled 'non-sport'.
- (2) **Accompanying subjects:** Who the sportswoman was photographed with was recorded. For example, whether they were alone, with family members (i.e., parents), a 'significant other'<sup>9</sup>, team members or other competitors, or general shots (which includes spectators in the background).
- (3) **Camera angle:** As discussed in Chapter Two (section 2.4.3), previous research has suggested that the angle from which a photograph is taken can suggest connotations of superiority or inferiority (Duncan, 1990). The camera angle of photographs were recorded to see whether the findings of previous research can be supported in magazine media. A neutral category indexed all photographs which were taken at eye-level.
- (4) **Environment of photograph:** The environment in which the photograph was taken was recorded as either sporting or non-sporting. Photographs within the sporting environment were further categorised as either 'sport-action' or 'sport-profile'. 'Sport-action' photographs were of the athlete in motion or in postures suggesting motion,

---

<sup>9</sup> This term was used to refer to people in the lives of sportswomen with whom they are romantically or sexually involved.



while 'sport-profile' photographs occurred when the athlete was obviously posed for the photograph or it was a head and shoulders shot (adapted from Duncan and Sayaovong, 1990).

- (5) **Researcher's response to the photograph:** The researcher's response to the photograph was recorded. This was structured around three questions which aimed to reduce the subjectivity of the response.
- (a) Is the photograph related to the text of the article? (i.e., does the photograph put the sportswoman in the context of the sport or does it focus on the sportswoman in another context?)
  - (b) What body parts are revealed by the photograph? Are these congruent with what is expected to be revealed as part of the sport? (For example, due the nature of the clothing worn in netball, it could be expected that a photograph of a netballer would show her legs and, perhaps, buttocks).
  - (c) Could the photograph have been taken another way? (i.e., where is the focus of the shot?)

These questions were created in order to help understand the meanings within photographs and to approach the analysis of each photograph in a consistent manner.

The analysis of both photographs and article text in the manner described above contributed to answering the overriding question of this research - how do New Zealand magazines portray sportswomen?

### **3.5 Methodological Issue - Research Subjectivity**

In all research there is some degree of subjectivity. All researchers approach their topic with their own set of assumptions and expectations of results. Different results may be justified through acknowledging the framework in which the researcher works, ensuring a definitional system which is replicable, and recognising the potential for personal prejudice. While any text is susceptible to multiple meanings, the role of a researcher is to "...suggest likely interpretations drawing on visual evidence" (Duncan and Sayaovong, 1990). In work such as the current study there is the possibility that replication could result in conflicting readings of the data. This chapter provides strong definitions of key variables which increases the reliability of this research.

### 3.6 Chapter Summary

Through the methods and processes discussed in the above sections, the portrayal of sportswomen in six New Zealand magazines was addressed. Content analysis was the method employed to undertake this analysis, using feature articles as the units of analysis.

Photographs accompanying feature articles were considered as part of the unit of analysis. A form of purposive sampling helped determine which categories of magazines and which titles within those categories were to be analysed. The resulting magazines were *NZWD*, *NZWW*, *NZ Listener*, *MORE*, *North & South* and *NZSM*. Twenty-five per cent of all the issues produced from January 1, 1991 - December 31, 1993 (inclusive) were selected for analysis, resulting in 39 issues of each weekly magazine and nine issues of monthly magazines.<sup>10</sup>

This research takes a qualitative approach to the content analysis. Thus, the latent content of feature articles was studied rather than the manifest content. Themes were established and connections between different articles and different magazines made. Computer programmes NUDIST and Q&A were utilised to keep a record of the data and to aid in the analysis. The results from this analysis are the subject of the following four chapters. While addressing the research questions laid out in this research, the interpretations made also contribute to a greater understanding of media portrayals of sportswomen in general.

---

<sup>10</sup> With the exception of *NZSM* as indicated earlier in this section.

## *Chapter Four*

# **HOW TARGET AUDIENCES AFFECT THE PORTRAYAL OF SPORTSWOMEN**

### **4.1 Introduction**

This is the first of four chapters which address the research questions in light of the data obtained. This chapter tackles the question of how magazines with different target audiences portray sportswomen. Several themes arose from the six magazines analysed, which suggest that the target audience of a magazine does affect how sportswomen are portrayed. The first two sections of this chapter examine what differently targeted magazines wrote about, and the sports covered, to provide an initial insight into the differences between magazines. This is followed by a more in-depth analysis of the themes found within different magazines.

### **4.2 Article Type**

Articles were categorised as 'sport', 'sport-related' or 'personal'. 'Sport' articles described the sportswoman's development as a player, her current standing, or her future performance and made up 62 per cent of articles analysed (28/45). There was a dominance of 'sport' articles in *NZSM*, general magazines and *MORE*, which was categorised as a women's magazine. A second category, 'sport-related', classified 35 per cent of all articles and included those which described issues surrounding the sport but not about the sportswoman's actual playing. These articles were found in all magazines, however where the focus was on retirement as a 'sport-related' issue, the articles were solely from women's

magazines. The third category, 'personal', accounted for 42 per cent of articles. Within this category, three specific themes were identified, each of which centred on particular aspects of sportswomen's personal lives - their sexuality, weddings and babies. Three articles focused on sexuality, all of which profiled the tennis player, Martina Navratilova. Likewise, weddings were the focus of three articles, two of which dealt with weddings which had happened, showing photographs of sportswomen in wedding dresses and describing the ceremonies. The other wedding article described how the sportswoman had been proposed to (by a prominent New Zealand sportsman) and when they were getting married. Two articles were indexed under the theme of 'baby'. One described the imminent birth of a child, the other after the child had been born. Table 4.1 shows the types of articles found in different magazines.

**Table 4.1 Sports Articles Covered by Different Magazines**

	<i>NZ List.</i>	<i>MORE</i>	<i>Nth &amp; Sth</i>	<i>NZSM</i>	<i>NZWD</i>	<i>NZWW</i>	<b>TOTAL</b>
<b>Sport</b>	7	2	1	8	2	8	28
<b>Sport- related</b>	3	2	-	5	5	3	18
<b>Personal</b>	3	1	1	-	7	7	19
<b>TOTAL</b>	13	5	2	13	14	18	65

*N.B The total number of articles is greater than 45 because some articles were categorised under more than one heading.*

Of the 19 articles indexed as 'personal', 79 per cent were found in women's magazines. Women's magazines also accounted for 43 per cent of articles indexed as 'sport'. The percentage of 'sport' articles within an individual magazine was highest in the *NZ Listener* and *NZSM*. These findings are the first indication that through the subjects written about, different magazines portray sportswomen differently.

## 4.3 Type of Sport

The sports in which sportswomen were represented were categorised as either 'high-risk', 'strength/endurance/overpowering', 'aesthetic' or 'neutral'. Table 4.2 displays the types of sports covered in different magazines.

*Table 4.2 Sport Type by Magazine*

	<i>NZ List.</i>	<i>MORE</i>	<i>Nth &amp; Sth</i>	<i>NZSM</i>	<i>NZWD</i>	<i>NZWW</i>	<b>TOTAL</b>
<b>High-Risk</b>	2	1	-	-	1	5	9
<b>S/E/O</b>	-	-	-	-	-	1	1
<b>Aesthetic</b>	1	-	-	2	-	1	4
<b>Neutral</b>	5	2	1	6	9	8	31
<b>TOTAL</b>	8	3	1	8	10	15	45

*Key:*

S/E/O: Strength/endurance/overpowering Sports

The category 'high-risk' indexed nine documents (20 per cent) and covered sports in which the danger posed to the athlete is produced primarily by the physical environment. The sports included skiing (slalom and speed - 4 articles), boardsailing (2 articles), motorcycle racing, motocross and horse racing. It should be noted here that trampolining was cross-categorised under both 'high-risk' and 'aesthetic' categories. While trampolining is subjectively judged according to the execution of moves requiring the use of proper form, there is also an inherent risk associated with the completion of required moves. Given this, it might seem that gymnastics too, could be categorised as 'high-risk'. Nevertheless, this categorisation is based on earlier research (Kane, 1988) which included gymnastics as an 'aesthetic' (and therefore 'gender-appropriate') sport. While the trampolining article was found in *NZSM*, the remaining articles covering 'high-risk' sports came from women's magazines and the *NZ Listener*.

The 'strength/endurance/overpowering' category indexed sports in which one opponent overpowers another by superior physical strength and greater endurance. Where there was possible dispute over the inclusion of sports in this category, a decision was made on the

basis of whether the sport was a contact sport or whether the athlete used physical strength to attain the desired results. The only sport which was indexed under this category was an article on boxing, found in *NZWW*.

The 'aesthetic' category included sports wherein the success is determined primarily on the basis of grace and proper form and is often subjectively judged. Four documents were indexed here, including gymnastics, trampolining, body building and three day eventing (dressage). As with the case of trampolining, both three-day eventing and body building were categorised under two categories. In three-day eventing the inclusion of three different events makes it difficult to place the sport under one category. The dressage component of this event, where proper form and the performance of movements are requirements for success, was categorised as 'aesthetic', consistent with Duncan and Sayaovong's (1990) research. However, the two other components of this event (show jumping and cross-country), did not sit so comfortably in this category as success is judged more objectively according to whether rails are knocked down and the completion of circuits in a time frame. There are also elements of risk associated with these two aspects of three-day eventing, given that the athlete must jump rails and ride at speed. Thus in this research these elements of three-day eventing were included in the 'high-risk' category.

Similarly, body building cannot solely be categorised as 'aesthetic'. While body building deals with the aesthetics of grace and form, the inherent focus within body building is on constructing the body, with the aim of developing muscle bulk. Previous research has characterised body building as inappropriate for women (Kane, 1988). This sport has "...always been deemed an inappropriate, possibly deviant activity for both women and men" (Klein, 1984; cited in Pugh, 1993, p. 80), due, in part to the negative image associated with publicised steroid abuse. Pugh (1993, p. 80) suggests that a common perception is that women body builders are "...rejecting their femininity in favour of masculinity", that they want to be "...strong and muscular, therefore emasculating men". Her research suggested support for Duff and Hogg's (1984, cited in Pugh, 1993) proposition of a redefinition of femininity to include strength and muscularity. It is suggested here that body building is currently in a state of flux, in the process of becoming more acceptable for women to participate in, yet also containing elements, such as the contradiction between being developing musculature and remaining 'feminine', which make it still inappropriate for women. Body building in this research, thus, sits somewhere between being defined as 'gender-inappropriate' and 'gender-appropriate'. In light of this, further discussion of the portrayal of body building is found in Chapter Six.

The final category, 'neutral', describes all other sports which did not fit into any other

category and indexes the majority of documents (68 per cent). The sports included netball, running/athletics, tennis/squash, swimming, canoe polo and soccer.

While conclusive statements about the differences between magazines are difficult to make given the dominance of 'neutral' sports, it is interesting to note the variety of sports covered by *NZWW*. This was the only magazine to cover a sport from the 'strength/endurance/overpowering' category (boxing) and it also covered the majority of 'high-risk' sports, both considered to be 'gender-inappropriate' according to the categorisation system used here. The fact that *NZWW* featured the widest variety of sports, including sports from 'gender-inappropriate' categories, deserves discussion. Through the inclusion of these sports in a magazine, one might conclude that this magazine is challenging the notions of conformity. Conversely, it might be reinforcing the 'exceptions to the rule'. An analysis of the ways in which these sports are covered (the language used, the meanings in photographs), helps to clarify the apparent contradictions. While some magazines appear to be challenging the notions of conformity or stereotypes by covering certain sports, the language used and the meanings generated in photographs actually serve to reinforce stereotypes. For example, while women's magazines covered more 'gender-inappropriate' sport types, the focus was predominantly on non-sporting issues. Thus while a superficial analysis might suggest that general and sports magazines focus on sporting themes more than women's magazines, or that women's magazines challenge conformity by covering non-traditional sports for women, a deeper level analysis of the themes within texts sheds more light on the messages being conveyed. The themes found within different magazines is the subject of discussion in the next sections, while Chapter Six discusses further the portrayal of the 'gender-appropriateness' of sports.

## **4.4 Magazine Themes**

This section examines the themes which were prominent in different magazines. The themes found predominantly in women's magazines will be discussed first, followed by those common to all magazines, and finally themes found only in other magazine types.

## 4.4.1 Women's Magazines

### Personal Life

A central theme within women's magazines was reference to sportswomen's personal lives. Under this theme, several sub-themes were recognised.

#### *Relationships*

An important focus of articles about sportswomen in women's magazines was on their primary relationships. Fifty-four percent of articles made reference to husbands, partners, lovers, boyfriends or new men in sportswomen's lives and were found predominantly in women's magazines. Importantly, the role of the partner in the sportswoman's life was emphasised: he (most often) provides support or stability in the sportswoman's life, has played an integral role in getting her involved in sport or has been a top level performer himself. Examples of these references include;

*...the husband, former manager, sometime coach and super-support of the super-star... (Loates, 1992)*

*Her husband... and brother... introduced Bernie to running. She was their sponge girl... (Neville, 1992)*

*It was through her boyfriend...a former South Island Golden Glove heavyweight champion... [that she] grew to know and love boxing... (Comer, 1993a)*

*Introduced to the art of self-sculpture by fitness enthusiast boyfriend... (Umbers, 1992)*

An interesting dualism arises here regarding the role men play in sportswomen's lives. While for some sportswomen men have played an important part in introducing them to their sport, for others their sport participation allows no time for a relationship. Perhaps for others still, the introduction to sport by men in their lives, has resulted in having no time for a relationship. These findings are interesting in light of other literature which discusses the notion of dependency by women on male partners. While some sportswomen appear to succeed without the support of male partners, others require such support. This theme is discussed further in Chapter Eight with reference to other literature.

While the influence of men was noted in these articles, there were minimal references to the role women have played in sportswomen's lives. The article within *North & South*



acknowledged the role a sportswoman's mother played in introducing her to netball, however generally, the roles women play in the lives of other women was neglected. While some of the sportswomen profiled may have lesbian relationships these are not explored - except in the case of Martina Navratilova whose public status as a lesbian is known and whose portrayal in light of this is explored in a later section. It is possible that the influence of other women is underrated in order to preserve the status quo - heterosexuality.

### *Motherhood*

A second theme under personal life were references to motherhood as an aspect of the sportswoman's personal life. Twenty-one per cent of all articles contained such references and all, except one, were found in women's magazines. The main theme which arose in the discussion of motherhood was that children were or would be a feature of the sportswoman's life. Two examples of these types of statements are:

*Children are not planned, but will be welcomed if they arrive.* (Paterson, 1991)

*...to make all her dreams come true, [she] wants a baby...* (Rule, 1992)

Articles in *NZSM* and *North & South* contained no references to motherhood, nor did they cover sportswomen who were mothers (at the time of publication). The only reference to motherhood in the *NZ Listener* was an article on Alison Roe which discussed her career in television and the impact which motherhood has had on her life.

The coverage of motherhood by predominantly women's magazines suggests that although these sportswomen have achieved great feats in sport, it is necessary to provide some reassurance to the public that these women are somehow 'normal'. This is important because if a woman is seen to be achieving outside of traditional stereotyped roles she is a potential threat to the status quo. Therefore, because a sportswoman's *greatest wish* might be to have children, she becomes more acceptable in the public's eye. Under the societal assumption that all women want, or should want children, women who achieve outside the home (particularly in traditionally male domains like sport), and who do not have children, are considered abnormal. In order to prove their normality sportswomen are acknowledged for their achievements as mothers and, consequently, their status as sportspeople becomes less important than that of being a mother.

The portrayal of Martina Navratilova requires attention. In the time period analysed, there were three articles on Martina, all of which focused on her sexuality and the latest *scandal* surrounding her life. All were found in weekly women's magazines.

As with the articles on heterosexual sportswomen which described the support male partners have provided in their lives (see earlier section), the influence of one of Martina's partners is mentioned. Comparatively, however, this influence carries negative undertones. For example, while one partner is portrayed as saving Martina's career, having helped her to the top, their relationship is described as a drug, which eventually *started wearing off* (Walker, 1993).

The focus on Martina's partners appears to be solely for sensationalism. The language used to describe Martina's private life reinforces this. Unlike other sportswomen who have partners, she has *lovers* and *sordid affairs*, implying a more illicit personal life. The use of the term *latest partner*, further suggests promiscuity. To journalists, Martina's sexuality is more newsworthy than her tennis abilities.

Women's magazines also focused on other aspects of sportswomen's lives, which, although important, did not form major parts of the analysis. These are examined in the following three sections.

### **Exercise and Pregnancy**

The issue of exercising while pregnant was raised in two articles in women's magazines. One athlete *raised eyebrows during her first pregnancy, at age 40, by continuing to run* (Neville, 1992). However, she was *glad [she] kept running now because [she] can advise other women about running and pregnancy*. Another younger athlete was pregnant for the first time and noted that *far from writing her off for the future* she received great support from her coach and teammates who gave her books about exercise during pregnancy (Sarney, 1993c). These two examples are interesting to compare. For the younger athlete there was the potential to return to full training and competition after pregnancy, as many top athletes have done in recent years, thus exercising through her pregnancy was supported. Conversely for the older athlete, being pregnant at 40 and continuing to run *raised eyebrows*, although the article does not mention whose eyebrows were raised. The difference in attitude perhaps reflects the age difference of being pregnant and societal attitudes about pregnancy.

The inclusion of this information in women's magazines is important given that the

focus of this research is on the portrayal of sportswomen. Such comments portray sportswomen fulfilling the female biological role (being pregnant) and, in a sense, their pregnancies reaffirm their status as women. Despite their sporting prowess, pregnant sportswomen are proving their normality and, therefore, there is support for them during this time while still being engaged in sport.

## **Pressure**

While comments about the pressures faced by sportswomen were found predominantly in women's magazines, an article in *NZSM* dealt with the competitive pressure one athlete faced and discussed her use of sport psychology to cope. The language used to describe her experiences contained sexual connotations, describing her use of sport psychology as *bedtime games* and a *flirtation: in bed she visualises, while others might fantasize* (Marr, 1992a). This language trivialises the athlete's serious use of this science.

Comments about pressures faced by sportswomen are another illustration that sportswomen are like other women - they too have insecurities. By portraying sportswomen in this way, readers are enticed into identifying with aspects of sportswomen's lives.

## **Summary of Women's Magazines - The Search for the Sensational**

In the bid to win readers, the weekly women's magazines, *NZWW* and *NZWD*, have a strong focus on human interest stories and the search for the sensational. The focus on aspects of the athlete's personal life is strong with much emphasis placed on relationships, motherhood, weddings and sexuality. Where there is scandal or hot gossip, the weekly women's magazines will cover it; sensationalism is news. While other magazines refer to aspects of the athlete's personal life, it is to provide context to the woman's sporting life.

The focus on relationships within women's magazines raises questions about why this aspect of sportswomen's personal lives is more prominent than other considerations. Where women's magazines discussed other parts of sportswomen's personal lives it was done in a very limited way and emphasised the fact that although sportswomen play sport, they are in fact like other women. To reiterate Brown's (1992) findings, it would seem that in women's magazines, in particular, women's achievements in sport are placed in the context of more traditional roles.

It is important to differentiate between weekly magazines and *MORE* magazine. Although *MORE* did emphasise aspects of sportswomen's personal lives, articles in this

magazine also examined other issues. The target audience of *MORE* provides some clues to why it is different to the weekly women's magazines, focusing more specifically on young, intelligent, active and adventurous women, aged between 20 and 30 - professional, more highly educated single women, who recognise the achievements of women outside the traditional roles of mother and wife.

#### 4.4.2 Other Magazines

##### Major Theme - Comparisons with Sportsmen

An interesting theme arising within other magazines was the comparison of the achievements of a sportswoman to a sportsman, found within 15 per cent of documents.

Examples of such comparisons are:

*[Claudine Toleafoa] plays her tennis with the same sort of intensity **Buck Shelford** displays on his best days on the rugby paddock.* (Romanos, 1991a)

*...the previous highest achievement by a New Zealander was **Simon Wi Rutene's** 76th in 1989 and the previous best performance in a Europa Cup competition was **Wi Rutene's** 12th placing that same year so Coberger's achievement is obvious.* (Romanos, 1991c)

*"I suppose she's been like **Michael Jones**, who was very shy when he first got into the All Blacks." The comparison with Jones is appropriate, for both are born-again Christians who don't play sport, even test matches, on Sundays.* (Romanos, 1992a)

*Nevertheless, her bulging 40cm biceps (the same size as former world heavyweight boxing champion **Rocky Marciano**) and other impressive body parts, still make her the centre of attention.* (Umbers, 1992)

A question which immediately arises when analysing these statements is why it is that the standard by which the authors compare sportswomen's achievements in sport, is male. Given the dominance of media coverage about male sport (Ferkins, 1992), it could be argued that the comparison of sportswomen's achievements with men helps the (perhaps male) reader to understand the level at which these sportswomen have achieved. If the author states that someone plays with the same intensity of Buck Shelford and the reader knows that Shelford was a great rugby player who was 100 per cent committed, he/she can then understand how committed Claudine Toleafoa is. Likewise, because the reader is told that Simon Wi Rutene's 76th placing was the highest competitive skiing achievement of a New Zealander, they can accept that *Coberger's achievement is obvious* when she attained her 12th placing.

Interestingly, when we look at the magazines from which these extracts come and who the authors are, we get an indication of why the comparison of sportswomen's achievements is male-centred. These extracts were taken from the *NZ Listener* and *NZSM* and, with the exception of one unknown author, all were written by men. The articles in the *NZ Listener* were written by one person who is the sports writer for that magazine. Although the target audiences of these magazines include both men and women, if it were the case that the majority of readers of these articles were men then perhaps we can understand the need to relate women's achievements to sportsmen, with whose achievements the male readers might more readily identify. No figures on the percentages of female readers of *NZ Listener* were available, but only 21% of *NZSM*'s readers are women, suggesting support for this theory. Perhaps it is the case that the authors are attempting to educate male readers about the achievements of sportswomen by relating their successes to sportsmen, whose accomplishments are well profiled. In order that the achievements of these sportswomen are understood, they need to be compared to a standard which is already known - and that, predominantly, is male sporting achievement. However, some readers are women and the author is making the assumption that women readers who are interested in women's sports, are also interested in, and knowledgeable about, men's sports. If this was not the case, then the comparison with men rather than other sportswomen, would not serve its purpose.

These findings are supported by earlier research which also provides likely explanations for these comparisons. Using the television coverage of men's and women's intercollegiate basketball games as text, Blinde, Greendorfer and Shanker (1991) analysed the commentary of these games to examine whether differences existed. A major difference between the two games was the use of male standards for comparison in the women's game. Blinde et al. categorised such comparisons as attempts to grant legitimacy to the women's game while also facilitating understanding of the women's game. The findings from the current research would support the notion that comparisons are made in order to better understand the women's achievements.

The inherent threat in using this sort of comparison is that people will come to expect that we have to compare the results of sportswomen with sportsmen, rather than acknowledge the achievements of these sportswomen in their own right. Such comparisons suggest that the best women can rarely equal the best men: "When the standards for valuing sport rest on the comparison with a standard which means a male standard, women will always lose out" (Wright, 1989, p. 40). When the meanings behind such comparisons are read in the light of existing gender relations, such readings are not unreasonable (Wright, 1989).

For readers, viewers or spectators of sport to eventually accept women's sport as sport

in its own right, they need to know what sportswomen have achieved. Nonetheless if the standard by which we compare achievements continues to be male, followers of sport will not come to the realisation that women's sport *is* sport. Indeed, it would be interesting to examine whether men's achievements are compared with those of sportswomen, although previous research would suggest that this is not the case.

Ultimately it would seem more advantageous to the advancement of women's sport if comparisons of women's achievements in sport were made with those of other sportswomen in that field. While a few magazines did make this sort of comparison (for example, *she has an absolutely crunching forehand, fit to rank alongside those of Graf and Sabatini* (Gilbert, 1991)), the prevalence of such comparisons was less frequent than those with sportsmen. There are several reasons why this could be the case. Until recently, women's achievements in sport have not been as well documented as those of men's and female sporting stars have been fewer than male sporting stars. Given the history of rugby in New Zealand, if we wanted to determine the ability of Michael Jones (All Black), we could readily identify another 'Rugby Great' with whom to compare him. If, however, we wanted to compare the ability of skier Annelise Coberger with another female skier, we would struggle to find someone of similar ability. Instead her achievements are compared with Simon Wi Rutene's - New Zealand's best placed skier to date. Additionally, Annelise is also compared to Eddie the Eagle who, conversely to Annelise, *gain[ed] headlines just for being different* (Romanos, 1992b). This comparison further serves to illustrate this point for while Eddie is not a skiing great, the low-profile attributed to skiing in New Zealand, for both men and women, means in order to achieve the same impact as other comparisons, the association is with an overseas sportsperson. Interestingly, Blinde et al.'s (1992) research also noted fewer instances in which the actions of women athletes were compared to those of other women athletes. Further, the skills of male athletes or the performances of men's teams were never compared to those of female athletes or women's teams. (Such findings reinforce the belief that women will never be as powerful, skilful and exciting as men. While women's sport remains invisible in the media, women's achievements will remain uncelebrated.) Thus the achievements of female sporting heroes will continue to be compared to male achievements which are more readily known. Unless conscious efforts are made to alter the balance, it is a self-perpetuating situation.

Before completing this section, one example which highlighted the use of male standards as a basis for comparisons, rather than acknowledging the achievements of sportswomen and women's sport, is drawn from a women's magazine. It was suggested that the profiled sportswoman was *the finest physical specimen that women's tennis has ever seen*

(Walker, 1993). This sportswoman is an athlete with a powerful physique and muscularity, by women's *and* men's standards. However, rather than acknowledging that this athlete could be the finest physical specimen in *tennis*, men's or women's, the need is to make women's sport different to 'sport' in general, which is defined as sport for men. The danger here is that women's sport will continue to be seen as different to, and by implication lesser than, sport in general.

Finally, it is interesting that women's magazines do not make the same comparisons that the other magazines make. The reason why this is so is unclear. One could hypothesise that because the readers of these magazines, predominantly women, understand women's achievements, it is therefore unnecessary to compare their achievements with men. The more favoured explanation here is that women's magazines are not interested in this sort of comparison because they prefer to focus on non-sporting issues. (Women's sporting achievements are less important than their weddings, relationships, breakdowns or pregnancies.)

### **Minor Themes - Influences and Comments**

Two additional themes were identified as occurring within other magazines but not in women's magazines. The first theme examined influences on the sportswoman's decision to play sport, with references found in *NZSM*, the *NZ Listener* and *North & South*. Examples of extracts from this section include;

*Matenga, the brilliant goal shoot of the 1980s, was the player who most influenced Noovao as a youngster..."I watched her closely. I loved the way she played and how much she enjoyed the game."* (Romanos, 1992a)

*Carter used to rush to school early just to watch Parker training. They were similar in stature and style - fast, muscular and powerful....the two had a great respect for one another because each realised how hard the other one had worked* (Butcher, 1993)

With the exception of one statement made by a body builder, all statements about influential others were from netballers. This may have been due to two things. First it may be that other sportswomen in the data set did not have people who influenced them when they first began their involvement in sport. It would be interesting to examine further the presence of role models for sports people (and young New Zealanders) with a particular emphasis on the development of role models over time as media coverage of sport has become more prominent. A second, and perhaps more plausible, reason may be that due to the prominence of netballers within the data set, their responses were over-represented, thus they appear to be

the only sportswomen to have role models. Chapter Six, section 6.5, expands further on the prominence of netballers within the data set in light of the portrayal of sportswomen from individual and team sports.

A second theme indexed general comments made by sportswomen about sport and included remarks about money and sport; reflections on international experiences; and coaching issues. The data for this section was obtained from *North & South*, *NZSM*, the *NZ Listener* and *MORE*. While this data was not substantial, it indicates again the de-emphasis of weekly women's magazines on sportswomen's opinions on subjects outside their social or biological roles.

#### **4.4.3 Themes Across All Magazines**

While there were themes which were common across all magazines, the way in which they were treated, and the emphasis they received, was different. The following section examines these themes and highlights the differences between magazines.

##### **Sports Career**

A major theme found in all magazines was reference to sportswomen's careers in sport, including past successes, training regimes, reflections on careers and other related issues. While there was a mixture of these references found in women's magazines, there were differences between the three weekly women's magazines in what was discussed.

While articles in *NZWW* focused primarily on personal lives, some reference was made to sporting matters. These were limited to comments on sports careers and carried positive and negative undertones. On the positive side, sport has provided some women with the opportunity to travel, meet people and learn other skills such as tolerance and patience - traditionally female characteristics. On the negative side, involvement in sport has, for some, resulted in a lack of a social or personal life, missing out on being a mother, and the crisis of what to do after sport. It is unclear whether these statements tell us that sport has interrupted being a 'normal' woman or whether the women have benefited from being involved in sport. It may be that there is a personal crisis for some women being involved in sport and that their involvement has cost them their chance at motherhood or some other feminine ideal.

References to how sportswomen became involved in sport were dominant in weekly women's magazines. A common theme was the young age at which sportswomen began their involvement. The following extracts from several magazines support this statement:



*...has skied since she was nine.* (Wilson and Fleming, 1993)

*[her parents gave] her an oversized tennis racquet to play with at the age of six.*  
(Gilbert, 1991)

*...her passion for bikes was sparked when she was given a small 50cc machine as a six-year-old.* (Sarney, 1993b)

A similar theme is the presence of a family interest in sport as supported by the following extracts:

*"Mum used to drag me along to games in a pushchair when I was about three. I remember being adamant about which games I wanted to watch."* (Williamson, 1993)

*...when the whole family took up the sport.* (Wilson and Fleming, 1993)

This theme is also expanded upon in the next section which examines the family backgrounds of sportswomen.

It is debatable whether the focus of interest on how sportswomen began their involvement in sport is gender-specific or activity-specific. The interest in how high-profile sportspeople started in their sports career could be the same for sportsmen and sportswomen, or it may differ. Alternatively, it could be that there is interest in how any high performer - musician, artist, dancer, sportsperson - began their involvement in their chosen field of endeavour. Comparative research on these issues would be needed before conclusions could be drawn.

Fifty-five per cent of all documents contained references to the future sports career of sportswomen. There was a focus on what sportswomen intended to do with their sporting careers, with a prominent theme being the goals the athletes have for their participation in the near future. For the highest achievers, these goals related to participation in World Cup/Championship events or the Olympics; for example, *she'll be pointing her efforts towards the World Cup events*, (Romanos, 1991c), and *"Now I want to defend my titles at Atlanta in 1996"* (Romanos, 1992b). With the exception of *NZWD*, articles in all other magazines contained references to the future career goals of the athlete.

A final theme reflected on sportswomen's past successes. These reflections included comments about the most disappointing aspect in sportswomen's careers; for example; *the disappointment she felt about New Zealand's thrashing at the World Games remains. "It would have been really nice to go out on an up," she says.*" (Williamson, 1993); *"I was very disappointed, particularly in my second-round singles," she admits. I really let it go.*" (South, 1993). Highlights of sportswomen's careers also received comment: *"It's been like a dream,"*

she says. "The victory in Goldau [the first of her two Europa Cup wins] was a highlight, but I've been pleased with my form all season." (Romanos, 1991c); "I was expecting only one gold, in the 100m freestyle - the rest are a dream come true," she said (Sarney, 1992). One of the comments within this section came from NZSM; the rest were distributed across general and women's magazines.

### **Family Background, Childhood and Education**

Although not major themes, references to the family backgrounds of sportswomen were present in all magazines. However there were differences in how these references were made. In women's magazines, statements about the achievements of sportswomen's families were made in passing. The following examples are from NZWW;

*Born into a family devoted to sport...* (Walker, 1993)

*Jim, who used to compete in motocross nationally...* (Sarney, 1993b)

By comparison, such references in *MORE*, the *NZ Listener* and *NZSM*, were elaborated upon and formed important parts of the paragraph or sentence concerned. Examples include:

*[Her brother] is an outstanding junior javelin and discus champion, being the first New Zealand secondary school pupil to have bettered 60m for the discus. At 17, he finished third in a Robin Tait Memorial international senior field discus and he won a national junior decathlon title last summer.* (Agnew, 1993)

*Her father has always been keen on sport, her mother now performs in that accolade to sports celebrities, the Watties baked beans commercial. Her sister Margaret has played hockey for New Zealand, another sister, Caroline, was a good athlete until she injured her knee ligaments, and her brother Thomas is an All White.* (Ansley, 1991)

References to the childhood or education of sportswomen were found in all magazines, except NZWW. Themes which were mentioned included where sportswomen went to school and activities they took part in while growing up. Again such references were found forming important contextual background in sporting and general magazine categories, and also in *MORE*.

The predominant non-sport focus of women's magazines suggests that for the editors of these magazines, and presumably their readers, sport itself is valued less than non-sporting aspects of sportswomen's lives.

## Other Interests and Employment

Nineteen per cent of documents fell under the theme of 'other interests'. Several references were made to other sports in which the athlete had participated or had an interest, aside from the one in which they excelled. Likewise, several references were made to other interests the sportswomen have - for example, *she'll continue with her art: ink drawings, pencil sketches, landscapes...* (Romanos, 1992b). Such references were predominantly found in the *Listener* and *NZWD*, with one reference from *NZSM*.

The employment status of sportswomen was mentioned in 44 per cent of documents and referred to past, present and future positions. While these references were found in all magazines, they did not form substantial parts of the articles and thus, nothing conclusive can be stated. With reference to this theme, it would be interesting to re-examine the portrayal of sportswomen in five years time as professionalism takes place within women's sport.

## 4.5 Chapter Summary

It would appear from this analysis that the target audience of a magazine does influence the portrayal of sportswomen. Evidence for this is found in the themes identified.

Weekly women's magazines focused predominantly on personal lives - relationships, motherhood, weddings or sexuality. Other more contextual information, such as family background, childhood, education, and sporting career was mentioned in passing but not given substance. Combined with the dominance of large 'non-sport' photographs, the reader is left with the general impression that sportswomen are profiled in these magazines not for their accomplishments in sport, but for their biological or social roles as women. When other themes are discussed, they are used to show how sportswomen are like other women - for example, their greatest wish is to have a child. Sportswomen are primarily featured in these magazines because of their achievements in sport, yet the articles often discuss everything else but this, portraying sportswomen like other 'normal' women (i.e., their readers) who have the same fears, relationships, insecurities and pressures.

When the target market of these magazines are examined, the reason for these differences becomes clear. The target groups for *NZWD* and *NZWW* are very broad - both magazines aim at women aged 20 plus. There is much competition between these magazines to cover the hottest gossip or to obtain the most scandalous cover in order to attract buyers.

In these magazines economic or political issues of the day are not of concern - unless someone in power has had a new hair cut or is wearing an unbecoming outfit. The average reader apparently wants to read about Susan Devoy's miscarriage rather than her training schedule for getting to the world championships. Such themes undermine the achievements of sportswomen in the sporting arena and relate their lives to traditional roles for women.

It was suggested earlier that *MORE* stands separate to weekly women's magazines. The journalistic style of *MORE* is closer to that of general and sporting magazines, where the article length is longer, than it is to other women's magazines. The target audience of *MORE* is reflected in the greater range of themes covered in these articles. Readers are interested in topical issues, women's issues and a more comprehensive portrayal of sportswomen than that available in weekly women's magazines. Still, while articles in this magazine contain more dense information, personal themes are still prevalent. Consequently, *MORE* sits somewhere between the general magazines and the other women's magazines.

While the other magazines, *NZ Listener*, *North & South* and *NZSM*, do focus on aspects of the athlete's personal life, they also discuss issues surrounding their sporting lives. The *NZ Listener* and *North & South* are designed to appeal to those interested in today's issues. As a current radio and television advertisement suggests "If you want to be informed on the issues...", sporting, political, economic or social, the *NZ Listener* is the magazine to read. Articles within *NZSM*, the only New Zealand-published general sports magazine, are aimed at "...New Zealand's active sportsmen and women, sports fans, and readers interested in a variety of sport". Thus the focus is supposedly primarily on sporting issues. Interestingly, while the articles found in *NZSM* contained a greater focus on sporting issues than other magazines, there were noticeably fewer articles on sportswomen than sportsmen. Information collated on *NZSM* (see Appendix C), highlights the male dominance in this magazine, revealing that on the covers, the lead-in pages of photographs, and the articles themselves, the presence of women in sport is minimal. Importantly, while there is a comparatively stronger presence of sport in both the photographs and text of *NZSM* and the general magazines, there is still a clear non-sport focus in articles on sportswomen.

This chapter has recounted differences in how the magazines analysed portrayed sportswomen. While differences existed, there was one similarity across all magazines - the focus on non-sport aspects of sportswomen's lives. This message was strongly reinforced in both the article texts and accompanying photographs, the latter of which are explored further in Chapter Seven.

## *Chapter Five*

# **THE PORTRAYAL OF THE 'GENDER-APPROPRIATENESS' OF SPORT**

### **5.1 Introduction**

Chapter Five examines the representation of sportswomen participating in 'gender-appropriate' and 'gender-inappropriate' sports. This focus arose from the findings of previous research which suggested that women participating in 'gender-inappropriate' sports receive less coverage than women participating in 'gender-appropriate' sports and that the coverage is also qualitatively different.

The quantitative breakdown of which sports were covered in the data set was discussed in Chapter Four. These results showed that the majority of sports were classified as 'neutral'. When a deeper level analysis is undertaken, however, interesting themes develop in how sportswomen participating in different sports are portrayed. This chapter focuses on this level of analysis.

### **5.2 'High-Risk' Sports**

Within the 'high-risk' category, all but two of the articles were found within women's magazines. Four articles about skiing were distributed across women's magazines and the *NZ Listener*. In women's magazines these articles focused on an injured skier who was nearly killed while participating in the sport, and a top-ranked skier who was home for a break in between seasons. The two articles in the *NZ Listener*, about the same top-ranked skier,

focused on issues concerning the sportswoman's participation in this sport - she was described as *underfunded and from the wrong side of the world* (Romanos, 1992b). The focus of articles about skiers in *NZWW* and articles in the *NZ Listener* was considerably different. While the *NZ Listener* focused on sport-related issues, the *NZWW* discussed injury resulting from participation in this 'high-risk' sport, and the sportswoman's social life. This reinforces earlier findings that different magazines do portray sportswomen differently.

Three interesting themes arose in the examination of the portrayal of a sportswoman participating in trampolining, a sport categorised as both 'high-risk' and 'aesthetic'. Found in *NZSM*, this article portrayed a *bouncing grannie* attempting to give it *one last shot* before retiring and *treating her husband...to a 'normal' existence* (Marr, 1992b). Interestingly, the sportswoman is portrayed as ageing even though she is only twenty-three and, related to this, her participation in sports competition is portrayed as a temporary phase in her life because her first duty is to her husband. More relevant to this section is the focus on the mental strength required to participate in trampolining - something, we are told, that *trampolining experts* believe this sportswoman lacks.

One interpretation of this article might suggest that this sportswoman does not have the nerve necessary to succeed in trampolining because of the risk involved. The article gives examples of where the sportswoman had the competition *wrapped up*, only to *bomb out*. As this is the only article in *NZSM* covering a 'high-risk' sport, and given the focus upon her inability to succeed because she (supposedly) lacks the mental strength required to take the risks, it might be suggested that participating in competitive trampolining is not appropriate for women.

An article about a sportswoman participating in the 'high-risk' sport of motorcycle racing did not tackle the issue of risk. Having previously participated in show-jumping, which itself could be characterised as 'high-risk', Belinda now participates in a sport which has traditionally been a male domain and therefore inappropriate for women. The sport embodies masculine characteristics - it is a dirty sport, filled with oil, grease, speed and danger. Given that Belinda participates in a sport which is the antithesis of femininity, it is interesting to examine how Belinda's participation is portrayed.

The article, found in *NZWW*, opened with the statement that *pretty Belinda used to be content with the challenge of competitive show-jumping and eventing...until she fell in love with a throaty black Italian bike* (Jarvis, 1991). The choice of language implies that it is a shock that a 'pretty' woman would switch to a sport such as motorcycle racing. The maleness associated with this sport is reinforced when the readers are told that *when the pretty soft-spoken young woman pulls on her bright but inevitably masculine leathers, no*

matter how feminine the rider tries to be, this is an inappropriate sport for 'pretty' women. Perhaps had Belinda not been considered 'pretty', her involvement would not be sensationalised in this manner.

The characterisation of Belinda's mother's reaction assumes that all mothers would react the same way. Readers are told that *it's a mother's worst nightmare - your daughter comes home and tells you she's taken up motorcycle racing*. Belinda notes that her mum *"doesn't have any idea of the speed we race at, but when you tell her..." [it's] more than enough to make any mother's heart lurch*. The location of this article within a women's magazine would suggest that these sentiments are designed to appeal to readers who are mothers who likewise would be horrified if their daughter took up a sport like motorcycle racing. Such statements act to exclude readers, mothers or not, who would not react in this way. It would be interesting to examine whether the same comments would be made about the mother of a sportsman involved in a similarly 'gender-inappropriate' sport. Although, given that 'aesthetic' sports are considered 'gender-appropriate' for women, it might be assumed that a 'gender-inappropriate' sport for men might be one from this category.

It is suggested that Belinda's support crew do not *take themselves seriously* and that they *tend to take the mickey a bit*. Such a characterisation indicates that Belinda's involvement in motorcycle racing is sanctioned because it is regarded as a joke. During races, while other teams *take the temperature of the tyres [from computers strapped on to the bike tanks, Belinda's team] wants to rush out and take [her] temperature instead*. Belinda is treated, and treats herself, as something of a joke and is thus excused as a real competitor. If Belinda's team does not take themselves seriously, why should the reader? It appears that the only person who does take Belinda's participation seriously is her mum, who tried to dissuade her daughter from participating by relating *every horror story she could think of when Belinda told her she planned to [take up motorcycle racing]*.

An alternative reading might suggest that the very fact that Belinda's team makes light of her racing is because they are trying to lessen the impact of her involvement. They are aware that *people aren't quite sure how to take [them]* so they laugh it off. Having *developed a reputation for performing well* the team are prepared to make a few jokes about Belinda's involvement - where male riders had *bikini-clad umbrella girls in their support crew* Belinda had an umbrella boy; and one time a member of the support crew *held up a pit board with 'Phone your Mum' on it*. The team are aware that Belinda's participation is an oddity but are prepared to laugh it off and continue performing, therefore making her participation even more of a threat because, despite the light-heartedness, it is for real.

There is a sense of confusion in this article about whether Belinda's participation is

accepted. Although one interpretation would suggest that her participation is sanctioned because she does not take herself seriously, there is also a concern that she could be serious and therefore is a threat to the status quo. In a second article dealing with a sport also characterised as 'high-risk', the same confusion does not exist. The sportswoman concerned participates in moto-cross, yet her involvement is not subjected to the same imagery as Belinda's participation in motorcycle racing. While she is keen to carry on racing for as long as possible, Shelley jokingly states that she will *probably get into something like go-karts* (Sarney, 1993b). The message in this article shows support for Shelley's participation from family and friends - even when *nearly all her race successes have been against men*. Shelley is, however, only 15 and the underlying tone of the article suggests that she is just 'having a go' and is not a serious competitor. Comparatively, Belinda is portrayed as having given up competitive show-jumping for the lure of something more dangerous and exciting and, therefore, could be more serious. Thus while Shelley may grow out of it, Belinda might not, which sanctions the younger woman's participation more than Belinda's. While paying tribute to Belinda's participation, the article first reinforces stereotypes, leaving an underlying message of uncertainty about her involvement.

For sportswomen participating in other sports in this category, the main issue is the risk involved. Several articles included comments from sportswomen about the perception of risk involved in their sport, such as:

*"With skiing, a lot of it is your state of mind. People say my technique is pretty good and I don't ever feel it ever gets me down. So it really comes down to your confidence. Will you risk going for just that bit more pace? Will you cut things that little bit finer?"* (Romanos, 1991c)

*[She'd] never thought of riding racehorses as being a particularly dangerous occupation. "Naturally I'd had falls," says Jacqui, "a couple of broken noses and collarbones, but you just got back on a horse and carried on. It was part of the job..."* (Comer, 1993b).

While these comments were made by the sportswomen themselves, the articles did not indicate whether they are responses to direct questioning from the journalist. If they were responses to questions asked of them, it might suggest something about the magazine's perceptions about women involved in risky sports. However, although these statements question women's involvement in risky sport, they also show sportswomen who have succeeded despite the risks involved. Further research into attitudes towards women and risk would prove fruitful in light of these comments. Likewise, comparative research on the media portrayals of both men and women and risk would be worthwhile.



### 5.3 'Strength/Endurance/Overpowering' Sports

A second category of 'gender-inappropriate' sports covered in the data set was classified as 'strength/endurance/overpowering'. The only sport included in this category, boxing, was found in the *NZWW*. Kane and Synder (1989, p. 80) suggested that physicality is a "...central criterion often used to classify some sports as 'typically male' and others as 'typically female'". It could therefore be argued that boxing, of all the sports covered in this data set, is the most inappropriate sport for women to participate in given the emphasis on power through physicality.

Within the boxing article there is a strong presence of Maria's boyfriend, Aaron, who is introduced as a *former South Island Golden Gloves heavyweight champion* (Comer, 1993a). His presence dominates the article; two photographs picture Maria in training with Aaron, while the third depicts her in her 'real job' as a receptionist. In both 'training' photographs Aaron is pictured behind Maria with his arms around her shoulders, showing her the technique but also guiding and protecting her. The general impression is that while Maria does participate in this 'gender-inappropriate' sport, she does so with the endorsement of her boyfriend, a boxing champion, which therefore makes it acceptable. In fact the article text suggests that Maria was almost goaded into 'having a go' by her boyfriend. Maria states that "*one day he said to me I didn't know what it was like to be in there to win or lose*". It would seem that because this sportswoman had the approval of her boyfriend, her participation was endorsed. Further testimony of Aaron's endorsement of Maria's involvement is evident by the fact that since participating in boxing they are *closer now than [they have] ever been*. Maria's role as a partner in a heterosexual relationship has been enhanced by her involvement in boxing. Thus her role as a girlfriend is more important than her boxing.

This is, however, only one interpretation of the messages within this article. An alternative reading might suggest that given Aaron's own experience as a boxer, his presence might be expected and further, he could be a valid role model for Maria. Nonetheless, as in many of the photographs accompanying articles, particularly in women's magazines, the manner in which sportswomen were photographed with 'significant others' suggested dependence by sportswomen on the men in their lives. This theme is given prominence again in the article being examined here. If Aaron plays such an important role in Maria's training, the photographs could have depicted them sparring together, rather than posed for a punch with Aaron's arms wrapped around her.

Kane and Synder (1989) suggested that when a woman does stray into masculine sport types, their efforts will be trivialised and minimised because the masculine culture will constantly remind them that despite their efforts, the best females can rarely beat the best males. Maria has been invited into the masculine world of boxing, where physical power is supreme. Although her boyfriend played an important part in Maria's decision to begin boxing, it is suggested here that her efforts as a boxer are minimised by the dominating presence of Aaron and consequently, her participation is not taken seriously. Further undermining Maria's seriousness about boxing are the photographs which portray a very feminine Maria (she is wearing make-up, a pink leotard with black spots and yellow gloves).<sup>11</sup> The combination of article text and photographs contribute to thwart serious consideration of Maria as a boxer. In summary, the title captures the feeling nicely - *This woman packs a punch!* - suggesting surprise at a woman's involvement in this sport and in her physical power and overt aggression, which are not attributes typically associated with being feminine.

The next section examines the portrayal of sportswomen in 'aesthetic' sports. Much of the discussion focuses on the portrayal of a body builder with some of the issues relevant to this section also.

## 5.4 'Aesthetic' Sports

Sports containing characteristics classified as 'aesthetic' are considered appropriate for participation by women (Metheny, 1965). In this research these sports were found in *NZSM*, *NZ Listener* and *NZWW*. One observation which arose from analysing an article on a body builder suggested that this sport has elements of both 'gender-appropriateness' and 'gender-inappropriateness'.

A prominent theme within the article on body building would suggest that there is a conflict for the sportswoman, Siobhan, between participating in the sport and maintaining her femininity. There was, for example, a concern with looking good - it was a *huge relief* for Siobhan to find out that she did not need to get *freaky big* in order to succeed in the sport (Umbers, 1992). In this context 'freaky big' probably means abnormally big muscles (and

---

<sup>11</sup> This information is taken from the colour photograph on the contents page of this issue of *NZWW*. While the photographs in the article are black and white, it is fair to assume that the clothing worn is the same for all photographs.

therefore size generally) compared to other women. Comments throughout this article refer to the size of Siobhan's body and reinforce the idea that she is not quite 'normal' because of her participation in a sport which makes her 'big'. Siobhan's grandmother's response to her initial interest in weight training (*why do you want to look like a man?*) provides a good example of this. She has had concerns herself about the size of her arms and remains *self conscious about clothing*, remarking that she feels *funny about going into clothes shops and coming out of changing rooms in dresses with [her] great big shoulders* (Umbers, 1992). This self-consciousness is perpetuated by comments from others, for example the gang member Siobhan quotes as saying *God, your thighs are bigger than mine*. The author also draws attention to Siobhan's size making comment about the fact that *her bulging 40cm biceps (the same size as former world heavyweight boxing champion Rocky Marciano) and other impressive body parts, still make her the centre of attention* (Umbers, 1992).

The focus in this article is not on the sportswoman's muscular physique, but on the self-consciousness she has about remaining feminine, which means looking 'normal' and not having big muscles. These themes would suggest that body building is not totally acceptable for women as it contains elements which make it 'gender-inappropriate'. While this article was classified here as 'aesthetic', the characteristics of the sport and the contradictions for the sportswoman involved suggest that it sits better in the 'strength/endurance/overpowering' category.

This article was found in *NZSM*. Of the sports portrayed in the eight articles analysed from *NZSM*, six were categorised as 'neutral', while two (body building and trampolining) were categorised as 'gender-inappropriate' because they fell between 'high-risk' and 'aesthetic' (trampolining) and 'strength/endurance/overpowering' and 'aesthetic' (body building). Given that there were minimal images of sportswomen participating in 'gender-inappropriate' sports in this magazine, the messages illustrated in the articles which do cover them become even more important. In the article on Siobhan, there was a focus on maintaining femininity. Thus while the inclusion of this sport might have served to challenge traditional notions, the themes focused upon reinforced the necessity to conform.

## **5.5 Team Sports versus Individual Sports**

A related issue to the appropriateness of sport is the coverage of women participating in team versus individual sports. Several researchers have suggested that women receive greater

**Table 5.1 Team and Individual Sports by Magazines**

	<b>SPORTS</b>	<b>NZ List</b>	<b>MORE</b>	<b>Nth &amp; Sth</b>	<b>NZSM</b>	<b>NZWD</b>	<b>NZWW</b>	<b>Tot # Arts.</b>
<b>TEAM</b>	Netball	2	1	1	4	3	2	13
	Canoe Polo	-	-	-	-	-	1	1
	Soccer	-	-	-	-	-	1	1
	Motocross	-	-	-	-	-	1	1
<b>INDIV.</b>	Tennis	1	-	-	1	3	1	6
	Athletics	1	-	-	-	2	2	5
	Skiing	2	-	-	-	-	2	4
	Swimming	1	-	-	1	-	1	3
	Board-sailing	-	1	-	-	1	-	2
	Squash	-	1	-	-	1	-	2
	Trampolining	-	-	-	1	-	-	1
	Motor-cycle Racing	-	-	-	-	-	1	1
	Body Building	-	-	-	1	-	-	1
	Gymnastics	-	-	-	-	-	1	1
	Horse Racing	-	-	-	-	-	1	1
	Boxing	-	-	-	-	-	1	1
	Equestrian	1	-	-	-	-	-	1
<b>TOTAL # ARTICLES</b>		8	3	1	8	10	15	45

social acceptance for participation in individual sports than team sports (Metheny, 1965; Boutilier and San Giovanni, 1983). Women are not 'roughed up' by participation in an individual sport as they might be through participation in team sports where physical contact is likely. The disproportionate focus on women in individual sports in this research suggests agreement with these earlier findings. Table 5.1 indicates the breakdown of team versus individual sports, within which the dominance of netball, as one of the profiled team sports, is apparent. It is interesting to examine this dominance given the suggestions made by previous research about the inappropriateness of team sports for women.

The trial of netball as a television product in 1986 has since resulted in huge success, making it one of the few sports which is in the position to negotiate television rights for coverage (Ferkins, 1992). The appearance of New Zealand netballers on television has greatly influenced their status as role models. Young girls emulate their heroes on the netball court in the same manner as young boys mimic the actions of Sean Fitzpatrick (All Black Captain) or Lee Germon (New Zealand Men's Cricket Captain). Netball was originally a women-only sport, thus it is one sport in which women can compete without having their actions compared to a male equivalent (although perhaps this may change as men's netball increases in popularity). The very dominance of netball in the data set would suggest that netball is considered an appropriate sport for women in New Zealand. The fact that the representations of netballers are dominant makes the images portrayed in the articles even more important.

The ways in which role models are portrayed affect what people think. The portrayal of women participating in team sports presented only in the light of non-sporting issues will affect how young athletes perceive women's place in team sports. Additionally, if there is little representation of women participating in other team sports, the options for young girls wanting to play a team sport are limited. Fewer role models are shown and, as a result, some girls may believe that it is appropriate for women to participate only in certain team sports.

## **5.6 Chapter Summary**

Although conclusive statements are hard to make given that the majority of sports were classified as neutral, the results from this research revealed some differences in the portrayal of the 'gender-appropriateness' of sports.

The quantity of 'high-risk' sports within the data set, and particularly within women's magazines, was an unexpected finding, given the assumed theoretical inappropriateness of women's participation in these sports. A similar trend was also found in Duncan and Sayaovong's (1990) research where there were a greater number of females portrayed in 'high-risk' sports than males. While Duncan and Sayaovong's analysis looked at photographs, this research also examined text. Although the inclusion of 'high-risk' sports within women's magazines would appear to be challenging stereotypes, the themes which were revealed in the text instead reinforced them. The focus on personal life issues, such as injury or femininity, resulted in ambivalence in the acceptance of women's participation in

these sports and, further, contributed to undermine serious consideration of their participation. Additionally, as was suggested in the article on Belinda, their participation was sanctioned only because it was not taken seriously.

[A prominent theme in the article covering a 'strength/endurance/overpowering' sport was the endorsement of the sportswoman's participation because of the approval of her boyfriend.] Given that there was only one article covering this sporting type, it was suggested that it is still considered inappropriate for women to participate in 'strength/endurance/overpowering' sports and that women's participation in such sports is acceptable only under certain conditions.

Four articles in the data set were categorised as 'aesthetic' sports, making them 'gender-appropriate' according to Metheny's (1965) typology. Of these sports, three were cross-categorised, making them 'gender-inappropriate' by their inclusion in the 'high-risk' and 'strength/endurance/overpowering' categories. It was suggested that body building appears to be experiencing a change, moving away from being unacceptable for women, towards acceptance. For the sportswoman involved in this sport now, however, her participation is fraught with contradictions. While the inclusion of body building in a sports magazine would appear to be challenging traditional notions of 'gender-appropriateness', the underlying focus made it clear that women's participation was still not appropriate.

## *Chapter Six*

# THE USE OF LANGUAGE

### 6.1 Introduction

Previous research has suggested that language describing sportswomen can trivialise their achievements. Three types of analysis were used to determine whether this was the case in the current research: the use of physical and character descriptors and the use of metaphors. In the following sections, the term 'descriptor' defines words ascribed to sportswomen which describe some physical or character attribute.

### 6.2 Physical Descriptors

Hair and eye colour were physical descriptors applied to sportswomen, particularly blonde haired sportswomen. Of the 45 articles in the data set, 20 of them featured blonde sportswomen. Twenty-five per cent of these article made direct reference to the hair colour of sportswomen, for example; the *blonde from Christchurch*, the *blonde receptionist* and the *blonde, blue eyed* woman. The hair colour of brunette sportswomen was not mentioned and there were some sportswomen whose hair colour was difficult to distinguish.

There are some stereotyped perceptions of what being blonde means. Popular stereotypes associate blonde with being 'dumb and dizzy'. Brownmiller (1986, p. 48) noted that while the cult of Aryan supremacy associated bloneness with strength and intelligence, in American tradition bloneness is associated with femininity. She also suggested that 'dumb blonde' is essentially one word for some people and, further, "...even when the blonde

is obviously smart and knowledgeable, she is perceived as less threatening or overbearing [than] her brunette sisters" (ibid.) who are considered to be more level-headed and intelligent. The dominance of blonde sportswomen in the articles covered could suggest that blonde sportswomen are more acceptable because of the connotation that blonde means being feminine. However, given the way in which the term blonde is used to describe these sportswomen, it is suggested that the writers are falling back on popularist use of language. The saying 'blonde bombshell' and the like have almost become a permanent fixture in our language, and may be a feature of alliteration rather than intentional suggestions of acceptable femininity or lack of intelligence.

In one article different descriptors were ascribed to the same hair colour of two sportswomen which resulted in contrasting images. While both sportswomen have blonde hair, one was described as the *golden girl* while the other was the *beach blonde [with] almost white, spikey hair*; the author noting that this *fits perfectly with her image [of being a little different]* (Estrada, 1992b). The rebel image conjured up by the second description was reinforced throughout the article, in both text and photos, and noted in the title *Different Strokes*. The characterisation of this particular athlete is examined further in Chapter 7, section 7.7.2.

The use of physical descriptors was compared between different magazines. While other results from this research would suggest that the texts of general and sporting magazines were more likely to focus on sporting aspects of sportswomen's lives, this analysis showed that the language used was more likely to trivialise sportswomen's achievements. While such references were infrequent compared to previous research, they were more common in general and sporting magazines than in women's magazines.

In general magazines, some articles contained descriptors which parallel the language found in romance novels. Language in such novels describes fictional characters as possessing *long thick sunlight-streaked honey-blonde hair and intelligent wide-apart sherry-gold eyes* (Jordan, 1994, p. 5); having eyes *a pretty shade of blue that reminded her of the way the sky looked the morning after a bad rainstorm* (Macomber, 1993, p. 9); or hair described as *salt-and-pepper curls* (Flynn, 1995, p. 187). In this research, one article likened an athlete to the cover of such a novel, noting that when the sportswoman *smiles her wide, open, honest smile... her face glows like a Mills and Boon cover and her eyes take on an even more gentian hue than her hand-knitted jersey* (Ansley, 1991). Other such romanticised references included descriptions of the *violet blue of her eyes*, *her sparkling eyes* and her *straight, uncomplicated hair*. This last comment about hair could be a metaphor for this particular sportswoman herself - described in the article as a *blunt, no-nonsense woman*



(Butcher, 1993) who, perhaps like her hair, is 'straight-up' and uncomplicated. The use of the romance genre in writing raises questions about who the author is writing for and what the purpose of such language is. Ultimately such language undermines any references to the ability of these sportswomen.

Another article from the *NZ Listener* reminds readers of an athlete's sporting victory and describes her *flowing to the finish in [a] lovely graceful style* (Romanos, 1991b). While acknowledging that some people may see running as art, this description could serve to undermine the 'athleticism' of the sportswoman, describing her running style in a way which enhances her femininity and not her ability. This interpretation is strengthened by another reference later in the article that it is *uncanny how much [the sportswoman] resembles Meryl Streep*. While Meryl Streep is a very skilled and powerful actress, such a comparison serves to undermine the sportswomen's ability as an athlete. Could not the athlete have been compared to the ability of another runner or another sportsperson? Such descriptive and romanticised statements were found more in the *NZ Listener* than other magazines.

References to the strength and fitness of sportswomen were more likely to be found in the *NZ Listener*, as well as *NZSM* and *North & South*. Likewise, comments about the physical size or stature of the athlete were more often found in these same magazines. Such statements were divided between what could be described as feminine and masculine builds. While some sportswomen were described as *towering, big, strong, tall, solidly built*, possessing a *sturdy frame* with *bulging biceps*, one was portrayed as having a *pale, pink, cherubic, oddly endomorphic appearance* (is she a fat angel or an accomplished sportswoman?), and others were described as *slim, willowy, delicately built, a tiny form, a pixie* or having a *slight frame*. Smiles were described as *wide, wonderful, huge, open* and *honest*. The one reference to physical size from *MORE* gave kudos to the sportswoman concerned. In this example, the size of the athlete was cast as a positive attribute, the author noting that the sportswoman's *sheer physical size gives her mana* (Nimmo, 1991a).

The concentration on the physical appearance of sportswomen can either trivialise or highlight their achievements. Previous research has shown that the focus common in media coverage of sportswomen does the former. In this research such statements were relatively rare compared to other research, however, there were enough trivialising references to detract from the focus on the sportswomen's abilities. The use of descriptors served to evaluate women in terms of traditional feminine standards of beauty. While other results from this research would suggest that the texts of general and sporting magazines were more likely to focus on sporting aspects of sportswomen's lives, the language used while covering these themes was more likely to trivialise sportswomen's achievements. The use of romance novel

language was an interesting finding in these magazines which outwardly appeared to discuss sporting issues.

### 6.3 Character Descriptors

Of all the words used to describe character traits of sportswomen, *determined* was the most common. In several articles sportswomen were described as possessing *steely* or *iron determination* and *single mindedness* - this last phrase being the title of one article. An athlete with a disability was referred to as *gutsy*, *inspirational* and *gritty* in two articles on her achievements. In each article on Martina Navratilova a major character trait was her lesbianism, while in other articles repetitive character traits included *feisty*, *soft/quietly spoken*, *outgoing* (including *bubbly*, *bright*, *cheery*), *easy-going*, *dedicated*. These traits were used as passing comments within sentence structures and were found in all magazines.

### 6.4 The Use of Metaphors and Similes

Although rare, metaphors or similes were occasionally used within article texts to describe aspects of the athlete's personality and problems or battles they faced. An example from an article on a disabled athlete stated that *her personality, despite the crippling blow life has dealt her, remains as warm as the late summer sunlight flooding into [her home]* (Comer, 1993b). A squash player was likened to the *red poppies* in her garden, which *stand tall*, suggesting perhaps that the athlete was a victim of the 'tall poppy' syndrome in New Zealand. Further, this athlete's contemplation of retirement from sport was likened to *a fresh spring morning when the garden unfurl[s] into new life* (Loates, 1992). Both of these metaphors portray images which have connections to fertility and new life - symbolic perhaps of women's reproductive roles, thereby connecting the sportswoman to traditional notions of femininity. By comparison, the battle to the top for a recently appointed captain of a New Zealand sports team was likened to the story of an *embattled young man who becomes a top athlete through extraordinary courage and discipline. The moral, in less extremes, could be applied to [this sportswoman]* (Butcher, 1993). Indicative as it is of strength of character and courage, conventionally male characteristics, this image is not a traditionally feminine one. The first two of the above examples are from women's magazines while the last is from

## **6.5 Chapter Summary**

This chapter examined the use of language to describe sportswomen. Three themes were examined - the use of physical and character descriptors and the use of metaphors.

The material on physical descriptors formed a major part of this chapter, suggesting differences between magazines in how such language is used. There was a focus on the hair colour of sportswomen, body size and other physical attributes. Comparatively, the use of character descriptors was not as prevalent. While not forming major parts of the data, the use of two metaphors in women's magazines reinforced feminine characteristics, while one challenged these notions. It was suggested that while some magazines undermined, trivialised and patronised the achievements of sportswomen through the themes focused upon in the article texts, others did so with the use of descriptors and metaphors.

## ***Chapter Seven***

# **MEANINGS GENERATED BY PHOTOGRAPHS**

*"Every picture has a voice"*  
(Heiferman and Kismaric, 1994, p. 9)

## **7.1 Introduction**

This chapter examines the research question which asked what meanings are generated by photographs of sportswomen. It is based on the assumption that photographs, like text, convey meaning. This chapter explores how photographs were constructed to convey certain meanings to the viewer and whether the photographs emphasised the sexuality, muscularity, athleticism or femininity of sportswomen who were photographed.

Two strategies were employed in order to answer this research question. First, quantitative information about the photographs was collated, detailing how photographs were used in magazines and second, each photograph was subjected to a qualitative analysis using objective questions to guide the interpretations. The following sections report the results of these analyses.

## **7.2 Quantitative Analysis of the Use of Photographs**

### **7.2.1 Number of Photographs**

The total number of photographs in the data set was 101, with an average of 2.2

photographs per article. Table 7.1 shows the breakdown of the number of photographs per magazine and the average number of photographs per article in each magazine.

**Table 7.1 Number of Photographs in all Magazines and Average Number of Photographs Per Article in Each Magazine**

Magazine	Number of Photographs in All Articles	Average Number of Photographs Per Article
<i>North &amp; South</i>	5	5.0
<i>NZWD</i>	34	3.4
<i>NZWW</i>	32	2.1
<i>MORE</i>	6	2.0
<i>NZ List.</i>	14	1.75
<i>NZSM</i>	10	1.25
<b>Total</b>	<b>101</b>	<b>2.2</b>

With one exception, women's magazines together had proportionally more photographs per article than other categories of magazines. The exception was the article in *North & South*. Five photographs were included in this article, giving *North & South* the highest average compared to other magazine titles. As the *North & South* article was substantially longer than those found in other magazines, it is possible that the number of photographs per article is related to the length of the article itself. However, as only one issue of this magazine was included in the data set, this conclusion is difficult to substantiate.

The number of photographs represented in an article sends a message about what the magazine wants to portray. Where there are more photographs, a greater importance has been placed on the visual portrayal of sportswomen. The type and content of the photograph reveals what has been deemed important about the sportswoman being profiled. For example, in the two 'articles' (or photo spreads) about weddings found in *NZWD*, the message was clearly not about the sportswomen's achievements in sport, but about their relationships and fulfilment of a heterosexual role. The following sections build on this initial analysis by examining the content and type of photographs within different magazines.

## 7.2.2 Photograph Area and Type of Photograph

Photographs were categorised as 'sport-action', 'sport-profile' and 'non-sport'. 'Sport-action' photographs were defined as an action shot of the sportswoman in the sport environment, while a head-and-shoulders photograph of a sportswoman in the same environment was considered 'sport-profile'. As noted in Chapter Three, 'sport-action' photographs may have been posed rather than taken during actual events - for example, a photograph of a netballer taking a shot at goal may not have been taken during a game. The difference between a live action shot and a posed one could affect the intention of the photograph; however, as the distinction was impossible to make, it was not taken into consideration in this analysis. All other photographs were categorised 'non-sport'. Table 7.2 lists the percentage of the article area consisting of photographs for each magazine (column four). The percentage of photographic area taken up by each type of photograph is listed in columns one to three.

**Table 7.2 Percentage of the Article Area Containing Photographs and Percentage of Photographic Area of Each Photograph Type.**

Magazine	(1) Sport-action Photographs/ Total Area Photos (%)	(2) Sport-profile Photographs/ Total Area Photos (%)	(3) Non-sport Photographs/ Total Area Photos (%)	(4) Total Photographic Area/ Total Area of Article (%)
<i>NZWD</i>	25.0	0.0	75.0	56.7
<i>NZSM</i>	56.2	31.2	12.5	44.4
<i>MORE</i>	16.2	16.2	66.7	43.4
<i>NZWW</i>	17.2	41.1	41.6	36.3
<i>NZ List.</i>	33.4	27.1	39.5	33.0
<i>North &amp; South</i>	20.0	20.0	60.0	26.0

Over all magazines, the percentage of article area containing photographs ranged from 26 to 56.7 per cent. Articles in *NZSM* had the greatest percentage area of sport photographs

(combining 'sport-action' and 'sport-profile') and the lowest percentage area of 'non-sport' photographs. While articles in *NZWD* had no 'sport-profile' photographs of sportswomen, they contained the greatest percentage area devoted to 'non-sport' photographs, followed by articles in *MORE* and *North & South*. The dominance of 'non-sport' photographs in *NZWD* was undoubtedly influenced by two articles which between them contained 17 photographs of sportswomen at their weddings. These photographs were of wedding parties, families, and partners. Articles in *NZWW* contained the largest percentage area of 'sport-profile' photographs.

The analysis provided by Table 7.2 can be taken a further step to qualitatively examine the content of the photographs within magazine articles. Table 7.3 provides a breakdown of how *many* photographs in each magazine were 'sport-action', 'sport-profile' or 'non-sport'. While Table 7.2 shows the *percentage* of the article area containing photographs, Table 7.3 shows *what* photographs made up that area. In Table 7.3 the first figure shows the percentage of different types of photographs, while the figures in brackets relate to the total number of each type of photograph in each magazine.

**Table 7.3 Types of Photographs**

Magazine	Percent (No.) Sport-action Photographs	Percent (No.) Sport-Profile Photographs	Percent (No.) Non-Sport Photographs	Total No. Photographs
<i>NZWD</i>	15.0 (5)		85.0 (29)	(34)
<i>NZWW</i>	22.0 (7)	41.0 (13)	37.0 (12)	(32)
<i>NZ List.</i>	36.0 (5)	28.0 (4)	36.0 (5)	(14)
<i>NZSM</i>	50.0 (5)	30.0 (3)	20.0 (2)	(10)
<i>MORE</i>	33.3 (2)	33.3 (2)	33.3 (2)	(6)
<i>North &amp; South</i>	20.0 (1)	20.0 (1)	60.0 (3)	(5)
<b>Total Percent</b>	<b>24.8 (25)</b>	<b>22.8 (23)</b>	<b>52.5 (53)</b>	<b>(101)</b>

Out of 101 photographs, 52.5 per cent were 'non-sport', 24.8 per cent 'sport-action' and 22.8 per cent 'sport-profile'. By magazine, *NZWD* contained the largest percentage of 'non-sport' photographs (85 per cent) while *NZSM* contained the lowest (20 per cent). 'Sport-

action' photographs were found most often in *NZSM* (50 per cent) and least often in *NZWD* (15 per cent). *NZWW* had the highest percentage of 'sport-profile' photographs.

A comparison of Tables 7.2 and 7.3 illuminates the emphasis on different types of photographs within magazines. In most cases there was a similar trend between the percentage area allocated to a type of photograph and the percentages of that type of photograph within articles. For example, in *NZWD* the emphasis on the non-sport aspects of sportswomen's lives was evident through both the percentage of the total photographic area consisting of 'non-sport' photographs and the percentage of this type of photograph in articles in this magazine. A similar trend was apparent in *NZSM*, excepting that the emphasis was on 'sport-action' photographs. By comparison, in *MORE* there was an even number of each type of photograph across all articles, yet 'non-sport' photographs contributed to a greater percentage of the article area. This inconsistency suggests a predominant emphasis on the non-sport aspects of sportswomen's lives.

### 7.2.3 Accompanying Subjects

A breakdown of who sportswomen were photographed with reveals the dominance of photographs of sportswomen by themselves (Table 7.4). Of the 101 total photographs in all the articles, 43.6 per cent depicted sportswomen by themselves followed by photographs of weddings (16.8 per cent). A further 13.9 per cent of photographs pictured sportswomen with team mates or competitors, 9.9 per cent with family or friends and 8 per cent pictured sportswomen with 'significant others'. The rest of the photographs were distributed between photographs of sportswomen with pet(s), sponsors or crowd shots. In two photographs sportswomen were not present. Instead, one pictured a prominent sportsman who was a friend of a sportswoman and the other showed a collage of magazines covers on which the sportswoman had featured. Photographs of sportswomen with competitors or teammates were most common in *MORE* followed by *NZSM*. All the photographs of sportswomen with 'significant others' were found in *NZWD* and *NZWW*. Photographs of sportswomen with friends and family were also found primarily in these magazines.

These results reinforce the attention given by magazine articles to the non-sport lives of sportswomen. The dominance of photographs of sportswomen by themselves needs to be placed in the overall context of the environment of photographs. Although some of these photographs depicted sportswomen by themselves in a sporting context, as an earlier section revealed the majority of photographs were 'non-sport'. In light of this information the



**Table 7.4 Accompanying Subjects within Photographs**

Mag	Self	F/F	SO	C/T	P	CS	SP	W	NP	Tot
<b>NZWD</b>										
%	20.6	5.9	5.9	14.8	3.0			50.0		
No.	7	2	2	5	1			17		34
<b>NZWW</b>										
%	46.9	18.7	18.7	6.2		6.2			3.1	
No.	15	6	6	2		2			1	32
<b>NZ List</b>										
%	78.0	7.1				7.1			7.1	
No.	11	1				1			1	14
<b>NZSM</b>										
%	50.0			30.0	10.0		10.0			
No.	5			3	1		1			10
<b>MORE</b>										
%	50.0			50.0						
No.	3			3						6
<b>North &amp; South</b>										
%										
No.	60.0	20.0		20.0						5
	3	1		1						
<b>Percent</b>	43.6	9.9	7.9	13.9	2.0	3.0	1.0	16.8	1.9	100
Tot No.	44	10	8	14	2	3	1	17	2	101

Key:

F/F Family/Friend

SO Significant Other

C/T Competitors/Teammates

P Pets

CS Crowd Shot

SP Sponsor

W Wedding

NP Not in Picture

emphasis on the non-sport aspects of sportswomen's lives is reinforced. This is given further support through the prominence of photographs of sportswomen with people outside of their sporting lives, such as weddings, pets, family or friends and significant others. While there are photographs of sportswomen with team mates or competitors, these are not given the same attention as photographs of sportswomen with people from their personal lives.

## 7.2.4 Camera Angle

While the majority of photographs in the data set were taken from a 'neutral' angle (90.1 per cent), there were more photographs taken from an angle above sportswomen than

below. These findings support those of Duncan and Sayaovong (1990) who also found that while more men than women were photographed from an angle above the viewer, the dominant camera angle was at eye-level. Table 7.6 shows the breakdown of camera angle by magazine.

These results suggest that, in most cases, viewers of sportswomen in New Zealand magazines are invited to view the subject (sportswomen) as equals. In the minority of photographs that used a non-neutral camera angle, the viewer was invited to look down on a sportswoman, which fits with findings of previous research. A comparison of the use of camera angles in photographs of sportsmen would perhaps illustrate the relevance of these findings.

**Table 7.5 Camera Angle**

<b>Magazine</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Above</b>	<b>Below</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b><i>NZWD</i></b>				
%	<b>94.1</b>	<b>5.9</b>		
No.	32	2		34
<b><i>NZWW</i></b>				
%	<b>87.5</b>	<b>9.4</b>	<b>3.1</b>	
No.	28	3	1	32
<b><i>NZ List.</i></b>				
%	<b>85.7</b>	<b>7.1</b>	<b>7.1</b>	
No.	12	1	1	14
<b><i>NZSM</i></b>				
%	<b>90.0</b>	<b>10.0</b>		
No.	9	1		10
<b><i>MORE</i></b>				
%	<b>100</b>			
No.	6			6
<b><i>Nth &amp; Sth</i></b>				
%	<b>80.0</b>	<b>20.0</b>		
No.	4	1		5
<b>Percentage</b>	<b>90.1</b>	<b>7.9</b>	<b>2.0</b>	<b>100</b>
No.	91	8	2	101

## 7.3 Qualitative Analysis of the Use of Photographs

Qualitative information about the use of photographs in magazine articles provides background for deeper analysis. The qualitative themes which arise from the photographs is interpreted not only in light of academic literature but also in context of the size of different photographs, the environment of the shots and type of photograph.

Each photograph in the data set was subjected to clusters of questions. These were:

- (a) Is the photograph related to the text of the article? Does the photo put the sportswoman in the context of the sport or does it focus on the sportswoman in another context?
- (b) What body parts are revealed by the photograph? Are these congruent with what is expected to be revealed as part of the sport? (For example, due the nature of the clothing worn in netball, it could be expected that a photograph of a netballer would show her legs and, perhaps, buttocks).
- (c) Could the photograph have been taken another way? Where is the focus of the shot?

The following sections expand on these questions.

### 7.3.1 Relationship of Photograph to Article Text and to Context of the Sport

While 62 per cent of articles were categorised as 'sport' articles, and 40 per cent as 'personal' articles, the predominant focus within photographs was on the 'non-sport' aspects of sportswomen's lives.<sup>12</sup> Where the focus in the text was on the 'non-sport' aspects of sportswomen's lives, the photograph was in keeping with the article text. Where the photograph was relevant to the sporting context, however, 'sport-action' photographs were smaller and fewer in number than 'non-sport' photographs. Photographs in women's magazines depicted the athletes as women first, then as athletes; the reverse pattern was found in *NZSM* where 'sport-action' photographs contributed to over four times the area of 'non-sport' photographs.

One article reported on the scandal which has surrounded Martina Navratilova (tennis)

---

<sup>12</sup> This percentage is greater than 100% because some articles were categorised in more than one way.

since she declared her lesbianism. The main photograph depicted a very feminine Martina - she was wearing heavy eye-liner, lipstick, earrings, a necklace and a low cut top with her hair blown back off her face. The accompanying caption read *Glamorous Martina: "I was uncomfortable about pretending to be something I wasn't"* (Walker, 1993). The use of the word 'glamorous' is intriguing. Defined as "fascinating or voluptuous beauty" (McLeod, ed, 1990), something glamorous is designed to be looked at as an object of beauty. The text suggested that Martina was uncomfortable about hiding her sexuality, yet she did not want the publicity which would accompany a declaration of lesbianism. The make-up, hair-do and clothing worn by Martina are congruent with the fashion industry's image of what makes a woman attractive to a man. This image of Martina fits with the notion of the female apologetic which suggests that to account for their involvement in sport, women take on feminine appearances. Felshin (1974, p. 37) suggested that apologetics develop in order to justify women's involvement in sport in face of its social unacceptability, and further, that the apologetic has been served in a myriad of ways including an "...insistence on 'heels and hose' as an appropriate off-court costume". In light of this statement, Martina's appearance avows society's importance of the necessity for women to look good, while undermining her status as a renowned tennis player. Further, given Martina's sexuality, this photograph has the potential to send conflicting messages because her appearance as a glamorous woman may conflict with images of lesbianism. Research about the images used by homosexual people to attract partners would reveal whether the representation of Martina is appropriate in light of her sexuality. Even if the image is appropriate, the portrayal of Martina still acts as an apologetic for her involvement in sport, feminising her in a way which her sporting involvement cannot.

The notion of the female apologetic and the importance of femininity was reinforced in other articles. In one article the new 'teen sensation' of women's tennis was described as a *typical teenager who loves fashion* (Gilbert, 1991). Accompanying this article were three photographs, none of which showed the sportswoman on the tennis court, or even in tennis clothes. Instead the photographs depicted a very fashionably dressed, feminine young girl - very different to the *grunt girl* who is No.1 on the tennis court. Further, while the article discussed her rise to tennis stardom, she was portrayed as a young girl who *collects stuffed toys[,] has a passion for music and fashion clothes [and] devours Paula Abdul moves* - things which perhaps every teenage girl does. A photograph of the sportswoman on the tennis court in action, or even in tennis clothes would have a greater relationship to the article and would not have undermined her ability as an athlete.

Duncan (1990, p. 28) suggests that "...women who embody the feminine ideal (who are

made up, glamorous, and obviously sexually different to men) are more popular subjects of sports photographs than those women who do not". While it may not be the most 'glamorous' athletes, in the sense of 'voluptuous beauty', who were most often photographed in this research, there were a few sportswomen who were the focus of attention more than others. Aside from Martina Navratilova, whose characterisation as a 'glamorous' woman has been examined, a prominent netballer was the subject of four articles. Her character is established as a *good kiwi Sheila* - someone who looks on the bright side of life and is described as *Doris Day*. This sportswoman could be a fashion model; she has maintained her femininity (although the definition of what that means to her is vague) and wants to *play the saxophone, plant a garden, knit, [and] bake* (Ansley, 1991) when she retires from sport. It is argued here, then, that it is not necessarily the most glamorous sportswomen who receive the most coverage, but perhaps the sportswomen who New Zealanders would most like their daughters to emulate - a down-to-earth, honest, smiley, home maker who has not been masculinised by their participation in sport.

Photographs in weekly women's magazines undeniably focused on 'non-sport' aspects of sportswomen's lives. Sportswomen photographed in 'non-sport' environments were often surrounded by symbols of their femininity - they were adorned with necklaces, earrings, make-up or rings and were dressed fashionably. They were also pictured with children, partners, pets or their families. The majority of 'non-sport' photographs were of weddings while other recognisable environments showed sportswomen in the garden surrounded by flowers - another symbol of femininity (Duncan, 1990); at the beach; at home or at work. These photographs reinforced aspects of sportswomen's lives away from sport, focusing on features of their 'femaleness', rather than their ability as athletes. Where the focus was on sporting aspects of sportswomen's lives, 'non-sport' photographs were larger and more dominant than sport photographs, often making up twice the size and number of other photographs. In this research, accompanying photographs emphasised the femininity and 'otherness' of sportswomen and not their ability as sportspeople.

### **7.3.2 Body Parts Revealed in Photographs**

As athletes participate in sport, they appear in a "...relative state of undress" (Duncan, 1990, p. 28). The clothing worn displays the contours of athletes' bodies and allows viewers to critically examine these bodies. In the current research, photographs did not reveal any more of sportswomen's bodies than was expected, given the clothing worn as part of the sport involved. Where there were articles about netballers or squash and tennis players, the

accompanying 'sport-action' photographs showed sportswomen in short skirts associated with playing these sports. Due to the nature of the playing attire, the sportswomen's upper thighs and occasionally, depending on the angle and timing of the shot, their buttocks, were revealed. This is not out of context of the sport given that short skirts flare up when players move, although it could be questioned whether the timing and angle of the shot purposefully enhanced such parts of the athletes' bodies. Of all the 'sport-action' photographs of sportswomen who participate in tennis, squash or netball, one was posed while in the remaining, the presence of spectators or competitors, suggested the photographs were taken during actual competition and not deliberately posed in order to portray eroticism.

Other sports in which the clothing worn allowed the spectator to see parts of the athletes' bodies also had photographs in keeping with the expectations associated with that sport. Such examples included photographs of sportswomen involved in gymnastics, trampolining, running and swimming. These photographs did not reveal any more of the sportswomen's bodies than would be expected, given the clothing worn during these competitions (i.e., leotards or swimming togs). Compared with the sports discussed previously, more of these photographs were posed action shots, rather than *actual* action shots taken during a real event or competition. This could be a reflection of the nature of these sports which makes it more difficult to obtain good photographs of these athletes in action.

Conversely to the findings of previous research (Duncan, 1990), the 'sport-action' and 'sport-profile' photographs of sportswomen in this research did not emphasise sexual difference or 'otherness' of sportswomen. This characteristic of sports photographs was more likely to be accentuated in 'non-sport' photographs as highlighted earlier.

One article about a swimmer created an image worthy of discussion. Although the sportswoman was pictured in her swimsuit beside the pool, the way in which the photograph was framed drew attention to the upper thigh area where the sportswoman was tattooed on her groin line. The text of the article discussed the swimmer as rebellious and a *bad girl*. The framing of the photograph to draw attention to the tattoo reinforced the rebel message within the text because of the association of tattoos with a counter-culture. This message was reinforced further in the second photograph which pictured the swimmer with her sponsor's employees - strip club dancers. Of the four dancers in the photograph, one was in leather and chains, another was a dancer from the Sahara, a third wore a furry leopard-skin bikini outfit and the fourth was dressed as a little girl with a lolly pop. It could be argued that the strip dancers were all dressed as figures of sexual fantasy, to be found more commonly in 'girlie' magazines than sport magazines. The swimmer was pictured in the middle of the dancers, as one of the troupe, thus casting her as a rebel for her involvement. This message was subtly

reinforced in the article title, *Different Strokes*, portraying the athlete as the swimmer who does things differently to everyone else. What was clear in this article and the accompanying photographs was that the message was not about sport. Rather, through the use of alternative images, such as the strip dancers, sex was being used to convey a particular message.

Body building is also a sport in which one would expect to see body parts revealed. In an article on body building, one might expect to see photographs of an athlete 'pumped up' in readiness for competition or perhaps working out at the gym. In the only article about a female body builder in this research (Umbers, 1992), the sportswoman was pictured in a bikini-type-outfit (which may be competition dress), leaning on a post in a large white room with a wooden floor. She was pictured with one hand on her hip while the other hand was cupped with her chin resting on her fingers. Her elbow leant on the post and her weight bearing was done on the outside leg. Her head was tilted so that her glance was slightly angled rather than straight on - suggestive of the 'come-on' look discussed in Duncan's (1990) analysis of sports photographs and often found in soft-core pornography. She looked as though she may have been pumped up, ready for competition, yet the pose, and the environment of the shot, did not indicate a competitive arena. The photograph of this sportswoman invited the reader to look at, and be critical of, her body.

The photograph of the body builder portrayed the inharmonious concepts of strength and femininity. While the sportswoman was shown in what could be considered a very feminine stance, the visibility of her strength (through muscle definition in her stomach, thighs and upper body), challenged traditional notions of femininity. Strength and femininity are two incongruous concepts which generally are traded off against each other - to be feminine typically means being weak, to be strong is masculine. The tension between the two characteristics was reinforced in the text which discussed the sportswoman's concern with maintaining her femininity (see Chapter Five, section 5.4). While the text was suggesting that the sportswoman's femininity was being tested through her participation in body building, the photograph was challenging traditional notions of femininity by displaying the sportswoman's strength yet still managing to portray her in a feminine manner.

### **7.3.3 Focus of the Shot**

Photographs within the data set were predominantly taken from a neutral angle. In the majority of the 'sport-action' photographs the focus was on where the action was going - particularly in netball photographs. In these photographs, the sportswomen were attentive to the play and the photographs appeared to have been taken during actual competitive events -

for example games against Trinidad and Tobago or Australia. These were inset photographs, taken by photo companies, for example PhotoSport, and were predominantly found in *NZWD*.

It could be argued that the sportswomen in these photographs have become objectified because they are unaware of being photographed. Objectification acts to inculcate male power through presenting women only in light of their feminine beauty, to be looked at but not taken seriously. However, it is suggested here that because these photographs showed the athletes focused on something off the camera, the sportswomen actually maintained their power. White and Gillett (1994) suggested that while the male figure is increasingly appearing as the object of the gaze, in comparison with images of females, the male is often constructed to be doing the looking, thereby maintaining a position of power relative to the reader. In their research, male figures were pictured looking up, past the camera thereby constructed as *doing the gazing*, rather than being gazed at. In the current research, while sportswomen were the object of the gaze, they were focusing on action outside of the shot being framed, thereby maintaining their sense of power by not actually being framed as passive objects being viewed. An alternative reading might suggest that there is sense of voyeurism in these photographs. The sportswomen do not know they are being photographed and therefore because they are unaware, they do become objectified. A third interpretation might suggest that these are just great photographs taken of sportswomen during the course of live play. The assumption made at the beginning of this section, however, was that photographs, like text, convey meaning. Thus while these photographs may appear to have been randomly snapped, the premise made here is that photographs were selected for inclusion in articles for a particular reason. The particular reason will be compatible with editorial policy about the use of photographs in individual magazines while also being dependent on what magazines value and the messages they wish to communicate.

In speculating about the inclusion of these photographs over others which could have been chosen for publication, it is not disputed that these are excellent action-shots of sportswomen. However, because the photographs invite us to observe sportswomen in action, they bring attention to, and invite scrutiny of, the athletes' bodies in action. Given that these photographs were found in women's magazines, and given the small emphasis placed on them as inset photographs, their collective purpose appears to be to offer the reader a glimpse of the athlete's sporting life. The dominance of non-sport themes both within the text and other photographs reinforces the more important non-sport messages.

The emphasis on the dependency of sportswomen on men in their lives and the need for emotional support was prevalent in several articles in the data set. Many photographs depicted the partner (predominantly male) in a dominant pose encircling the sportswoman,



implying dominance in their lives. These photographs could have been taken differently to convey less vulnerable messages.

One article covered the return to international sport of a prominent netballer. The main photograph in the article showed the sportswoman in her (male) partner's arms. The text, combined with the title of the article, focused on the sportswoman's return to international sport after a *string of personal troubles had left her exhausted and she was no longer enjoying the game* (Wright, 1993). Given the focus of the article text, the article title (*Back from the Edge*), while playing on the sportswoman's name, also suggests that the athlete was perhaps on the edge of a breakdown but has now returned from that 'edge'. One interpretation of the presence of the partner throughout this article could be that because the sportswoman has a man in her life, her life is *settled and balanced now*. Undoubtedly the partner of this sportswoman has played an important part in her life to date, however the accompanying photograph could have been taken differently to emphasise the support the partner provides, without suggesting dependency and the need for security on the part of the sportswoman. The article makes reference to the couple training together; the accompanying photograph could have depicted the sportswoman and her partner out training. He would still be portrayed as supportive, but the emphasis of the photograph would be quite different.

The photographs accompanying a second article communicated a similar message. The title on the contents page of the magazine encompassed the need for emotional support, noting that *Love pulls disillusioned athlete through* (Topham-Kindley, 1993). The impression gained from the main photograph of the athlete with her fiancé, combined with the article text, is that it is only with the support of a man that she has got through the tough times: *Her life [is] made much more bearable by her fiancé*. The message conveyed suggests again that it is only with the support of men in their lives that women survive in sport. There is ambiguity here, too. For while this athlete's *own courage and tenacity* has pulled her through the hard times, her self-sufficiency is undermined by the need for the support from her fiancé and her coach, who are both men.

The predominance of men providing support in sportswomen's lives is supported by findings from Hilliard's (1984) qualitative interpretation of themes found in magazine articles on leading male and female professional tennis players. In Hilliard's research female athletes were portrayed as "...needing an 'emotional rescue', [or on] the verge of a nervous breakdown" (Hilliard, 1984, p. 255). Hilliard (1984, p. 256) found that "...often these emotional difficulties [were] tied to relationships with men and to questions concerning the compatibility of athletic and more traditional female roles". The current research would support Hilliard's findings. The images of vulnerability and dependency these themes convey

are consistent with images of femininity and reveal the contradictions for women involved in sport.

Perhaps, however, the dominance of male partners in photographs of sportswomen is not as much about emotional dependency and support as it is about physical dominance. Given that men are generally physically bigger than women, a photograph of a sportswoman with her male partner standing behind her could actually be a result of differences in size, than implications of emotional dominance. If this were the case, how sportswomen are positioned relative to men in their lives becomes important. The portrayal of men in sportswomen's lives only in relation to a crisis (as was often the case here) sends clear messages about the role men play in these women's lives. Such messages are quite different to those communicated by the inclusion of women in the lives of sportsmen. Again, with reference to Hilliard's research, in examining the portrayals of both male and female tennis professionals in magazines, Hilliard (1984, p. 259) noted that "...in contrast to the dependency theme which appears in materials on the women, the men are portrayed as being extremely independent [and] self reliant". The importance of family life and marriage were highlighted in articles on professional tennis women players. Contrasted with the role conflict in articles on women, however, in articles on men marriage and family life were only important themes when related to success on professional tours (Hilliard, 1984). Hilliard's research forms an excellent base from which New Zealand-specific literature in this area could be developed. There is a need for a similar study relevant to the New Zealand context, of articles of sportswomen and sportsmen, with particular emphasis on the role partner's play in the lives of sportspeople.

The articles discussed here make some assumptions about the role men play in the lives of sportswomen. Undoubtedly partners do play an important part in sportswomen's lives, but more often than not their presence was portrayed as an integral reason for the success of these sportswomen. The partners were often portrayed as the sole source of stability in the sportswomen's lives when their support could have been portrayed in a more positive light - one which showed sportswomen achieving both with, and without, the support of a man in their life. While the support of family and friends was present in articles in most cases it was not given the same importance as support provided by male partners. Without a balance, the implication is that women do not belong in sport without the support of men. If they do, there is the suggestion of exhaustion and a break down, as was shown in the article by Wright (1993) and in Hilliard's (1984) research, or doubt is expressed about whether these sportswomen can cope on their own. A final example reinforces this theme. When one sportswoman found out she had missed selection in the national team she tried to telephone

her partner, also a national representative, who was on tour overseas at the time. She described herself as a *neurotic female crying down the line* (Sarney, 1993a). This characterisation, although coming from the athlete herself, reveals to the readers that although she is a sportswoman she, too, is similar to other women who turn to the men in their lives to get through difficult times. The emphasis on partners for stability or emotional support, such as this last example, fits well with the notion of women's vulnerability, but conveys a one-sided message about women's involvement in sport.

### 7.3.4 The Importance of Religion

The portrayal of a sportswoman's commitment to religion is worthy of discussion. The article made several assumptions about religion, women and sport, both within the text and the accompanying photographs. At one stage the author stated that

*Netball is not quite the gentle game of 20 or 30 years ago. Players can have their skirts ripped off, get tripped and pushed, scratched and sworn at. How would Noovao the Christian deal with those scenarios, especially as captain?* (Romanos, 1992a).

In this statement the author reveals some preconceptions about Christianity and about women's involvement in sport. In questioning how *Noovao the Christian* would deal with the scenarios painted, Romanos reveals his attitudes toward Christianity suggesting that Christian athletes deal with rough play in a different way to other players. Further, it appears that Noovao is being asked if she, as a *female* Christian, can take the knocks, given that netball is *not quite the gentle game* of years gone by. Here Christianity, like female-ness, is being equated with physical gentleness. It would be interesting to examine whether Michael Jones, an All Black, and like Noovao, well-known for his Christianity, has ever been asked the same question.

The photographs illustrated two important components of Noovao's life, sport and Christianity, while reinforcing the importance of religion. Noovao was photographed wearing a dress which was buttoned to the neck and fell to below the ankles, holding a Bible in one hand and a ball in the other. Additionally, the photographs were taken beneath a large cross, outside what looked like a church.

The assumption made here is that these photographs were included for a reason. While it may have been that the only time Noovao could meet a photographer was after church, it is argued here that because Noovao's stance on religion is considered news, it is emphasised. Thus Noovao is photographed in her Sunday best, carrying a Bible because her strong

Christianity is sensational and unusual. The text of the article indicates some assumptions about what being a Christian means and these are carried over into the photograph. For this reason the article does not include a photograph of Noovao in action on the netball court, revealing legs and buttocks. Instead Noovao is represented in a manner consistent with her religious beliefs, placing more importance on them than on her sporting abilities.

## 7.4 Chapter Summary

This chapter has reviewed both the quantitative and qualitative data on photographs of sportswomen found in magazine articles. The quantitative results illuminated variations in how different magazines used photographs while the qualitative analysis revealed the meanings underlying these photographs.

Of all magazines, *NZSM* contained the lowest average number of photographs per article and the second highest percentage of article area containing photographs. Of the total photographic area, over half was devoted to 'sport-action' photographs while 12.5 per cent was devoted to 'non-sport' photographs. Numerically, 50 per cent of the photographs were designated 'sport-action'. Thus, while there were a smaller number of photographs per article in *NZSM*, qualitatively the area constituting 'sport-action' photographs was greater.

The highest total number of photographs in a magazine was found in *NZWD*. This magazine also had the highest percentage of the total photographic area consisting of 'non-sport' photographs and the highest percentage of this type of photograph in all articles. Wedding photographs were most often featured in this magazine. In general, two-page articles within this magazine featured a full page 'non-sport' photo of the sportswoman, accompanied by smaller (inset) 'sport-action' photographs.

While *NZWD* contained no 'sport-profile' photographs, *NZWW* had the highest percentage and percentage area of 'sport-profile' photographs of all magazines. Of all magazines, *NZWW* pictured the sportswoman with significant others the most, followed by photographs of the sportswoman with family/friends.

There was a prominence of 'sport-action' and 'sport-profile' photographs in the *NZ Listener*. This magazine ranked second highest in the percentage of the total photographic area consisting of 'sport-action' photographs (behind *NZSM*) and third highest in 'sport-profile' photographs. While there were the same *number* of 'sport-action' photographs as there were 'non-sport' photographs, the total area consisting of 'non-sport' photographs was

larger. This indicates a greater emphasis on the 'non-sport', as opposed to sporting, aspects of sportswomen's lives.

As there was only one article from *North & South* in the data set, generalisations from it are limited. While the article had the highest number of photographs per article across all magazines, it contained the lowest percentage area of photographs. 'Non-sport' photographs were dominant both in terms of percentage area and number of this type of photograph.

Likewise in *MORE*, conclusive statements about themes arising in photographs are hard to make given the sample size. Within the three articles analysed, there was a greater emphasis on the 'non-sport' aspects of sportswomen's lives. While there were the same number of photographs which fell under each category, 'non-sport' photographs contributed to a larger percentage of total article area.

Overall, the dominant camera angle in all magazines was neutral. The highest percentage of photographs pictured the sportswoman alone, followed by wedding photographs, pictures of competitors/team mates and sportswomen with friends/family and significant others.

The qualitative analysis reinforced the quantitative findings that the predominant focus within photographs was on the sportswomen's non-sporting lives. Where the article emphasis was placed on sporting aspects of sportswomen's lives, photographs were out of context with the article text. Generally sports photographs were smaller and fewer in number than 'non-sport' photographs associated with articles.

The photographs did not reveal more of sportswomen's bodies than would be seen during sport participation. Photographs accompanying an article about a swimmer were noted for their reinforcement of the rebellious imagery in the article text. In the article on a body builder it was suggested that some tension existed between the images of strength and femininity.

The majority of 'sport-action' photographs appeared to have been taken during live play. It was suggested that the purpose of these inset photographs in women's magazines was to offer only a glimpse of athletes' sporting lives while the main focus was on non-sport issues.

The emphasis on the dependency of sportswomen on men in their lives within the text, and reinforced in the photographs, was supported by the findings of earlier research. The same research also noted the differences in the characterisation of partners in the lives of men and women and these were discussed with relevance to the findings of the current research. It was suggested that the importance of partners in sportswomen's lives could have been constructed differently to allow the focus to be on the sportswomen rather than the support

and stability the partner provides. Finally a need for further research about the characterisation of male and female athletes, and the roles of partners in their lives, was suggested.

## *Chapter Eight*

# **SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH**

### **8.1 Introduction**

This chapter summarises the research findings and draws conclusions about the portrayal of sportswomen in the six New Zealand magazines analysed. To complete this chapter, recommendations for future research are made.

### **8.2 Results Summary**

The results from this research suggest that magazines portray sportswomen differently according to their target audiences. Different magazines concentrated on certain aspects of sportswomen's lives which did not always centre on the sport itself. In all magazines, sensationalism was news.

Women's magazines portrayed sportswomen in a limited manner due to the emphasis on relationships, motherhood and other personal life issues. The example of Martina Navratilova in weekly women's magazines highlighted this focus, providing accounts of her relationships and sexuality, portraying her involvement in sport only in light of her lesbianism. The portrayal of Martina in general readership magazines may be different to those in women's magazines. Such accounts may well provide a more informed account of her life as a tennis star.

Through the variety of themes discussed, general and sport-specific magazines appeared to portray sportswomen in a more comprehensive manner. When a deeper level analysis was

undertaken, however, the language used tended to undermine and trivialise the achievements of sportswomen. In examples cited from the *NZ Listener*, it was suggested that the language used to characterise sportswomen paralleled that found in romantic fiction. While the majority of articles in this magazine were written by the sportswriter, these articles did not use this sort of language. Comparisons of the achievements of sportswomen with sportsmen were found in *NZSM* and *NZ Listener*. This finding supports earlier research undertaken by Blinde et al. (1991) which suggested that such comparisons are attempts to provide legitimacy to, and facilitate understanding of, women's sport. Such results reflect the lack of acknowledgement of women's sport as sport in its own right and continue to de-value the achievements of sportswomen.

The meanings within photographs of sportswomen further accentuated the 'non-sport' aspects of sportswomen's lives. Sportswomen were pictured predominantly in non-sport surroundings with symbols of femininity (adornments, flowers, children) in close proximity, reinforcing the achievements of sportswomen outside of sport and serving to undermine their credibility as sportspeople. Importantly, this emphasis on femininity also went beyond the environment of the photographs to highlight the dependency and vulnerability of sportswomen by picturing them with male partners. Both of these are themes consistent with images of femininity and are supported in the findings of both Duncan (1990) and Hilliard (1984). In a case study of an article on a body builder, the photographs accentuated the contradictions for the woman involved in this 'gender-inappropriate' sport.

Previous research has suggested that magazines send clear messages about what sports are appropriate for women to participate in by covering certain types of sports more than others (Kane, 1988). While it appears that this holds true for this research, it is also important to examine the themes discussed within articles covering different sporting types. For example, while weekly women's magazines appeared to challenge the notions of appropriateness by containing articles about women in 'gender-inappropriate' sports, stereotypes were reinforced through the themes which were discussed. By comparison, articles about 'inappropriate' sports in the *NZ Listener* were more likely to discuss sporting issues relevant to that person's participation. The majority of articles in *NZSM* were classified 'neutral' sports, with a focus on sporting issues. It was suggested that while this magazine could have challenged the notions of appropriateness in articles covering 'gender-inappropriate' sports, themes within these articles reinforced stereotypes.

The portrayal of sportswomen participating in 'gender-inappropriate' sports revealed problems for women who challenge the notions of 'appropriateness'. For the athletes participating in these sports, there was a conflict between maintaining their femininity or



being a 'normal' wife and achievement in sport. The seriousness of some sportswomen's participation was undermined by the presence of partners who sanction their participation and, further, was questioned by the language used to describe their participation. The latent theme within such articles was one of ambivalence. Although 'gender-inappropriate' sports were not dominant in the data set, the portrayal of women participating in them reinforced stereotypical messages about women's participation in such sports. Additionally, the fact that they were not dominant says much about the acceptance of women's participation in such sports and, further, makes the messages within articles that do cover them even more important.

Given their predominance, it would be worthwhile to explore whether 'neutral' sports are considered 'gender-appropriate' for women. If this were the case, these findings would support earlier research by Kane (1988) which noted that women participating in 'gender-appropriate' sports receive more coverage than women participating in other sports. It may be more true, however, that the dominance of neutral sports as reported here means that Metheny's (1965) categorisation system is outdated or not appropriate to today's sporting environment. The dominance of sport in the New Zealand society, for both men and women, indicates there is a need for the development of a classification system which caters specifically to New Zealand experiences, and which allows for the increase in, and general acceptance of, women's participation in a greater variety of sports.

The results from the present study suggest that the portrayal of sportswomen in New Zealand magazines is steeped in stereotypes and traditional notions of appropriateness and femininity. While quantitative New Zealand research might suggest that media coverage is moving towards parity in numbers, these results reveal that the flavour of the coverage within magazine articles reinforces conventional understandings of women's place in sport. This reflects how women's sport is valued by society in general, portraying women in context of their social or biological roles before the role of athlete.

### 8.3 Future Research Suggestions

Further research is needed in the area of reader interpretation. It has previously been stated that the interpretations made here were only one way of reading the data. Another researcher with a different set of life experiences may have made different interpretations. Additionally, this research has not addressed the public's interpretation of magazine articles.

Future research in this area could be aided by gathering interpretations of magazines articles from those who read or buy such magazines. Such research could also include gathering information from the athletes who were profiled to obtain their reaction to the article, and to question whether they believed that the article was an accurate account of their interview. This would provide additional contextual information to the interpretations made by the researcher.

The portrayal of other female personalities in light of the portrayal of sportswomen would make an important research contribution. Such research could question whether female celebrities in other fields are subjected to similar stereotyping as sportswomen. For example, is the same focus on relationships, motherhood or other personal life issues prevalent in articles on television presenters, politicians or businesswomen, particularly within women's magazines. Further, are the achievements of women in other fields placed in context of social or biological roles, as they are for sportswomen.

It would also be interesting to examine at what point a sportsperson becomes a celebrity or personality. Appendix C discusses the articles which were rejected from the analysis because they did not meet the definitional criteria spelt out in Chapter Three. One such article focusing on April Iremia was discounted because Iremia's inclusion in the magazine was due to her status as a television personality, rather than a sportsperson. Further research about the movement from sportsperson to personality would prove enlightening.

An important step from here is to conduct a comparative analysis of the portrayal of sportswomen and sportsmen. It was not the intention of this research to compare the portrayals of sportswomen and sportsmen, however, analysis of the messages conveyed in articles and photographs of sportsmen would determine whether men are subjected to similar gender stereotyping. The purpose of such an analysis would also be to examine how different types of sports are portrayed, the prominence of sportsmen taking part in 'non-traditional' activities (such as dancing or netball) and the positioning of women in their lives.

The predominance of sports categorised as neutral in the current research suggests a need to update Metheny's typology. Although the version used here was that adapted by Duncan and Sayaovong (1990), it is important that such a typology be developed which fits the New Zealand sporting environment. This could be done through a random survey requiring respondents to classify different sports as appropriate or inappropriate for women. Categorising sports according to a New Zealand specific typology would allow a truer reflection of the 'gender-appropriateness' of sports for women in this society.

Finally, in their continual search for the best story, the focus in magazines articles invariably turns to human interest stories, particularly for women's magazines. Undoubtedly

economics plays a major role in this, the impact of which has not been examined but which is acknowledged in other research (see Hilliard, 1984). While acknowledging the impact economics unquestionably plays, it is not something which this research has explored, and is perhaps a starting point for future research.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Agnew, I. (1993). Bernice Mene - upholding family traditions. *New Zealand Sport Monthly*, Issue 12, March, 54-55.
- Ansley, B. (1991). Special edge. *NZ Listener*. July 1, 14-17.
- Babbie, E. (1989). *The practice of social research*. Belmont, California: Wadsworth Publishing Company.
- Blinde, E.M., Greendorfer, S.L. and Shanker, R.J. (1991). Differential media coverage of men's and women's intercollegiate basketball: reflection of gender ideology. *Journal of Sport and Social Issues*, 15(2), 98-114.
- Bolla, P.A. (1990). Media images of women and leisure: an analysis of magazine advertisements, 1964-87. *Leisure Studies*, 9, 241-252.
- Boutilier, M.A. and San Giovanni, L. (1983). *The sporting woman*. Champaign Illinois: Human Kinetics Publishers Inc.
- Brown, P. (1992). Changing representations of the female athlete in the Australian print media. *Paper presented at the Leisure Studies Association Annual Conference 'Body Matters: Images and Lifestyles', Sheffield City Polytechnic 14-16 September, 1992.*
- Brownmiller, S. (1986). *Femininity*. Collins, Glasgow: Paladin Books.
- Bryant, J. (1980). A two year selective investigation of the female in sport as reported in the paper media. *Arena Review*, 4, 32-44.
- Butcher, M. (1993). Shooting star. *North & South*, June, 78-85.
- Coakley, J. (1978). *Sport in society: issues and controversies*. St Louis: Mosby.
- Comer, P. (1993a). This woman packs a punch! *New Zealand Woman's Weekly*, February 8, 38-39.
- Comer, P. (1993b). A special pal - big Mal. *New Zealand Woman's Weekly*, May 3, 86-87.
- Cushman, J.G., Laidler, A., Russell, D., Wilson, N. and Herbison, P. (1991). *Life in New Zealand Commission Report Volume IV: Leisure*. Dunedin, New Zealand: University of Otago.
- Davis, L.R. (1993). Critical analysis of the popular media and the concept of ideal subject position: *Sports Illustrated* as case study. *Quest*, 45, 165-181.
- Television*, 23(3/4), 61-73.

- Duncan, M.C. (1990). Sports photographs and sexual difference: images of women and men in the 1984 and 1988 Olympic Games. *Sociology of Sport Journal*, 7, 22-43.
- Duncan, M.C. and Hasbrook, C.A. (1988). Denial of power in televised women's sports. *Sociology of Sport Journal*, 5, 1-21.
- Duncan, M.C. and Sayaovong, A. (1990). Photographic images and gender in *Sports Illustrated for Kids*. *Play and Culture*, 3, 91-116.
- Duquin, M.E. (1989). Fashion and fitness: images in women's magazine advertisements. *Arena Review*, 13(2), 97-109.
- Estrada, A. (1992b). Different strokes. *New Zealand Sport Monthly*, Issue 4, June, 51-53.
- Felshin, J. (1974). The triple option for women in sport. *Quest*, 21, 36-40.
- Ferguson, M. (1978). Imagery and ideology: the cover photographs of traditional women's magazines. In G. Tuchman, A.K. Daniels & J. Benet (Eds.), *Hearth and home - images of women in the mass media* (pp.97-113). New York: Oxford University Press.
- Ferkins, L. (1992). *New Zealand women in sport: an untapped media resource*. Unpublished Master's Thesis, Victoria University, Wellington, New Zealand.
- Flynn, C. (1995). *Jake's mountain*. Australia: Silhouette Books Australia.
- Gilbert, J. (1991). The grunt girl is no.1. *New Zealand Woman's Day*, May 29, 2-3.
- Heiferman, M. and Kismaric, C. (1994). *Talking pictures - people speak about the photographs that speak to them*. San Francisco: Chronicle Books.
- Hilliard, D.C. (1984). Media images of male and female professional athletes: an interpretative analysis of magazine articles. *Sociology of Sport Journal*, 1, 251-262.
- Jarvis, L. (1991). Belinda boosts her horse power. *New Zealand Woman's Weekly*, March 18, 32-33.
- Jordan, P. (1994). *French leave*. Great Britain: Mills & Boons Ltd.
- Ingram, R. (1976). Advertising in women's magazines. In P. Bunkle, S. Levine, & C. Wainwright (1976). *Learning about sexism in New Zealand*. Wellington, New Zealand: Leamouth Publications.
- Kamins, S., Beeler, M., Walden, J. and Watkins, D. (1988). *Q & A users manual*. San Francisco: Tech Art.
- Kane, M.J. (1988). Media coverage of the female athlete before, during and after Title IX: *Sports Illustrated* revisited. *Journal of Sport Management*, 2, 87-99.
- Kane, M.J. and Synder, E. (1989). Sport typing: the social 'containment' of women in sport. *Arena Review*, 13(2), 77-96.

- Krippendorff, K. (1980). *Content analysis: an introduction to its methodology* (Sage Commtext Series, Volume 5). Beverly Hills: Sage Publications.
- Loates, L. (1992). Getting ready. *MORE*, Issue 114, December, 34-38.
- Luebke, B.F. (1989). Out of focus: images of women and men in newspaper photographs. *Sex Roles*, 20(3/4), 121-133.
- Lumpkin, A. and Williams, L.D. (1991). An analysis of *Sports Illustrated* feature articles, 1954-1987. *Sociology of Sport Journal*, 8, 16-32. Dubuque, Iowa: Wm.C.Brown Co Publishers.
- Macomber, D. (1993). *The forgetful bride*. Great Britain: Mills & Boon Ltd.
- Marr, J. (1992a). Leaver in style. *New Zealand Sport Monthly*, Issue 4, June 1992, 74-76.
- Marr, J. (1992b). One last shot!. *New Zealand Sport Monthly*, Issue 6, August, 46-47.
- McLeod, W.T. (ed). (1990). *The Collins dictionary and thesaurus in one volume*. London & Glasgow: Collins.
- Meier, K.V. (1981). On the inadequacies of sociological definitions of sport. *IRSS*, 2(16), 79-100.
- Messner, M.A. (1988). Sports and male domination: the female athlete as contested ideological terrain. *Sociology of Sport Journal*, 5, 197-211.
- Metheny, E. (1965). *Connotations of movement in sport and dance*. Dubuque, Iowa: Wm.C.Brown Co Publishers.
- Miller, S. (1975). The content of news photos: men's and women's roles. *Journalism Quarterly*, 52, 70-75.
- Neville, P. (1992). Bernie's marathon surprise! *New Zealand Woman's Weekly*, May 4, 22.
- NZ Audit Bureau of circulations (Inc). (1993). *Summary of audited circulations*.
- Nimmo, K. (1991a). A goal in life. *MORE*, Issue 96, June, 100-102.
- O'Leary, E.M. (1984). *Television sport*. Unpublished Master's Thesis, Victoria University, Wellington, New Zealand.
- O'Rourke, M. (1994). A report on the media coverage of women's sport. *Aussie Sport Action*, Spring, 5(4), 26-27.
- Palmer, T. (date unknown). *Too big for her shoes*. TVNZ Documentary.
- Paterson, K. (1991). Anne Audain powers ahead. *New Zealand Woman's Day*, December 31, 12-13.
- Phillips, J. (1987). *A man's country? The image of the pakeha male: a history*. Auckland, New Zealand: Penguin.

- Pugh, J. (1993). The social perception of female body builders. In C. Brackenridge (Ed.) *Body Matters: Leisure Images and Lifestyles, Leisure Studies Association Publication #47*.
- Reinharz, S. (1992). *Feminist methods in social research*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Richards, T.J., Richards, L., McGilliard, J. and Sharrock, B.A. (1992). *NUDIST 2.3 User Manual*. Bundoora, Australia: La Trobe University.
- Rintala, J. and Birrell, S. (1984). Fair treatment for the active female: a content analysis of *Young Athlete* magazine. *Sociology of Sport Journal*, 1, 231-250.
- Romanos, J. (1991a). Singles minded. *NZ Listener*, January 21, 20 and 69.
- Romanos, J. (1991b). The marathon mum. *NZ Listener*, March 18, 42-43.
- Romanos, J. (1991c). Frozen out. *NZ Listener*, April 8, 46-47.
- Romanos, J. (1992a). Leading light. *NZ Listener*, April 13, 22-25.
- Romanos, J. (1992b). Sporting chances. *NZ Listener*, November 28, 26-29.
- Rule, M. (1992). Susan chases her dream. *New Zealand Woman's Day*, December 8, 10-11.
- Sabo, D. and Jansen, S.C. (1992). Images of men in sport media: the social reproduction of gender order. In S. Craig, (Ed), *Men, masculinity and the media* (pp.169-184). Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications.
- Sarney, E. (1992). A dream come true. *New Zealand Woman's Weekly*, October 19, 86-87.
- Sarney, E. (1993a). Romantic double-header. *New Zealand Woman's Weekly*, February 8, 2.
- Sarney, E. (1993b). A whizz on wheels. *New Zealand Woman's Weekly*, May 10, 80-81.
- Sarney, E. (1993c). A mixed blessing! *New Zealand Woman's Weekly*, July 5, 88.
- Snell, A. (1989). *Media coverage of women in sport*. Unpublished paper. Wellington: Hillary Commission.
- South, B. (1993). Richardson on the rise. *New Zealand Sport Monthly*, Issue 12, March, 34-35.
- Sport and Recreation Ministers' Council. (1992). Invisible Games - a report on the media coverage of women's sport, 1992. *An initiative of the Standing Committee on Recreation and Sport Special Subcommittee on Women in Sport on behalf of the Sport and Recreation Ministers' Council*. Belconnen, Australia: Sport and Recreation Ministers' Council.
- Snyder, E.E., Kivlin, J.E. and Spreitzer, E.E. (1975). The female athlete: an analysis of objective and subjective role conflict. *Psychology of Sport and Motor Behaviour II*,

- Topham-Kindley, L. (1993). Love pulls her through. *New Zealand Woman's Weekly*, May 3, 24.
- Umbers, L. (1992). O'Neill shapes up to the professionals. *New Zealand Sport Monthly*, Issue 3, May, 38-39.
- Walker, S. (1993). Martina's private pain. *New Zealand Woman's Weekly*, July 5, 82-83.
- Wenner, L.A. (ed). (1989). *Media, sports and society*. California: Sage Publications.
- White, P.G. and Gillett, J. (1994). Reading the muscular body: a critical decoding of advertisements in *Flex* magazine. *Sociology of Sport Journal*, 11, 18-39.
- Williamson, L. (1993). 'Why I quit' - Julie tells all. *New Zealand Woman's Day*, November 16, 18-19.
- Wilson, R. and Fleming, D. (1993). It was meant to be. *New Zealand Woman's Weekly*, July 27, 88.
- Wright, J. (1989). A sporting chance. *Australian Left Review*. Nov/Dec, 113, 40-42.
- Wright, L. (1993). Back from the edge. *New Zealand Woman's Day*, September 21, 18-19.



## **APPENDICES**

## Appendix A

**Table A.1 Magazine Issues Analysed**

<i>NZ Listener</i>	<i>NZWW</i>	<i>NZWD</i>	<i>North &amp; South</i>	<i>MORE</i>	<i>NZSM</i>
1991: Jan 21 *	1991: Jan 7	1991: Feb 6	1991: Feb	1991: Jan	
Jan 28	Feb 4	Feb 13	June *	Jun *	
Mar 18 *	Mar 18 *	Mar 20	Aug	Aug	
Apr 8 *	May 27	Mar 20	Dec	Oct	
June 10	Jun 10 *	Mar 26 *		Dec	
Jul 1 *	Jul 22	May 8			
Aug 19	Aug 19	May 29 *			
Sep 2	Sep 9	Jul 10			
Sep 16	Sep 16 *	Jul 24			
Sep 30	Sep 23	Aug 13			
Oct 21		Aug 27			
Nov 11		Sep 17			
		Nov 19			
		Dec 31 *			
1992: Feb 26	1992: Jan 6	1992: Feb 11	1992: Dec	1992: Apr	1992: May *
Mar 9	Jan 20	Jun 16		Oct *	Jun *
Mar 16	Feb 17	Jun 23		Nov	Aug *
Mar 30	Mar 16	Jul 28		Dec *	
Apr 13 *	Apr 20	Aug 25			
May 18	May 4 *	Sep 8			
Jun 15	May 25	Dec 8 *			
Jul 6	Jun 15				
Jul 25	Jul 27				
Aug 29	Sep 7				
Sep 5	Sep 21				
Oct 10	Oct 12				
Nov 21	Oct 19 *				

<i><b>NZ Listener</b></i>	<i><b>NZWW</b></i>	<i><b>NZWD</b></i>	<i><b>North &amp; South</b></i>	<i><b>MORE</b></i>	<i><b>NZSM</b></i>
Nov 28 *	Nov 23				
Dec 19					
1993: Jan 9	1993: Feb 8 *	1993: Jan 26	1993: Jun		1993: Feb
Jan 30	Feb 22	Feb 2	Oct		Mar *
Feb 20	May 3 *	Feb 16	Nov		
Apr 3	May 10 *	Feb 23 *	Dec		
Jun 12	May 17	Mar 9			
Aug 7	Jun 14 *	May 11			
Aug 14	Jun 28	May 18 *			
Oct 2	Jul 5 *	Aug 31			
Oct 9	Jul 19 *	Sep 21 *			
Oct 23	Jul 26 *	Sep 28			
Nov 20	Sep 13	Oct 19			
Dec 11	Sep 27	Oct 26			
	Nov 29 *	Nov 2			
	Dec 13	Nov 9			
		Nov 16 *			
		Dec 14			
		Dec 21			

*Key:*

\* indicates issues which contained articles about sportswomen included in the analysis.  
**NZSM** *New Zealand Sport Monthly*  
**NZWD** *New Zealand Woman's Day*  
**NZWW** *New Zealand Woman's Weekly*

## Appendix B

**Table B.1 Articles Included in the Data Set**

Magazine	Year	Issue	Article Title	Sportswoman	Sport	Reference
<b>MORE</b>	1991	June	A goal in life	Wai Taumaunu Sandra Edge	Netball	Nimmo, K. (1991a)
	1992	Oct	Filling the frame	Barbara Kendall	Boardsailing	Nissen, W. (1992)
		Dec	Getting ready	Susan Devoy	Squash	Loates, L. (1992)
<b>North &amp; South</b>	1993	June	Shooting star	Julie Carter	Netball	Butcher, M. (1993)
<b>NZSM</b>	1992	May	O'Neill shapes up to the professionals	Siobhan O'Neill	Body building	Umbers, L. (1992)
			New Ferns bloom in test series	Lisa Wilson Margaret Bray	Netball	Edge, S. (1992)
		June	Cox rockets ahead	Tanya Cox	Netball	Estrada, A. (1992a)
			Leaver in style	Leonie Leaver	Netball	Marr, J. (1992a)
			Different strokes	Toni Jeffs	Swimming	Estrada, A. (1992b)
		August	One last shot!	Paula O'Gorman	Trampolining	Marr, J. (1992b)
	1993	March	Richardson on the rise	Julie Richardson	Tennis	South, B. (1993)
			Bernice Mene - upholding family traditions	Bernice Mene	Netball	Agnew, I. (1993)
<b>NZWD</b>	1991	Mar 27	Martina unmasked	Martina Navratilova	Tennis	Martina Unmasked (1991, March 27)
		May 29	The grunt girl is no.1	Monica Seles	Tennis	Gilbert, J. (1991)
		Jul 10	Sandra's winning edge	Sandra Edge	Netball	Nimmo, K. (1991b)
		Dec 31	Anne Audian powers ahead	Anne Audain	Running	Paterson, K. (1991)
	1992	Dec 8	Susan chases her dream	Susan Devoy	Squash	Rule, M. (1992)

Magazine	Year	Issue	Article Title	Sportswoman	Sport	Reference
	1993	Feb 23	Barbara's golden wedding	Barbara Kendall	Boardsailing	Nissen, W. (1993)
		May 18	Martina's new love	Martina Navratilova	Tennis	Martina's new love (1993, May 18)
		Sep 21	Lorraine's romantic marriage marathon	Lorraine Mollar	Running	Fowler, J. (1993a)
			Back from the edge	Sandra Edge	Netball	Wright, I. (1993)
		Nov 16	'Why I quit' - Julie tells all	Julie Carter	Netball	Williamson, L. (1993)
<i>NZWW</i>	1991	Mar 18	Belinda boosts her horse power	Belinda Milnes	Motorcycling	Jarvis, L. (1991)
		Jun 10	Tragedy that cannot be forgotten	Olga Korbut	Gymnastics	Gordon, G. (1991)
	1992	May 4	Bernie's marathon surprise	Bernie Portenski	Running	Neville, P. (1993)
		Oct 19	A dream come true	Jenny Newstead	Swimming	Sarney, E. (1992)
	1993	Feb 8	Romantic double-header!	Michelle Cox	Soccer	Sarney, E. (1993a)
			This woman packs a punch!	Maria Smallridge	Boxing	Comer, P. (1993a)
		May 3	Love pulls her through	Tania Murray	Athletics	Topham-Kindley, L. (1993)
			A special pal - big Mal	Jacqui Jamieson	Jockey	Comer, P. (1993b)
		May 10	A whiz on wheels	Shelley Hickman	Motocross	Sarney, E. (1993b)
		Jun 14	Wai's surprise	Waimarama Taumaunu	Netball	Neville, P. (1993)
		Jul 5	Martina's private pain	Martina Navratilova	Tennis	Walker, S. (1993)
			A mixed blessing!	Leonie Leaver	Netball	Sarney, E. (1993c)
		Jul 19	Out on the town	Annelise Coberger	Skiing	Sarney, E. (1993d)
		Jul 26	It was meant to be	Lisa Powell	Skiing	Wilson, R. & Fleming, D. (1993)

Magazine	Year	Issue	Article Title	Sportswoman	Sport	Reference
		Nov 29	Not brawny, but...	Airini Caddick	Canoe Polo	Cowley, B. (1993)
<i>NZ Listener</i>	1991	Jan 21	Singles minded	Caludia Toleafoa	Tennis	Romanos, J. (1991a)
		Mar 18	The marathon mum	Alison Roe	Running	Romanos, J. (1991b)
		Apr 8	Steel rider	Vicky Latta	Equestrian	Chambers, M. (1991)
			Frozen out	Annelise Coberger	Skiing	Romanos, J. (1991c)
		Jul 1	Special Edge	Sandra Edge	Netball	Ansley, B. (1991)
	1992	Apr 13	Leading light	Ana Noovao	Netball	Romanos, J. (1992a)
		Nov 28	Sporting Chances	Jenny Newstead	Swimming	Romanos, J. (1992b)
			Sporting Chances	Annelise Coberger	Skiing	Romanos, J. (1992b)

*Key:*

**NZSM**      *New Zealand Sport Monthly*  
**NZWD**      *New Zealand Woman's Day*  
**NZWW**      *New Zealand Woman's Weekly*

# Appendix C

## Quantitative Results

Although the focus of this research was qualitative, quantitative information was collated on each magazine issue and feature article analysed. The characteristics of the data set are described in this Appendix.

### C.1 Articles

Of the 139 issues selected for analysis, 35 contained relevant feature articles. Within these issues, 45 articles constituted the final data set. The breakdown of articles across the magazines analysed is shown in Table 4.1, along with the number of issues containing relevant articles and the average number of pages per magazine. For further reference, Appendix A documents the issues analysed from each magazine.

*Table C.1 Number of Articles Analysed from Each Magazine*

	<i>NZ List.</i>	<i>MORE</i>	<i>Nth &amp; Sth</i>	<i>NZSM</i>	<i>NZWD</i>	<i>NZWW</i>
<b>No. of issues with relevant articles</b>	6	3	1	4	9	12
<b>No. of articles</b>	8	3	1	8	10	15
<b>Average no. of pages per issue</b>	100	152	132	81	103	96

Although five articles had titles suggesting they were about sportswomen, they were not included in the data set. The first was an article entitled *Hard Graf* and included a photograph of Steffi Graf (tennis player). This article was excluded because the subject of the article was an interview with Graf’s father and the focus was not on Graf. Likewise, an article entitled *When Luxury was a Lada* was also excluded. While the article contained a photo of Katarina Witt (ice-skating) and mentioned her name in the article, the primary focus was on the administration of East German sport and the perks East German sports stars

receive. A third article focusing on the Olympic ‘successes’ of two New Zealand athletes was also not included because the article reviewed a competitive event, and thus it did not meet the criteria for definition of a feature article as defined in Chapter Three. A fourth article previewed a competitive event, which also discounted it from the analysis. Lastly, an article on April Iremia (ex-netballer) was not included. Although Iremia was originally known for her success as an international netballer, she has now moved beyond the ranks of ‘sports person’ and into that of ‘sports personality’. Given the definition of sportswoman as defined in Chapter Three, it was decided that it was not Iremia’s sporting identity and status that determined her inclusion in the magazine, but her identity as a television presenter.

C.2 Authors and Photographers

Female authors wrote 58% of the articles (26/45) in the data set while males authored 35% of the articles (16/45). ‘Unknown’ authors, that is articles whose author was not identified, wrote the remaining 7%, or 3/45 articles. Within this it is possible to break down the gender of the authors by the magazine type, as shown in Table 4.2 below.

Table C.2 Authors’ Gender by Magazine

Gender of Author	NZ List	MORE	Nth & Sth	NZSM	NZWD	NZWW
Female	1	3	1	3	8	10
Male	7	-	-	4	-	5
Unknown	-	-	-	1	2	-
Total	8	3	1	8	10	15

Male authors dominated articles in the *Listener* and female authors dominated women’s magazines. The *North & South* article was written by a female author. More males wrote articles found in *NZSM*.

Of the 45 documents, 20 articles (44%) had male photographers and five (11%) had female photographers. ‘Unknown’ photographers took the remaining photographs in 44% of documents. Of the photographers whose gender was identifiable, female photographers took no photos in *NZSM*.



## Appendix D

### Additional Information about *New Zealand Sport Monthly*

Additional information collected about *NZSM* reveals interesting statistics about the coverage of women in sports in this magazine.

**Table D.1 Additional Information about *NZSM***

Issue	Cover	Lead Up Pages	Faces for the Future Male:Female	Parting Shot
May 1992	Sean Fitzpatrick	netball* soccer male runners rugby	3:1	Caltex Men's Basketball Team: "Huddle of Stars"
June 1992	Eroni Clarke	male cyclists English League English soccer rugby	2:2	Dean Bell: "You Beauty"
August 1992	Andre Agassi	league Rothman's Rally (male driver) male swimmer rugby	2:1	Joan Hodson and College Rifles: "Final Pirouette"
Feb 1993	Mark Greatbatch	Brett Steven Blair Hartland NZ Endeavour	2:1	Dan Wallace after 100km race: "More than a marathon:"
Mar 1993	Adam Parore	league superbowl female tennis rugby	1:2	Sprinter Mark Keddel: "This kiwi can fly"

\* Not a 'sport-action' photograph

Each issue of *NZSM* contained regular 'columns' entitled 'Faces for the Future' and 'Parting Shot'. Furthermore, the four pages immediately following the cover contained full page photographs. As Table 3.3 shows, of the five issues analysed, no sportswomen were featured

on the cover of *NZSM*. In the first four pages following the cover, of the issues analysed two shots were of women's sport - netball and tennis - while the remaining were of men's sport. Additionally, the netball photograph did not show sportswomen in action as many of the other photographs did, but paused during play. In 'Faces for the Future', young sportsmen outranked young sportswomen in all but one issue and of the five 'Parting Shots', sportswomen featured in only one - again netball. Prior to beginning the analysis, the information gathered here provided food for thought about the portrayal of sportswomen in this magazine.