

Results of the international sports press survey 2011 – from an international and the German perspective

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Sport is one of the most important topics covered by the world's media. However, there are only a handful of cross-national comparative research studies about sports journalism and sports coverage in the area of television. Global data about the quality and quantity of sports coverage in print media is not available.

This is of concern as there are many important questions to be asked:

- Does print media coverage of sports worldwide follow similar patterns across different national contexts, or are there national differences?
- What about the globalization of the sports world in contrast to the mostly national/regional focus of print media reporting?
- What kind of topics are being covered in print (types of sport and personalities)?
- Which sources are being used for articles, and are they of good quality?

The answers to these questions are of great interest considering the worldwide decrease in the relevance of print media, the decline in circulation and the increasing competition from television and the Internet.

The International Sports Press Survey (ISPS) 2011 provides the biggest content analysis yet of sports coverage in print media worldwide. It analyses 18.340 articles in 82 newspapers across 23 countries during April and July 2011 and bases it on two sample weeks (Switzerland was counted as two countries with French and German language media examined).

The ISPS 2011 was the result of a co-operation between the German Sports University Cologne (DSHS), the Macromedia University for Media and Communication in Hamburg (MHMK) and the Danish-based think tank Play the Game. More than 30 researchers collected samples of the biggest national and regional quality and tabloid newspapers of each country. For each newspaper, all articles covering sport topics – whether in the sports section or elsewhere, were coded. This was the third edition of the ISPS. Thus, the results can be compared to the previous, smaller, surveys of 2002 and 2005.

The results of the ISPS 2011 include statistics and analysis of many different variables - the number of photos, journalistic formats, types and number of sources for articles, the gender of the contributing journalists, the types of sport, the primary content, the regional perspective of the articles and the athletes covered.

In a brief and preliminary summary, we came to the following conclusions:

- There are different sport worlds in international print media: the covered sports vary between countries and continents, particularly with regards to the different sports seasons.
- Soccer seems to be the only sport with truly global appeal in the world of print media.
- Sports journalism is a man's world: the overwhelming majority of articles are written by men and cover male sports.
- Seen in its entirety, sports journalism is of low quality: sport reporters rarely use many (quality) sources for their coverage and focus primarily on news about current sport competitions.

In the presentation first we will give an overview on the final results of the International Sports Press Survey 2011 from an international perspective as well as some special results from all over the world. Secondly we will focus on a special view of the German results. In Germany we had with data from eight newspapers the biggest cluster of the survey, so it will be interesting to compare the national data of Germany to the international situation. The presentation in Aalborg will be the first publication of the final results of the International Sports Press Survey 2011 in a congress worldwide.