

**To win or to enjoy: A comparative discourse analysis of  
masculinity in *de Telegraaf* and *USA Today***



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## **Abstract**

This study introduces Hofstede's cultural masculinity dimension to cross-cultural representation of sport news by conducting a comparative discourse analysis of news articles reporting matches on the Olympics in the Netherlands and the United States. These articles are analysed to determine how masculinity is represented in the articles of both countries.

The quotes are retrieved from the Dutch newspaper *de Telegraaf* and the American newspaper *USA Today* discussing the Beijing Winter Olympics 2022. Within three different categories (Belief, Attitude, Rhetoric), 31 masculine or feminine signifiers are defined and a corpus of nine articles from *U* and eleven articles from the *USA Today* is analyzed.

Differences between the two countries are found in terms of the presence of masculine signifiers in all categories. The findings from the quotations show a difference in the extent to which sport news has the tendency representing sport to be assertive, tough, and focused on material success ('wanting to be the best') or supposed to be more modest, tender, and concerned with the quality of life ('liking what you do') between the Netherlands and the US. The implication of the difference in representation of masculinity is explained in terms of cultural context.

*Keywords:* Masculinity; sport news; comparative quotation analysis; Dutch newspaper; American newspaper

## **Introduction**

Every fourth summer and winter, the whole world is watching coverage about the competing athletes at the Olympic Games. In this particular sports competition, the importance attached to the performance differ from other competitions. In this event particularly, everything is subject to performance (McCann, 2008). Athletes are competing to win and find success. Their achievements during the Olympics are the crucial moments for their future career. A huge part as well is the success of a whole nation to show her talents and maintain and enhance her national reputation.

The media plays a crucial role during the Games as the event is covered on the radio and television, in newspapers, and online. Sport turns out to represent a significant part of culture. It has a strong cultural influence occurring naturally as an innate representation of sexual difference and male superiority (Messner, 1992). The Olympics give, with the global and rich media coverage, nations a chance to introduce and showcase their national culture and pride to the whole world (Hayashi et al., 2016). Every competing country gets a chance to represent their athletes in the Olympic opening to the world, so the whole world gets to see what each country has to offer in the Games. The Olympic medal table, moreover, shows the medal count of each country and, therefore, the performance of each nation and not that of the individual athlete. Given that the Olympic Games is seen as an opportunity to represent national cultures of competing countries, their cultures are reflected and emphasized in the national news coverage on the event. This means that when comparing national news articles of two different cultures about the Olympic Games, it could display cultural differences.

Topsport is still considered as a masculine domain nowadays, but this traditional attitude about gender is challenged by the increased female participation as well as news coverage of female athletes (Hardin & Greer, 2009; Riemer & Visio, 2003). Sport whilst still being masculine would implicate that both feminine and masculine societies show masculine characteristics in the media coverage of sports. The masculinity dimension in the media coverage of sports is represented through the masculine characteristic: ‘the motivation of athletes trying to be the best, projected through achievements and competitiveness. The feminine characteristics, on the other hand, involve ‘the motivation of athletes liking what you do’.

A remarkable sports culture in a masculine society is the American sports culture, sport news is extensively represented and reflected in every American newspaper. This masculine culture is relevant to compare to the (top)sport media representation of a feminine

culture, such as the Netherlands. A qualitative discourse analysis on a corpus of Dutch and American news articles reporting matches, which allows for a comparison of the articles from both cultures, will be conducted in order to establish how sport news represents masculinity and to what extent this is explained within the cultural context.

### **Representation of sport events in the media**

The purpose of sports has been shifted through the still growing connection of the sports industry and the media. This purpose was defined first as an amateur pursuit, one who cultivates a sport without pursuing it professionally, and has transformed into a hyper-commercialised global industry (Zion, Spaaij & Nicholson, 2011). Sport has turned into a profiting business in which the media plays a crucial role. The growth or decrease of types of sport is, for a great deal, influenced by the media. They stimulate sports that attract their audience and dismiss sports which do not interest them (Kumar, 2017). Sports events and competitions that are paid much attention to in the media will grow because of the profits that the media representation generates. After the choice of types of sports made by journalists, the sport event is framed and constructed to give an experience to their audience, which gives a journalist the power to directing the audience to read and understand it from a certain perspective (Kumar, 2017).

### **Media coverage of social events across cultural context**

National cultures can vary in six different dimensions: the ‘power distance index’, ‘individualism’ versus ‘collectivism’, ‘masculinity’ versus ‘femininity’, ‘uncertainty avoidance’, the ‘long term orientation’ versus ‘short term normative orientation’, and ‘indulgence’ versus ‘restraint’ (Hofstede & Bond, 1984). The difference in news coverage of the Olympics 2022 in the Netherlands and the United States can be reflected in the masculinity dimension and the long-term orientation as these are significantly different in the two countries. In the masculinity dimension of Hofstede’s model, the United States is defined as a masculine society and the Netherlands a feminine society. In a masculine society, ‘wanting to be the best’ is what motivates people, whereas in a feminine society, people are motivated through ‘liking what they do’ (Hofstede & Bond, 1984). Wanting to be the best generates attitudes and beliefs as being assertive, tough, and focused on material success, whereas liking what you do generates attitudes and beliefs as being modest, tender, and concerned with the quality of life. As sport is structured traditionally to be hierarchical with

extreme importance on winning (Messner, 1992) the news coverage of sport events is also expected to show – to a certain extent – masculine characteristics such as being competitive, striving for achievement and rewards. Consequently, it is expected that both cultures reflect masculine characteristics in their news coverage, because they are covering a major global sports event, in which being awarded a medal is both personally and nationally important. Moreover, seeing that the Olympic Games are a competitive event, masculine characteristics could be dominant in the Dutch news coverage. This does not change the expectation that the American news coverage represents masculinity traits to a greater extent than in Dutch news.

The influence of culture in media representation has previously been investigated in various studies. Two examples are the studies of Zhou (2008) and Lee & Kim (2010), which both introduced Hofstede's model into their framing research of news coverage across cultures. A cross-cultural analysis of news coverage of the internet in China in Hong Kong, Singapore, the US and the UK (Zhou, 2008) examined the effect of sociocultural factors on media content and news frames. They focus on the process of 'frame-building', which is the objective reality transformed into news frames through the media. With that focus, the extent to which generic news frames varies due to the cultural dimensions of a particular country was analysed.

The assumption that people, including journalists, within one culture with the similar cultural characteristics develop the same ways of thinking, expectations and interpretations in news stories was supported. Their findings showed that Long-Term-Orientation (LTO) was significant for the presence of most of the frames. A society with a high score on LTO, journalists do not focus on correcting social injustice but on pragmatic practices with long-term benefits. In those societies, the factual and economic consequences frames were more likely to be present. Societies with a low score on LTO, contrastingly, the human interest, leadership and conflict frames were more likely to be present, as in such societies journalists are more concerned about the problems that exists in a given system (Zhou, 2008).

They found, furthermore, that the interaction between the dimensions had effect on the presence of particular news frames. This was the case for the presence of the conflict frame in the US newspapers, even though the low score of Power Distance versus the high score of that in Asian countries would indicate the contrary. The high score on Individualism of the US compared to the low score of individualism in the Asian countries turned out to be more significant for the presence of the frame. These interaction effects suggest that for cross-cultural studies, information might be missing out when only analysing two countries (Zhou, 2008).

Earlier research examined Corporate Sustainable Responsibility (CSR)- related news coverage and explored how media framed CSR activities across cultures, South Korea and the United States (Lee & Kim, 2010). The study attempted to determine content and discuss the implication of news coverage on how CSR's were framed through a content analysis using the cultural dimensions of Hofstede. Only three of the five dimensions were included in the study, excluding power distance and masculinity as these dimensions did not overlap with CSR activities and, therefore, not relevant to analyse (Lee & Kim, 2010). Findings demonstrate that differences in all three dimensions analysed (Individualism, Uncertainty Avoidance and LTO) had a significant impact on how the media framed CSR related activities. In the United States, an individualistic culture, the focus was more on profits and competitive advantage, while in South Korea, a collectivistic culture, the focus lies on benefits to society. Furthermore, CSR activities were framed as wanting to generate quick results in the US with a low score on the LTO dimension. South Korea, on the other hand, which has a high score on the LTO dimension, it was the performance as a company, not the immediate results.

The media coverage on CSR in the US stated often how the vague concept CSR is, which shows they are more likely to accept the vagueness and uncertainty with a low score on the Uncertainty Avoidance dimension. South Korea with a high score, contrastingly, feel the need to clarify the concept by authorities (Lee & Kim, 2010). Limitations of the study are that the target audience of the newspapers should be taken into account comparing newspapers cross-culturally. This study includes both national newspapers (general media) and business-focussed journals, which might affect comparability.

### **Quotations in news coverage**

Journalism education puts significant emphasis on the use of quotation and how a news story will be perceived more reliable by the audience using quotes (Jones, 1976). Direct quotes are expected to truthfully represent the story of the interviewee of an event, including their beliefs, emotions and attitude concerning the event. Simultaneously, direct quotation in news media can be used by journalists as a tool to twist the news in a seemingly objective manner, that is, by selecting quotations which support certain ideas and excluding others the journalist or the media prefers not to distribute. Hence, journalists have control over how the story will be perceived by the audience which effects the readers' perception of reality and their judgements about the topic in question (Gibson & Zillmann, 1993). Acknowledging the

subjectivity of quotes, it should be noted that quotes might show the (cultural) beliefs of journalists, albeit subconsciously.

The much-used quotations in news articles generates rich data to research on for example attitudes and beliefs of the US sports industry. Previous research analysed news stories of US national newspapers through a qualitative textual analysis of quotes (Luisi, Luisi & Geana, 2016). More specifically, the research contained articles about the coming-out of Jason Collins and Michael Sam, two gay athletes on the US men's national basketball team and the National Football League respectively.

A sampling method was aimed at the insight about the athletes to examine the attitudes and beliefs about this phenomenon and obtain information rich data. The quotation analysis included an inductive research approach because not enough previous knowledge to this subject existed. The articles were organized in the first phase of the analysis and demographic data noted. A six-step process followed in which demographic data of the quotes took place, open coding, development of coding sheets, grouping, categorization, and lastly, abstraction. Through discussion and noting findings, step three, four, and five could be conducted, which led to the formulation of the categories Collins's identity (Collins as a person, Collins as a player), Response (Positive, Neutral, Negative), Story Magnitude (High, Low), NBA Culture (Team dynamic, NBA dynamic), NBA Expectations (Ideology, Call to action, Forecast). The same categories were applied to Sam (NFL).

The application of this method led the researchers to the conclusion that the beliefs and attitudes of the National Basketball Association (NBA) had a more inclusive masculinity (equality and respect for homosexuals) when whereas the NFL hold a traditional hegemonic masculinity (when homosexuality is seen as inferior sexual orientation).

## **Present study**

*De Telegraaf* and *USA Today* were the two are the biggest nationwide newspapers by circulation and the two national newspapers that covered the most reports and interviews on the Beijing Olympics 2022 in their respective countries. *De Telegraaf* is a Dutch popular newspaper with a right-wing political orientation (Telegraaf, 2020). *USA Today*, however, is an American middle market newspaper, and, therefore, both entertains with soft news and covers news events. This means that this newspaper has characteristics of a sensational newspaper as well as a quality newspaper, which needs to be considered in the results. Although the *USA Today* was first seen as a right-wing and center oriented newspaper, the newspaper is recently leaning to a left-wing political orientation (USA TODAY Media Bias

Rating, 2022). According to the team of Media Bias Rating (2022), quotes were more often from left-wing oriented sources, and the quotes from right-wing oriented were either left out or included at the end of an article. Although a political difference exists between the two newspapers, it will not be expected to cause a significant difference in observation as news about sports puts less emphasis on the political orientation.

The study focused solely on reports and interviews, including action and words of athletes competing, about the Winter Olympics 2022 with the aim of understanding how sport representation in both the US and the Netherlands is framed within national sports context. The Beijing Winter Olympics 2022 was chosen as this is the most recent Olympiad. Most of the articles on the Olympics in *de Telegraaf* and the *USA Today* were reports and interviews. The few short first-hand news updates among the data did not contain rich data and were, therefore, excluded in the study. An example of a first-hand news update is a summary of medals won that day by a nation, or results on a race without elaboration on the game.

Dutch and American culture differ in only two cultural dimensions; LTO and Masculinity, as mentioned earlier. The Netherlands scores high on the LTO and low on the Masculinity dimension, while the US scores the opposite, low on the LTO and high on the Masculinity dimension. The difference in only two cultural dimensions makes data comparable and the interaction effects will have lower impact. The first dimension the United states is defined as normative society and the Netherlands as pragmatic society, which makes this cultural dimension less relevant in the current study about (top) sports as it does not demonstrate a strong association with the media representation of (top)sports. The focus of the study, for this reason will be the masculinity dimension and observation is done through the lenses of the masculinity dimension.

The quotations of the newspaper articles will be analysed following an inductive approach, looking for patterns after a specific observation of the data. According to Elo and Kyngäs (2008), this approach should be used when no sufficient previous research exists or has been done on a certain phenomenon, or when it lacks sufficient available information. No clearly elaborated or defined frameworks on quotation analysis are available, as earlier research on quotation used inductive approaches as well and, therefore, this approach is adequate in this study. In order to investigate this, the following research questions has been formulated:

RQ1: How do the news articles reporting matches of the Olympics in *de Telegraaf* and *USA Today* represent masculinity?

RQ2: How is the representation of masculinity in the articles explained within the



cultural context?

The first question aims to uncover the representation of masculinity in the news articles reporting matches of the Olympics in *de Telegraaf* and *USA Today* through a textual analysis. The second question intends to contextualize the outcome of the first question according to the culture. The first question will be answered in the result section. The second question will be placed in the discussion as it calls for more of an interpretation of the results.

## Method

### Corpus

A first round of data collection resulted in a total of 28 Beijing Olympic 2022 sports announcements, reporting texts on the matches, of *de Telegraaf* and 30 from *USA Today* in their databases from 15<sup>th</sup> of February. The announcements could be found easily as the Olympics was a special category in the papers, given the subheading of ‘*Olympische Spelen*’ in *de Telegraaf*, and ‘Olympics’ in *USA Today*. *De Telegraaf* and *USA Today* were selected, being the largest (sensational) national newspapers by circulation. The time frame selected for this was one day, 15<sup>th</sup> of February, in the last week of the Olympics. This was the day where most medals could have been won and athletes were competing for a medal mostly as most matches were final races. Therefore, many articles were published that day on the Olympics, because the results of many races implicated a medal or not for an athlete and country, which generates rich data.

The databases were the archives of the newspapers, accessed through the websites of the newspapers, of the 15<sup>th</sup> of February, with the selection of the articles on the Olympics. Only reports about the matches and interviews with athletes were analysed, to make the data of the two articles comparable. Most articles were reports in both newspapers, however, all cases included quotes of interviews with athletes, and in some cases, it was solely an interview. These were included as they generated rich data as well. News articles not relevant to the Olympics 2022 sports briefing were removed from the sample for analysis.

Furthermore, the articles had to reflect on the races of the Olympic Winter Games Beijing 2022. Every selected article had to contain at least five quotations, to ensure that texts entailed enough material for the search. In addition, articles that only explained specific concepts of the Games, such as how athletes pick their music for figure skating programs, were removed, as this did not concern a race of the Winter Olympics 2022. The final articles, nine from *the Telegraaf* and eleven from the *USA Today* formed the sample, with the unit of analysis one article.

### Analysis

The study’s model of analysis was based on a qualitative discourse analysis, which was conducted in two phases. In the first phase, a textual analysis was done in order to answer the first research question. The latter phase was executed through a contextual analysis, in order to put the answers of the textual analysis in context.

### ***Phase 1: Textual analysis***

A qualitative content analysis was used to analyse quotations found in newspaper articles about the Olympic Winter Games 2022. The content analysis was executed following an inductive approach, suggested when no sufficient previous research has been done on a certain phenomenon, or when there was not sufficient information available (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008). An inductive approach, moreover, enabled a rich first analysis on the quotations without missing important observations.

The process was conducted in three phases of analysis in the following order, *the preparation phase*, *the organizing phase*, and *the reporting phase* (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008) to analyse the quotations in newspaper articles. The preparation phase allowed the researcher to go over the data several times to familiarize herself with it. The demographic data of the articles was recorded following Luisi et al. (2016). These included: (1) title of newspaper article, (2) article word count, (3) number of quotations, (4) author announced, (5) pictures. Moreover, a demographic notation was done of the quotations: (1) quotation number, (2) article number, (3) speaker, (4) speaker identity, and the (5) quotation.

The organizing phase used a 5-step process to analyse the content of quotations: open coding, development of coding sheets, categorization, and abstraction. Through this process, a search to masculine and feminine characteristics resulted in a list of cultural masculine and feminine signifiers (Srite, 2006), which was found relevant to analyse the quotations. The cultural signifiers of Srite (2006) were categorized in four main categories. The first category, *belief*, was coded to show good, moral, and desirable.

In the present study, the texts were searched for masculine and feminine beliefs. The texts were examined for the masculine beliefs for a list of signifiers namely Strength, Performance, Challenge, Winning, Dominance, Control, Power, Success, and Skill. The masculine signifiers Battle (physical), Dare, Heroism, Leadership, and Money (Srite, 2006) did not appear during the analysis and were therefore left out of the study. The feminine signifiers 'Other' focused on Compromise, Commitment, Community and togetherness, Personal and Concern for quality of life indicated that the quote had a feminine belief. The feminine signifiers Sympathy for the weak, Charity, Relationship, Success is focused on others, Sharing and Conflict reduction in relationship were left out of this study as they did not appear in the analysis. See Table 1 for the examples of the operationalization of the signifiers for the category Belief.

Table 1. Signifiers for category Belief and their operationalization

	Signifiers	Examples from data
<b>Masculine</b>	Strength	‘Me, Myself. I was the one in the starting gate.’
	Performance	“My goal coming into the Olympics was to have one gold, and have one more podium in a different event,”
	Challenge	‘The biggest thing is trying to recover as much as possible while still getting some quality training runs in’
	Winning	‘We’ve won many relays in the World Cup before this Olympic relay, and we really wanted to win today as well.’
	Control	“I feel like the weight has been lifted in a sense. Now I can just kind of breathe.”
	Success	‘Ik had geen idee of ik hier een kans zou krijgen en dat was heel lastig. In eerste instantie denk je: het voelt wel goed. Maar ik ben vaker goed geweest, en toen werd ik niet beloond. [I had no clue if I would get a chance here and that was very difficult. Initially you’ll think: this feels good. But I have been good before, and that time I did not get rewarded for it]’
	Skill	‘We hadden kunnen winnen met onze kwaliteiten. [We could have won with our qualities]’
<b>Feminine</b>	Other focused	‘Anna is al acht jaar de koningin van de Big Air. Dat is echt ongelooflijk. [ Anna is already for 8 years the queen of the Big Air. That’s unbelievable]’
	Compromise	‘Maar het heeft met de Nederlandse cultuur te maken, de individuele afstanden zijn belangrijker. [But it has to do with the Dutch culture, the individual distances are more important]’
	Commitment	‘Ik ben ook een onderdeel van het probleem [I am also part of the problem]’
	Community and togetherness	Hakeem had my back, we believed in each other, we left everything out there and I'm really grateful to be doing this."
	Personal	‘This one is more emotional to me, because it's so unexpected’
	Concern for quality of life	‘Of ik nu een biertje ga drinken? Wellicht. [Whether I am going for a beer? I might]’

The second category Attitude showed what feeling and emotional state is conveyed with the message (Srite, 2006). The texts were examined for masculine and feminine attitudes

in the present study. The texts were searched for masculine beliefs for a list of signifiers namely Showing strength, Ambitious, Achievement, Competitive, Noncommittal and Rational indicated a masculine feeling and emotional state. The masculine signifiers Bargaining (for money) and Adventurous did not appear in the quotes and were, therefore, left out of this study. The feminine signifiers Emotional, Caring, Compassionate, Appreciative, Contented, Well-wishing, Needing help, Fearful and Worrying implicated characteristics of a feminine feeling and emotional state. The other feminine signifiers Friendly, Helpful, Healing, spiritual and Transformative were left out of the study as they did not appear in the analysis. See Table 2 for the examples of the operationalization of the signifiers for the category Attitude.

Table 2. Signifiers for category Attitude and their operationalization

	Signifiers	Examples from data
<b>Masculine</b>	Showing strength	‘Me, Myself. I was the one in the starting gate.’
	Ambitious	‘We gaan vol voor die lange kür [We are going all-in for the free program]’
	Achievement	‘Dat ik dan ook nog in de finale sta, had ik eigenlijk pas over vier jaar verwacht [That I am in the final, I actually expected in four years]’
	Competitive	‘The level is so high that there’s a battle just to qualify.’
	Noncommittal	‘I trust the judges, sometimes they give it to you and sometimes they don’t, and today they didn’t.’
	Rational	‘Dit was niet goed genoeg. We merkten dat we minder waren. Het is heel vervelend dat we het niet hebben kunnen waarmaken. [ This was not good enough. We realized we were not as good as the others. It is very sad we could not deliver]’
<b>Feminine</b>	Emotional	‘Dat is even slikken [This is quite a shock]’
	Caring	‘Ik heb veel met haar gepraat en gezegd dat ze niet met de prestatie bezig moest zijn, maar moest focussen op waar ze goed in is [I talked a lot wit her, and told her she should not be focussing on her achievement, but on what she is good in]’
	Compassionate	‘I hope she gets the same attention from this ride that she would have got for a medal’
	Appreciative	

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	‘Normaal gesproken is Patrick onze joker die de laatste vier ronden op kop sleurt. Negen van de tien keer gaat dat goed, maar hij heeft al een dijk van een toernooi gereden en heeft het heel zwaar gehad. [Normally Patrick is our joker that rides upfront the last four rounds. Nine out of ten times this works, but he already skated hell of a
Contented	tournament and has had a hard time.]’
Well-wishing	‘Bizar gevoel [Crazy feeling]’
Needing help	‘Ik wilde de sport snowboard een gunst doen. [ I wanted to do the sport snowboard a favor]’
Fearful	‘Er moet wel iets komen van een toekomstplan waarin meer duidelijk is. [There has to be a plan for the future in which it is more clear.]’
Worrying	‘My mind hasn't recovered from the fall. It's hard to me to think or talk about it right now.
	‘Maar dan gaat het bijten op een ander gebied [But then it will sting elsewhere]’

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The third category Rhetoric was coded to show how the language use differs between masculine and feminine messages for stylistic emphasis and persuasion, by the presence of facts, logic and arguments (Srite, 2006). The texts were searched for masculine and feminine Rhetorics in the present study. The relevant signifiers in this study for the category rhetoric included the masculine signifiers Fact-focused, Boasting, Combative and Brief and assertive versus the feminine signifiers Explanatory, Stylistic and expansive and Warning (see Table 3). The masculine signifiers Emphatic, frequent use of exclamations (!) or capitalization, Impersonal ‘he’ ‘it’ address, Absolute use of facts, Sarcastic, use of irony and the feminine signifiers Intuition, feeling oriented, flexible, Attributed use of facts and numerical facts, Contextualizing by using ‘-ing’, Deference to expertise, Explanation by questioning the reader and Personal ‘you’ address were left out after not appearing in the analysis. See Table 3 for the examples of the operationalization of the signifiers for the category Rhetoric.

Table 3. Signifiers for category Rhetoric and their operationalization

	Signifiers	Examples from data
<b>Masculine</b>	Fact-Focused Boasting Combative	“All three Germans to win medals here, it’s so crazy,” ‘I’m the only one who did a double on that’ ‘You want to be as fast as them and then you push every day.’
	Brief and assertive	‘I’m tired. I won’t lie.’
<b>Feminine</b>	Explanatory	‘Ik ben zelf niet goed genoeg en normaal gesproken is Patrick onze joker die de laatste vier ronden op kop sleurt [I myself am not good enough, and normally Patrick is our joker that rides upfront the last four rounds.]’
	Stylistic and expansive	‘Oma moest naar het ziekenhuis, en ik zou haar een rood hartje sturen als ik het goed gedaan had. Nee, niets ernstig hoor, dat was voor controle. En dit is ook mooi voor mijn coach Carine [Grandma needed to go to the hospital, and I would send her a red heart if I did well. No nothing serious, just for a checkup]’
	Warning	‘Misschien elke dag op moeten trainen, maar dan gaat het bijten op een ander gebied [Maybe training for it everyday, but then it will sting elsewhere]’

The last category Syntactic, which related to the Rhetoric signifiers, was left out of the study as it denoted a specific use of syntactical structure particularly in a Web document and was therefore not relevant in this content analysis of news articles.

The final step of the content analysis was the reporting phase. In this phase an abstraction was made of what appeared in the results. Finally, the whole corpus was analysed and the data of the newspapers was compared.

#### *Example textual analysis*

A first example analysis showed interesting findings. The first category Belief, a presence of the feminine signifiers in the Dutch articles was found in 46,6% of the quotes, of which Commitment and Concern for life 28,5% and Other focused, Community and togetherness, Personal appeared one time ( $n=14,2\%$ ). On the contrary, in the American quotes only masculine signifiers were present, most often appeared the signifier Skill( $n=36,4\%$ ), with 27,3% Performance, 18,2% Control, the signifiers Challenge and Success only appeared once

(9%). The present masculine signifiers in the Dutch article, existed mostly of Performance with 50%, and Skill with 37,5%, Challenge only appeared once. (12,5%). An example of the presence of the signifier Performance was shown in the quote published in *USA Today* “*My goal coming into the Olympics was to have one gold, and have one more podium in a different event,*”

Another significant difference between the articles was found in the second category Attitude, for which 76,9% of the signifiers in the Telegraaf were Feminine, when in fact the *USA Today* had a percentage of only 16,7% feminine signifiers. An example of the presence of the feminine signifiers Commitment and Personal was the quote in de Telegraaf “*ik ben ook een onderdeel van het probleem [I am also part of the problem]*”. The masculine signifiers Strong and Ambitious were for example present in the following quote in *USA Today* “*Just to be able to put down a run when you’re under pressure is another thing I’m proud to be able to represent,*”.

The last category Rhetoric as well indicated a great difference between the two papers in percentage of feminine or masculine signifiers, more feminine signifiers in Dutch quotes ( $n=92,3\%$ ) and more masculine signifiers in American quotes were found ( $n=66,6\%$ ). An example of the frequent present feminine signifier Explanatory in *de Telegraaf* was the quote *Ik ben zelf niet goed genoeg en normaal gesproken is Patrick onze joker die de laatste vier ronden op kop sleurt* [I myself am not good enough, and normally Patrick is our joker that rides upfront the last four rounds.]. An example of the masculine signifier Boasting appeared in *USA Today* in the quote ‘*I’m the only one who did a double on that*’.

## ***Phase 2: Contextual analysis***

In the contextual analysis the United States and The Netherlands were compared within the focus of this study, masculinity dimension. This was done by interpreting the results of the textual analysis within the context of the masculinity dimension of the Netherlands and the United States.

## **Reliability**

A reliability check was conducted to ensure that the coding of the content analysis would meet the reliability standards. To carry out the reliability check, a second coder was trained in analysing quotations, and by familiarizing herself with the corpus. In a first session, the two coders discussed and explained the model of analysis to get to an agreement. In the next session, the second coder was sent four articles, two from each newspaper. After a discussion



on the findings of the second coder, the two coders came to an overall agreement. A few minor disagreements such as coding a quote with ‘winning’ or ‘success’ were resolved in the discussion. The coders, moreover, had no disagreements in whether to code the quote with a feminine or masculine signifier.

## Results

The research question of this study concerned the way sport representation was framed in Dutch and American sport news in context of the masculinity dimension. An analysis was done on Belief, Attitude and Rhetoric throughout the whole corpus and for every quotation. The following paragraphs discuss the presence of the signifiers of both countries on each category separately.

### *Belief*

For the signifiers which characterized the belief of the quotes, in both countries more masculine signifiers were present in the quotations than feminine signifiers. However, *de Telegraaf* had a relatively low presence of masculine signifiers of 57,84% compared to the quotations of *USA Today*, in which 75,78% of the signifiers were masculine. In both countries Performance and Skill were two masculine signifiers relatively often present in the quotes compared to the other signifiers. In the Dutch quotes the feminine signifiers Community and togetherness Commitment and Compromise were relatively more present than in the American quotes, whereas the masculine signifiers Control, Strength, Winning and Success were relatively more present in the American quotes than the Dutch quotes. This explained the higher percentage of the feminine signifiers in the Dutch quotes compared to the American quotes. Table 1 shows the exact frequencies of Belief signifiers that appeared in the sample of quotations and whether they were masculine or feminine.

Table 4. Comparison of presence of signifiers in the Category Belief in Two Societies' Newspapers (Dutch: *N*= 102, US: *N*= 128)

Signifiers	Netherlands (N, %)	US (N, %)
<u><i>Masculine</i></u>	59	97
	57,84%	75,78%
Performance	27	33
	26,47%	25,78%
Skill	14	20
	13,73%	15,6%
Challenge	10	15
	9,8%	11,72%

Control	3	7
	2,95%	5,47%
Strength	3	11
	2,95%	8,59%
Winning	1	6
	1%	4,69%
Success	1	5
	1%	3,9%
<i><u>Feminine</u></i>	43	31
	42,16%	24,22%
Community and togetherness	12	8
	11,77%	6,25%
Other focused	10	12
	9,8%	9,38%
Commitment	7	1
	6,87%	0,78%
Personal	6	6
	5,89%	4,69%
Concern for quality of life	4	4
	3,92%	3,13%
Compromise	4	0
	3,92%	0%

### *Attitude*

For the signifiers which characterized the attitude of the quotations, the number of masculine signifiers were strikingly less in the Dutch quotes than in the American. In the Netherlands, a percentage of 41,3% of the signifiers were masculine, while the American quotes had a much higher percentage of 73.64%. In line with this high percentage all masculine signifiers were relatively more present in the American quotes, no exceptions. However, it should be noted that the masculine signifier Achievement was the most frequently present signifier in both countries, even though the feminine signifiers were more present in the Dutch quotes. the difference in the number of masculine signifiers could be explained through the masculine signifier Showing Strength, which appeared strikingly more often in the American quotes,

and the feminine signifiers Contented and Worrying, which appeared in the Dutch quotes remarkably more often. Table 2 shows the exact frequencies of Attitude signifiers that appeared in the sample of quotations and whether they were masculine or feminine.

Table 5. Comparison of presence of signifiers in the Category Belief in Two Societies' Newspapers (Dutch:  $N=92$ , US:  $N=110$ )

Categories	Netherlands	US
<i><u>Masculine</u></i>	38	81
	41,3%	73,64%
Achievement	17	30
	18,48%	27,27%
Competitive	4	12
	4,35%	10,9%
Showing strength	2	16
	2,17%	14,55%
Ambitious	9	10
	9,78%	9,09%
Noncommittal	0	1
	0%	0,1%
Rational	6	12
	6,52%	10,9%
<i><u>Feminine</u></i>	54	29
	58,7%	26,36%
Contented	12	5
	13,04%	4,55%
Fearful	4	4
	4,35%	3,64%
Worrying	7	2
	7,61%	1,82%
Appreciative	10	7
	10,87%	6,36%
Emotional	15	6

	16,3%	5,45%
Compassionate	6	5
	6,52%	4,55%

### *Rhetoric*

The results showed an extremely low number of masculine signifier present in both countries for the signifiers which characterized the rhetoric of the quotes. However, compared to each other, the Netherlands had an even much lower percentage of 6,76% whereas in the US this percentage was 30,86%. The signifiers that contributed the most to this difference were the masculine signifiers which appeared more in *USA Today* Boasting, Combative and Brief and assertive and the feminine signifier Stylistic and expansive, which was more present in the Dutch quotes. Most striking was the frequent number of the feminine signifier Explanatory in both countries, which contributed to the majority of the rhetoric signifiers. Table 3 shows the exact frequencies of Rhetoric signifiers present in the sample of quotations and whether they re masculine or feminine.

Table 6. Comparison of the presence of signifiers in the Category Rhetoric in Two Societies' Newspapers (Dutch: *N*= 74, US: *N*= 86)

Categories	Netherlands	US
<u>Masculine</u>	5	25
	6,76%	30,86%
Boasting	1	10
	1,35%	11,63% %
Combative	3	11
	4,05%	12,79%
Fact-focused	1	1
	1,35%	1,16% %
Brief and assertive	0	3
	0%	3,49%
<u>Feminine</u>	69	61
	93,2%	70,93%
Explanatory	59	60

	79,72%	69,77%
Explanation by	2	0
questioning reader	2,7%	0%
Stylistic and expansive	8	1
	10,81%	1,16% %

## Conclusion and discussion

The research question of this study concerned the representation of masculinity in the news articles reporting matches of the Olympics in *de Telegraaf* and *USA Today*. The quotation analysis led to the identification of 31 (masculine and feminine) signifiers within three different categories (Belief, Attitude, Rhetoric). This resulted in a few similarities and numerous striking differences between the presence of signifiers that were found in the quotations from the two countries.

In the Dutch newspaper *de Telegraaf*, the quotations put more focus on feminine Belief, Attitude and Rhetoric than in the American newspaper *USA Today*, in which the focus is put more on masculine Belief, Attitude and Rhetoric in the quotes. These results are in line with the previous findings that the representation of news can vary significantly between countries due to a different score on a cultural dimension (Lee & Kim, 2010; Zhou, 2008).

Eventhough (top)sport is still a masculine domain (Hardin & Greer, 2009; Riemer & Visio, 2003), the assumption that the quotes in news articles from both of the two countries would represent more masculine characteristics than feminine ones is not supported by findings from this small-scale corpus analysis. On the contrary, findings indicate that the traditional approach to sports is indeed challenged by the development of the female participation of sports, as well as news coverage of female athletes in (top)sport. Future research could elaborate on these findings.

The findings show that whether the sports media has the tendency representing sport to be assertive, tough, and focused on material success (wanting to be the best) or supposed to be more modest, tender, and concerned with the quality of life (liking what you do) can also depend on the cultural context (Hofstede, 1984). The higher emphasis on ‘being the best’ in the articles from *USA Today* and on ‘liking what you do’ in the ones from *de Telegraaf* depicts a similar finding through an analysis of quotations, because it is in line with their score on the masculinity dimension, considering the USA scores high and The Netherlands scores low on this dimension.

This is first of all found in the Belief signifiers showing the underlying assumptions of what is perceived to be good, moral, and desirable in the quotations. A relatively high number of quotations in the US presume a presence for Control, Strength, Winning and Success suggesting masculine underlying assumptions in the American sports culture. On the other hand, relatively frequent Dutch quotations carry the belief of the feminine signifiers Community and togetherness, Commitment and Compromise, which suggests feminine

underlying assumptions regarding what is perceived to be good, moral and desirable. The emphasis on performance that exists particularly in the Olympic Games (McCann, 2008) could explain the relatively high percentage for both the Netherlands and the US of the masculine signifier Performance (26,47% and 25,78%).

The higher masculine emphasis in the American quotes than in the Dutch quotes is also depicted in the Attitude signifiers which show the feeling and perception conveyed in the quotations. The relatively high number of quotations with masculine attitude signifiers in the US can be explained by their high score on the masculinity dimension. This is in contrast with the relatively low number of quotations with masculine attitude signifiers in the Netherlands which can be explained by their low score on the masculinity dimension. The emphasis on achievement and performance (McCann, 2008) in the Olympic Games could explain the presence of the masculine signifier Achievement in both the Netherlands and the US (18,48% and 27,27%), which was in both countries the most present signifier in the category Attitude.

Lastly, in the Rhetoric signifiers which reflect how a point or argument is made in the quotation, similar results were found. The relatively higher number of quotations with masculine rhetoric signifiers in the US suggests a more masculine sports culture than that of the Netherlands which has a relatively lower number of quotations with masculine rhetoric signifiers. However, it should be noted that in both countries the quotations had much higher percentage of feminine rhetoric signifiers than masculine. This percentage is caused in both the Netherlands and the US by the signifier Explanatory (79,72% and 69,77%). This could be explained by the model of analysis that has been used. The cultural signifiers of Srite (2006) were identified through a research for Web documents, this different sample has impact on how a point or argument is made. Direct quotations tend to truthfully represent the beliefs, emotions and attitude of the interviewee concerning an event (Gibson & Zillmann, 1993), and generates mostly data to research on attitudes and beliefs (Luisi et al., 2016).

The findings of the study add to the knowledge about newspaper representation of sports across cultures. The present study has attempted to fill the gap existing in academic with regard to a content-based news analysis of quotations of sport events across cultural-contexts. Although extensive research had already investigated on news events cross-culturally, news on sport events had not yet been cross-culturally compared. This research was a mere beginning to cross-culturally compare news of a sport event, under the lens of a quotation analysis. Findings reveal that the representation of sport events can have an impact



on a readers' perception of reality, showing cultural beliefs, and therefore is cultural dependent.

The current study is only a start of the cross-cultural content analysis of sport events in the media. Future research could improve the model of analysis, and identify more signifiers relevant to sport news articles, to assure the relevance of the model and make it more relevant to sport, as the model used in the present study was originally established by Srite (2006) for web-documents. Furthermore, it would be interesting to study how other cultures compare to each other in news articles, and how multiple variations in the cultural dimensions would interact cross-culturally. In the present study only the masculinity dimension has been analyzed as this was the only cultural difference between the Netherlands and the United States. However, in another context, when comparing countries which differ in other or multiple dimensions, this is not the only cultural dimension that can have impact on the newspaper representation of sport. One of the limitations of the study is the limited number of news articles that formed the corpus. Although the sample included sufficient data to come across valuable observations, it may affect generalizability of the results.

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## Appendix A

### Demographic data

Title of newspaper article: Sven Kramer ziet zijn kans op vijfde goud vervliegen: 'Dat is even slikken'

Article word count: 708

Number of quotations: 10

Author announced: no

Picture: 2

### Demographic characteristics of the quotations:

Quotation 1, Sven Kramer, speedskater, *'Dat is even slikken'*

Quotation 2, , Sven Kramer, speedskater *"ik ben ook een onderdeel van het probleem",*

Quotation 3, Sven Kramer, speedskater, *'Misschien elke dag op moeten trainen, maar dan gaat het bijten op een ander gebied'*

Quotation 4, Sven Kramer, speedskater, *We hebben alle drie niet het niveau laten zien wat we in onze mars hebben en dat is even slikken.'*

Quotation 5, Sven Kramer, speedskater, *'Ik ben zelf niet goed genoeg en normaal gesproken is Patrick onze joker die de laatste vier ronden op kop sleurt. Negen van de tien keer gaat dat goed, maar hij heeft al een dijk van een toernooi gereden en heeft het heel zwaar gehad.'*

Quotation 6, Sven Kramer, speedskater, *„In de zomer hebben we hier wel veel op getraind, maar later komt dit toch lager in de prioriteit. Dan komen de World Cups en het OKT eraan en dan gaat het om de individuele onderdelen. Misschien hadden we er elke dag met z'n drieën op moeten trainen, maar dan gaat het toch bijten op een ander gebied. Wij hebben in Nederland gewoon een ander landschap in het schaatsen dan de andere landen. Individueel is bij ons toch meer de prioriteit. Net zoals in het zwemmen de estafette toch ook minder belangrijk is. Dat is in het schaatsen ook zo.'*

Quotation 7, Patrick Roest, speedskater, *„Ik zal de 5 en 10 kilometer altijd leuker vinden dan de ploegenachtervolging",*

Quotation 8, Patrick Roest, speedskater, *„Die individuele afstanden vormen toch het traditionele schaatsen en daardoor ben ik deze sport leuk gaan vinden.'*

Quotation 9, Patrick Roest, speedskater *"Het is erg zuur dat het dan nu niet lukt"*

Quotation 10, Patrick Roest, speedskater, *„De Noren duwen constant en rijden in één opstelling naar de streep. Maar ja, we hebben ze op de EK Afstanden wel verslagen, dus was er geen reden iets aan te passen. Het is erg zuur dat het dan nu niet lukt.”*

Table A1. Example Analysis of article 1 from the Telegraaf

Quote number	Belief	Attitude	Rhetoric
Q1	Personal	Emotional	Explanatory
Q2	Commitment	Worrying	Explanatory
Q3	Skill	Ambitious	Explanatory
	Challenge	Worrying	Explanatory
	Performance		Warning
Q4	Performance	Emotional	Explanatory
Q5	Skill	Appreciative	Explanatory
	Other focused	Fearful	
Q6	Performance	Rational	Facts
	Commitment		Explanatory
	Community and Togetherness		
Q7	Concern for quality of life	Emotional	Explanatory
Q8	Concern for quality of life	Emotional	Explanatory
Q9	Performance	Emotional	Explanatory
Q10	Performance	Competitive	Explanatory
		Emotional	

#### Demographic data:

Title of newspaper article: Wafer-thin margin leads to Olympic silver for Eileen Gu

Article word count: 991

Number of quotations: 7

Author announced: no

Picture: 0

#### Demographic characteristics of the quotations:

Quotation 1, Eileen Gu, freestyle-skier, *“I trust the judges, sometimes they give it to you and sometimes they don’t, and today they didn’t.”*

Quotation 2, Silvia Bertagna, freestyle-skier, *“It’s hard to be good in even one of these things,”*

Quotation 3, Eileen Gu, freestyle-skier, *“She said ‘Pretend your second run is your third run, pretend you have no more chance,’ And I was like, ‘I’m trying!’ But I guess my imagination isn’t that good.”*

Quotation 4, Eileen Gu, freestyle-skier *“Just to be able to put down a run when you’re under pressure is another thing I’m proud to be able to represent,”*

Quotation 5, Mathilde Gremaud, freestyle-skier, *“I believe the difference was probably my first jump,”*

Quotation 6, Mathilde Gremaud, freestyle-skier, *“I’m the only one who did a double on that. That could’ve been what made the difference, even on those few points, or those few ‘zero-point’ points, or whatever.”*

Quotation 6, Eileen Gu, freestyle-skier, *“Of course I’m competitive, so the zero-point-three points — I’m going to think about that,” “But it’s OK, I’m happy.”*

Quotation 7, Eileen Gu, freestyle-skier *“My goal coming into the Olympics was to have one gold, and have one more podium in a different event. I’ve already met that goal, and I’m going into my strongest event.”*

Table A2. Analysis article 1 USA Today

Quote number	Belief	Attitude	Rhetoric
Q1	Control	Noncommittal	Explanatory
Q2	Skill	Achievement	Explanatory
Q3	Control	Showing strength Fearful	Combative
Q4	Skill Performance	Achievement Showing strength	Boasting
Q5	Skill	Achievement	Boasting
Q6	Performance; Skill	Achievement Competitive	Boasting
Q7	Challenge	Competitive; Contented	Combative; Explanatory
Q8	Performance Success	Ambitious	Boasting

## Appendix B

### Checklist EACH (version 1.6, november 2020)

*You fill in the questions by clicking on the square next to the chosen answer* ☐

*After clicking, a cross will appear in this square* ☒

#### 1. Is a health care institution involved in the research?

*Explanation: A health care institution is involved if one of the following (A/B/C) is the case:*

- A. One or more employees of a health care institution is/are involved in the research as principle or in the carrying out or execution of the research.
- B. The research takes place within the walls of the health care institution and should, following the nature of the research, generally not be carried out outside the institution.
- C. Patients / clients of the health care institution participate in the research (in the form of treatment).

☒ No → continue with questionnaire

☐ Yes → Did a Dutch Medical Institutional Review Board (MIRB) decide that the Wet Medisch Onderzoek (Medical Research Involving Human Subjects Act) is not applicable?

☒ Yes → continue with questionnaire

☐ No → This application should be reviewed by a Medical Institutional Review Board, for example, the Dutch [CMO Regio Arnhem Nijmegen](#) → end of checklist

#### 2. Do grant providers wish the protocol to be assessed by a recognised MIRB?

☒ No → continue with questionnaire

☐ Yes → This application should be reviewed by a Medical Institutional Review Board, for example, the Dutch [CMO Regio Arnhem Nijmegen](#) → end of checklist

3. Does the research include [medical-scientific research](#) that might carry risks for the participant? ☒ No → continue with questionnaire
- ☐ Yes → This application should be reviewed by a Medical Institutional Review Board, for example, the Dutch [CMO Regio Arnhem Nijmegen](#) → end of checklist

### **Standard research method**

4. Does this research fall under one of the stated [standard research methods](#) of the Faculty of Arts or the Faculty of Philosophy, Theology and Religious Studies?
- ☒ Yes → Standard research into written expression, 3 → continue with questionnaire
- ☐ No → assessment necessary, end of checklist

### **Participants**

5. Is the participant population a healthy one?
- ☒ Yes → continue with questionnaire
- ☐ No → assessment necessary, end of checklist → [go to assessment procedure](#)
6. Will the research be conducted amongst minors (<16 years of age) or amongst (legally) incapable persons?
- ☐ Yes → assessment necessary, end of checklist → [go to assessment procedure](#)
- ☒ No → continue with questionnaire

### **Method**

7. Is a method used that makes it possible to produce a coincidental finding that the participant should be informed of?



☐ Yes → assessment necessary, end of checklist → [go to assessment procedure](#)

☒ No → continue with questionnaire

8. Will participants undergo treatment or are they asked to perform certain behaviours that can lead to discomfort?

☐ Yes → assessment necessary, end of checklist → [go to assessment procedure](#)

☒ No → continue with questionnaire

9. Are the estimated risks connected to the research minimal?

☐ No → assessment necessary, end of checklist → [go to assessment procedure](#)

☒ Yes → continue with questionnaire

10. Are the participants offered a different compensation than the usual one?

☐ Yes → assessment necessary, end of checklist → [go to assessment procedure](#)

☒ No → continue with questionnaire

11. Should [deception](#) take place, does the procedure meet the standard requirements?

☐ No → assessment necessary, end of checklist → [go to assessment procedure](#)

☒ Yes → continue with questionnaire

12. Are the standard regulations regarding [anonymity and privacy](#) met?

☐ No → assessment necessary, end of checklist → [go to assessment procedure](#)

☒ Yes → continue with questionnaire

## **Conducting the research**

13. Will the research be carried out at an external location (such as a school, hospital)?

☒ No → continue with questionnaire

☐ Yes → Do you have/will you receive written permission from this institution?

☐ No → assessment necessary, end of checklist → [go to assessment procedure](#)

☐ Yes → continue with questionnaire

14. Is there a contact person to whom participants can turn to with questions regarding the research and are they informed of this?

☐ No → assessment necessary, end of checklist → [go to assessment procedure](#)

☒ Yes → continue with questionnaire

15. Is it clear for participants where they can file complaints with regard to participating in the research and how these complaints will be dealt with?

☐ No → assessment necessary, end of checklist → [go to assessment procedure](#)

☒ Yes → continue with questionnaire

16. Are the participants free to participate in the research, and to stop at any given point, whenever and for whatever reason they should wish to do so?

☐ No → assessment necessary, end of checklist → [go to assessment procedure](#)

☒ Yes → continue with questionnaire

17. Before participating, are participants informed by means of an information document about the aim, nature and risks and objections of the study? (zie [explanation on informed consent](#) and [sample documents](#)).

☐ No → assessment necessary, end of checklist → [go to assessment procedure](#)

☒ Yes → continue with questionnaire

18. Do participants and/or their representatives sign a consent form? (zie [explanation on informed consent](#) and [sample documents](#)).

☐ No → assessment necessary, end of checklist → [go to assessment procedure](#)

☒ Yes → checklist finished

**If you want to record the results of this checklist, please save the completed file.**

**If you need approval from the EACH due to the requirement of a publisher or research grant provider, you will have to follow the formal assessment procedure of the EACH.**

## Appendix B

### Statement of own work

Sign this *Statement of own work* form and add it as the last appendix in the final version of the Bachelor's thesis that is submitted as to the first supervisor.

Student name: Merijn Mulder

Student number: S102926

PLAGIARISM is the presentation by a student of an assignment or piece of work which has in fact been copied in whole or in part from another student's work, or from any other source (e.g. published books or periodicals or material from Internet sites), without due acknowledgement in the text.

#### DECLARATION:

- a. I hereby declare that I am familiar with the faculty manual (<https://www.ru.nl/facultyofarts/stip/rules-guidelines/rules/fraud-plagiarism/>) and with Article 16 "Fraud and plagiarism" in the Education and Examination Regulations for the Bachelor's programme of Communication and Information Studies.
- b. I also declare that I have only submitted text written in my own words
- c. I certify that this thesis is my own work and that I have acknowledged all material and sources used in its preparation, whether they be books, articles, reports, lecture notes, and any other kind of document, electronic or personal communication.

Signature:

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a large, stylized 'M' followed by a horizontal line extending to the right.

Place and date: Nijmegen, 12<sup>th</sup> of June