Moving towards inclusion:

An analysis of photographs from the 1926 Women's Games in Gothenburg

Abstract

The 1920s were characterized by a struggle over the social acceptance and inclusion of women's track and field disciplines into international organisations. The debate was particularly heated between Alice Milliat, the then president of the Fédération Sportive Féminine Internationale and members of the International Athletic Federation and International Olympic Committee. Underlying the debate were differing assumptions about gender ideals and the role of women in society. While Milliat's efforts have been crucial and recognised in developing women's track and field, little research has examined how visual representations of track and field athletes related to gender norms. In this paper, we examine a corpus of professional sports photographs taken during the 1926 Women's Games in Gothenburg to gain understanding of how female athletes' media representations were part of negotiations over gender ideals. Placing the material within the notion of 'gender dispositive', our analyses reveal a process of negotiation between the 'new' woman ideal that included characteristics such as autonomy and self-control, but also the mechanisation of women's bodies and traditional notions of femininity.

Key words: 1926 Women's Games, sports photographs, track and field, gender dispositive

Introduction

The emancipation of sporting women during the 1920s is well documented.[1] With regard to track and field, the emancipation meant that women increasingly participated in most disciplines of this sport, that local, national and international organisations were founded and that new national and international competitions were held. In contrast to these developments, the inclusion into existing international organisations was contested. In the years between the late 1910s and 1920s in particular, the requests for inclusion by the then president of the Fédération Sportive Féminine International (FSFI), Alice Milliat, met with the disapproval of members of the International Athletic Federation (IAAF) and the International Olympic Committee (IOC).

In the literature on the struggle over the acceptance and inclusion of track and field events into international organisations, the focus has predominantly been on how Milliat approached, negotiated and was rejected by the majority of the members of the IAAF and IOC. Scholars such as Nathalie Rosol, André Drevon, Florence Carpentier, Jean-Pierre Lefèvre, Gertrud Pfister and Thierry Terret, to name key scholars, have collected various primary sources to document and explain Milliat's efforts and the responses she received.[2] This research has shown how IAAF and IOC members held conservative views about women in general, and women and sport in particular, and how these influenced the assumptions held and decisions made at the time. Although a trend towards inclusion was emerging, the debate was arduous and successful in only very limited ways. Indeed, only five events (100, 800 and 4x100m races, high jump, discus), in comparison to the 22 disciplines men could compete in, were included in the 1928 Olympic Games.[3]

In response to IAAF's and IOC's reservations about including women in their organisations, the FSFI organized their own international meets. Initially called the Women's Olympic Games, and later the Women's Games, these events were held in Paris in 1922, Gothenburg in 1926, Prague in 1930 and London in 1934 and were popular with athletes, spectators and the media. These games have been researched.[4] Historical visual representations of these events, however, have received very little attention.[5] Yet, visual studies literature points to how visual materials are discursive events that shape social reality.[6] With regard to sports, visual representations have been found particularly important in providing viewers with opportunities to become familiar with (new) codes of corporeal norms and ideals.[7]

The analysis of bodies captured by sports photographs, and their relations to social phenomena, is emerging. Recent important examples are Mike Huggins' and Mike O'Mahony's book 'The Visual in Sport', as well as the contributions within the special edition 'Sport and the Visual'.[8] Other visual analyses that have explicitly focused on bodies include, for instance, Gary Osmond's analyses of Peter Norman's 1968 Black Power salute and with regard to gender and/or women Fiona Kinsey's examination of women cyclist photographs from the late nineteenth century in Australia, Adrian Schmidtke's analyses of how women athletes were portrayed in national-socialist Germany, Christine Walther's publications on how male and female winners were portrayed around 1900 in Germany, and Julia Weber's and Natalie Barker-Ruchti's interpretations of 1960s and 1970s international women's artistic gymnastics photographs.[9] Although still only few in number, the analyses provide 'a critical contribution to the understanding of [bodies], in particular in relation to

how [they] intersected with the changing gender culture [race for the contribution by Osmond]' of the time under research.[10]

For the purpose of this article, we assume that a corpus of professional photographs of female track and field athletes taken during the 1926 Women's Games in Gothenburg, Sweden, were part of the negotiations of how women were perceived at the time. As Lynne Duval writes, it was not only the occupation of decision-making positions during the First World War that redefined femininity.[11] The experiences of competition, freedom of movement and greater control over the body also influenced the changes in gender ideals. Sports photographs have the potential to visualise and communicate these experiences. Indeed, as the images we analyse in this contribution were accessible to Swedish journalists, and several of these photographs were made available to readers through their publication in national daily newspapers, they can be seen to have acted as transmitters of corporal, behavioural and aesthetic gender codes.

In order to understand how images are read (and re-read), we draw on the concept of 'materiality'. A key point of this concept is that photographs become understood as three-dimensional events.[12] It is thus important to not only examine photographs, but also their forms of publication, consumption and recycling. In so doing, researchers must ask how an image is inscribed 'by the specific physical contexts of each appearance'.[13] In answering these questions, insight into how visual materials are discursive events within particular social spaces and times is gained. With regard to this study, the consideration of how the visual representation of a selection of sports photographs relates to the written representations in newspaper articles is of particular interest and provides insight into broader social negotiations of gender ideals during the 1920s.

The purpose of this article is thus to examine a corpus of sports photographs that was taken during the 1926 Women's Games in Gothenburg. The specific research questions brought to this sample are: a) How were the participating athletes represented in the sport photographs? b) How do these images relate to the written representations of a selection of Swedish newspapers that included these/similar images? And c) How did the representations relate to gender ideals and discourses?

In the following, we begin by discussing methodological aspects related to sports photographs, placing these within the notion of 'gender dispositive'. We describe the serial-iconological method of analysis and the concept 'figuration' we employed to prepare the photographs for interpretation. Following, we present and discuss the contents and materiality of five photographs. Lastly, we pick up two elements of the gender dispositive and discuss the effects the images may have had in relation to the social context of women at the time.

Sports photographs as gendered constructions

Sport photography has technical and access issues that set it apart from other photographic genres.[14] Precise moments of action are critical, and long, fast lenses are today the prime equipment for getting close to athletic action. Bertil Norberg, the photographer of the images we study in this article, did not have contemporary equipment available. Nevertheless, the tools he would have employed, probably a Hasselblad camera positioned on some kind of

tripod[15], in combination with the good light due to good weather, allowed Norberg to closely capture the competitive action of the Women's Games in Gothenburg.[16]

Although the development of photographs is a chemical process, the social construction of photos has been argued in a variety of academic fields, including sport history.[17] Scholars have recognised the potential of visual materials, not only because images, films or architectural constructions provide historical information, but also because they provide histories in themselves. To reach such information, Murray Phillips, Mark O'Neill and Gary Osmond see a poststructural perspective as necessary.[18] We adopt this perspective and understand that multiple and polysemic meanings do not reside '*in* cultural objects but are created by the viewer and viewing context'.[19]

To further possibilities of deconstruction, we draw on Michel Foucault's idea of disciplinary power. This form of power refers to 'a new mechanism of power possessed of highly specific procedural techniques, completely novel instruments, quite different apparatuses'.[20] Whereas sovereign power showed its authority through repression, this form of power uses a bureaucratic *life-administering* force. Foucault called it 'dispositive'.[21] A dispositive includes, for instance, discourses, institutions, architectural constructions, laws and scientific findings, and can thus be seen to be made of what can and is being said (or seen) and what cannot or is not being said (or seen). Dispositives build a heterogeneous ensemble of events that, through various means of distribution (e.g. media, policies, school curriculum), act as a machinery or apparatus that constructs and supports particular ideas, ideals and norms. Foucault called this new development the 'beginning of an era of "bio-power"' that provides points of reference from which a population can evaluate itself.[22]

Sabine Maasen, Torsten Mayerhauser and Cornelia Renggli consider media images significant elements of dispositives.[23] Indeed, these scholars argue that photography operates as an 'excellent panoptic instrument, which can be used to monitor the population or the punishment of delinquent behaviour to force an extended and deep-seated implementation of the panoptic society'.[24] As products and tools of dispositives, images are powerful in creating particular objects of knowledge and produce particular realities, which in turn support and reinforce the knowledge and practices that led for a dispositive to emerge.

At the same time as visual representations act as tools of normalisation, however, images may also challenge norms.[25] Knowledge and discourses, and indeed dispositives, are not fixed or stable. Rather, as changes to any of the elements of a dispositive may occur, a dispositive and its effects may also change. Images thus hold a potential to visualise new norms or possibilities, demonstrating viewers what is or can be possible. Julia Weber's and Natalie Barker-Ruchti's research on 1970s women's artistic gymnastics photographs is one study that has demonstrated such visualisation possibilities.[26]

As did Weber and Barker-Ruchti, we also draw on German sociologist Andrea Bührmann's concept 'gender dispositive' for the examination of the sample of 1926 photographs.[27] Bührmann extended Foucault's notion of dispositive by questioning how and why the duality of sex became naturalised and hierarchised. Bührmann criticised Foucault for accepting the duality of sex, as in her view, he did not problematize how and why the human body became categorized along biological criteria. This, Bührmann argued, cannot be ignored because it formed the basis from which the gender dispositive could emerge. She refers, for instance, to the development of gendered scientific knowledge (e.g. hysterisation of women,

medicalisation of female reproduction, female special anthropology) and practices (e.g. gynaecology, psychiatric treatment of women).

In order for us to make elements of the gender dispositive 'visible', we employ Ulrike Pilarczyk's and Ulrike Mietzner's serial-iconological method for photographic analysis and Manfred Schmalriede's conceptualization of figuration in sports photographs to prepare the images for interpretation.[28] We will discuss these below.

Methods

Sample of photographs

The corpus of original black and white photographs analysed in this article were located by the third author of this manuscript. The photographs were stored within the 'Women's History Collection' of the Gothenburg University Library. The photos are of the 1926 Women's Games in Gothenburg and include images of the opening ceremony, spectators, officials, competitions and athletes. The sample consists of 63 images, each of very good quality. Unfortunately, information on how the photographs came to be stored by the library could not be found. Bertil Norberg (1888-1959), a Swedish freelance photographer, who worked for various national publication outlets, was a member and later board member of the Swedish Press Photographers' Association and acted as a court photographer during the 1930s, took the photographs.[29]

Serial-iconological method for photographic analysis

The serial-iconological method for photographic analysis is a tool that allows for visual materials to be analysed systematically. The method combines individual image with serial image analysis. The former step requires the reconstruction of individual visual representations on the background of socio-historical emergence and application, whereas the latter step allows for the development of 'supra-individual' and discursive meanings (e.g. makes elements of dispositives visible). This combination of individual and collective analyses requires the description and interpretation of images along four levels: pre-iconographic description, iconographic description, iconographic interpretation and iconological interpretation.

In the first step, the pre-iconographic description, each image is described in all their details. This first process is necessary in order for representative themes to be formulated in the second step, the iconographic description. In the case of our sample, we first described the images along criteria of content, background and photo-technical aspects (e.g. photographer's position, photographic angle). Through these, two main categories representative of the images' contents emerged: a) competitive action (29 photographs) and b) non-competitive action (34 photographs). In the former category, the sub-categories 'preparation phase of a movement', 'main phase of a movement', 'end-phase of a movement', 'flight phase of a movement', 'endurance performance', 'crossing of finishing line', and in the latter category, the sub-categories 'opening ceremony', 'athlete portraits', 'group photographs', 'spectators' and 'prize giving' were created.

Above, we have discussed how visual materials are part of dispositives and how 1920s women's sport reflected, reproduced and challenged dominant gender discourses. Hence, the photographs under study here are not only a product of gender dispositive, but also an influential agent within public discourses of gender. In this regard, the competitive action photographs can be seen to have provided greater challenges to dominant discourses of gender than the images within the non-competitive category. This can particularly be said as during the 1920s, the sight of women in competitive was still relatively novel. We thus feel that while the photographs within the non-competitive category are also part of the gender dispositive - in that athlete portraits or group photographs may, for instance, reinforce traditional notions of femininity – we chose the images of the competitive category because we believed they would offer greater potential for an examination on how new codes corporeal norms and ideals related to the negotiation of 1920s gender ideals.

In order to achieve deeper understanding of how the competitive action images relate to gender dispositive, the analysis procedure within the first two iconographic steps included the transformation of the descriptive sub-categories into figurations. Manfred Schmalriede defines a figuration as a visually typified, normative, and de-personalized body constellation.[30] According to this scholar, we learn to understand body constellations in sport photographs as dispositions of specific sport codes and gender affiliations. As Weber and Barker-Ruchti have done, we extend Schmalriede's conceptualization of figuration by understanding figurations as visually fixed corporal movements. Such movements entail different levels of how one can use the body. Using Klaus Heinemann's levels of corporeality, we identified figurations along the criteria of body technology, body language (mimicry, gestures, body composure), and body ethos (conduct of the body).[31] We assume that these levels of corporeality define and structure body formations in sports photographs and allow for differentiated figurations to become visible. The figurations that emerged through this analytic procedure are: 'running', 'lunging', 'accelerating', 'thrusting, and 'flying'.

As part of the third analytic step (the iconographic interpretation), the images are being embedded within socio-historical context. Information concerning the photographs' materiality and construction are considered and included, and questions regarding the nature of the representation, the generated messages, as well as their inclusion in other forms of representations, are being asked. The photographs' captions, as well as seven leading Swedish daily newspapers of the 1920s ('Aftonbladet', 'Dagens Nyheter', 'Göteborg's Handels- och Sjöfartstidning', 'Göteborgs Posten', 'Göteborgs Tidningen', 'Idrottsbladet', 'Svenska Dagsbladet') were consulted for this purpose. With regard to the former, the captions did not need to be collected as they were attached to each photograph. With regard to the latter, articles that referred to the Women's Games between 20 August and 5 September 1926 (one week before and one week after the Games) were sought. 73 articles, of which 22 related to the games in a general way and 51 directly reported on the results of the competitions, were collected. In total, the articles included 46 photographs, of which nine came from the sample we study in this article. Of those nine, five showed athletes in competitive action, while four showed athletes in non-competitive action.

For the purpose of this contribution, three newspaper articles that contained photographs (similar to) the images included below were chosen and translated into English. We chose these articles because a) they were printed in 'Göteborgs Posten' and 'Dagens Nyheter', the then two most distributed Swedish newspapers, b) they were of considerable size (an entire A3 page) and c) they were printed on either the front pages of the paper, or

within the sport section, areas we see to have caught readers' attention particularly well. Lastly, as the nature of the representations of the Women's Games differed, we chose representative texts. This means that two of the three texts predominantly critiqued women's sporting performances and achievements, while one article saw the Women's Games in a much more positive light. The three articles were translated into English by a professional translator.

In the fourth and last step (the iconological interpretation), the socio-historical context and the information produced in the first three steps, are collated. The deciphering of the 'supra-individual' and discursive meanings of the image (i.e. elements of gender dispositive), which influenced the production and use of the images, play a decisive role. This led us to write notes about the selected photographs and newspaper articles. These included contextual information about women, sport and women in sport, which allowed us to draw out differences and similarities between the visual and textual representations.

Before we present the gender figurations we obtained from the photographs showing competitive action, we would like to briefly introduce the 1926 event that took place in Gothenburg.

The Gothenburg Women's Games in 1926

The Women's Games in Gothenburg were held between 27 and 29 August 1926 at 'Slottskogvallen', a soccer and track and field stadium built in 1923. They were organised by 'Sveriges Kvinnliga Idrottsförbundet' (Sweden's Women's Sport Association, founded in 1925), which was presided by Einar Lilie and financed by private sponsors, including, for instance, the Swedish royal prince Gustav Adolf.[32] Various influential individuals, such as Einar Lilie, also president of 'Svenska idrottsförbundet' (Swedish Sports Confederation), Alice Milliat, Sigfried Edström, Swedish member of the IOC, and consuls of the participating athletes' nationalities, visited the event. 17,000 spectators watched the competitions during the three days. The media was also present and articles covering the competitions were printed in all major Swedish newspapers.

The Gothenburg Games attracted athletes from eight countries (Belgium, Czechoslovakia, England, France, Japan, Lithuania, Poland, Sweden). The events that athletes participated in included 100 yard, 100, 200 and 1000 meter, 100 yard hurdle and 4x100 yard running races, discus, javelin and shot put, and long, high and standing jump events. Various world records were broken during the event.

As a corollary, the Gothenburg Games have been described as a breakthrough for women's sport in Sweden and as a catalyst for the inclusion of five track and field events (100m, 800m & 4x100 races, high-jump, discus) by the IAAF and IOC for the 1928 Olympic Games.[33] How were women track and field athletes visualised in sports photographs? How did the images relate to gender ideals? In what follows, we consider these questions, and examine how the visual representations related to a selection of newspaper articles published in Swedish newspapers at the time.

Results

We begin by presenting the pre-iconographic and iconographic descriptions and iconographic interpretations we developed for the five figurations (running, lunging, accelerating, thrusting, flying). Within each of these, one photograph representative of this figuration is included. Each of the images will be described along content, background and photographic technique (angle and position) and, for each, visual impressions are included. Issues of materiality, in particular the captions attached to the photographs and representations in newspaper articles, will be considered and related to each other and the photographs. The three newspaper articles are included as follows: one within the running figuration, one within the lunging figuration and one within the accelerating, thrusting and flying figurations.

It is important here to reinforce the polysemic nature of reading visual materials. The interpretations we offer below are reflections of our ways of seeing things and should not be understood as exclusive. Rather, as we describe, analyse and interpret the images, we offer ways the images can be interpreted, attach meanings and provide suggestions of how the gender dispositive surrounding women, and women in sport, may have operated in 1926.

Running figuration

This category involves movements that require constant exertion. It can perhaps be compared to a machine operating smoothly as long as there is sufficient fuel. The photograph in Figure 1 shows eight women running in a stadium. The runners are captured in different phases of gait (e.g. mid-air, stepping), but all appear in full stride. One athlete is somewhat behind the group of seven athletes, three athletes are concealed by other competitors. All women are slim, wear shorts and t-shirts and have short hair styles. Each athlete carries a number, as well as a national symbol, on the front of the shirt. They each wear running shoes, some also wear socks. The runners look to the ground.

Insert Figure 1 here.

The women run on the ‘Slottkogsvallen’ stadium running track. In the background, spectators are visible. They are located on the stadium’s stand, but also on the terrace of a heptagonal building. The runners’ shadows are relatively long, which suggests that the race took place in the late afternoon. The photographer appears to have been standing to the left and in front of the athletes. His position was relatively close to the runners (approx. two meters).

The great number of spectators visible in the background, but also the athletes’ clothes, numbers and national symbols, as well as their application, give the impression that the race was of importance. Further, as the image captures muscular legs, as well as full strides, the athletes appear well-trained. This is also reflected in that all athletes look to the ground and do not show signs of exhaustion. The caption attached to the photograph translates as: ‘1000 m. race’.[34]

In the newspaper 'Göteborgs Tidningen', a very similar image to the one in Figure 1 was printed on the front page on Monday, 30 August 1926. This photograph shows the same athletes of the same race (the same numbers on the athletes' t-shirts are detectable in the same racing positions as in Figure 1), with roughly the same photographic position, distance and angle to the athletes, however, taken from the opposite side. Taken from this side, seven of the eight athletes are visible. However, the background of the image has been cut and only some of the surface the athletes are running on is included. The article is titled 'Superior English victory. France in second. Sweden in third place' and took up four-fifths of the page.[35] The photograph and title of the article fill just over half of the contribution. The caption below the photograph says: 'One thousand meter race. From left: Inga Gentzel, Elsa Pettersson, Belona (28), Trickey (62), Emilia Krum (73)'.[36]

The article mostly refers to the last day of the 1926 competitions. It does not specifically refer to the photograph, but rather focuses on the novelty of woman track and field competitions. Indeed, as the journalist writes that opportunities to watch female athletes compete are rare, the 'hundred bouncy and jaunty athletic girls were the attraction' for the spectators to have come to the stadium.[37] The article compares the number of spectators to those of the previous two days, and states that it must be the audience's having 'come more accustomed to see the beautiful sex on the competition track' to have come in greater numbers on the last day of competitions.[38] It is interesting to note here that the article's attention to the apparently astonishing amount of spectators is not reflected in the image that was printed in the article. As the background of the image is cut, one could get the impression that the athletes are running anywhere and possibly without being seen by anyone. In this way, the image can be seen to devalue the importance of the running race, as well as the significance of the competitive event at large. The writer's critique of the athletes' performance techniques adds to this devaluation. One athlete's jumping style is particularly highlighted and described to be peculiar. With a better technique, so the writer recommends, she 'would have been able to increase her jumping lengths to outdo the current world record'.[39]

The running figuration representative of photographs that picture athletes in a running race transmits continuity in terms of performance, competition and stamina. The close proximity to the running action ensures these impressions. The background, as well as the caption's information, confirms that the pictured runners are indeed taking part in an important endurance race. In contrast, the information provided in the newspaper article does not refer to such criteria. Instead, the text objectifies the women athletes and devalues and even ridicules theirachievements.

Lunging figuration

This category involves athletes crossing the finish line of a running or walking race. In the photograph below (Figure 2), four athletes are captured. One of them is about to cross the line. Three athletes are approximately two to three meters behind the victorious runner. As with the image in Figure 1, different phases of stride are captured. The winning runner has her arms down and her chin and chest are pushed forward in an attempt to cross the line earlier. The attire is similar to the ones in Figure 1. The direction in which the athletes are looking is not clearly detectable.

The competitors run on the running track. 'Slottskogsvallen' stadium, in particular one of its heptagonal buildings, but also a tent at the top-right corner of the photo and spectators,

are visible in the background. The image also pictures the background beyond the stadium, which includes a forested hill and light sky. No shadows are visible, but the position of the flags indicates that there was some wind. The photograph was taken from a frontal position, perhaps three meters from the winning athlete. The angle further suggests that the photographer was standing.

The impression is that the women are participating in an important race. The actions by the winner of this heat, in particular her movement of the upper body towards the finishing line, are indicative of this. Her strained face also adds importance and suggests that she exerted considerable effort to lunge towards the finish line. The caption of the photograph reads: 'Race 100 yards. Heat 1. Winner Radideau, France'.[40]

Insert Figure 2 here.

Figure 2 was printed in 'Dagens Nyheter' on 29 August 1926. The title of the article translates as: 'New world- and Swedish records and "daggstänkta berg, fallera", the women's second Olympic day. The first Swedish victory in javelin'.[41] The article was printed in the sport news section and takes up just under half of the page, of which the title and photograph cover a third. The caption below the photograph says: 'The final of the women's 100 yards. Radideau blasting the finish line'.[42]

The article sexualises and criticises the women athletes. With regard to the former, the athletes are referred to as 'girls' and several are specifically mentioned in terms of their appearance: the Czechoslovakian athlete, Halina Konopacka, is described as tall, slim and the 'competition's most coquette lady', who performed additional flexibility exercises that the journalist perceived to be inappropriate; her team colleague, Mária Vidlakova, is portrayed as 'exquisitely beautiful and powerfully built, who, at least from the press box, looks to have features of Greek beauty'; the Latvian competitor, Leepin, is considered the most beautiful athlete, with 'all binoculars directed at her slender figure' and [she is] 'a racing car next to [the throwing athletes, who are considered] steamrollers'; and lastly, the Swedish athlete, Anne-Lise Adelsköld, who is described as the 'girl Platino, at least as sweet in a very sweet collection [of ladies]'.[43] In terms of criticism, the organisation of the games is represented as generally unprofessional and it is suggested that 'even if these games are only for ladies', the officials have much to learn.[44] Likewise, the performances of two athletes in the 1000 metres walking race, namely the French woman's erroneous premature stop during the race, and her attempts to catch up to the winning athlete, are also criticised and even ridiculed. Moreover, some competitors' athletic techniques are either highlighted as 'surprisingly well learned' or 'awkward' and 'alienated', while their enthusiasm and joy of competing is seen as a sign of their lack of knowledge of how to compete in a serious and professional way. The author writes that the:

> 'Ladies of the heat races still haven't understood to rest, if they are not challenged in the home stretch. Instead, they strain themselves with an equal impossible and desperate bravery. They also haven't understood to go in the locker rooms in between events to keep warm, but rather stay outside in the field watching the other competitions, freeze and solidify … the time may also come when they

> compete with the same grim seriousness as men. But the present condition is in all events out of a spectator's view more entertaining'.[45]

In contrast to the ridiculing nature of the article's comments, the changed photographic caption can be seen to add weight to the pictured race.[46] Representing the race as the final (rather than a heat), as well as describing Radideau's win with 'blasting the finish line', depict the situation as significant and serious. At the same time, however, the latter comment could also be seen to sensationalise her win, which, at least today, has been found a common feature of how the media represents women's sporting achievements.[47]

The lunging figuration points to an athletic act that demonstrates competitiveness and determination. The visually fixed movement of extending the body forward in order to reach the finishing line more quickly illustrates how the pictured athlete purposefully aimed to make time. Her strained facial expression reinforces this effort. In contrast to these impressions, the newspaper article criticises, devalues and ridicules the event, as well as the athletes' performances and mostly refers to the athletes' physiques in a sexualising way. In a way, the changed photographic caption illustrates the divergence between old and emerging codes and norms, and points to the negotiation of gender norms and values that took place during the 1920s. On the one hand, the reference to the athlete's efforts (winning a final by 'blasting the finish line') can be seen to add weight to her achievement. On the other hand, the sensationalising nature of the comment suggests that her achievement was unexpected and thus out of the ordinary.

Accelerating figuration

This figuration involves the mid-phase of a throwing motion. It is the phase within which an athlete accelerates her motion before releasing the device. During this acceleration, the athlete gathers and assembles corporal power to then transfer this power to the object that is being thrown forward. In Figure 3, a woman putting a shot is captured. The athlete holds a shot put ball in her right hand, which is entirely bent so that the ball sits by her shoulder. Her left arm is extended horizontally. She stands on both her legs, although more weight is placed on the front leg. Her body is tensed. She wears shorts and a t-shirt, which depicts the number 29 and the Swedish national flag. She wears sports shoes and socks. Her hair is short and she wears a headband.

Insert Figure 3 here.

The athlete is standing in a circled area of sand. At the front of the circle, the stopboard – a white piece of rounded material – creates a boundary. Her left foot touches this edge. The sand shows signs of use. In the front of the image, a shot put is pictured. In the immediate background, several men wearing dark suits are visible. Both seem to closely observe the thrower's actions. Further in the background, a man is sitting on a bench, and still further, a stand with spectators is visible. The image includes a considerable amount of light sky. The photographer is positioned in front of the athlete, approximately two meters from her. The throwing action will be towards the right of this position. The photo was taken with a slight under view. The photograph's caption is: 'Shot put. Second place Elsa'.[48]

The image evokes a feeling of anticipation. The slight blurriness, as well as the athlete's tensed body, supports this impression. The tension visible in her fingers and left arm, as well as the motion detectable in her clothes, refers to the strain of the athlete's efforts. Her facial expression, while not completely distorted, points to her using and producing energy. The posture of the man to the left of the athlete indicates expectation. This athlete is about to put the shot.

Thrusting figuration

This figuration involves the end phase of a throwing movement. In this phase of throwing, an athlete is releasing or has just released a device (e.g. javelin, shot put, discus). It involves considerable force and propulsion of the body so that maximum power can be transferred to the device. Athletes often are quite vocal in this phase. In Figure 4, the athlete pictured has just released a javelin. She is in air, perhaps 10 to 20 centimetres off the ground. Her legs are split in a gait-like position. Her right arm is extended towards the front as she has thrown the javelin with this arm. The left arm is to her side. The athlete's body is slightly tilted towards the left. The thrower is fiercely looking at the javelin. Her hair is short and blows backward from the throwing exertion. She wears shorts and a t-shirt, on which the number 24 is attached. On the left top side of her shirt, the Swedish flag is visible. She also wears socks and dark sports shoes.

Insert Figure 4 here.

The javelin thrower is competing on a sandy surface. The athlete's movement has blown up some sand just behind her right foot. In the immediate background, two athletes are sitting on a bench and two men standing to the side and back are visible. One man carries some kind of megaphone; the other is perhaps a photographer. Further in the back, the blurred background includes spectators sitting and standing in the stands of a stadium. Behind this construction, forest and sky are visible. The relatively long shadow on the sand suggests that it was a sunny afternoon. The photographer would have been standing approximately two meters from the athlete, somewhat to the side of her. The photo was taken slightly from below.

The impression this image offers is one of immediacy and action. The spear's proximity to the athlete (approx. one meter away), the athlete's mid-air position, as well as the sand blown from her right foot, create this impression. Her fierce look supports the feeling that the athlete exerted herself to thrust the javelin as far as possible. The caption of this photograph says: 'Javelin. 1st place Anna-Lilja Adelsjöld. Sweden'.[49]

Flying figuration

This figuration refers to athletes being photographed mid-air. The photograph representative of this figuration (Figure 5) shows an athlete during her long jump exercise. The athlete is approximately one and a half meters above ground in a gait-like position. Both her knees are bent. The left arm points upwards, while the right one is pointing forward. Her expression is that of exertion, the ends of her mouth pointing downwards. Her leg muscles are visible. She

wears shorts, a t-shirt and a head band. The competition number is visible, although not clearly readable. The clothes are pressed to her front. She does not wear socks with her athletic shoes.

Insert Figure 5 here.

The athlete is about to land in a sandpit. In the immediate background, several men are visible. One is holding some sort of book. Several others are sitting on grass watching the athlete. Further back, a stadium is pictured. Half of the background shows light sky. The photograph lacks sharpness and was taken with considerable under-view. The photographer would have been standing at the edge of the sandpit to the side of the performing athlete. The caption added to the image says: 'Long jump: 1st price Hitomi, Japan'.[50]

The impression the photograph leaves is one of awe and amazement. The athlete appears to have gained considerable height, which seems to be somewhat unrealistic. The tensed muscles add to this impression. Further, as her clothes are pressed against her body, forward movement can be guessed. The flying figuration can thus be seen to depict an action that involves some risk. The captured movement, especially the position of her arms and legs, signals that the athlete has been willing to take risk, and actually might be at risk. The view from below increases this impression, as it makes the athlete appear higher in air than she actually is.

Three similar images to Figures 3, 4 and 5 are printed on the front page of 'Göteborgs Tidningen' on 29 August 1926. Two photographs capture athletes in the moment of having thrown a piece of equipment (the equipment is not visible), while one pictures Kinue Hitomi in her long jump performance. The background of the javelin thrower has been cut. Four other photographs are placed next to the three images. They include images of several other disciplines. Two images show athletes presenting themselves standing in front of the camera. The article takes up most of the page. The title says: 'Two Swedish flags in top places at the prize ceremony. Anna-Lisa Adelsköld won the javelin with Elsa Haglund in third. – Hitomi, Japan, broke the world record in long jump. England in first and Sweden in second place in the nations' contest'.[51] The photographs' single caption says: 'Top from left to right: Japanese Hitomi, starting the hurdles race and victories in spear throwing, Anna Lisa Adelsköld. Below: Hitomi and English competitor Gunn, Smolova in the long-jumping event and Swedes Svensson (nr 29) and Svedberg (nr 97)'.[52]

The article reports on the various competitions and results. None of the text refers directly to the images. However, the author describes the competitions in great detail and is not shy of using a vocabulary of military and war to describe the competitions and athletes. The author refers to the competitions, for instance, as 'dramatic' and 'fierce battles', and the achievements to be a result of the athletes 'salvaging victories'. Further, Hitomi is described as 'the strong Japanese' and Adelsköld as an athlete, who 'in supreme Swedish style brought home the first prize of javelin with a record result'.[53] Her achievement is even compared to the 'patriotic warmth and admiration' that Swedes felt when Eric Lemming[54] won a gold medal at the 1912 Stockholm Olympic Games.

The accelerating, thrusting and flying figurations portray anticipation, immediacy, action, courage and risk. The accelerating figuration constructs an image of an athlete gathering her forces to excel athletically. The impression of the thrusting figuration is shaped by the athlete in air and the flying javelin, especially in contrast to the various non-moving elements in the background. One feels in close proximity to the athletic feat. In the flying figuration, the view from below, but also the reaction of the clothes and the athlete's facial expression, reflect incredulity, courage and risk. The newspaper text, at least to some extent, captures these features by including similar images, using a traditionally masculine vocabulary, and praising the athletes for their fitness, bravery and achievements. At the same time, however, the changes in images, including the cropping of thrown equipment and background (e.g. spectators) and the large size of the two portrait images, the article also reflects traditional ways of representing athletic women.

Discussion

The above examinations show how the photographs represented the competitors of the 1926 Women's Games in Gothenburg and how these related to the textual descriptions of three newspaper articles. As part of the fourth interpretative step, the iconological interpretation, we will now place the visual and textual representations within the wider social context of the 1920s, in particular within elements of gender dispositive. In so doing, we can point to how the photographs were part of broader social negotiations of gender norms and roles. The two elements we include in the discussion are: a) mechanisation of bodies and b) feminisation of women's bodies.

Mechanisation of bodies

During the nineteenth century, industrialization changed models of corporal harmony and naturalisation to an ideal defined by biomedical knowledge.[55] As sciences such as physiology, experimental psychology and ergonomics emerged and developed, the body became defined within new parameters, including technological concepts such as energy, efficiency and performance. These developments shaped sport, in particular regarding how athletes' bodies were perceived: namely as objects that could be manipulated and trained to achieve records.[56] This objectification, in turn, not only rationalised and mechanised the body, but also idealised this type of body.

The mechanical body, however, was gendered. Gertrud Pfister writes how the striving for records celebrated the performances of men and relegated those achieved by women.[57] Certainly, discourses surrounding body culture, aesthetic ideals, as well morals and decency, defined corporal standards, as well as what women were seen as capable of within the domain of physical exertion and competitive sport. Generally, an athletic appearance (ie. a muscular body) and competitive sport, in particular endurance sports and disciplines traditionally practiced by men, were considered out of bounds for women.[58]

Yet, for women to be able to achieve top performances in sport, and to be taken serious by stakeholders and spectators, the adoption of perceived masculine orientations and behaviours was essential. This included rational and mechanistic parameters. Indeed, Pfister writes how the 1920s was characterised by women preferring functionality over femininity.[59] The five figurations we produced from the sample of photographs illustrate how women

adopted such characteristics. They visualise corporal mechanisation by way of portraying the athletes exerting themselves (all figurations), saving time (lunging towards the finish line), collecting energy to thrust a piece of equipment in the air and risking oneself to propel the body into the air. These corporal technologies are supported by the athletes' body language and ethos. The athletes' facial expressions, for instance, demonstrate effort, concentration and determination and portray women's control over their bodies. They reflect composed selves, controlled motions and purposeful application. The movements are not left to chance, but rather are performed with clear determination and aims.

The newspaper articles do not directly refer to the rationalised and mechanised ways the athletes used their bodies. Yet, in the article published in 'Göteborg's Tidningen', the journalist suggests that with a better technique and a more professional attitude, the athletes could have improved their performances. These passages are examples of how the mechanisation had taken hold of sport. The journalist referred to notions of efficiency and technique to evaluate the women's attitude and performances. It demonstrates how this type of knowledge had gained importance, and how the journalist felt that the women were not sufficiently adhering to these standards (ie. not sufficiently mechanised their bodies).

Feminisation of women's bodies

At the same time of bodies being rationalised and mechanised, and these characteristics taking hold of sport, the years after the First World War brought about a 'new' woman's ideal. This can be seen as a consequence of women having gained much freedom of space and action during the war.[60] As men were needed in the military, women took over much of men's duties and responsibilities. Although women were expected to revert to their traditional roles once their men returned from war, they were not prepared to part with their newly gained liberty and autonomy. Further, times were not as they had been. Memories of the war led people to realize their vulnerability and appreciate the present. Activities characteristic of the 'roaring twenties' exemplify how life was lived more actively and intensely.[61]

This new context, coupled with the rationalisation and mechanisation of the body, influenced the development of an obsession with corporeality.[62] For women, this 'new' ideal broke away from previous models of passivity and instead became characterised by autonomy and self-management. While it had previously been external factors that had shaped women's bodies (e.g. clothing, in particular the corset, but also medical advice), the newly emerged ideal asked women to take an *active* role in the shaping of their selves.[63] This self-creation was seen to give women a means to create bodies that were (or remained) youthful, slim, narrow-hipped and flat-chested. Those that could achieve such bodies were considered to be modern and successful. In terms of physical activity and sport, this trend can be seen to have given women opportunities to become active. Indeed, to be athletic was fashionable, with the sport heroine embodying a pinnacle of emancipation.[64]

The photographs provide examples of the 'new' signifiers, both in terms of appearance and performance. With regard to the former, the athletes pictured in the photographs appeared to have adopted the 'new' look (e.g. short hairstyle, athletic bodies, sporting attire). With regard to the latter, the constructed impressions had previously mostly been associated with men. The photographs we analysed above, however, point to how the women competing in the Women's Games in Gothenburg had begun to embody high performance. The various corporal expressions, the general intense application during competition, as well as the

women's trained physiques, indicate how the women sought to strive for athletic excellence. The newspaper articles did not refer to these specific performance characteristics. Yet, the articles acknowledged the Gothenburg Games by reporting on it as extensively as they did (including images), and in many instances printing their features on the newspapers' front pages. In one of the articles ('Göteborgs Tidningen'), the text acknowledges and praises the athletes' accomplishments. In this article, the journalist uses a military vocabulary, words that are traditionally masculine. The victory by one Swedish woman is even likened to that of a male Olympian from 1912.

1920s society did not, however, accept the 'new' woman ideal without reservations. The articles printed in 'Göteborgs Tidningen' and 'Dagens Nyheter' illustrate how social expectations conflicted with the athletic ideal. As the sporting woman adopted traditional masculine characteristics, gender differences became blurred. Although women athletes fascinated the public, which the great number of spectators at the Gothenburg Games illustrates, 'the masculinisation of women was a symbol of decadence' which led to numerous negative developments.[65] Indeed, the newspaper articles mostly placed the track and field athletes within traditional ideas of femininity. The sexualisation of the athletes' looks (e.g. Greek goddess, girl Platino), for instance, as well as the representation of the Gothenburg Games as a spectacle, are examples of this feminisation. In terms of performance, a basic assumption that could be observed was that of the male performance being the yardstick for evaluation. This led to comparative analyses between women's and men's professional attitude towards competing, their competition strategies and athletic performances and gave the journalists opportunities to highlight deficits and differences (e.g. awkward technique, unprofessional behaviour). Where shortcomings could not be found, the performances were sensationalised and represented as exceptional and out of the ordinary. Through these evaluations and the critique, the women's performances and achievements were devalued. Lastly, three of the five images we analysed above also picture various male officials. Their involvement as judges and time or record keepers, as well as organisers and sponsors, illustrates that sport was, and continued to be, organised by men.

In summary, the 1920s were a time when a new women's ideal emerged and when women pushed the boundaries of what was considered ideal and possible in track and field. The five photographs we included above can be seen as testimonies of how the women athletes at the Gothenburg Games contested traditional gender norms and expectations. Yet, conservative ideas and discourses were present and shaped how women were perceived at that time. These elements were part of the contemporary gender dispositive that created negotiations over gender norms and roles, which in part were carried out in and certainly transmitted through the representations in newspapers. They were also part of the debate over the acceptance and inclusion of women track and field athletes into international organisations.

Conclusion

The sample of photographs and newspaper articles we examined portray the Women's Games that took place in Gothenburg, Sweden, in 1926. They visualised how the women athletes adopted and lived performance-based movement characteristics commonly associated with traditional notions of masculinity. They became part of the contemporary gender dispositive, within which gender norms and roles were negotiated. As the photographs challenged what

had previously been perceived as possible, the sexualisation of women athletes in the newspaper articles can be seen as an example of how the idea of women as competitive athletes was resisted. The debate over the acceptance and inclusion of women into the IAAF and the IOC is another example of this negotiation. Over time, the elements within the gender dispositive adopted knowledge and discourses surrounding women in competitive sport. The partial inclusion of track and field events at the 1928 Olympic Games can be seen as a first step in this trend.

This is not to say that women athletes became equal to men. In contrast, and as various scholars have pointed out, the negotiations of gender values and norms did not lead to an amalgamation of masculine and feminine standards, but women's adoption of masculine ideals.[66] In track and field, this adoption literally led women to lose influence over institutional and organisational developments. Although they had gained partial entrance by 1928, the eventual disappearance of the FSFI, and thus the takeover by the mostly male members of the IAAF and IOC, is a case in this point.

Our photographic analyses demonstrate how generative visual materials can be. We would even like to contend that had we not specifically analysed sports photographs, the findings we presented surrounding the athletes' use of their bodies, as well as the messages this employment created, could not be explored. We thus join other visual studies scholars' recommendation to consider and use visual materials in their explorations of social phenomena.

Notes

[1] For useful examples see the works by Hargreaves, *Sporting Females;* McCrone, *Sport and the Physical Emancipation*; Pfister, 'Sport - die Befreiung', 206-247; 'Zur Geschichte des Körpers', 11-47; 'Die Frauenweltspiele', 157-171; 'Die grossen Frauen', 138-145;'Olympische Spiele nur für Männer?', 110-136.

[2] Rosol, 'Pour une Participation', 15-35; 'Le Sport vers le Féminisme' 63-77; Drevon, '*Alice Milliat'*; Carpentier & Levèvre, 'The Modern Olympic Movement', 1112-1127; Pfister, 'Die Frauenweltspiele', 157-171; Pfister, 'Die grossen Frauen',138-145; Terret, 'From Alice Milliat to Marie-Thérèse Eyquem', 1154-1172.

[3] Rosol, 'Pour une Participation', 15-35; 'Le Sport vers le Féminisme' 63-77; Drevon, '*Alice Milliat'*;Carpentier & Levèvre, 'The Modern Olympic Movement', 1112-1127; Pfister, 'Die Frauenweltspiele', 157-171; Pfister, 'Die grossen Frauen',138-145; Terret, 'From Alice Milliat to Marie-Thérèse Eyquem', 1154-1172.

[4] For useful examples see the works by Drevon, '*Alice Milliat'*; Tolvhed, 'Damolympiaden', 93-102.

[5] A text that has included photographs of the Games, although without specifically analysing these, is the work by Tolvhed, 'Damolympiaden', 93-102.

[6] For useful examples see the works by Booth, 'Visual Materials', 98-106; Maasen, Mayerhauser & Renggli, *Bilder als Diskurse.*

[7] Cowan & Sicks, *Technik, Krieg und Medien*, 23.

[8] Huggins & O'Mahony, *The Visual in Sport*; *The International Journal of the History of Sport, special issue* 'Sport and the Visual', 28, 8-9, 2011.

[9] Osmond, 'Reflecting Materiality', 339-360; Kinsey, 'Australian Women Cyclists', 77-101; 'Reading Photographic Portraits', 1121-1137; Schmidtke, *Körperformationen;* 'Sportstudentin beim Diskuswurf', n/p.; Walther, *Siegertypen;* 'Nichts vermag mit dem unangenehmen Eindruck',7-29; Weber & Barker-Ruchti, 'Bending, Floating, Flirting, Flying', 22-41.

[10] Kinsey, 'Reading Photographic Portraits', 1121.

[11] Duval, 'The Development of Women's Track and Field in England', 25.

[12] Edwards & Hart, *Photographs Objects Histories*, 11.

[13] Osmond, 'Reflecting Materiality', 342.

[14] Freeman, *The Photographer's Vision*, 102.

[15] The Hasselblad company is a Gothenburg-based enterprise. From 1940 onwards, it produced various cameras, including the famous Hasselblad 500C in 1957.

[16] Personal communication with Agne Ågren, a retired camera shop owner from Gothenburg, a photography enthusiast and an antique photographic equipment collector.

[17] Booth, 'Visual Materials', 98-106; Osmond, 'Reflecting Materiality', 339-360; Philipps, O'Neill & Osmond, 'Boardening Horizons', 271-293.

[18] Philipps, O'Neill & Osmond, 'Boardening Horizons', 280.

[19] Philipps, O'Neill & Osmond, 'Boardening Horizons', 280, emphasis ours.

[20] Foucault, *Power/Knowledge*, 104.

[21] Foucault, *Dispositive der Macht.*

[22] Foucault & Rabinow, *The Foucault Reader,* 262.

[23] Maasen, Mayerhauser & Renggli, *Bilder als Diskurse*, 21.

[24] Maasen, Mayerhauser & Renggli, *Bilder als Diskurse*, 15, translation ours.

[25] Cowan & Sicks, *Technik, Krieg und Medien,* 23.

[26] Weber & Barker-Ruchti, 'Bending, Floating, Flirting, Flying', 22-41. In their study, the authors showed how the acrobatic performance trend of women's artistic gymnastics

influenced visual representations. Although most photographs and written texts continued to represent gymnasts in traditionally feminine ways (e.g. in terms of eroticism and sexual availability), photographs that captured gymnasts in flight (e.g. somersault) provided viewers with new imaginations of what girls and women are capable of. They can be seen to have at least challenged traditional ideals of femininity.

[27] Bührmann, 'Die Normalisierung der Geschlechter', 71-93.

[28] Pilarczyk & Mietzner, *Das reflektierte Bild;* Schmalriede, 'Zwischen Dokumentation und Inszenierung', 11-39. Pilarczyk and Mietzner see iconography to serve the description of and classification of depicted motifs. Iconology, on the other hand, synthesises the iconographic information as sources and evidence for a wider social, political, and cultural analysis of the time in which the image was produced.

[29] Information retrieved from www.modernamuseet.se.

[30] Schmalriede, 'Zwischen Dokumentation und Inszenierung', 21.

[31] Heinemann, *Einführung in die Soziologie des Sports*, 85-116.

[32] Tolvhed, 'Damolympiaden', 95.

[33] Hofmann, 'Ein hürdenreicher Weg', 173.

[34] Translation ours.

[35] Göteborgs Tidningen, 'Överlägsen engelsk seger', 1, translation ours.

[36] Translation ours.

[37] Göteborgs Tidningen, 'Överlägsen engelsk seger', 1, translation ours.

[38] Göteborgs Tidningen, 'Överlägsen engelsk seger', 1, translation ours.

[39] Göteborgs Tidningen, 'Överlägsen engelsk seger', 1, translation ours.

[40] Translation ours.

[41] Dagens Nyheter, 'Nya världs- och Svenska rekordtitle', 14. 'Daggstänkta berg, fallera' is a section of a traditional Swedish song lyrics for folk dance and can be translated to 'dewy mountain, fallera'.

[42] Translation ours.

[43] Dagens Nyheter, 'Nya världs- och Svenska rekordtitle', 14, translation ours. We realise that the writing style of the 1920s differs from that of today. The translations we made were made in an effort to keep as close to the original text as possible. Unfortunately, Leepin's first name could not be located.

[44] Dagens Nyheter, 'Nya världs- och Svenska rekordtitle', 14, translation ours.

[45] Dagens Nyheter, 'Nya världs- och Svenska rekordtitle', 14, translation ours.

[46] We assume here that the text given in the caption is accurate and that the newspaper journalist changed this information.

[47] Barker-Ruchti, 'The media as an authorising practice of femininity', 226.

[48] Translation ours.

[49] Translation ours.

[50] Translation ours.

[51] Göteborgs Tidningen, 'Två Svenska flaggor i topp', 1, translation ours.

[52] Translation ours.

[53] Göteborgs Tidningen, 'Två Svenska flaggor i topp', 1, translation ours.

[54] Eric Lemming (1880-1930) was a Swedish athlete who competed in a variety of events. He won a total of seven Olympic medals over three Olympic Games including 4 golds. In 1912, he won the javelin title.

[55] Cowan & Sicks, *Technik, Krieg und Medien,* 15.

[56] Pfister, 'Sport – die Befreiung', 213.

[57] Pfister, 'Sport – die Befreiung', 213.

[58] Hargreaves, 'Playing Like Gentlemen', 46.

[59] Pfister, ‘Sport - die Befreiung‘, 221.
[60] Tinkler & Krasnick Warsh, ’Feminine Modernity’, 132.
[61] Terret, ‘From Alice Milliat to Marie-Thérèse Eyquem’, 1161.
[62] Cowan & Sicks, *Technik, Krieg und Medien,* 20.
[63] Pfister, ‘Sport - die Befreiung‘, 227.
[64] Pfister, ‘Sport - die Befreiung‘, 238.
[65] Pfister, ‘Sport - die Befreiung‘, 239.
[66] Pfister, ‘Sport - die Befreiung‘, 241.

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1000-m.-löppet

Löpning 100 yards. Heat 1. Segr:a Radicleau, Frank.

Kulstötning. 2a pris Elsa


24

Spjutkastning. 1a-pris Anna-Lisa Adelsköld, Sverige

I. Längdhopp: 1:a pris Hitomi, Japan.