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Media coverage of the Olympic Games

Висвітлення Олімпійських ігор у медіа

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Abstract

The Olympic Games have always occupied a special place in the information environment. Coverage of the preparation of these important competitions in modern media discourse deserves more detailed consideration. This is due to the development of new media, in particular, social networks and a kind of competition with traditional media. Accordingly, the aim of the work is to analyze the peculiarities of the coverage of the Olympic Games in the media. As a result of the study, it was concluded that since the London Olympics in 2012, traditional media have experienced strong competition from social networks (eg, Facebook, Twitter). As a result, new media promote active communication, which allows individual consumers to create content in a very specific way. At the same time, there are alarming trends in the use of the media in information or political confrontation, which is a threat to freedom of expression. In order to analyze the coverage of the Olympic Games in the media, general theoretical research methods are used, including analysis and synthesis. The conclusions conclude that modern media contribute to the promotion of the Olympic movement in the world, and the use of the latest media opportunities significantly democratize and diversify this process.

Keywords: Olympic Games, mass media, social networks, information.

Анотація

Олімпійські Ігри в інформаційному середовищі завжди посідали окреме важливе місце. Висвітлення підготовки, проведення та особливостей організації цих важливих змагань у сучасному медіадискурсі заслуговує докладнішого розгляду. Це спричинено розвитком нових медіа, зокрема, соціальних мереж та своєрідною конкуренцією із традиційними ЗМІ. Відповідно, метою роботи є аналіз особливостей висвітлення Олімпійських ігор у медіа. Реалізація мети передбачає виконання завдань: аналізу ролі сучасних медіа у інформаційному супроводі олімпійських змагань, дослідження політичних маніпуляцій. В результаті проведеного дослідження підсумовано, що уже від Олімпіади в Лондоні у 2012 р. традиційні ЗМІ відчули потужну конкуренцію зі сторони соціальних мереж (наприклад, Facebook, Twitter тощо). Внаслідок цього нові медіа сприяють активній комунікації, яка дозволяє окремим споживачам цілком конкретно створювати контент, тобто виступати творцями цінностей. Водночас, тривожними є тенденції щодо використання ЗМІ в інформаційному чи політичному протистоянні, що є загрозливим для свободи слова явищем. Із метою аналізу висвітлення Олімпійських ігор у медіа ресурсах застосованими є загальнотеоретичні методи дослідження, поміж яких індукція, дедукція, аналіз та синтез. Вагому увагу займає історичний метод дослідження, за допомогою якого ми охарактеризували розвиток цього змагання у цілому. У висновках підсумовано, що сучасні засоби інформації сприяють популяризації олімпійського руху в світі, а використання новітніх можливостей медіа значно демократизують та диверсифікують цей процес.

Ключові слова: Олімпіада, засоби масової комунікації, соціальні мережі, інформація.

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Introduction

Physical culture and sports are the most relevant and universal factors that unite all spheres of life of any social group, every person as an individual, collective, and nation as a whole. One of the components of physical culture is a sport. Its presence and development are determined by the needs of society in a specific sphere of educational and game activities of people, the need to have such a space, in which a person could show their physical and intellectual abilities. It is in sport, in the process of competing by the rules, that a person finds one of the ways of self-assertion of a personality, defeating his own flaws, age, rivals, and in the end, triumphing over himself, developing his abilities. Olympic sport is one of the phenomenal phenomena, unparalleled throughout the world. Its culminating event is the unification of the world's athletes in the great sporting festival that is the Olympic Games. They are covered by a lot of modern media, demonstrating the achievements of certain athletes. At the same time, like any value judgments, media reports have a considerable amount of subjectivity. It is important, however, to distinguish between meaningful actions that mislead content consumers and the personal preferences of certain observers. Without excusing the latter, we should note that meaningful manipulations that can be found in the media are much more damaging. Our study aims to analyze the media coverage of the Olympic Games with a focus on the sports and socio-political components.

Theoretical Framework or Literature Review

The Olympic Games are the largest multi-sport event in the world, regularly attracting billions of viewers from all over the world. Live sports coverage is viewed by viewers from hundreds of countries around the world. The topic of the Olympic Games has received a lot of attention in the studios of scientists. So, to analyze the peculiarities of media coverage of the Olympic Games, we will conduct a systematic review of current professional literature. Specifically, Geurin & Naraine (2020) analyzed in detail the problem of Olympic Games research from 1999-2018. The scholars carefully reviewed 221 articles that exposed the problem of athletic competition through a theoretical, methodological, or contextual lens. Their results revealed a significant amount of research focused on the Summer Olympics, shaped by U.S. newspaper reports. Yan (2020) explored the relationship between professional sports and media through the example of media coverage of

the Olympics. The author paid much attention to newspaper and magazine reports about the competition. Salido-Fernández & Muñoz-Muñoz (2021) conducted a systematic review of the literature on women's coverage in the Olympics. Their results showed that such scholarly studios were mostly conducted among American researchers. The latter predominantly analyzed media reports and with close attention to television. Mauro (2020) analyzed media coverage of the Olympic Games and their influence on the formation of nationalist principles. So, the mentioned problem is not new in scientific circles but still requires further research, taking into account the politicization of the media, the peculiarities of the functioning of the information society (Geurin, & Naraine, 2020).

At the same time, we believe that the main directions of further development of the Olympic media space should include a broad coverage and justification of previous theoretical research, diversification of the research context (application of various methodological and analytical approaches), and further analysis of the Olympic Games as part of the growth of the overall Olympic movement.

Methodology

The work is based on the use of general theoretical methods of research, in particular, the article uses the principles of analysis, synthesis, induction, and deduction. Equally important was the method of comparison, through which we were able to compare the practice of coverage of the Olympic Games in the world media. In the work, we also used the method of abstraction, which involves ascending from the abstract to the concrete. It was used in the analysis of general theoretical approaches and positions, and the formation of recommendations for further coverage of the Olympic Games in academic circles. The article also used the historical method of research, which shows the development of the modern Olympic Games. Separate attention in the work is focused on empirical methods of collecting and interpreting information. In particular, this problem is investigated based on newspaper, magazine reports, television coverage of the Olympic Games in the world. Note that our study is formed based on the analysis of European and American media. Also, the study is formed as a result of using the statistical method, which

consisted of a qualitative analysis of the experimental data.

We analyzed the Olympic Games took part last twenty years. It shows the main tendency of evolution of its perception in the social media.

The data used in this study are gathered from newspapers such as *The New York Times*, *Los Angeles Times*, *The Washington Post*, and *China Daily*, four powerful newspapers that are popular in the United States and China. In addition, the work is shaped by an analysis of new media resources. We are talking about the social networks Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube. Particular attention was paid to the analysis of sports messages in the social platform Weibo. We are talking about the Chinese communication network microblogging, which has recently been gaining in popularity. Also, the Russian media resource Sport24.ru was used to highlight the problem of manipulation in the media. The study was formed based on the analysis of data from other resources, in particular, Ukrinform (Ukrainian news site), YahooSport (American sports media platform), etc. were analyzed.

Results

Since its founding in 1896, the modern Olympics have become the largest sporting event in the world. For example, 2,833 athletes from 92 countries and 11,238 athletes from 207 countries participated in the last such competitions held in Pyeongchang, South Korea, in 2018, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in 2016, respectively. Despite this, we note that, in general, a small proportion of the world's population can attend these competitions in person, so most learn about the

progress of the Olympic Games through media resources (Gerrard, 2022). According to research by contemporary scholars, on average, at least 4.5 billion of the world's population watch the Olympics. (Yan, 2020). Traditionally, a flame is lit before the opening of the Olympic Games, symbolizing good freedom and unity among nations. Numerous runners carry it into the main Olympic Stadium. On the way to the stadium, the flame should not be extinguished, so it is symbolically passed from torchbearer to torchbearer.

At the same time, the current literature notes that coverage of Olympic events can influence (and manipulate) the nation's goals in different ways, hence the importance of now critically examining the sports media. Specifically, Eagleman et al. (2014) noted that media coverage of such games plays an important role in shaping attitudes toward them, those who cannot visit them with their own eyes. Thus, how the media represent the Olympics can have a powerful influence on the views of certain citizens about the Olympics. The development of television has influenced how Olympic sports have begun to be broadcast on different channels (Yan, 2020). At the same time, such a showing of these sporting events gave the sport the popularity that put its main characters on a par with the world's stars. The latter is due to both a certain material interest and social prestige. A striking example is the 2004 Olympic Games, held in Athens. It was at that time when television coverage of the Olympic competitions was particularly developed; with the help of the comparative table, one can trace the popularity of their broadcasting, which can be traced in the amounts of payment for television rights (Tabl. 1).

Table 1. *Television coverage of the Olympic Games. Official partners at the 2004 Athens Olympics.*

State	TV network	The cost of television rights to broadcast the Olympics, \$ million
United States	NBC	793
Canada	CBC	37
Latin America	OTI	17
Puerto Rico	WKAQ	1
Japan	AOJC	155
UAE	ASBU	5
Korea	AOKP	15
Europe	EBU	394
Australia	Seven	51
Africa	URTNA	1
Total		1469

Source: IOC 2006 Marketing Fact File

New Media in Olympic Coverage

At present, coverage of the Olympic Games takes place in numerous resources of mass communication. A notable place in this is occupied by the Internet, which has extensive multilateral communication capabilities. As a relatively new means of mass communication, the Internet has such characteristics as interactivity, virtuality, spatial immensity, openness, etc. (Yan, 2020). In order to watch the Olympic Games a person does not need to be in a particular place or at a particular time, it is enough to own different media, as well as to have access to the Internet. At the same time, we note that the increase in the number of sources of information in sports communication is due to: the promotion and quality filling of official websites of sports clubs, federations, or other organizations, the formation of sites of sports TV channels; the activity of athletes on their own pages in various social networks (we are talking about Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, YouTube, etc.) (Gerhart, 2017). We agree with the view that as a result of technological advances, media and technology have, on the one hand, spread into social life and, on the other hand, have become more diverse (Yan, 2020). At the same time, compared to traditional media, online media have

quite a huge potential, because users can get certain unlimited access to resources, and they also act as a kind of tool for shaping public opinion (Geurin, 2019). Online media became especially relevant during the Covid-19 pandemic, including (as now) sports mass communication sites worked to form broader content creation and digital activation strategies. Several major leagues in Europe and the NBA in North America are known to have significantly multiplied digital engagement in sports by more than 10%. We are talking about the period from spring 2020 to April 2021. At the same time, many official Olympic sites have recorded a marked increase in activity on well-known social platforms such as Twitter, YouTube, and Instagram. The recent Tokyo Olympics (Horne & Whannel 2020) is a prime example of this. Facebook and Twitter were the most-watched and analyzed by Internet users of these competitions (Litchfield & Kavanagh, 2018). In last place is the TikTok network, due to its more sensible content. Recently, the number of sports audiences on a social platform such as Weibo has grown. We are talking about the Chinese microblogging communication network. The authors of this network also paid noticeable attention to the Olympic Games in Tokyo (Tabl. 2).

Table 2.
Weibo Hot Topics Classification

Sports' event (by sport)	Number of messages
Table Tennis	64
Athletics	21
Shooting	20
Swimming	19
Diving	19
Opening Ceremony	19
Total	162

Source: database was calculated by Chen (2022).

The table shows the most popular topics (with at least 50,000 likes on Weibo) in July and August 2020 during the Tokyo Olympics. Apparently, table tennis was the most popular event from this point of view, while the other competitive disciplines, along with the opening ceremony, garnered roughly the same number of views. The popularity of ping-pong can be explained by the great activity of Asian media resources, where this game is the national sport. Obviously, the trends in the popularity of the sport in Asia will not only continue but also grow in the future.

The task of modern media is to inform the general public. As a result of the development of

marketing relationships, sports federations have established contacts with media providers (Geurin, & Naraine, 2020). Accordingly, media resources enjoy the mass popularity of sports to stimulate audiences, readers, advertising display revenue, sales, and royalties. The traditional media model has now shifted to new patterns of interaction using modern digital platforms and tools that develop interactive interaction between the consumer and media providers.

New media is the use of digital developments and technological innovations to convey information according to consumer requirements, usually within real-time and space. The formation of

modern media content significantly democratizes the process of information resources, significantly different from outdated media models (Byun & Leopkey, 2020). New media facilitate active communication that allows individual consumers to create content quite specifically, i.e., these transformations have influenced organizational paradigms of interaction and information control. Organizations and organizing committees must collaborate with various media agencies, but also consider collaboration with other, sometimes even independent, content producers. New media involve revenue generation incentives (e.g., merchandising related products or tickets, etc.), take into account consumer opinions and criticism, promote the growth of trade brands, etc. (Mauro, 2020). Their individual organization allows for more effective journalism, a better viewer or media experience, and feedback.

In fact, all subsequent Olympic competitions from the Atlanta Olympics in 1998 introduced powerful innovations using the latest digital techniques. As early as the 2008 Beijing Olympics, for the first time in history, a separate Internet broadcast was used and sold separately from television rights (Yan, 2020). At the 2010 Winter Olympics, the Cultural Olympics Digital Edition (CODE) was created with the goal of highlighting the role of modern digital technologies in art and communication. The next Summer Games in London in 2012 were new - at that time, social media had already become the dominant mode of content production and were quite capable of competing with traditional media resources (in particular, television) and became an object of special interest to viewers. According to available calculations, more than 1 billion people watched the Games in 2012 on Facebook alone. Likewise, the London Olympics was an important event on Twitter because the expansion of this social communication platform dramatically increased during 2010-2012, creating its own content that promotes the brand of the sports movement in the world.

Harmonizing East-West Relations - Media Resources on the 2008 Beijing Olympics.

The start of the 2008 Summer Olympics in Beijing was accompanied by reservations from many U.S. policymakers, military officials, and experts about China's participation and hosting of the upcoming competition. Many observers picked up on this trend and used the media to replicate it in the American media space, pointing to the new dangers of Communist Chinese domination and the rise of authoritarian

political systems. Such sentiments did not contribute to the spirit of the Olympics but were present in the coverage of the main events of the Olympics at the time (Martínez-Abajo et al, 2020).

At the same time, the success of the Olympics has changed the general discourse somewhat. For example, American columnist David Brooks published an article entitled "Harmony and the Dream" (Fomenko et al., 2020). He thought that the start of the Beijing Olympics ceremonies allowed a detailed comparison of the two concepts of social organization, collectivism, and individualism (between China and the United States, respectively). In particular, different peoples who preferred individualistic thinking were significantly better developed than those societies based on collectivist consciousness (Geurin, & Naraine, 2020). At the same time, the current economic and political development of China or Japan indicates the possibility of establishing a new order in the world based on a dialogue between East and West based on mutual trust. Perhaps the 2008 Olympics could act as a strong bridge for the establishment of new political contacts. At the same time, the structure of the Chinese social model may provide some alternative to democratic values. For example, a 2009 New York Times Magazine report stated, "China's rise is not only the result of economic development but also a cultural triumph". Consequently, the ideal of a harmonious society based on a philosophy of collectivism can become as attractive an ideal as the idea of American democracy. This will certainly be a useful lesson of inspiration for other autocratic regimes. So, there have been several images of the Olympic competition linked to images of China in the media.

In particular, journalists close to the Republican Party, The Washington Post portrayed the Middle Kingdom in negative colors. It is unlikely that relations between democratic and authoritarian regimes will change and that Sino-American relations will not improve, and the democratization of Eastern societies will not occur. The future relationship was portrayed differently by employees of the more liberal media resources The New York Times and Los Angeles Times (Mauro, 2020). Here, it was considered normal to establish relations with an authoritarian China, acknowledging the country's authority (while also pointing to shortcomings and tangible shortcomings). There was more positive (or neutral) coverage of China in these papers.

Thus, the media coverage of the organization of the Olympic Games can be considered through the prism of the socio-political component. It should be noted that such materials have a fairly detailed analytical component related to the coverage and conduct of the competitions, as well as their consequences. They are formed in accordance with the preferences and subjective reflections of certain observers but contain a serious layer of objective data.

Media machinations and “simulacra” - Sochi 2014 Winter Olympics.

For example, the process of preparing and organizing the XXII Olympic Winter Games in Sochi in 2014 received a wide response in the media environment, ranging from many controversial stories related to the previous stages, as well as other aspects of the political and socio-economic existence of the modern Russian Federation. This proves the unity of international relations and sports competitions. In particular, a brief analysis of the English-language media (The New York Times, The Washington Post, The Economist) and other media resources demonstrates this interest. Naturally, much attention was paid to the English-language news agencies, which have a high degree of citation. This is due to the authority of these publications and the wide interest of the English-speaking audience. At the same time, consideration of media materials from other regions made it possible to assess the holding and consequences of the 2014 Winter Games from different points of view.

According to official statistics, up to 2 million people came to watch the competitions in Sochi. On the other hand, the volume of attracted television viewers was about 3 billion. Consequently, the media audience of the XXII Olympic Winter Games outweighed the real one by 1500 times - respectively, such a striking difference between the real and virtual presence of viewers led to the fact that the main events were mainly learned about. Obviously, this is also how the idea of these 2014 Games was formed - by the work of journalists, Internet observers, etc.

In his time, the French postmodern philosopher Jean Baudrillard expressed an original concept of forming a specific picture of reality, which creates in a mass audience only an illusion of what is happening. The scholar called this illusion “simulacra” - imitation of something that does not exist and has never existed in real-time and space. The viability of this concept (which is

still used in postmodernism) has been proven in practice (Mauro, 2020). In particular, during the 1991 Gulf War, the main focus of the world's media was on the region. Broadcasts from the bombing and war scenes were virtually live, leading viewers to an image of the conflict that did little to correspond to reality. The reality was replaced by “simulacra,” that is, certain images of events.

On the example of the XXII Olympic Games in Sochi, it is possible to trace the use of such simulacra. In particular, its “innocent” illustration was the well-known episode with a large symbolic snowflake, which for technical reasons could not open in time. The vast majority of viewers did not see this little misunderstanding, because during the broadcast they did not notice the inoperative mechanism of the huge snowflake (which had been turned into one of the Olympic rings, as the organizers had intended), because the live broadcast video was replaced in time by a previously prepared clip from the dress rehearsal. So, already on this example, it is noticeable that the media was not so much shown with reality, but with a certain simulacrum, which was shown to the audience as reality. It was only later that the technical problems became known to the general public.

As it turned out, the entire 2014 Winter Olympics was a kind of simulacrum. From the very beginning, the media demonstrated the victories of Russian athletes, who, as it turned out, defeated all competitors in the medal standings at the time. This victory was widely replicated by the leading Russian media, which were financed (directly or indirectly) from the state budget of the Russian Federation. This served as the basis for the narrative that the authorities needed about the growth of Russia's power, which had achieved incredible heights in sports. It is worth recalling that at the same time the annexation of the Crimean Peninsula was taking place and aggressive actions were unfolding in Ukraine. All this created a tangible simulacrum of political orientation, aimed primarily at the formation of victorious sentiments and exalted Russian patriotism among Russian consumers (Organista & Mazur, 2017). The Sochi Winter Olympics became an element of the “Russian Spring” - the mental beginning of the revival of the glory of former Czarist-Soviet Russia. It should be noted that many international organizations and politicians protested against the violation of the main Olympic principle of peace during the Games. At the same time, as it turned out later, the results of the Russian Olympians had been fabricated. The use of prohibited substances

(doping) had become systematic. As a result of the investigation: doping samples and analyses of quite a number of athletes had been replaced at the appropriate moments through special holes in the laboratories. Accordingly, the new analyses contained no traces of doping. This created a misleading impression of Russian athletes winning and leading in the overall medal standings. In fact, the simulacrum was exposed, many of the "victories" were reversed and the athletes and attendants responsible were suspended. In general, the Russian Federation Olympic team was banned from participating in official competitions under its own flag, and many other sporting events that were supposed to take place within that country were canceled.

However, the Russian government, through the media, began to more actively impose the idea of an "island of Russia" surrounded on all sides by enemies. Sports and blatant manipulation of the Olympians' analyses were used by Russian politicians for their own purposes - media disinformation was the driving tool. It should be noted that similar algorithms were used in other authoritarian countries, in particular Nazi Germany. Thus, media resources can perform not only informational functions but also to a certain extent propaganda functions. These negative phenomena are a cause for concern because the dissemination of pre-biased testimony in the media is an extremely threatening practice.

The 2020 Olympics in a manipulative narrative

As is well known, many media resources do not often attempt to speak objectively on certain issues. This is especially true of the Russian media. Although Russia did not formally take part in the last competitions (because its Russian athletes were banned until December 2022 to compete under their flags, the anthem, or the name of the country at large-scale sporting events. The ban in question was related to the doping problem, organized not just by the coaches, but also by Russian officials and their intelligence services. However, many media outlets further assessed this situation critically. "A ban that means nothing," the British edition of the Evening Standard declared the situation. Russia is announced as Russians... And it seems that nothing happened - neither systematic use of doping, nor cover-up operations, whose traces

lead to the Kremlin, nor the absence of apologies for the violation." The American specialized website Yahoo Sports noted on this point: "It's amazing that Vladimir Putin has not yet appeared in downtown Tokyo on horseback and shirtless ... but with a false mustache and a document named Pladamir Vutin."

However, while in the Western media the authors expressed their dissatisfaction with this punishment of Russian athletes, the Russian media spread information about the so-called "humiliation of Russia. In addition, the Russian media disseminated slanted information about the participants of the competition, especially about the participants from Ukraine. In particular, the site Sport24.ru published a news story on July 28th titled: "A Ukrainian wrestler at the Olympics bit his opponent's hand. It shocked everyone...". The reason for the publication was an incident that had happened during a boxing match between the boxers from Morocco and New Zealand. At that time a Moroccan wanted to bite his opponent's ear. However, for unknown reasons, the Russian media wrote that it was the Ukrainian who bit his opponent's ear. What is interesting is that it was not possible to watch the Olympics in all of Russia. In particular, in Crimea, annexed by Russia, residents could not watch these competitions live. We note that live broadcasts of the Olympic Games are provided by such services as the Olympic Broadcasting Services (Olympic Broadcasting Services). However, this service blocked the signal from Russia, as the International Olympic Committee has repeatedly pointed to this ban even before the competition. Since the International Olympic Committee, taking into account the current norm of international law believes that Crimea should be part of Ukraine.

Despite a certain politicization of the coverage of the Tokyo Olympics. A great deal of attention was paid to the sports component. The media coverage reached a large number of fans, actively communicating with each other using modern media technology. Thus, in general, the 2020 Olympics received extensive attention in the American and European media. In particular, the preferences of American observers and, consequently, readers highlighted the following list of popular topics (Tabl. 3).

Table 3.
Popular tags from American users on Twitter (during the Tokyo Olympics).

Sport time	Number of notifications
Basketball	42
Athletics	35
Swimming	22
Opening Ceremony	19
Rhythmic Gymnastics	16
Medal ceremony	15
Total	149

The table was made by authors.

Thus, according to the choice of content consumers, the most popular online interests of the American audience were basketball, athletics, and swimming (West, 2022). At the same time, according to statistical calculations, the level of

interest of the American population in the 2020 Olympic Games is average. Predominantly U.S. citizens are only “somewhat interested” in the Games. But “very interested” 24% (compared to “not at all interested” 22%). (Fig. 1).

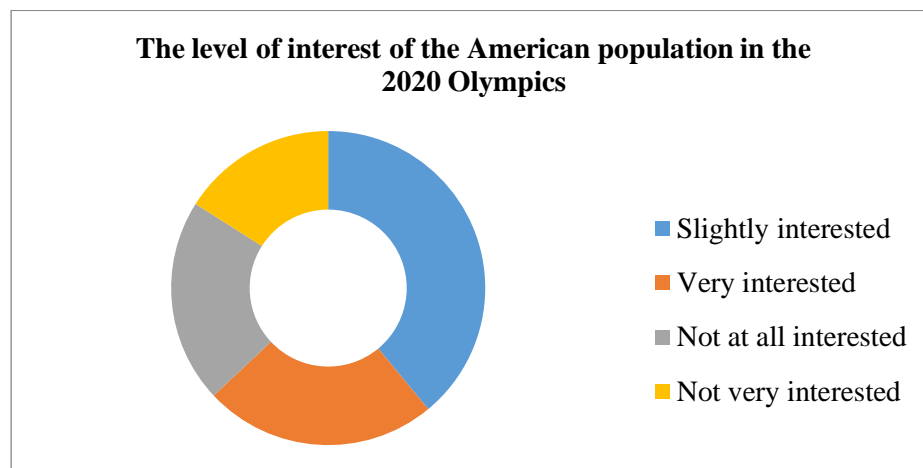


Figure 1. *The level of interest of the American population in the 2020 Olympics*

Discussion

The modern digital transmission of media content has very official implications for the development of the information society, including coverage of the Olympic Games. Diversification processes in the formation of communication platforms and their growth using social media can shake the dominance of traditional media and their practices in covering truly large-scale events such as the Winter or Summer Olympic Games (as well as the need for powerful financial injections into these media structures). It is possible that the media market associated with large-scale sporting events, in general, is undergoing a dramatic change in favor of contracting with smaller organizations or even individuals.

Consequently, many sports fans are increasingly turning their attention to social media, preferring the use of mobile devices and apps on the go rather than conventional TV at home. On the one hand, this leads to possible threats to traditional Olympic programs, since the structure of their broadcasts implies a focus on television screens. In order to use the full potential of digital technology, however, the existing infrastructure will have to be significantly upgraded. However, this can hardly be considered a negative side - it is more about the further evolution of media technologies, which is an objective process of human development.

The presence of a large layer of information about the Olympics on social media greatly democratizes these competitions. In particular, the official media focus primarily on the positives, while criticism is very often hidden.

Reviews on the Internet and personal impressions allow us to look at the competitions from a different perspective. This creates a greater representation of opinions. These thoughts and impressions demonstrate the Olympics as a social organism, which cannot be covered by traditional media. In the same way, these processes introduce people to the life and work of sports journalists, after all, many amateurs also try to become them by covering various social topics. Since quite a few ordinary users have been covering Olympic sports events through social media, they have also contributed in their own way to expanding the popularity of these powerful competitions. The expansion of media channels thanks to new media technologies and the growing value of content created by ordinary users has changed attitudes toward the Olympics and in some ways allowed viewers to become a source of information themselves.

At the same time, the problems of traditional media are evident. This was especially evident when the Olympics were held in countries with authoritarian regimes. For example, Beijing 2008 showed the strength and orderliness of Chinese administrators, but this was used not to showcase a sporting celebration, but for political purposes. Western observers warned against this, but also understood political motives in sports. Probably the Russian media were the most prominent in this field, launching a real campaign to distort reality.

While the traditional media continue to be the mainstay of Olympic coverage, such a policy does not make them popular and forces them to verify their information. Such distrust destroys the perception of the Olympic Games as a sporting celebration and brings political motives to the fore, which we believe is a negative manifestation in the formation of the Olympic sporting spirit.

Conclusions

So, the Olympic Games are one of the most popular topics in various sports communication media. It is true that with the development of the latest communications, the influence of traditional media on the coverage of major sporting events is diminishing. Attention is also drawn to the destructive political influence of political confrontation, which does not allow sports to be completely free of politics. Separate attention should be paid to dangerous trends regarding targeted manipulation, which has recently been demonstrated in Russian traditional

media directly or indirectly financed by the state budget. At the same time, modern media contribute to the popularization of the Olympic movement in the world, and the use of the latest media opportunities significantly democratizes and diversifies this process. The costs of infrastructure projects (associated with the preparation of facilities) can be offset by the interest of billions of people in the Olympic Games. In addition, the paper notes that manipulation in the sports media is quite common. Consequently, further scientific studies on this subject should be guided solely by a scientific-critical vision.

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