



# Professional Habitus and the Construction of Gender. The case of sport press male journalists in France.

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**Abstract**

This article analyzes the role of male journalists in the construction of gender models in the specialized mountain bike press. Using Pierre Bourdieu's field and habitus theory, it shows that the masculine and feminine media figures are mainly dependent on the professional habitus of these male journalists. Indeed, on one hand, professional socialization experiences out of the mountain bike press do facilitate a critical attitude regarding the most stereotypical gender models. On the other hand, male journalists who inversely spent all of their career within the mountain bike press do perpetuate representations in keeping with the dominant doxa.

**Introduction**

Positioned at the interface of sport, gender, and media sociologies, this article analyzes male journalists for the mountain bike press in France and their role in the construction of the gender models as staged in magazines. Using Pierre Bourdieu's theory of field and habitus (1991, 1992), it intends to show that the journalistic practices and attitude to gender models of these editors depend on their educational and sports capitals, their occupational habitus, and the position of their magazines within the mountain bike press sub-field.

Most work on gender construction in sports media involves corpus-based case studies, and establishes their influential role in the production/reproduction of gender relations (Rowe, 2006). These findings equally apply to television productions (Morse, 1983 ; Messner, Duncan, Wachs, 1996; Montanola, 2012) and to sports pages in general-interest magazines (Kane and Parks, 1992 ; Kane, 1988, 1996 ; Kane and Buysse, 2005 ; Duncan and Messner, 1991,1998). The latter indeed favor masculine figures (Salwen and Wood, 1994; Buysse and Embser-Herbert, 2004), sportswomen being often under-represented (Mennesson, 2005 ; Lumpkins and Williams, 1991) and hyper-feminized (Morse, 1983; Mennesson, 2005 ; Mikosza and Phillips, 1999; Messner,1992). An analysis of sports articles' photo illustrations broadly confirms this trend (Duncan, 1990). Overall, a lot of research is conducted on gender models in sports media in general, but it mainly focusses on the most publicized sports, like basketball, or on the American magazine Sport Illustrated and its different variants (Sport Illustrated Women, Sport Illustrated Campus), or else on TV broadcasts. Full-fledged outdoor activities in nature, such as mountain biking, are rather favored by middle and upper class sportspersons (Pociello, 1995) and are rarely analyzed in depth. In a similar situation,

scientific literature mostly studies the general-interest press, whereas in France the first employer of journalists happens to be the magazine press (Marchetti, 2002). In a recent study, we examine the modes of representation of men and women in three magazines that constitute the sub-field of mountain bike media in France (Frayse, 2013). While the data confirms a broad presence of the gender models that conform to « emphasized femininity » and « hegemonic masculinity » (Connell, 1987), it also shows that these models vary with the position occupied by the magazines within the sub-field.

Apart from these corpus investigations, some studies look into the process of information production, in order to better understand the role journalists play in the showcasing of stereotypical gender models. These studies particularly investigate the place of women in the world of journalism, and underline their marginalization. Not very represented in the prestigious columns, and occupying very secondary positions (Chambers, Steiner and Fleming, 2004 ; Van Zoonen, 1994), women have difficulties to impact the traditional media representations of gender categories (Neveu, 2000). Such findings about journalism as a whole seem particularly true in the specialized sports press (Harding and Shaine 2005 ; Salwen and Garrison 1998 ; Knopers and Elling, 2001), which hosts fewer women than the regular general press (Deuze, 2001 ; Dargelos and Marchetti, 2000). Female journalists quite often occupy the lowest positions in sports editorial boards (Marr, Wyss, Blum and Bondafelli, 2001). Career opportunities are less frequent for women than for men, too (Lapchick, Little, Mathew and Zaine, 2008 ; Staurowsky and DiManno, 2002). Clearly dissuaded (Strong, 2007), or excluded from this journalistic specialty (Claringbould, Knoppers and Elling, 2004), they work on editorial boards where the reigning masculine hegemony sparsely fosters questioning. Lucie Schoch (2008, 2013) in particular explores the relations between women journalists's position in this media field, their professional ethos and their hexis. She analyzes the « doxa » structuring the sub-field (Schoch and Ohl, 2011, 2010; Schoch, 2013) and brings to light the central role of sports socialization among journalists, operating as a specific capital (level of practice and knowledge of the milieu). In this context, only the female editors with the richest cultural and sports capital claim access to the same professional practices as men.

Interestingly, this investigation highlights women's differentiated strategies, as opposed to men's strategies, which appear relatively homogeneous. In this article, we focus on the professional practices of male editors, as these are usually analyzed in less detail than female editors' practices. As is the case with all sports media, the mountain bike press is

predominantly masculine. Indeed, out of 19 journalists in the editorial pools, 15 are men and 4 are women. Moreover, the editorial boards of all studied three magazines, Vélo Vert, VTTMag and Vélo Tout Terrain, strongly favor operating within close-knit male organizations. Still, Bourdieu's habitus and field theory (1980, 1991, 1992) suggests the existence of struggles to impose the legitimate definition of the field-structuring activity, in other words, of the « doxa ». These struggles encompass all agents involved in the field, and therefore do not only oppose women to men, but also men amongst themselves. They reveal different conceptions of the sports journalist profession, and different positions on the gender models promoted by the milieu. In order to analyze the diversity of stances among the different investigated editors, we mobilize all three key concepts of Bourdieu's theory, capital, habitus and field.

Thus we look at the mountain bike specialized press as a media sub-field, characterized by fundamental and relatively invariant properties (Bourdieu, 1991, 1992). Each field constitutes a microcosm in the social space and is organized around specific issues at play. Each field has its own habitus, its own « system of incorporated dispositions », and only the agents who have incorporated this specific habitus recognize each other in the field and participate to it (Bourdieu, 1991, 1992). These agents nevertheless occupy different positions and struggle to appropriate the specific capital, unevenly distributed. Thus, they engage in the conservation strategies that have always succeeded up to that point, or in subversion strategies based on innovation. Although the dominant doxa of the mountain bike media sub-field valorizes passion, practical experience and knowledge of the sport (Schoch and Ohl, 2011 ; Marchetti, 2002), it is challenged by another sort of expertise, legitimated by new forms of professional training. It is thus possible to identify different professional habitus, based on the capitals owned by the editors and the modalities of their occupational socialization. As the asymmetric nature of gender relations is a structuring element of the milieu, the rapport to gender models also contributes to differentiate these professional habitus.

Numerous studies mobilize the field and habitus concepts to analyze gender construction (Adkins, 2003 ; Fowler, 1997 ; Skeggs, 1997 ; Krais, 2006 ; McCall, 1992). Surveys of female snowboarders (Thorpe, 2009), or soccer players and boxers (Mennesson, 2012), show that the forms of masculinities and femininities operate as a specific capital. This capital, sometimes equated to a form of cultural capital (Lovell, 2000), differs from group to group and gives structure to the field. So, as suggested by Holly Thorpe (2010), the recent feminist works discussing Bourdieu's theoretical model provide a better grasp of the dynamics of

gender relations. In this perspective, Bourdieu's theory provides useful conceptual tools to conjointly study the editors' journalistic habitus and their positions on the gender models displayed in magazines.

Since these journalists are situated in the space of the mountain bike press, the magazines in which they publish occupy a specific, historically constructed place that orients editorial strategies and exerts strong constraints on their writing practices and on their approaches to showcasing men and women. Publications and their editors-in-chief in particular, each defend one conception of the « real » practice of mountain biking, and of the respective place of men and women in the milieu. A particularly strong homology is noticed between the editors-in-chief's occupational habitus and the gender models promoted in the publications.

The first part of this article analyzes the positions of male journalists in the specialized mountain bike press on gender models, and their relations with the professional habitus. After a presentation of the gender models displayed in the studied magazines, we examine the capitals owned by the investigated individuals and their modes of occupational socialization, which play a central role in the constitution of differentiated habitus.

These journalistic habitus, which orient the writing practices, also depend on the position of the magazines in the sub-field. Thus, the second part examines the homology between the editorial lines the different magazines express when defining mountain biking or displaying gender models, and the professional habitus of the journalists from the respective editorial boards ; with a particular focus on the editors-in-chief.

## Methodology

This article relies on a four-year-long ethnographic investigation of the mountain bike milieu and its journalists in France. Centered on gender construction in this specific world, the collected data includes a corpus study of all three magazines present in that media sub-space, biographical interviews with the near-totality of the editors (19), and observations conducted at the editorial board headquarters, as well as during bike community events that provide structure to the milieu, such as certain shows or competitions.

In a first phase of investigation, examining the contents of the three magazines helped establish the main characteristics of the modes of showcasing men and women cyclists, and the variation in these gender models from magazine to magazine. 172 issues were analyzed over the 2006-2010 period. The processing consisted in a quantitative analysis of the respective share allocated to women and men in the 3 publications. A study of the articles'

texts and photographs highlighted the main characteristics of the modes of representation of men and women cyclists, as broken down by specific column or magazine. This corpus study was completed by biographical interviews of each of the 19 journalists of the milieu in order to get insight into the production of the masculine and feminine gender models identified. The questions were about their career and sports story, educational pathway, professional practices, and about the mountain bike community. The point was to identify their positions regarding the gender models present in the magazines, as well as to analyze the journalistic practices and representations of the very profession of journalist for the specialized mountain bike press.

Additionally to the corpus analysis and interviews, an ethnographic survey of the mountain bike milieu and its specialized press was conducted. The field notes taken during the major live event gatherings on the stands of the three publications, and also at the headquarters of the editorial boards, provided insight into the interactions between journalists, with the readers, and helped to accurately grasp the structure and hierarchy of the milieu.

**Professional habitus and gender models**

The detailed analysis of the gender models presented in mountain bike magazines reveals strong compliance with gendered conformity. The masculine and feminine media figures are particularly representative of what Connell (1987) names hegemonic masculinity and emphasized femininity. Men are staged in a display featuring power, performance and violence (Messner, 1992 ; Mc Kay, Messner and Sabo, 2000 ; Sabo, and Panepinto, 1990 ; Coaklay, 2004). The feminine representations are less frequent, in strong compliance to gendered conformity as well, with some measure of eroticization. While those aspects are characteristic of the examined corpus, some given contexts, such as some modalities of practice, or even the status of the represented cyclists in the mountain bike milieu, do facilitate the presence of models that are relatively distant from the hegemonic forms (Connell and Messerschmidt, 2005 ; Coaklay ; 2004 ; Mc Kay and Laberge, 2006 ; Wheaton and Tomlinson, 1998 ; Thorpe, 2005). Indeed, the display of injuries which is typical of the male athletes’ depiction (Messner and Steven, 2002), is absent in certain interviews, revealing an attenuated form of hegemonic masculinity (Klein, 2000 ; De Garris, 2000). Similarly, some female champions, often those with the highest titles, are represented as men are, performing risky actions (Duncan, 1990 ; Salwen and Wood, 1994; Buysse and Emnser-Herbert, 2004;



Mennesson 2005) that are distant from the traditional definitions associated with femininity. They are not, by far, described as pretty and shy (Wright and Clarke, 2000), and no comments are made about their private life (Duncan and Messner, 1998), two characteristics otherwise typically found in the media when dealing with sportswomen. Therefore, one observes a relative juxtaposition of the gender models seen in mountain bike magazines, from the most innovative to the most stereotypical. This diversity illustrates the struggles among journalists with differentiated characteristics, to appropriate the definition of the practice and the milieu of mountain biking.

### ***Between adhesion and distance regarding the most stereotypical gender models***

Not all the mountain bike press journalists share the same position on gender models. On one hand, some do condemn the most extreme aspects of hegemonic masculinity, and are critical about the eroticization of feminine figures. On the other hand, some strongly adhere to these models. Out of the asked 15 male journalists, 7 are strongly critical of the most stereotypical gender models presented in magazines. Quite revealing are Quentin's comments regarding two columns, respectively named « La verte du mois » (literally "The green one of the month", with a French pun, as "green" may suggest "naughty", or "beginner") and « la gamelle d'or » ("the golden cropper"). « La verte du mois » invites readers to send a photo of their wife or girlfriend on a bike, but regularly just boils down to showing them in their underwear, and the « gamelle d'or », awards a free 6-month subscription to the most spectacular wounds.

#### **Quentin:**

« Yeah well I found it in rather poor taste (*La Verte du Mois*), at least for the most. At the end we received images which...we've got drawers full of them, ok, there are plenty we never published, ok, we were receiving stuff that was really...really more than dubious. [...] we've got this drawer full of unpublishable photos. So in fact there's no point in going on anymore. We even still receive some, by the way, even though we've stopped, we still get some from readers staging their wife. Rarely in good taste... anyway... »

« We felt we were going in circles (*with la Gamelle d'Or*), since anybody can send you a pic of his arm that got torn off because he fell. Now, come on, what's the point of it all ? ... Enough already ! »

In their journalistic practices, these editors, that we label the « critical » ones, do not mobilize much the most stereotypical gender models. Whatever the champion's gender, they're interested in the athlete's private life and illustrate their articles with photographs in non-sportswear. Alex, a « critical » journalist at VTTMag wrote an article on Anne-Caroline Chausson, a French woman several times downhill world champion, which clearly illustrates



this position. The author describes the champion as he would male riders. Her performances and her list of honors are mentioned as early as the introduction, and the photographs in the article show her in action. Similarly, in his article about male downhill champion Steve Peat, Alex asks questions about his family life, about how difficult it is to be often away from his wife and son during competition seasons, as well as about his daily life in the English countryside. Thus, these «critical» journalists denounce the most typical displays of hegemonic masculinity and emphasized femininity, such as eroticization or wounds showcasing, and defend a relative equality in the modes of presentation of male and female mountain bikers.

Inversely, the other 8 journalists adhere to the representations that evoke gender models the most. They represent sportsmen and sportswomen in a strongly stereotypical manner. While women are not systematically eroticized, they are constantly brought back to their gender group. Editors of that type value and openly support all three characteristics of hegemonic masculinity, namely, power, violence and performance. To them, this trio reflects the major traits of mountain bike practice. These journalists, that we label «in adhesion», clearly differentiate their interview topics according to the interviewee's gender. In their articles on a man, whenever they report any element unrelated to mountain bike, it is exclusively about his professional projects or leisure activities. When they write about a woman, she is systematically asked about typical issues such as motherhood, life as a couple, or sharing household chores.

In this respect, the article on female Canadian downhill champion Lisa Lefroy is particularly representative. The article headline immediately likens her to a princess, and the sub-headline mentions her physique, judged flattering. Most questions revolve around life with her partner, French downhill champion Cédric Gracia. Some photographs chosen to illustrate her interview show Lisa in an eroticized position. Inversely, the article on French downhill champion Karim Amour compares him to «a tiger» and his career to that of fictional boxer «Rocky». Most questions detail his list of honors, his «aggressive» steering technique. Photos stage Karim Amour in hazardous, risky actions such as spectacular jumps. Thus, journalists in that second group openly support the presence of particularly stereotypical gender models in the magazines:

**Ludovic:**

«In mountain bike, it's masculine, there's mud, wounds and all, so pretty chick pictures, it's nice. Because... First, me, because my pleasure is to shoot women, because as I'm a hetero by nature<sup>1</sup>, I have potentially more affinities with a woman than with a man. But that's a bit off-topic. No, but

because it's very nice, and because I've also been working in motorbikes and in motorbikes it's like in Formula 1 and now a bit like in biking although the community has a hard time admitting it, in all these mechanical sports, and biking is one, let's not be hypocritical, mechanical sports and chicks go together.

« do you feel that in the community, it's also important ? »

« Sure. Otherwise we wouldn't do it. »

They justify their position with two arguments. On one hand, they consider that the interviewed personalities do appreciate this type of stage-setting. This argument is all the more used that it attempts to justify the eroticization of feminine figures in particular. On the other hand, the gender models that evoke the most extreme aspects of hegemonic masculinity and emphasized femininity are also regarded as special elements that provide a sense of belonging to the community. In this perspective, they are supposed to be similarly appreciated by the readers.

Thus, mountain bike press journalists position themselves between adhesion and criticism regarding the most stereotypical media models, and mobilize differentiated writing practices. These practices result from journalistic habitus that are themselves diversified, structured by diverging modes of professional socialization.

### ***Differentiated modes of professional socialization***

The interviewees' professional habitus are studied here by modes of practice of the profession. And in a second phase, they are put in relation with the professional socializations and the educational capital.

In his work on the characteristics of journalists, Dominique Marchetti (2002) distinguishes two types of professional habitus. Editors who write for the « general-interest »<sup>2</sup> press value journalistic techniques and competences, such as distance from the sources, ability to present various topics and speed when processing information. Inversely, journalists who work in more specialized media (such as the sports press) essentially consider themselves as « specialists ». Often very close to the milieu they cover, they associate their profession with a certain activism (Tunstall, 2001), sometimes very removed from the above-mentioned professional criteria. This proximity with the sources induces more or less standardized forms of writing, and prevents one from adopting a critical posture about the standards in force in the milieu, such as gender models.

Biographical interviews with the mountain bike specialized press professionals reveal the diversity of professional habitus among the investigated, in a spectrum ranging from « general-interest » journalists, or « generalists », to experts of the milieu, or « specialists ». Irrespective of their group, all members consider mountain bike hands-on practice as a compulsory element of their profession (Schoch and Ohl, 2013). All are high-level practitioners, the younger being competitors, and the older former champions. Still, in spite of that common ground, the self-described « generalist » editors strongly value classical journalistic competences, unlike the « specialists ». For the former, editorial qualities and critical distance regarding the sources are indispensable. They consider themselves journalists in their own right, on a par with the other general press colleagues, and most of them have the official French press card (6 out of 7). Delivered on request by a specific commission, this card is not mandatory but nevertheless constitutes a strong sign of affiliation with the profession. Off-the-record, these « general interest » journalists frequently voice remarks about the conniving attitude of their « specialists » colleagues with the sources and deplore the lack of independence of their magazines from the brands. Actually, rather than being strictly « general interest » journalists, they indeed occupy a position between « specialist » and « general interest »:

**Gwenaël:**

« I'm a journalist too, but that's the point, I'd like the milieu to be closer to real journalists. I also happen to sometimes work regularly with a weekly, [...] it's more serious about research and all. There's more investigation, now us, you see, we're a bit linked with the brands, though. [...] Yep, it's DIY more or less, at times, there's not at all the same rigor, it would all benefit from more professionalization. »

Inversely, journalists from the second group fully claim the « specialist » identity. They openly support and maintain relationships with the milieu and the brands. They consider themselves as experts of the mountain bike milieu and practice, before being journalists. As a consequence, they do not perceive a need to apply for a press card (1 holder out of 8).

**Franck:**

« Well I didn't do any journalism studies or anything. In fact, back then, I used to work for a bike store, and then I left to South America, and I had made photos. I had gone to South America on a mountain bike and then I had proposed it all to VTTMag. OK, they didn't pick up the topic but at least I had tried, and the editor-in-chief called me back a while after that and he was looking for a freelancer, to write occasional columns from time to time and so for me it was some small extra income and then I got into it and I kept writing columns for a long time and when they moved here, at the time of purchase, there was a change in the editorial board and in fact they proposed me a position as editor photographer. and here you are, it all happened like that. But no journalism studies. [...]. As far as I'm concerned, I'm not a journalist »

Thus, two very distinct professional habitus differentiate the 15 male journalists asked. The « specialist » is an expert whose professional practice largely depends on the sources. While the « generalist specialist » combines a credibility due to his practical knowledge of the discipline with a certain critical distance from the milieu at stake. This classification based on the rapport to the profession overlaps the classification obtained using the positioning in relation to gender models. Indeed, members of the « generalist » group strongly criticize the most stereotypical media models. Inversely « specialist » journalists display strong adhesion to the most stereotypical gender model representations. The diversity of gender models across magazines is thus explained partly by the existence of differentiated journalistic habitus, in line with different career paths (see the table). Although educational levels in terms of diplomas do not fundamentally differentiate both groups (see the table), respondents with a university-based education in journalism are over-represented in the first group. Independently, the main difference between « generalist » and « specialist » journalists lies in their modes of professional socialization. Indeed, analyzing the paths followed by the « generalist/critical » journalists, one reveals multiple journalistic socializations amongst various press media (regional daily press, press specialized in other domains), and/or experiences in other professional sectors. Having learned professional practices that differ from the mountain bike press practices, they are more critical towards this milieu. In their work, the information they provide is less close to the values and standards of this milieu, gender models included. Therefore, more than the educational capital, it is the acquisition of transversal professional competences, and then the acquisition of « generalist » journalistic skills, that operates as a form of specific capital, and motivates them to challenge the traditional definition of the job of sports journalist and its « doxa ».

On the contrary, occupational socializations in the « specialists/in adhesion » group only occur within the mountain bike community. Most members are former champions, who often started in bike shops, or have exclusively worked for mountain bike publications. Poorly armed in transversal or « generalist » journalistic competencies, their passionate relationship with the milieu constitutes their sole form of specific capital. Having had no experience in other social universes, they strongly depend on the mountain bike milieu. As shown by Thorpe (2010), this position is not conducive to challenging gender standards.

Thus, respondents' positions on gender models are linked to their modes of professional socialization and the nature of their specific capital. This homology between professional socialization, habitus and position on gender models is particularly marked in the case of

editors-in-chief, who play a central role in the choice of magazine contents. The importance given to the most stereotypical gender models thus varies with the editors-in-chief's characteristics and with the position occupied by the magazine in the sub-field.

**Positions in the field and gender models**

The corpus analysis shows strong disparities across the magazines in terms of modes of gender models display. The typical characteristics of emphasized femininity, namely invisibility, feminization and eroticization, are unequally distributed. In the same way, magazines variably mobilize the characteristics of power, violence and performance, associated with hegemonic masculinity. To shed light on this perspective, the feminine and masculine models respectively favored by each magazine are briefly reviewed. Regarding feminine models, typical forms of emphasized femininity are regularly conveyed by VTTMag, in contrast to Vélo Tout Terrain. Vélo Vert has an intermediate position, as it displays the juxtaposition, sometimes in one single issue, of both stereotypical and innovative feminine models. Regarding masculine models, VTTMag clearly prioritizes criteria of violence and performance, unlike Vélo Tout Terrain. The latter proposes portraits based on other values associated to mountain bike, such as the esthetic value of a given gesture. Vélo Vert also occupies a median position between the other two magazines, as it showcases power and violence in lower proportions than VTTMag does.

This brief observation clearly identifies a process of gender representations that differs across magazines. One may hypothesize that the editorial lines, historical legacies to a great extent, which are defended by editors with specific characteristics, significantly influence the media models proposed to the readers.

Vélo Vert, VTTMag and Vélo Tout Terrain, as they constitute the mountain bike press sub-field, are players in a struggle for the legitimate definition of what mountain bike practice must be, and by extension, the journalistic contents of a mountain bike magazine. With the largest circulation, Vélo Vert and VTTMag are in a dominant position, economically, and also historically, being the first magazines in the discipline. Vélo Tout Terrain, more recent, born of a scission off the VTTMag editorial board, and with less circulation, constitutes the « dominated pole ». These positions are a particularly relevant illustration of the dynamical structure of the field, as shown by Bourdieu (1992). In the case of the mountain bike press, this « battlefield » (Lahire, 2001, p.23) becomes all the more important that the segments are very close in terms of contents. This proximity of information across magazines, also visible

in other types of specialized presses (Bardelot, 2001 ; Hein, 2006), reinforces positioning struggles. In this context, mountain bike magazines editorial lines result, in part, from the strategies of publishing companies wishing to make a profit, and, in part, from the characteristics of editors-in-chief who occupy a specific position in the mountain bike community. Both elements actually maintain strong relations, since the editors-in-chief's professional habitus are globally in line with the strategies of their publishing houses. For further analysis, we present the case study of the most opposed two magazines in terms of gender models, VTTMag and Vélo Tout Terrain.

### ***VTTMag : Etienne's passion for motor sports and « bimbos »***

VTTMag strongly encourages stereotypical gender models, without much diversity. Since the beginning it has positioned itself as the representative of the most involved, committed practices. VTTMag is therefore much less a generalist than Vélo Vert, although both share the status of historical publication of the sub-field, and maintain the same level of circulation. Readers and professionals alike appreciate VTTMag's filiation with motor sports. The singular path of its editor-in-chief, and his editorial record help better understand the characteristics of the gender models favored by VTTMag.

Coming originally from a BMX magazine, VTTMag's early positioning was very close to that of motor sports, as was Vélo Vert, born in the same context. Thus, both were initially staging particularly stereotypical gender models, a typical feature of the universe of these practices. Still, while Vélo Vert's positioning and contents were progressively evolving, VTTMag has stuck to the initial values and models. This stability is in part due to the successive editors, similarly positioned on automobile motor sports. But, although editorial orientations do play an undeniable role, the other explanation that these stereotypical models remain so stable over time is the unusual path of the editor-in-chief, Etienne. With a passion for motorbikes and motor sports, being a BMX practitioner, he starts as a journalist when VTTMag is created, and quickly gets noticed as totally devoted to the publication. Trained in the field, Etienne is clearly part of the « specialists », and says he is « a fan of American brands ».

But, beyond this rapport to the profession, he particularly appreciates stereotypical gender models, that he considers as important elements of the milieu's identity. This position coincides with his taste for stripped « bimbos » and eroticized feminine models, linking back to his extended socialization in the motor sports milieu. So, via his magazine, Etienne facilitates the propagation of this type of figures in the media. The January issue calendar,



composed with women striking suggestive poses, constitutes a demonstrative illustration. Etienne initiated its publication personally, chose himself the models and how to stage the photographs.

Etienne : embodying a form of hegemonic masculinity that is highly valued in the VTTMag editor-in-chief milieu, Etienne is considered as one of the main « figures » in the milieu. His level of education is difficult to identify. Although he claims during the interview presentation to hold the equivalent of a PhD, this is denied by numerous informant sources. Inversely, no doubt remains about his behavior as a seducer, which is repeatedly mentioned off-the-record. He particularly appreciates motor sports, that he still practices as an amateur. « Now if girls or women prefer to ride guy gear, it's their problem. But me, you see, we get to have products sometimes, skintight racing shorts with a short skirt on, I'm, I enjoy it too, to see when you're feminine. And when you're totally into competition, the feminine, let's be honest, to see a girl vomiting on herself after 15 km because she's knackered, and there's blood everywhere and there you are. That's what mountain bike competition is, it's not beautiful. It's not feminine, let's be clear, it's not a sport that's feminine»

Etienne's ostentatiously assertive adhesion to the most stereotypical gender models can be noticed alongside his permanent control over the journalists. Indeed, he imposed his presence during the individual interviews of editorial board members, and even answered some of the questions in their place. Lacking any specific educational background, both his permanent colleagues are particularly indebted to him, and strongly support his positions.

Thus, in the case of VTTMag, the dispositions of an editor-in-chief meet an editorial line that is typically representative of the motor sports media segment. And this results in the permanence of emphasized femininity and hegemonic masculinity in the models propagated by the magazine. Etienne indeed symbolizes the identity of this milieu's « specialist », and is characterized by a professional habitus in extreme compliance with the dominant doxa. The homology between editorial line and editor-in-chief's position also characterizes Vélo Tout Terrain. But in that case, the situation is conducive to challenging the historical gender models, while promoting more innovative approaches to staging men and women.

***Vélo Tout Terrain : Bastien, a unique position in the sub-field***

Vélo Tout Terrain is characterized by its relative distance to stereotypical gender models. After a long quest for the best positioning in a sub-field broadly dominated by two powerful publications, Vélo Tout Terrain now has found its readership and its specific tone. It proposes columns on bike Economics; it supports practices like mountain bike rambles, as opposed to intensely involved, or competitive, practices, positioning itself as the « serious » magazine in the community for its readers as well as for the professionals. More distant from the brands, and not very inclined to foster the « folklore » associated to the milieu, it is called by some



journalists « a cushy, family man » magazine, « not much fun ». This positioning results in part from its editorial story. Vélo Tout Terrain has no links with motor sports, unlike the historical two magazines of the milieu. A publishing house, Voisin-Desclaux, created Vélo Tout Terrain by poaching journalists from the VTTMag staff. In spite of this filiation, Vélo Tout Terrain hasn't kept the initial style of contents, but rather the opposite, as indicated by its tone and mode of writing. The Voisin-Desclaux publishing house aims at a clear differentiation from the other two magazines, and goes for a readership that wouldn't be very attracted to any of them. It thus targets older readers, with a rather wealthier socio-economic background, and/or not very drawn to the motor sports filiation. These « new » mountain bikers prefer rambles, beautiful landscapes and couple touring to risk-taking tricks or competition. The management, in order to achieve its objective, appoints Bastien as editor-in-chief. As the most « generalist » of mountain bike press journalists, Bastien is reputed for his critical distance towards the milieu. He strongly opposes the most stereotypical gender models. Additionally, he highly values journalistic techniques and compels editors to corroborate information and keeps his distance from the brands. Thus, the publication's particular position within the sub-field combines with Bastien's dispositions to end up in much more innovative gender model choices.

**Bastien : an atypical career in the milieu**

Out of the interviewed 15 male journalists, Bastien, the editor-in-chief of Vélo Tout Terrain is the only one who frequently works for other press media, including writing press kits for a communication agency. His university education, (journalism school diploma), and other centers of interest (the piano) suggest a different social trajectory than that of the milieu professionals. His personality being labelled as not much « fun » by his colleagues, and cycle industry professional calling him incompetent in technique, it seems he's sometimes had difficulties finding his place. Which explains he's had to find work in other domains. In a way, his joining Vélo Tout Terrain would result from the proper match between his professional habitus, distant from the practice, and the publication's aim at an older readership segment, from wealthier social classes. Particularly critical of the stereotypical gender models, he does not allow the journalists of the magazine to promote them when illustrating their articles or publishing photographs. « It's a no brainer, just splash some naked woman on a bike I'm sure we're selling like crazy ! But not me, I don't want any part in that. »

While Bastien is perfectly in line with the publisher, this position is not shared by all of the Vélo tout Terrain journalists. As underlined by some authors, the matching between position and dispositions is not always achieved (Krais, 2006 ; Brown, 2006 ; Mennesson, 2012), and the professional habitus of some journalists seem at odds with their magazine's editorial line.

**Conclusion**

Although the sports magazine press appears as a very masculinized professional universe that fosters stereotypical ways to stage men and women athletes, this study shows that journalistic practices and rapport to gender models are not homogeneous among male journalists. Using Bourdieu's field and habitus theory, this work brings two differentiation principles to light. First, the data reveals two forms of professional habitus, which orient the position of journalists regarding the media construction of gender. These differentiated habitus link back in particular to the modes of journalistic training of the investigated individuals. Respondents with multiple professional socializations and low dependence on the milieu tend to show some distance from the mountain bike milieu and the most stereotypical gender models. Inversely, journalists with poorer educational capitals, or, mainly, with professional socializations limited to the mountain bike press, will preferably comply with the dominant doxa when staging men and women.

Furthermore, journalistic practices depend on the magazine's position in the studied sub-field, and also on the editors-in-chief's characteristics. In this respect, the investigation documents a relative homology between editor-in-chief profile and editorial line favored by the publishing house. This process exerts strong constraints on the journalists' modes of writing. As a consequence, although not widely spread, some journalists happen to write for magazines without agreeing with the editorial line, in particular in terms of gender staging modes.

The adopted perspective thus reveals the complexity of the gender construction processes in sports contexts (Thorpe, 2010 ; Mennesson, 2012). Whereas the hegemonic masculinity and emphasized femininity models clearly dominate in the examined corpus, these gender models are nevertheless challenged. Having such a critical distance, still, requires specific social conditions. The chosen point of view proposes a frame of reference which is relevant to identify them, considering each sports context as a space of stances, in relation with the characteristics of the individuals investigated and the positions they occupy.

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Notes

<sup>1</sup>This assertion of heterosexuality is textbook hegemonic masculinity. (Connell 1983, 1995 ; Connell and Messerschmidt 2005, Laberge and Albert, 2000.)

<sup>2</sup>The terms « generalists » and « specialists » originate in the work of Dominique Marchetti (2002) on journalistic sub-fields. They oppose two types of journalists, respectively general-interest vs specialized. The « generalist » is specifically trained in journalism techniques, and his professional background includes working with major press organizations. The « specialist » is an expert of one activity which makes up all of his career in the specialized press dedicated to that activity.

Table : Level of studies, occupational socializations and habitus

	<b>Critical, generalists</b>		<b>Adhering, specialists</b>	
<b>Vélo Vert</b>	<b>Journalists and level of studies</b>	<b>Occupational socializations</b>	<b>Journalists</b>	<b>Occupational socializations</b>
	<b>Clément</b> : baccalaureate (bac)	Management of the publishing house that owns the Vélo Vert magazine	<b>Maxime</b> : bac +4, journalism studies	VTTMag trainee
	<b>Fabien</b> : baccalaureate	Management of the publishing house that owns the Vélo Vert magazine	<b>Renaud</b> : bac	Vélo Vert trainee
	<b>Quentin</b> : bac+4 years, schooled in journalism studies	Daily regional press journalist : Est Républicain.		
	<b>Laurent</b> : bac+4, journalism studies	Daily regional press journalist : Est Républicain.		
	<b>Gwénaél</b> : no baccalaureate	Freelancer for ski and snowboard magazines. Radio announcer. Freelancer for a local weekly in French-speaking Switzerland.		
<b>Vélo Tout Terrain</b>	<b>Bastien</b> : bac+5, journalism studies	Journalist for national dailies. In charge of press kits for a communication agency	<b>Matthieu</b> : bac+2	Bicycle shop attendant
			<b>Ludovic</b> : bac+2	Bicycle shop attendant
			<b>Anthony</b> : no bac	Trainee at Vélo Tout Terrain
<b>VTTMag</b>	<b>Alex</b> : no bac	Rock festival organizer. Freelancer for mortorbike and music magazines. Former pro guitar player in a rock band.	<b>Etienne</b> : at least bac+2	Journalist at Bicross Magazine (a publication which gave birth to VTTMag)
			<b>Franck</b> : inferior to bac	Postman
			<b>Florent</b> : inferior to bac	Bicycle shop attendant