

ABSTRACT

This research investigates the connection between digital media practices of athletes in the lifestyle sport slacklining, the mediatization of the sport and its development. It deliberately focuses on this narrow field to make mediatization and its sub processes more apparent.

Mediatization, “the interrelation between the change of media and communication, on the one hand, and the change of culture and society on the other” (Hepp & Krotz, 2014, p. 3), struggles with how to assess transformations in society that are introduced by digital media. A lack of mediation in the cultural field of slacklining prior to the onset of digital media, allows for an observation of undistorted digital mediatization.

Twenty six (26) semi structured in depth interviews with professional and nonprofessional slackliners were conducted for the purpose of this allows1for

1 INTRODUCTION

Today, globalization, individualization, mediatization and the growing importance of the economy, which we here call commercialization, can be seen as the relevant metaprocesses that influence democracy and society, culture, politics and other conditions of life over the longer term (Krotz, 2007, p. 257).

Slacklining could exist without digital media, but the impression of slacklining, what you can see of it and how the community interacts – presently, these cannot possibly be imagined without digital media (Interviewee 9, a 26 year old German slackliner).

S)DE™

2.4 Mediatization

[...] used to analyse critically the interrelation between changes in media and communications on the one hand, and changes in culture and society on the other (Couldry & Hepp, 2013, p. 197).¹

within

whether how

where when

2.5 Digital Mediatization

3 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

4 OBJECTIVE(S) OF THE RESEARCH

5.2.3 Topic Guide

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6 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

[...]

sport;

What is so fundamentally different with slacklining, is that you write in a Facebook or WhatsApp group just about wherever you are that you would like to go slacklining, and 6 or 7 people that you have never seen before will turn up. [...] And that is the most natural thing in the world.

I know people who didn't have Facebook before for their own reasons, and they've created new accounts that don't even have their real name, it's just Slack Rob, because he just wants to be in touch with what's going on.

just makes...it's so much

6.3.1 Substitution and Amalgamation in Competition

[...] some slackliners, they focus way more on videos and landing the first ever trick of this or the first ever of that and not really focusing on competitions. [...] If success is being popular and having everybody know your name and know you as a great athlete or whatever on Facebook, that's one way to do it, not competitions [...].

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6.3.3 Amalgam6.3.3

It doesn't make a difference on a 30 metre line, but if I'm on a 60 70 metre line, which is outside my comfort zone, then it does have an impact, then the camera is motivating me. I will try

[...]

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1 – Interview Participants in Detail

Interview Participants in Detail – continued

APPENDIX 2 – Topic Guide

Topic 2 – Digital camera technologies and their influence

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APPENDIX 3 – Simplified Excerpt of Coding Frame

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