

<b>Institution:</b> University of Kent		
<b>Unit of Assessment:</b> 24: Sport and Exercise Sciences, Leisure and Tourism		
<b>Title of case study:</b> Informing Best Practice and Professional Methods for Reporting in Sport-Mega Events and Disability Internationally		
<b>Period when the underpinning research was undertaken</b> 2009-present		
<b>Details of staff conducting the underpinning research from the submitting unit:</b>		
<b>Name(s):</b>	<b>Role(s) (e.g. job title):</b>	<b>Period(s) employed by submitting HEI:</b>
Dr Sakis Pappous	Reader	2009-2020
<b>Period when the claimed impact occurred:</b> 2014-present		
<b>Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014?</b> No		
<b>1. Summary of the impact</b> (indicative maximum 100 words)		
<p>In 2015, Dr Pappous' research on the social legacies of sport mega-events and participation underpinned the first ever media guide on how to cover Paralympic Games for Rio 2016. The guide was introduced and endorsed by the Brazilian Paralympic Committee as part of their media toolkit, shared with thousands of journalists and practitioners via several training events and presentations, and gained international recognition with National Olympic Committees.</p> <p>Since 2016, Pappous has worked with and advised the Tokyo Paralympic Committee, the National Paralympic Committee of Columbia, and the French National Olympic Academy on an ongoing basis, leading to the adoption of the media guide for both the Tokyo 2021 and Paris 2024 Games; a Spanish adaptation of the guide; and further training material aimed at influencing the way international journalists portray disability sport. Concurrently, Pappous has worked directly with other teaching and practising professionals across Latin America, and has helped advance professional methods, ideas, and thinking on sports mega-events and disability across South America.</p>		
<b>2. Underpinning research</b> (indicative maximum 500 words)		
<b>Background</b>		
<p>For elite sports and sports mega-events such as the Olympics – the world's biggest sporting event – there is an extensive body of scholarly research on the media treatment of Olympic athletes, their sports, and the events. In contrast, for disability sports and sport mega-events such as the Paralympic Games, there has long been a lack of research and a lack of awareness of how the sports, their athletes, and associated events are reported on and should be made visible to the public by the media. Equally, as Dr Pappous has recently identified, as a result of insufficient training, there exists a great deal of perplexity among journalists regarding how to appropriately capture and present disability sports [R4].</p>		
<b>Research</b>		
<p>On his arrival at Kent in <b>2009</b>, Pappous led an interdisciplinary research project designed to scrutinise the media coverage of the Paralympics across multiple countries over three Olympiads, and sought to respond to this underdeveloped area of research and thinking. Applying his expertise in the social legacies of sports mega-events and sport participation, Pappous collaborated with the social scientists Dr Eric de Léséleuc (University of Montpellier, France) and Dr Anne Marcellini (University of Lausanne, Switzerland), and conducted novel content analysis of ten broadsheet daily newspapers from five European countries (UK, France, Germany, Greece, and Spain).</p>		

The analysis demonstrated and corroborated three significant theses: first, between the Paralympic Games of Sydney (2000) and Beijing (2008), the number of published photographs had grown, highlighting an increase in the journalistic attention given to the event by European newspapers; second, there is a large and immediate effect on the public and media sphere of the country hosting the Games; and, third, as a result of the increase in the published stories and photographs on the Paralympic Games, the event offers an excellent opportunity to attract media attention about disability sport at the host nation [R1]. At the same time, a thorough analysis of the pictorial data identified the recurrence of several negative practices in Paralympic Games reporting: in the media, it was often the case that Paralympic athletes were depicted in passive poses before or after the competition, outside the sporting context, or in a manner that only captured or portrayed part of their body, with their faces frequently failing to be shown [R1, R2]. Equally, it was identified that by depicting the athletes in conditions of isolation and despondency and/or by outing the focus on the prosthetic elements, wheelchair, or the missing/partially missing limb, for instance, a high proportion of the photos conveyed ideas of failure and accentuated the disabled athlete's impairment [R2].

Subsequently, further research conducted in **2010-12** established to what extent and by what processes female Paralympic athletes were presented in a 'trivialising' and 'infantilising' form, emphasising both the inadequacies of disability sports media coverage in greater depth as well as the aspects required to be improved upon, so as to challenge stereotypes and offer empowered representations of disability [R2, R3, R5].

### Outcome

In **2015**, Pappous sought to transfer this research knowledge and his expertise to Brazil ahead of the Rio 2016 Games, establishing a research group of early career researchers at the Federal University of Paraná, Brazil, with whom he was funded to visit and train over a four-month period – an activity that was later expanded in another country (Spain) and resulted in an Anglo-Spanish collaborative study on Spanish media coverage of Paralympic Games [R4]. Concurrently, the innovative nature of the research attracted the attention of several national Paralympic Committees and NGOs who invited Pappous to collaborate with them, and to author and deliver training material aimed at influencing the way international journalists portray disability sport.

### 3. References to the research (indicative maximum of six references)

All Kent staff are highlighted in bold.

[R1] **Pappous, Athanasios**, Marcellini, Anne, and de Léséleuc, Eric (2011). 'From Sydney to Beijing: The evolution of the photographic coverage of Paralympic Games in five European countries', *Sport in Society*, 14:3, pp. 345-354. ISSN: 1743-0437.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/17430437.2011.557271>

[R2] **Pappous, Athanasios**, Marcellini, Anne, and de Léséleuc, Eric (2011). 'Contested issues in research on the media coverage of female Paralympic athletes', *Sport in Society*, 14:9, pp. 1182-1191. ISSN: 1743-0437. E-ISSN: 1743-0445.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/17430437.2011.614775>

[R3] de Léséleuc, Eric, **Pappous, Athanasios**, and Marcellini, Anne (2010). 'The media coverage of female athletes with disability: Analysis of the daily press of four European countries during the 2000 Sydney Paralympic Games', *European Journal for Sport and Society*, 7:3-4, p. 283. ISSN: 1613-8171.

<https://kar.kent.ac.uk/40366/>

[R4] Solves, Josep, **Pappous, Athanasios**, Rius, Inmaculada Sanchis, and **Kohe, Geoff** (2018). 'Framing the Paralympic Games: A mixed-methods analysis of Spanish media

coverage of the Beijing 2008 and London 2012 Paralympic Games'. ISSN: 2167-4795. E-ISSN: 2167-4809.

<https://kar.kent.ac.uk/69343/>

[R5] Pappous, Athanasios, and Brown, Christopher (2018). 'Paralympic legacies: A critical perspective', in Ian Brittain and Aaron Beacom (eds.), *The Palgrave Handbook of Paralympic Studies* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), pp. 647-664. ISBN: 9781137479013. E-ISSN: 9781137479013. <https://doi.org/10.1057/978-1-137-47901-3>

#### 4. Details of the impact (indicative maximum 750 words)

##### **Informing Best Practice in the Reporting of Sports Mega-Events and Disability**

In **2015**, the International Paralympic Committee offered institutional support to Pappous to transform his research findings and co-author (with Doralice Lange de Souza, Federal University of Paraná) a media guide on how to cover the Paralympic Games for the Rio 2016 Games [a]. The Brazilian Paralympic Committee, under its then President, Andrew Parsons, introduced the media guide as part of their media toolkit, which was shared with all the journalists (several thousand) registered to cover the Rio 2016 Games, whilst also promoting its use through other streams, such as their website.

At the same time, in the build-up to the Rio 2016 Games, Pappous delivered several presentations to various relevant practitioners and associated bodies across different cities in Brazil, endorsing and unpacking the ideas and usage of the guide as well as media coverage of disability sports more broadly. The events included a presentation at the British House in Rio de Janeiro in September **2016** to the British Ambassador, representatives of the Brazilian Paralympic Committee, and Brazilian disability activists, following an invitation from the British Embassy, as well as at the Congress of Sport Science and Olympic and Paralympic Legacy hosted by the British Consulate. This event was attended by representatives from the Government of Minas Gerais and the consulate of the United Kingdom [b]. In response to the impact of these activities and Pappous' collaboration with the Brazilian Paralympic Committee on the knowledge, thinking, and practice of media coverage of disability sports at Rio 2016, the committee noted: 'Because of this, we are immensely pleased with the University of Kent's project, in partnership with the Federal University of Parana, which led to the production of this guide. The BPC immediately embraced the concept and it is our hope that this publication will be of help to media professionals, especially those who are experiencing the Paralympics for the first time' [a].

Likewise, the International Paralympic Committee highlighted that 'Dr. Sakis Pappous has contributed to our committee's ideas and methods', and that they 'recognise[d] the guide's value as an instructive tool for informing best practice of reporting on sports disability at mega events such as the Paralympic games, and, were pleased to be able to see it applied as part of the Rio 2016 strategy' [c]. Moreover, they strongly endorsed the guide's support from the former IPC president, Sir Phillip Craven, who wrote the preface for the guide and acknowledged its 'importance as a valuable education resource', and confirmed that as a result of their successful collaboration with Pappous they have 'continued our joint venture with him through the adaption of the media guide for the Tokyo 2020 Games' – the guide was further recognised by Andrew Parsons for its 'importance [in] the changed thinking it encourages' [c, d].

##### **Ensuring the Continued Provision of Empowered Media Representations of Disability**

Since Rio 2016, Pappous' collaboration with the International Paralympic Committee has continued, and both his and the guide's influence have increased. For the last four years, Pappous has also been working with the Tokyo Paralympic Committee, the National Paralympic Committee of Columbia, and the French National Olympic Academy on the adaption of the media guide for both the Tokyo 2021 and the Paris 2024 Games; the guide has been adapted into Spanish; and he has also committed to facilitating training for journalists

on the guide's concepts [d, e, f]. The President of the French Olympic Committee, Arnaud Richard, acknowledged that 'all of Dr Pappous' research on media coverage has been significant and has informed our strategic planning', highlighting that he has 'quoted Dr Pappous' data from his paper [R1] more than any other research to highlight the lack of appropriate media coverage of disability sport across Europe and to justify and set media training and educational interventions for the forthcoming Paris 2024 Games' [e]. Similarly, he highlights that Pappous' work 'over the past decade [...] is currently informing and inspiring the policies and educational interventions' of the French Olympic Academy [e]. The President of the National Paralympic Committee of Columbia stated that 'the research and expertise of Dr. Pappous has influenced our strategic thinking and planning surrounding how we encourage and foster more inclusive media practices and coverage of disability sports' [f].

In 2019, Pappous shared an abridged Spanish adaptation of the guide with, and gave a talk to, an audience comprising those in the fields of Social Communication and Journalism from various universities in Bogotá, sports journalists, athletes, and members of the Colombian Paralympic Movement (a talk that was also broadcast through Inspire Latin America's Facebook Live to a further 500 delegates). After the event, the Committee 'disseminate[d] the guide and endorse[d] its use during the National Paralympic Games of 2019 (Juegos Paranales 2019)', and has invited Pappous to produce 'a full adaptation of the Rio 2016 guide to be used by the Columbian Press for future Games and events' to coincide with additional training from Pappous [f].

### **Developing a Skilled Workforce and Contributing to Professional Development**

As a result of founding and training the research group of early career researchers in Brazil in the run-up to the Rio 2016 Games, Pappous has helped foster and advance the skills, capacity, and thinking of the professionals working in this field across South America and their pedagogical practice. As one of the ECRs (now an Assistant Professor at the Federal University of Mato Grosso do Sul) acknowledges: 'to have the opportunity so early in my academic career to be taught and trained by a worldwide expert in media coverage of disability sport was really influential and significant to me. [...] the work Dr. Pappous and Dr. Doralice de Souza generated informed my cohort and fostered a new form of thinking for us [...] and] advanced my career and helped me obtain a tenure track post at the Universidade Federal de Mato Grosso do Sul (UFMS)' [g].

Similarly, as a second student of the cohort (now a PhD student at the Federal University of Paraná, Brazil) stated: 'the seminars incited a new way of learning and thinking about physical education and fostered a motivation within us all to continue our understanding of disability and sports journalism media' [h]. She also states: 'the ideas and interests sparked in the seminars have since come to underpin the direction and success of my professional development in this area', and 'alongside the advances in my research profile, as I now work and teach on the topic of Sports Management, Sports Marketing and Sport Media and Legislation, my pedagogical practice and the subsequent learning of my students have also been influenced by the ideas initially incited and explained to me in the 2015 events' [h].

### **Advancing the Media's Professional Methods, Ideas, and Thinking on Sports Mega-Events and Disability**

Since 2015, Pappous has also conducted training for, and advised, numerous journalists across a number of South American countries. He has contributed to the training, thinking, and planning of the Latin American Observatory on Disability and Communication (OBLADIC, an Association of Journalists across South America - <https://en.discomunica.com/obladic>). The co-founder of the OBLADIC stated that the Rio 2016 media guide 'has been invaluable to the Latin American community of journalists [...] and] is the most consulted resource on [their] former blog and current website', highlighting that it has 'played a significant part in advancing the thinking and understanding of those working on community and disability in Latin America since its publication in 2016' [i]. In addition, they note that 'Dr. Pappous himself has been a

key component in improving the practices and thinking of our journalists and other associates we represent through the provision of training and sharing of his expertise' [i].

In **2019**, Pappous facilitated a training seminar that 'enabled the network of Latin American journalists on Paralympism and other members of the Paralympic Movement of the Americas to strengthen their knowledge and professional practices on the subject, while both encouraging the interest of future journalists in Colombia on Paralympic sport and informing their understanding of the correct way to communicate disability sports' [i]. Likewise, in translating the guide [a] into Spanish, they observe that he 'further improved professional ideas and methods', and state that 'his work has inspired the set-up of a new research agenda in Latin America allowing those of us already working in the field to better understand the reality of the relationship between sport, people with disabilities and the media in the Latin American sphere' [i].

##### **5. Sources to corroborate the impact** (indicative maximum of 10 references)

[a] Paralympic Games Media Guide: *How to Cover the Rio 2016 Paralympic Games*, co-authored by Sakis Pappous and Doralice Lange De Souza.

[b] Press Article: 'Conference on Sport Sciences and Olympic Legacy'. Describes the keynote speech Pappous delivered to the British Consulate and Government of Minas Gerais. A translated version of the article is also included.

[c] Letter of Support: Chief Brand and Communications Officer, International Paralympic Committee. Describes the impact Pappous' collaboration with the committee had on the Rio 2016 Paralympic Games, the guide's value, and their ongoing plans to keep working with Dr Pappous for other games.

[d] Paralympic Games Media Guide: *How to Cover the Tokyo 2020 Paralympic Games*, co-authored by Sakis Pappous and Ian Brittain. Full report available on request.

[e] Letter of Support: President, French Olympic Academy. Identifies the significant impact of Pappous' research, expertise, and contributions upon the French Olympic Academy's thinking and strategies for the Paris 2024 Olympic and Paralympic Games.

[f] Letter of Support: President, Columbia Paralympic Committee. Establishes the influence of Pappous' work and expertise on the planning, knowledge, and strategy of the National Paralympic Committee.

[g] Letter of Support: Associate Professor, Training Participant. Describes the impact of training with Pappous early on in their career and on their capacity as a professional within the field.

[h] Letter of Support: Associate Professor, Training Participant. Describes the impact of training with Pappous early on in their career and on their pedagogical practice and professional thinking.

[i] Letter of Support: Co-founder, Latin American Observatory on Disability and Communication. Identifies the impact of Pappous' research and expertise on the thinking and training of journalists and students across South America.