

Gender relations in Equestrian Sports 1952-2000

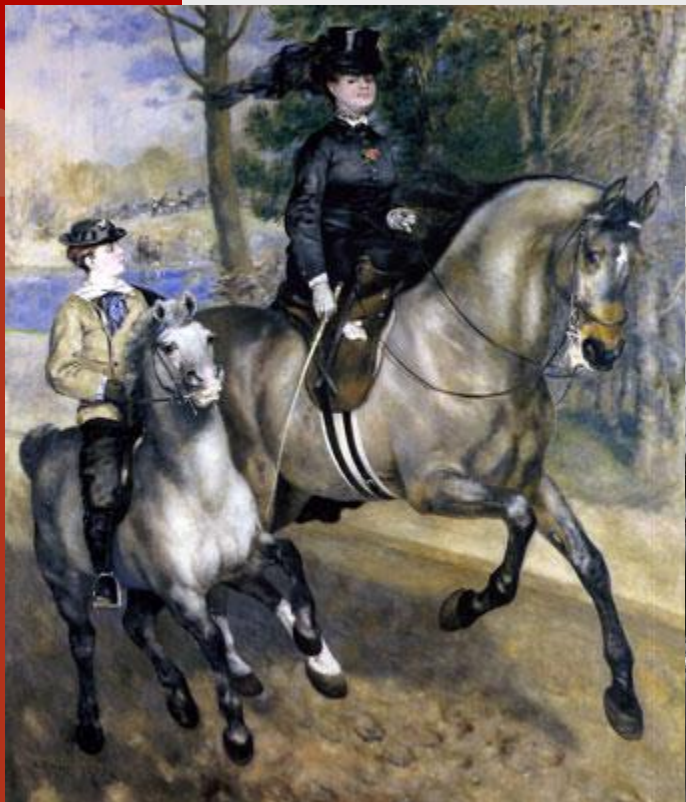
Susanna Hedenborg



Horses were traditionally connected to masculinity



Some women in the upper class were riding



Gender relations in Equestrian Sports

- Variances according to competition level, even (dressage, show-jumping, three-day eventing)
- Olympic Games 1952-2000
- Special focus Britain and Sweden



Olympic Equestrian Events

- Included 1912
- Women were admitted in
 - 1) Dressage in 1952
 - 2) Show-jumping in 1956
 - 3) Three-day eventing in 1964

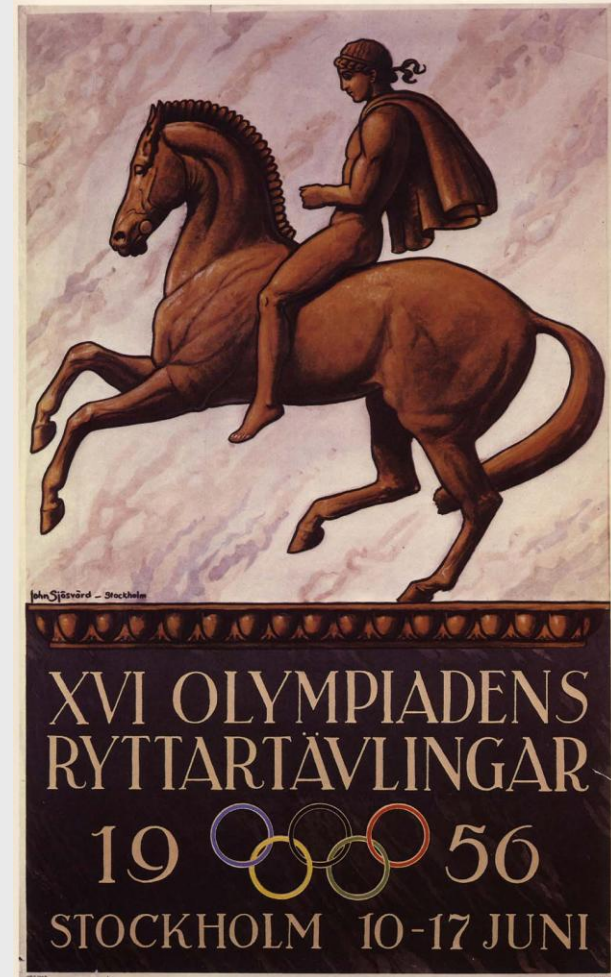
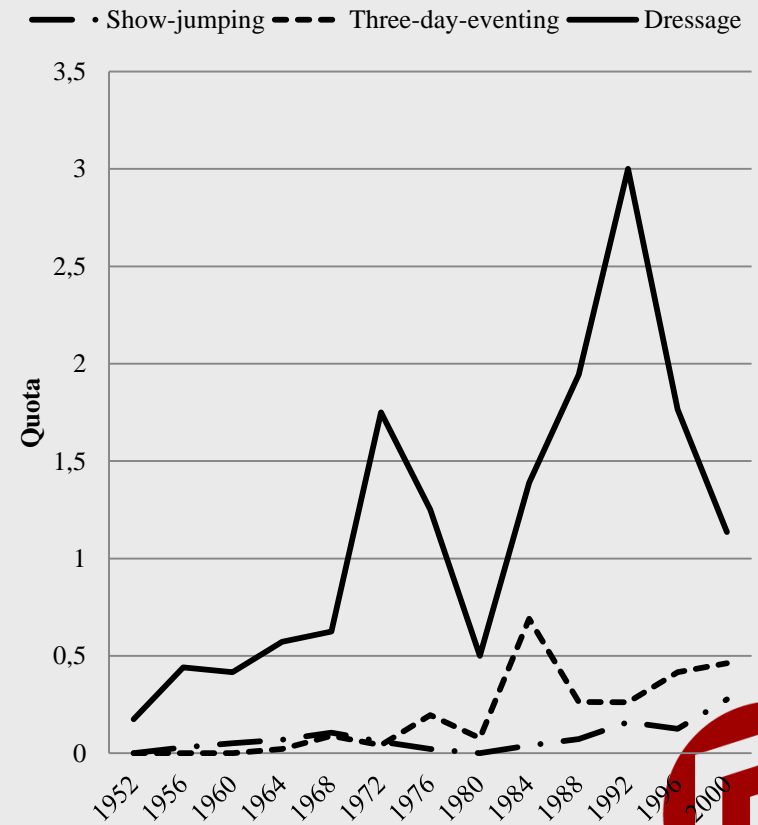
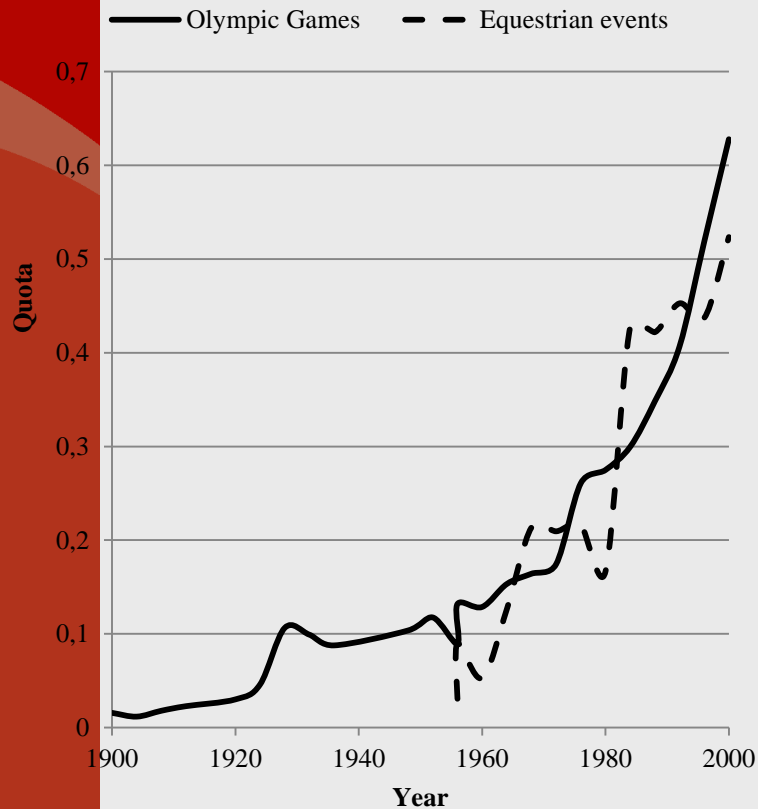


Figure 1. Quota female/male participants in the Olympic Games, 1900–2000, and in the Olympic equestrian events, 1952–2000;

Figure 2. Quota female/male participants in the equestrian competitions in the Olympic Games, according to event. Years of the Olympic Games 1952–2000.



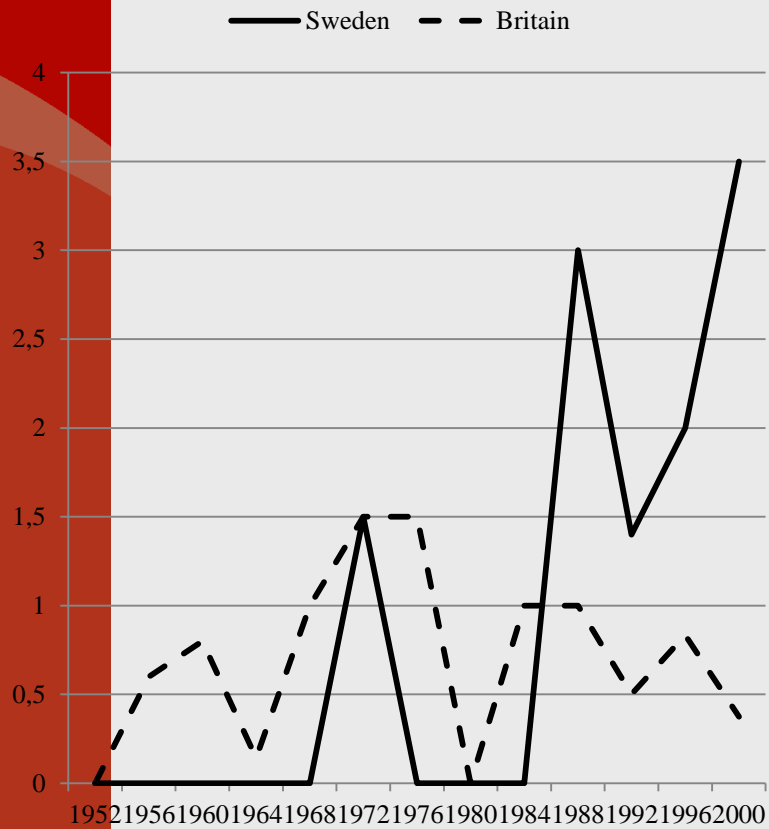
Dressage - a feminine event?

Ladies' day on Stadion in graceful medal dressage

Lis Hartel as well as Liselotte Linsenhoff showed such gentleness, grace and flexibility that they made several of their male competitors seem too strict. The ladies' dressage passed as a light and amusing game. There was something almost rococo-esque over the horses' dance, as they floated by in canter, tripped along easily and pirouetted. Only the music was missing. (Svenska Dagbladet, 17 June 1956 (translated by the authors))



Figure 3. Quota female/male participants from Britain and Sweden, respectively, in the equestrian competitions in the Olympic Games 1952–2000, according to event.



Conclusions

- Increasing number of female participants over time (1952-2000)
- Female participants in majority in dressage (connection to social construction of femininity/dressage)
- More female participants in three-day eventing than in show jumping (commercial reasons?)
- More female participants from Britain until 1980's, thereafter more female participants from Sweden (connection to partaking in WW1 and WW2; women of means entering the scene in Britain; governmental support to cavalry in Sweden until 1960's; governmental support to children's sport and youth sport; sponsors)

