

GENDER STEREOTYPES IN SPORT - PREJUDICES, INEQUALITIES AND DISCRIMINATIONS AGAINST WOMEN

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Introduction - terms

People are bombarded by gender stereotypes since birth. Find themselves dressed in blue or pink, give them trucks and soldiers or dolls and animals as gifts according to their gender. This is the first of several gender stereotypes that a child will face during life. Because males must show characteristics and behaviors that are considered "masculine" while females bear the responsibility to demonstrate "femininity". Stereotypes are simplified or standardized perceptions or images, often shared jointly of the members of a group for the members of another group (Δραγώνα θ. 2004). They can be positive or negative and are typical generalizations based on minimal or limited knowledge for the said a group of people. The gender stereotypes refer to the attitudes and perceptions of masculinity and femininity. The formation of these beliefs has strong cultural elements and evolves over time.

In the western world, men are expected to be strong, independent, and athletic while women are carrying the obligation to be quiet, obedient, attractive and supportive (Κοκκινάκης Φ. 2006). Accordingly, the expectation of femininity often leads women to avoid dealing with sports which express direct dynamism, competitiveness or aggressiveness. In other words, with sports like weightlifting, football, handball, water polo, rugby, motor sports and confrontation sports such as boxing and wrestling.

Socialization and gender stereotypes

What is particularly important to note is that the stereotypical social perceptions of gender and the discriminations and inequalities arising against women slightly caused or justified by biological differences (Roth & Basow 2004). It is an exclusively socio-cultural creation that is perpetuated through the socialization process of humans. In turn, this process reproduces stereotypes and maintains the dividing lines of behavior. When the dividing lines are not clearly visible a risk is created: the role of individuals into society is in question which might lead to partial or total marginalization. On the part of women this can also mean doubt of gender identity, social and ethical values or sexual orientation (Paradis E. 2012).

Even in progressive Western societies is not rare, female militancy be attached by negative social stigma. This will often work as a mechanism to control and restrict the participation of women in power sports or contact sports which are customary count as men sports, under the sociological perspective and as such are promoted by the media.

Sports and gender stereotypes

Gender stereotypes affect the choice of sport. Under this thought, sports and sporting activities are divided into three categories (Koivula 1995):

1. The neutral sports or activities in which the participation of both sexes is equally socially acceptable (such as cycling, basketball, swimming, sailing, tennis, volleyball, bowling, shooting sports, etc.)
2. Women's sports in which women's participation is considered appropriate and is encouraged while the participation of men is treated with skepticism and discouraged (ballet, dance, figure skating, gymnastics, synchronized swimming, aerobics, etc.) and
3. Men's sports or activities such as football, handball, ice hockey, rugby, pole vault, weightlifting, wrestling, boxing. This group is not often chosen by women or - when this is done - there is no easy and equal access to them.

Increasing women's participation

Although traditional gender stereotypes remain unchanged at their base during the last centuries, at the same time they have been challenged and criticized mainly by a large number of women. The sport sector has provided breeding ground for analysis, evaluation and revision (Πετσίλα Ε 2006).

In the last (70) years, women were highlighted faster than in other sectors. The years from 1976 to 1992 have signaled a without a prior progress for women's sports. Marked by a large increase in the number of Olympic sports in which women participate. In Atlanta (1996, 21 years and four Olympiads from today), women athletes reached a rate of 40%. The sizes are easily understood when taking into account that from the Olympic Games of antiquity up to the first modern Olympics did not compete any woman. Although the first female participation took place under the pressure of the International Olympic Committee, at the second Olympic Games (1900 in Paris in the sports of tennis and golf), up to the Second World War, no spectacular progress was made.

Sports participation for women in the USA

Is worth pointing out that over the same period the US increased more than other countries, women's participation in of every kind of sporting activity especially in sports that are traditionally considered male. This appears to be due to the foundation of a favorable institutional framework (Stevenson B. 2007). More specifically, in 1972 was voted a federal legal provision - commonly known as "Title IX" - with the following content: "no person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded of participation in, de denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance."

The application of this powerful arrangement changed the landscape of US sport. Brought out a strong acceleration in flow of social developments at gender issues leading to a great boom in female school and college sport which is the basis of the sports structure of the country (Anderson DJ. Cheslock JJ. Echrenberg RG. 2006).

Wrestling under "Title IX"

For the purposes of "Title IX" in wrestling, the following notes can be made: After the application of "Title IX" seems to be an overall decrease in the participation of boys in wrestling which mistakenly was attributed to the decision of some educational institutions to disband their male wrestling teams bringing the excuse for failure to cover the cost of two groups. Actually the reduction was due to other reasons such as the rise of the popularity of soccer in the US. This sport being highly popular among boys was able to deprive wrestling's share between the boys market. So soccer forced wrestling out of the first places of popularity ratings depriving resources of it

To reverse this situation for the US wrestling community, it is appropriate to create strategic partnerships with groups of women and their supporters to hold allocation of funds in other sports (such as basketball and football) instead of being trapped in a sterile confrontation with "Title IX" (Ridpath BD, Yiamouyiannis A, Lawrence H 2009). In the last years mainly in view of the requirements of the IOC, have been important steps in this direction.

Women's Wrestling - inclusion and perspectives

The rapid increase of in women's participation in sports activities demonstrates the reduction of the restrictive perceptions on physical appearance and athletic ability (Barbas I, 2014). However, traditional female stereotypes are still valid blocking the involvement of women with sports that have clear dynamic qualities (Roth & Basow, 2004).

For wrestling, to continue have space into the world athletic map and to remain alive and active in terms of IOC, it is necessary to take steps to address the problem of gender stereotypes. It is proposed to create a "Stereotype Management" program which will include a wider set of actions such as strategic partnerships and collaboration of entities.

Conclusions – recommendations

Accordance with standards of actions relating to the fight of discrimination against women at business premises and whereas a more systematic cultivation of female wrestling because is equivalent to the introduction of human resources to the sport, it is recommended to create a "Stereotypes Management" program which will include a set of actions such as (Κετσετζοπούλου M. 2007:

- Promotion of hits and achievements of the female athletes of our country, female athletes from other countries, as well as the social status of all high-level female athletes.
- Promotion of wrestling as an educational tool for acquiring social skills and treating dangerous conditions skills
- Adoption athletic scholarship in terms of Greek Federation Wrestling for girls engaged or distinguish in wrestling using some pretext (such as the international or European days, anniversaries, etc.) in order to reinforce school and academic performance.
- Promotion of school and academic performance of the wrestling girls in order to become clear that athletic participation does not prevent this kind of performance
- Motive establishment for coaches, sports clubs and National Federations involved in cultivation of women's wrestling
- Exert for strong institutional changes on both the States and the National Wrestling Federations which would ensure gender equality
- Improve communication and advisory by successful women in the area of wrestling

- Overturn the intensive attributes of existing social stereotypes in the media and advertising to change the negative image of women competing in combat sports (Gauntlett, D.2008).
- Discussion on the revision of the existing governance model for each country to include targets for women's participation at all levels
- Promote women in wrestling's technical structures (coaching) and structures of command of each country and internationally
- Emphasis on factor "female wrestler" in every event of the official organizing authority of wrestling in the country and internationally
- Support for women returning to athletic activity after an interruption
- Encouragement of young females to participate in wrestling by getting involved in all of its forms (Olympic and non-Olympic) through communication channels and providing rewards for this purpose

However, such a process cannot be one-dimensional. It requires strategic partnerships and collaboration with carriers such as nationals and international wrestling federation, wrestling's technical community, arbitration, educational foundations of all levels, clubs which promote wrestling at base, and especially mass media. It also requires the development of same initiatives by any concerned person.

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