

Strasbourg, 28 November 2011

EPAS (2011) INF 25

Enlarged Partial Agreement on Sport (EPAS)

Gender equality and (elite) sport

A report
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1. Introduction – sport and gender equality: why is a report necessary and relevant?

Currently, sport is a major issue worldwide, and thus also in European countries. Most states invest large amounts of resources in elite sport which was, and still is, (mis)used for the presentation of countries as well as the strength and quality of not only their political systems but also their economy and culture. The ideology of the representative benefits of sport is supported by its huge popularity. Events such as football world championships and the Olympic Games are followed by much of the world population. Sport attracts more people than political movements. 3.6 billion people watched at least one minute of the coverage of the Olympic Games in Beijing. “This figure represents 83% of the total potential TV audience and 53% of the world’s population.”¹

Because of its huge popularity, the images and messages of sport have a large impact on public opinion and “taste” (in the sense given to it by Bourdieu 1984). This refers likewise to perceptions, evaluations and constructions of gender in the sports arena. Sport and its gendered representations (re)produce the “scripts” for the construction of gender in society. This is an important reason why gender equality in sport is of crucial significance. However, sport also offers numerous benefits, including well-being and social contacts in the case of “sport for all” and fame, money and career opportunities in the case of elite sport. There are numerous reasons why women and men should have equal opportunities in all areas and at all levels of sport. Therefore, gender equality in sport was always – and still is – on the political agenda.

As early as 1981, the European ministers responsible for sport adopted the “Resolution on the Greater Involvement of Women in Sport” with concrete proposals for active policy measures which included the demand for additional resources.² Since then several recommendations and resolutions have followed which asked for gender equality in all fields and at all levels of sport – but without much success. In a recommendation adopted by the parliamentary assembly in 2005 it is stated that “the Assembly is distressed to observe that women still suffer frequent discrimination in their access to, and practice of, both amateur and professional sport”. The paper named stereotyping, the lack of support of sportswomen, the difficulty of life-work-sport integration, inadequate media coverage and limited funding. In addition, “the lack of women on sport’s ruling bodies” was regarded as a major problem.³ In 2010, the Committee of Ministers called again for gender equality in a revised “Code of Sport Ethics” and demanded the “equal participation of women, girls, men and boys in all individual and/or team sports without gender-based discrimination”.⁴ In addition, general guidelines, recommendations and resolutions in the field of gender equality have been adopted in recent decades which can be applied to the field of sport.⁵

1 Games of the XXIX Olympiad, Beijing 2008. Global Television and Online Media Report.

http://www.olympic.org/Documents/IOC_Marketing/Broadcasting/Beijing_2008_Global_Broadcast_Overview.pdf

2 [http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/epas/resources/texts/Res\(81\)3_en.pdf](http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/epas/resources/texts/Res(81)3_en.pdf)

3 <http://assembly.coe.int/Documents/AdoptedText/ta05/EREC1701.htm>

4 Recommendation CM/Rec(2010)9 of the Committee of Ministers to member states on the revised Code of Sports Ethics (Adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 16 June 2010 at the 1088th meeting of the Ministers’ Deputies)

5 E.g. CM Declaration (2009) 68 Final, Declaration on Making Gender Equality a Reality (adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 12 May 2009 at its 119th Session)

The “White Paper on Sport”, published by the European Commission in 2007, states in its introduction that sport “generates important values such as team spirit, solidarity, tolerance and fair play, contributing to personal development and fulfilment. It promotes the active contribution of EU citizens to society and thereby helps to foster active citizenship.” Although the effects of sport mentioned above may in some cases be more hope than reality, everybody should be able to enjoy its potential benefits. Article 2.5 of the White Paper on Sport, published by the EU in 2007, claims that everybody should have access to sport regardless of social class, origin, disability and gender. Despite this emphasis on gender equality, none of the education and social integration projects conducted during the European Year of Education through Sport (“EYES”) took women and gender differences into account.⁶

According to the documents presented above, the proportions of women and men in sport – in sport for all and in elite sport, as well as in all sporting roles – are indicators of equal access, equal opportunity and gender equality in society as a whole. Therefore, it is important to collect and compare the numbers of men and women who gain access to the different forms, levels and areas of sport.

A focus of this report is elite sport, which includes athletes, coaches and key executives who are part of a complex system of rules and regulations, discourses and practices which are embedded in nation states and governed by international organizations. In Europe the basis of the sport system is (still) sport for all, which represents and shapes the sporting tastes of the population and also has an impact on elite sport, although potential athletes do not “grow” out from the grass roots.

The gender proportions in the various fields of sport are in many ways interrelated as the number of women in organized sport has an impact on the availability of women for executive and coaching positions. Women in leadership positions can influence the recruitment of officials and coaches, as well as the situation of female athletes. Many coaches are former athletes and the gender proportion among athletes has an impact on the men-women-ratio among coaches. Coaches are in many ways “gate keepers” with a direct access to athletes, but also to decision making committees in sport federations.

“Mapping” gender ratios in various fields of sport is one thing; finding the reasons for gender differences is another – and a far more difficult issue. There may be numerous and various reasons behind all the numbers and figures which indicate the underrepresentation of women in all areas of sport. Consequently, it is difficult to explain the choices of women (and men), to evaluate the situation and to propose strategies and policies for change. Here, not only a collection of data but also in-depth research is necessary. Nevertheless, at the end of the report potential reasons and backgrounds for the prevailing gender arrangements in sport will be proposed and discussed.

Researching gender equality in sport means “unpacking” gender in the various areas of sport and in the manifold cultures of Europe; this can only result in a bricolage, a puzzle, which needs much more work in order to complete it. Gender intersects with other categories such as race, ethnicity, social class or sexual orientation which all have a large impact on subjectivities and arrangements in the individual lives as well as in culture and society. However, in this report it was not possible to include the individuals and groups mentioned above. This should be done in a follow up study.

⁶ http://www.sport-in-europe.eu/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=98&Itemid=151

Referring to men and women and their options, decisions and activities means referring to tendencies and averages, and one must be aware that there are also large individual differences between women with regard to their interests, prospects, resources and so on. The same is true of men.

2. Gender equality – a contested issue?

Gender equality is a key issue in all areas of modern societies. However, research on gender equality is confronted by several questions: How does one measure equality? Does equality in sport mean that there should be 50% of men and 50% of women in the Olympic delegations and equal numbers of men and women in all sports and teams? Is the aim to have the same number of men and women in each sport? Or is it acceptable if women and men have different priorities? Should it be demanded that “women-only” sports such as synchronized swimming gain the same appreciation as male dominated sports such as football? The meaning of equality is a long discussed dilemma of women’s movements: should potential differences between the conditions of life legitimize different policies for women and men or should there be equal demands and obligations despite unequal conditions of life?

This question is a major issue in sport, which is one of the few areas in Western societies with strict gender segregation. In most sports women and men do not compete with each other but in separate leagues and competitions and with different standards. Competitive sport aims at detecting performance differences and constructing hierarchies. Everybody has the right to compete, but not everybody has the same chance of winning. Genetic differences, for example with regard to size, differences in training and social differences decide performance and success. The sport system compensates for some of these differences such as gender and age, but does not compensate for others, such as size.

Not only gender, but also ethnic origin and socio-economic background have a decisive impact on sport participation on the grass root and the elite levels whereby gender, social class and ethnicity intersect. In addition, nationality influences opportunities for women and men to be successful in specific sports. Here, the different development of sport and the different sport systems, tastes and habits in the countries of Europe must be taken into account. A “women’s sport” in one country may be a male-dominated sport in another. In Norway team handball is a sport dominated by women, whereas female handball players are a relatively small minority in Germany.

Raising again the issue of equality, it is equal chances which we can ask for, as the first International Charter of Physical Education and Sport, adopted in 1978 by UNESCO states: “One of the essential conditions for the effective exercise of human rights is that everyone should be free to develop and preserve his or her physical, intellectual and moral powers, and that access to physical education and sport should consequently be assured and guaranteed for all human beings” (Women 2000 and Beyond, 2007, 3-4).

3. Methods and procedures

This report is based on available information in the form of reports, studies and other sources which are available in books, articles, papers or on the internet.⁷

Several publications provide information about the sport systems in the European countries, e.g. Bottenburg et al (2005), who focus on EU countries, and Sobry (2011), who covers all countries in Europe. An excellent overview is given in the report on “Sport in Europe – Social, Political, Organisational, Legal Transparency in Europe” (2008).⁸ This work was initiated by the European Year of Education through Sport (EYES 2004) and focused in particular on racism and xenophobia. Gender was named as one of the important issues but did not play any role in the report. Several recent reports focus on gender, such as “Women 2000 and Beyond: Women, Gender Equality and Sport”, published to promote the goals of the Beijing declaration and the platform for action in 2007,⁹ “Women and sport: the current situation” provided by the IOC (2009)¹⁰ and “Women, Leadership and the Olympic Movement”, edited by the *Comité international olympique* & Loughborough University (2010). These and other publications have been used in this report.

The material, sources and scientific studies about gender differences in sport, focus mainly on participation and leadership; information about female coaches is scarce, and about women as elite athletes virtually nonexistent. Very little is known about opportunities, participation rates, situations and perspectives of women in elite sport. There is an abundance of information about top-level sport in European countries, in particular about popular events and famous athletes; however, in nearly all cases the authors of the material use a “gender-neutral” language, and gender-differentiated information is lacking. This is true of the Olympic delegations, as well as of the participants in elite sport programs in the various countries.

Because of limited time and resources, this report is based on available information. The main sources are the websites of sports organizations and institutions, as well as relevant studies and publications. In addition, personal contacts were used, experts and sports officials being asked about issues which were not covered in publications or on the internet.

This report presents significant examples of gender arrangements in each of the interrelated fields of sports participation, leadership, coaching and elite sport and uncovers common features and trends which are typical of most, if not all, European countries. There is a tendency towards an increasing inclusion of women in the world of sport, but there are still a considerable number of gendered hierarchies which must be addressed and removed.

4. The development of gendered sport cultures in Europe – background information

4.1. The rise of modern sport

⁷ All websites have been accessed and checked on September 29 and 30, 2011.

⁸ German Sport University Cologne, Institute for European Sport Development and Leisure Studies October 2008
http://www.sport-in-europe.eu/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=98&Itemid=151

⁹ <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/public/Women%20and%20Sport.pdf>

¹⁰ <http://www.wcse2011.qa/wp-content/uploads/2011/05/Women-and-Sport-The-Current-Situation-2009-10-eng-.pdf>

Sport, i.e. the way it is organized, played and consumed, is not “natural” and self evident. The gender of the various sports, too, is not given, but the result of traditions and gender arrangements.

European countries and regions developed and still develop specific sport cultures which have their roots in the 19th century when gymnastics and sports were introduced with the aim to improve the public health and to prepare young men for the Napoleonic wars. It goes without saying that physical exercises were “invented” and developed by men and for men (Pfister 2003). At the same time, “modern sport” emerged in England and gained increasing acceptance and popularity in Europe. Characteristics were and are equal access and equal conditions, quantification of performances, a permanent striving for improvement, exceeding former performances and setting records.

In the last century, sport has developed to a global phenomenon: most of the “big sports” are played worldwide with the same rules, governed by a united system of organizations and covered by mass media with an international outreach. Maguire (1994; 1999) showed in his reconstruction of five phases of sportization “diminishing contrasts” between the sport cultures of the world but at the same time “increasing varieties” as new sports cultures, some of them from non-western regions, and new ways of sport consumption emerge (Maguire, 1994).

Since the turn to the 20th century, we observe various “sportification” processes, i.e. an increasing importance of competitive sport in Western societies and a growing popularity of elite athletes and international events. At the end of the century, processes of de-sportification emerged with the propagation of sport for all or recreational physical activities, whereby the borderlines between recreation and sport became blurred. Sports were and are dominated by white middle or upper class men, but the number of girls and women in the sport movement has continually increased and is still growing (Pfister 2010b).

4.2. The “landscapes” of sport in Europe today

Europe consists of approximately 50 states; all of which support and finance elite sport and provide and/or encourage sport for all. Despite the many differences between the countries, there is a “European sport system” with specific characteristics which were adopted, at least partly, by the former East-Bloc-Countries. After the collapse of communism, new sport structures and organizations have been built up in these countries in processes of European integration, which was, as in other areas, not without conflicts and problems (Heinemann 1999; Tokarski, Petry & Groll 2006; Scheerder et al. 2011; Sobry 2011).

The organization of sport activities in Europe differs considerably from the sport organizations in other parts of the world, in particular the USA where the main sport providers are educational institutions and fitness companies (DaCosta & Miragaya 2002; Gems & Pfister 2009).

In Europe, state, market and civil society are involved in the development of sport policies, infrastructures and provisions, whereby the civic and the public sectors are the major players (Tokarski, Petry & Groll 2009; Scheerder et al. 2011). In particular in the North- and West-European countries sport is to a considerable degree organized by clubs and federations which are responsible for amateur sport and sport competitions (Heinemann 1999; Scheerder et al. 2011). The competition system in all

sports has a pyramid structure with a continuous promotion of winning athletes and teams to a higher and the relegation of the losers to a lower level. The top of the pyramid are competitions on national and international levels. But this does not mean that elite sport is growing out of a broad basis of sport participation. Top level sport is a system of its own, only loosely connected with competitive sport on local or regional levels. Recreational sport coexists with competitive sport and takes place inside and outside of sport organizations (Scheerder et al. 2011, 8).

The structure of the sport organizations can also be described as a pyramid with the sport clubs as the basis. The clubs are members of regional and national sports federations, e.g. the French football Federation or the Royal Spanish Swimming Federation, which are members of the European and the international federations, e.g. FIFA or FINA¹¹. Clubs and federations are also members of regional and national umbrella organizations, e.g. the Norwegian or the German Olympic Sport Federation.

Characteristics of the European system are the focus on clubs as civil society associations governed by the principles of volunteering, “organized reciprocity and civic solidarity”¹² as well as autonomy. Although the sport associations are autonomous, they are in one or the other way supported by public subsidies because sport promises to provide public benefits. The public support of sport organizations follows the principle of subsidiarity which is explained on the webpage of the German Federal Ministry of the Interior as follows: Subsidiarity “means that sport organizations must exhaust their own sources of financing if they wish to receive federal funding”.¹³ Sport may be organised in most or all European countries in clubs, “but not only are the degrees of organisation different; what is more serious is that club and club member has a different meaning in each country” (Heinemann 1999, 18).

However, looking closer at the structures, organizations and practices, it becomes obvious that sport is organized and financed in different ways whereby the public, voluntary and commercial agents operate and co-operate differently in the various sport systems. “In sum, all over Europe, both civil society and the state play a relatively important role in the field of mass sport, which is an important common point. Nevertheless, it should be recognized that within Europe, there is a large variation in both their relative weight of these actors, as well as in the way they interact with each other (and with other players) (Scheerder et al. 2010, 10).

Although clubs are in some countries the main sport providers, in all European countries commercial sport centres and organizations emerged which seem to attract an increasing clientele, not the least because they adapt more easily than clubs to the needs of potential users.¹⁴ In addition, educational institutions, companies and other providers organize sport for various groups of the population. It should also not be forgotten, that a high number of physically active individuals engage in informal sporting activities such as hiking, swimming, cycling or playing football in a park.

¹¹ Fédération Internationale de Football Association; Fédération Internationale de Natation

¹² Interview with Robert Putnam *Journal of Democracy* 6:1, Jan 1995, 65-78;

<http://xroads.virginia.edu/~HYPER/DETOC/assoc/bowling.html>

¹³ http://www.bmi.bund.de/EN/Themen/PolitikGesellschaft/Sport/Sportfoerderung/sportfoerderung_node.html

¹⁴ For the commercial sport providers in the various countries see <http://www.sport-in-europe.eu/images/stories/PDFfiles/organisational%20aspectsofsportintheuropean.pdf>

Despite its unified rules and regulations, elite sport is embedded in diverse sport cultures and governed by country and sport specific policies and strategies. The training systems, the financing of sport and the organization of events depend on decisions and measures of the various sport federations and the states which delegate the responsibilities for sport to ministries, administrations and agencies. In addition, the business sector and the civil society may contribute to the promotion of elite sport.

In cooperation with the sport units of their governments, the sport federations have developed specific elite sport systems, in particular, rules and practices with regard to the identification, selection and training of talents, the establishment and administration of trainings centres, the financial support of the athletes as well as the delegation of sportsmen and women to international events (Digel, Burk & Fahrner 2006).

The various “elite sport systems” use primarily sport schools or clubs for the training in the early stages of sport careers. Clubs organize competitions and leagues on the local and regional levels. In many countries, e.g. in Denmark, specialized sport schools have been established which allow children and adolescents to strive for a sport and an academic career. Often “normal” schools or universities offer athletes specific conditions. Promising athletes are collected in trainings groups or elite sport centres, and get, at a certain performance level, enough resources to train full time with a top level coach. In France, athletes train in more than 100 multi-sport institutions (poles), the most important is the Institut National du Sport et de l’Education Physique (INSEP) in Paris. In Italy, CONI (*Comitato Olimpico Nazionale Italiano*) administrates 16 centres for the training of athletes in various sports. Similar centres have been established all over Europe.

Opportunities and challenges of a sport career also depend to a high degree on the type of sport. In ball games, e.g. basket ball, team handball and football, it is possible in some countries to earn money by playing on a regional level, in many other sports, from fencing to rowing to artistic gymnastics, athletes can only live from “sport income” when they compete on a world class level (Digel, Burk & Fahrner 2006; Breuer & Wicker 2010a). As studies indicated, parents play a huge role in the sporting careers of their children. They encourage them, drive them to training and competitions, pay for their equipment and offer emotional support. In some sports, e.g. figure skating or tennis, parents may even be the driving forces, not only by encouraging, but also by financing the training of their children.

4.3 The impact of the “European sport system” on gender equality in sport

As mentioned above, sport was a men’s world, women were late comers and often outsiders. However, already in the 19th century, women began slowly but continuously to enter the various areas of sport, one after the other. In some sports, such as tennis and golf, they were soon accepted, in others, such as football, women had to struggle to get access (Pfister 2000). Currently, women are still a minority in elite sport and in sport for all, as shown in this report.

The vast majority of information about the sport systems, elite sport organizations and training practices do not differentiate between women and men (see Digel, Burk & Fahrner 2006). It seems that institutions and groups involved in organizing (elite) sport and “creating sport careers” are gender blind. Reflection about the potential impact of measures on the one or the other gender and information about gender differences and their importance and meaning in elite sport are very scarce although there

is abundant evidence that the situation of male and female athletes differs in many ways (Hartmann-Tews & Pfister 2003).

The “European sport model”, described above, has a decisive influence on the way in which sport is organized and also how gender is taken into consideration. The clubs and federations are united in umbrella organizations which are the representatives of organized sport in the political arena and in the society as a whole. They put forward demands, negotiate the conditions of sport participation on various levels and decide about their sport-political agenda, e.g. the promotion of gender equality.

However, the members of the sport “family” (clubs and sport federations) are independent associations which have specific interests and make their own decisions. This means, that any laws about gender equality, e.g. quotations, cannot be dictated by the national sport confederations, but have to be implemented with the consensus of all organizations involved. In addition, sport organizations are voluntary associations which decide independently about their internal affairs. The executive board of sport clubs (consisting mostly of men) can, for example, decide to prioritize the men’s handball team instead of women’s gymnastics group e.g. with regard to trainings times or financial support.

In the USA, the government could compel educational institutions with the Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, a law against discrimination under education programs receiving Federal financial assistance, to provide equal resources for males and females in educational settings. This had the effect that high schools, colleges and universities, the main providers of amateur sport in the USA, increased their resources for women’s sport, female athletes and teams to a degree that gender equality in collegiate sport has been reached in many areas (Gems & Pfister 2009). The European sport system with its autonomous actors does not allow such interference from the state, gender equality has here to be initiated from within the organizations.

5. Sports participation – trends in Europe

Although elite athletes do not “grow out” of a broad basis of sports participants as the “pyramid model” suggests interest in sport, sports participation and top-level sport are in many ways intertwined, not least because sports participants create the milieu in which sports competitions and athletes can thrive. The popularity of a sport such as handball in Denmark or cross-country skiing in Finland has produced both mass participation and sporting success. De Bosscher et al. (2009) has explored the elite sport systems in five European countries (and Canada) and developed a system of “input” factors in order to explain sporting success. Among these factors are sports participation and the physical education of children and youth.

Excellent information about women’s sports participation in EU countries is provided by the Euro barometer “Physical Activity and Sport” (2010). According to the results of this survey, women are on average less physically active than men and form a minority in organized sport. However, there are huge differences according to country and type of sport, and the intersecting categories of social class, education, ethnicity and gender contribute to inequality with regard to sports, sporting activities and membership in sports clubs.

A good indicator for the degree of participation in sport is the frequency of the activity: 43% of the male populations of EU countries report that they play sport at least once a week, as compared with only 37% of women. The other way around, 49% of the male but 57% of the female respondents state that they never take part in sporting activities or do so less than once a month (Euro barometer 2010, 12). In the 15-24 age group 19% of men but only 8% of young women do sport five times a week or more; 71% of men and only 50% of women do sport at least once a week. In most countries men are overrepresented among those who are active in sport more than three times a week. Only in Denmark, Finland and Sweden do slightly more women than men report this high activity rate.

The other side of the coin is that women are overrepresented among those with a sedentary life-style. In all countries women form a majority of the inactive population with three exceptions. In Denmark 18% and in Finland 7% of both genders are not physically active. In Sweden only a small percentage of the population is inactive: 7% of the men and 5% of the women.

In Portugal, Romania Hungary, Bulgaria, Greece, Italy and Poland more than 50% the female respondents reported that they had an inactive life-style, while the corresponding figure was more than 60% in Italy, Bulgaria, Portugal and Greece. The numbers of inactive men are considerable lower: only in two countries, Greece and Bulgaria, is the percentage of men who report that they have a sedentary life-style over 50%.

These data reveal the diversity of “body cultures” in the EU. They also show that more women than men – and in some southern European countries even the majority of women – do not participate in physical activities and sport.

In the context of this report, involvement in sports clubs is of particular interest as leadership and elite sports are a matter of sports organizations and institutions. 16% of all male and 8% of all female respondents in the Euro barometer survey were members of a club. Club membership is more common among young people: 30% of men aged 15-20, but only 13% of women in this age group, are club members (Euro barometer 2010, 28).

In most countries sports organizations are dominated by men to a considerable degree. Only in two countries – Finland (12% of the men and 18% of the women active in sport) and Italy (5% of the male and 7% of the female respondents) – are there more women than men club members.

Clubs are particularly popular in the Netherlands (where 41% of men and 31% of women who are active sport are members), Germany (34% of men and 26% of women), and Austria (34% of men and 22% of women). However, in these countries, too, there is a clear gender difference of around 10% in favour of men when it comes to club membership.

Careers in sports organizations often start at the club level with volunteering. 9% of the male and 5% of the female respondents of the Euro barometer survey report that they are active as volunteers (Euro barometer 2010, 59). Studies indicate that women and men volunteer in different areas, with more men than women sitting in the executive committees of clubs – which is often a first step to holding key positions in sports federations (Doll-Tepper & Pfister 2004; Pfister 2006).

Other cross-national surveys with specific target groups corroborate the Euro barometer data presented above, among them the “Health Behaviour in School-aged Children” (HBSC) survey, which provides comprehensive data on activity patterns among children and adolescents across Europe.¹⁵

The 2006 HBSC study conducted in 41 countries revealed that in all age groups and all countries boys were more physically active than girls. On average, 61% of the boys and 45% of the girls (aged 13) and 61% of the boys and 42% of the girls (aged 15) were vigorously active for two or more hours per week (Currie et al. 2006).¹⁶ There are large differences between countries. The activity rates of 15-year-old adolescents may serve as example: 78% of Danish but only 39% of Romanian boys and 71% of Danish and 21% of Romanian girls met the criteria mentioned above. The Global School-based Student Health Survey (GSHS), developed by the WHO and conducted in numerous countries all over the world, confirms the European data and shows large gender differences with regard to physical activities among young people (aged 13-15).¹⁷

The Euro barometer data (2010) confirm the results of numerous studies conducted in European countries in recent decades. Based on available studies and statistics since the 1990s, Bottenburg, Rjinen & Sterkenburg (2005) found an increasing participation of the population in “keep fit” activities such as jogging, cycling, fitness training and various forms of aerobics. However, a comparison between results of a representative survey carried out in 1997 and the recent Euro barometer data reveals that the percentage of inactive individuals in EU countries has not changed considerably; in some countries it has even increased. The country reports presented in Bottenburg et al. (2005) demonstrate that not only the quantity and form of sports participation but also its organization differ substantially in EU countries. In northern and western Europe clubs are the main sport providers whereas in southern Europe physical activities mostly take place in fitness centres, and in the new EU countries people are predominantly active in informal settings. Thus, if one compares activity rates and the organization of sporting activities, it can be assumed that sports clubs provide an attractive environment for their members and contribute to a long-lasting involvement in sport.

The reports on EU countries in Bottenburg et al. (2005) also indicate that the popularity of different types of sport varies considerably depending on such things as tradition and environment. Examples of this are the popularity of team handball in Denmark and Germany, of ice-skating in the Netherlands, of rugby, basketball and judo in France and of darts in England. Some of these “traditional” sports, e.g. handball and skating, are popular with both genders while others, e.g. rugby and darts, are men’s sports.

Sports are gendered. Some are more attractive for women and others for men, and they convey different meanings, messages and images depending on the gender of the participants. Therefore, gender has a decisive impact on the choice of a sport. Girls and boys, men and women differ

15 The HBSC survey was initiated in 1982; the first cross-national survey of five countries was conducted in 1983/84; see www.hbsc.org.

16 Since the last survey in 2002 the percentage of active children has decreased. The HBSC data provide information about trends but have to be interpreted with caution. Country-specific conditions may not have been taken into consideration satisfactorily.

17 The Global School-based Student Health Survey (GSHS), initiated by the WHO and conducted in numerous countries, shows the same gender-specific patterns of physical activities. <http://www.cdc.gov/GSHS/de>.

considerably with regard to their favourite activities, with the specific “sports tastes” of girls and boys and men and women mirroring the gendered areas of elite sport.¹⁸

According to Bottenburg et al. (2005), football is the most important sport, at the grass-root as well as the elite level. A recent report on women’s and migrant’s football in Europe (Bradbury et al. in print), based on UEFA information, showed a recent football boom among girls and women, but it also revealed that football is still a male domain. In the 53 football federations in the EU and among 12.6 million registered adult amateur players there are more than one million women, amounting to a proportion of 8%. More than 10 million children play football; 9% of them are girls. The following examples indicate the large gender differences in the various countries: among all players, girls and women represent in Norway 22%, Denmark 21%, Germany 15%, the Netherlands 8%, England 5%, France 5%; Slovenia 3%, Italy 2%, Greece 1% and Portugal (UEFA 2009/2010).¹⁹

According to the statistics provided by Bottenburg et al. (2005), gymnastics ranks among the most popular activities of girls and women in all EU countries. Only in Germany, where gymnastics clubs offer various sport-for-all activities, is it popular among boys, although 70% of the members of the German Gymnastics Federation are girls and women.

There are few sports which do not attract at least 10 to 20% of participants of the other gender. Exceptions are horse riding, which is virtually a girls-only sport, and ice hockey, which is still very much a male domain. Nevertheless, at the elite level, men still dominate in show-jumping and there are women’s Olympic ice-hockey teams.

Several sports, such as badminton and basketball, appear in the top-ten list of men’s sports in some countries and in the women’s top-ten list in others. Throughout Europe, swimming, tennis and golf are popular among both sexes. In the last decade new forms of “risk” sports have become increasingly popular among boys and young men; these include skateboarding, competitive climbing, snowboarding (freestyle, off-piste), notably base jumping. Here, new forms of masculinity based on skill and risk-taking are manifested (e.g. Robinson 2008).

These findings of the mapping of sports participation in European countries are supported by numerous studies conducted in various countries, e.g. in Portugal (Matos Almeida & Cruz 2010), in the Netherlands (Claringbould 2008), in Denmark (Pilgaard 2008) or in Austria (Weiss & Russo 2005). The findings show clearly that the world of sport is (still) gendered with male and female domains, where women seem more willing than men to enter male spheres such as football. At the same time, women’s preferred physical activities such as gymnastics or aerobics have increasingly become vehicles for beautification projects emphasizing slimness and muscle tone, the essentials of post-modern femininity. Boys and men have reacted to the feminization of traditionally male sports by seeking new challenges and creating new and extreme sports. Here, clearly, doing sport is doing gender, and it is doubtful whether a “de-

18 See, for example, the number of participants and athletes in Danish sport <http://www.teamdanmark.dk/CMS/cmsdoc.nsf/content/tdwb7m51w4>; see also the male and female members of the different sports federations in the German Olympic Sports Federation www.dosb.de or the membership of Portuguese federation Matos Almeida & Cruz 2010, 133.

19

http://www.uefa.com/MultimediaFiles/Download/FirstDiv/uefaorg/Publications/01/51/90/63/1519063_DOWNLOAD.pdf
The data refer to the members of clubs with first division teams.

gendering” of sport is possible, not least because male and female participants will present different images and give their activities different meanings.

6 Elite athletes – numbers, sports, countries

Readers or audiences of sports news might easily gain the impression that elite sport is a male domain, not least because of the dominance of men’s football in the mass media. But there are more sports than football, and most of them are not in the limelight. Women have participated in international competitions for more than a century, and the question arises as to whether they are equally represented and treated in elite sport. Unfortunately, there are no Europe-wide surveys available which look at elite athletes and top-level sports from a gender equality perspective. The report on the “training of young sportsmen/women in Europe” focused on “national and European legal and political frameworks” and not on gender. Therefore, different indicators have to be used to answer the question stated above.

6.1 Female athletes at the Olympic Games

The programs and attendance ratios at the Olympic Games provide an excellent insight into the development of women’s sport in and outside the Olympic arena.²⁰ Women were excluded from the first Games in 1896 and remained a small minority among Olympians before WWII. The percentage of female athletes in the Olympic delegations rose from 11% in 1960 to 21% in 1980 and to 38% in 2000. At the 2008 Games in Beijing around 42% of the 10,900 athletes were women, and at the winter Games in 2010 they made up around 40% of the 2,500 athletes.

As the number of participants grew, so did the number of sports and events open to female athletes?²¹ In the 1908 Olympic Games, held in England, the birthplace of modern sport, 44 women competed in four disciplines: tennis, sailing, figure-skating and archery, all of them sports with a high social prestige.

Swimming was introduced to the women’s program in 1912 by the “feminist” Swedes (according to the minutes of the IOC assembly in 1911) (Pfister 1996; 2000; 2010). After a lengthy struggle between the International Athletic Federation and the IOC on the one side and the International Women’s Sports Federation on the other, women were first allowed to enter competitions in athletics in 1928. The first team sport in which women were permitted to take part in at the Olympic Games was volleyball in 1964. Team handball and basketball followed in 1976, football in 1996, and ice hockey in 1998. In 1984 cycling and the marathon were included in the women’s program, in addition to rhythmic gymnastics and synchronized swimming, events in which only women compete. Since then almost all sports and disciplines, even those considered male domains such as wrestling, weightlifting, pole vaulting and hammer throwing have been made accessible to female athletes (Pfister 1996; 2000; 2010).

²⁰ An excellent source for research on the Olympic Games is the website SR/Olympic Sports <http://www.sports-reference.com/olympics/>.

²¹ On the literature about the Olympic Games see Veal, A. J., and Toohey, K. (2008) *The Olympic Games: A Bibliography*. Sydney: Australian Centre for Olympic Studies, University of Technology, Sydney, available at: www.business.uts.edu.au/1st/research/research_papers.html.

In the 2008 games in Beijing men competed in 28 sports, women in 27. Two sports (baseball and boxing) were reserved for men, while in one sport (softball) and in two disciplines (rhythmic gymnastics and synchronized swimming) only women competed. Of the 302 events, 127 were open to women, 165 to men, and ten were mixed events.²²

In the 2012 Olympic Games in London boxing will be included in the women's program, and baseball and softball will be removed from the Olympic schedule. This means that the only step to be taken in order to achieve gender equality (at least with regard to the program) is to admit men to rhythmic gymnastics and synchronized swimming. However, the same sports for men and women does not necessarily mean the same number of events, as there can be more weight classes for men in sports such as boxing, judo and weightlifting.

This short overview reveals an enormous increase in the number of female competitors and a huge expansion of the women's program, a development which must be considered against the backdrop of the constant disputes over the admission of sports to the Olympic canon or their removal from it. In view of the current number of around 11,000 participants, a further expansion of the program would seem impossible. The inclusion of new sports or events, therefore, means a reduction in the number of existing (mostly men's) competitions, e.g. a reduction of weight classes in boxing in 2012, when women's boxing will become an Olympic discipline.

Hence, the continual increase in sports and events for women can be viewed not only as a success for the organizations and groups which have actively supported women's sports but also as a result of the IOC's equality politics. In addition, it must be taken into account that the people and groups who have advocated gender equality in Olympic sports have also been pursuing their own interests. Being able to send many (and above all successful) athletes to the Games has a positive effect on the status and the resources of sports federations, as well as on the prestige of the countries competing. Especially in sports which have long been men's domains, the number of women participants is small and the chance of success relatively high, so that it is not surprising that federations try to promote 'their' female athletes by advocating women's events.

The overall increase in the number of female Olympians and the number of women's events conceals the different gender ratios in the Olympic teams of European nations. With very few exceptions, all European NOKs sent more men than women to the Games in Beijing. The following table reveals large country-specific differences with regard to the composition of the teams of selected countries:

Representation of male and female athletes in Olympic delegations at the 2008 Summer Games

Norway	84 athletes, women's percentage	64% (women's football /handball teams)
UK	304 athletes, women's percentage	46%
Germany	420 athletes, women's percentage	44%
Netherlands	237 athletes, women's percentage	41%
France	309 athletes, women's percentage	39%

²² See the website of the Beijing Olympics: <http://en.beijing2008.cn/>

Italy	333 athletes, women's percentage	39%
Portugal	71 athletes, women's percentage	34%
Denmark	84 athletes, women's percentage	24 %

The low proportion of female Danish athletes can be explained by the participation of a men's handball team (14 players) and the dominance of Danish men in the cycling and rowing teams.

Representation of male and female athletes in Olympic delegations at the 2010 Winter Games

Netherlands	32 athletes, women's percentage	53%
Denmark	17 athletes, women's percentage	47%
UK	52 athletes, women's percentage	46%
Italy	109 athletes, women's percentage	37%
Germany	149 athletes, women's percentage	38%
France:	104 athletes, women's percentage	36%
Norway	95 athletes, women's percentage	26% ²³

The dominance of women in the Netherlands team is due to the high number of women speed skaters: 14 of the 17 female athletes competed in the various speed-skating events.²⁴

These examples make clear that female athletes still form a more or less small minority in Olympic teams, although their attendance rate depends on the sport and the country.

6.2 Female athletes at European events

European Championships provide an excellent insight into the numbers and opportunities of European sportsmen and women competing in various sports at a high international level. Three sports, rowing, athletics and swimming, have been selected and analyzed with regard to the gender ratios among the competing athletes. Swimming can be regarded as a "gender-neutral sport", swimming events being organized for women as early as the 1912 Olympics. As mentioned, above, women had to fight to be admitted to athletic events at the 1928 Olympic Games, and the "images" of the various athletic disciplines vary. For a long time rowing was a male domain, women not competing at all in this sport until after WWII. Female rowers have participated in the Olympics since 1976, although some events were only opened for women as late as 1988 and 1992.

Taking rowing first, women still compete in only six boat classes at the European Championships while men compete in eight.²⁵ In every European Championship since its re-introduction in 2007 women have made up around one third of the participants. In 2007 in Poznan and in 2008 in Marathon, female athletes formed 34% of the more than 400 participants. In 2009, the percentage of women decreased to 33% and in 2010 to 32%. The last European Championships took place in 2011 in Plovdiv, where 405 participants – 266 men and 139 women (34%) – competed in six and eight events respectively. The relatively small number of female rowers cannot be explained only by the difference in the number of

23 Explanation: the low percentage of women is due to the fact that in 2010 there was a male ice-hockey team and a male ski-jumping team.

24 <http://www.sports-reference.com/olympics/countries/NED/winter/2010/>

25 14 Olympic boat classes, the distance is 2,000m. http://www.worldrowing.com/event_categories/continental-events

racers. In all the events mentioned above, male crews also formed a majority, with one exception, in the boat classes open for both genders.²⁶

The European Athletics Championships in Barcelona in 2010 serves to explore gender ratios in the various track-and-field disciplines.²⁷ Altogether 1,626 athletes participated in this meeting, 891 men and 735 women (45%). Women competed in all events with one exception: the 50km race walking, which was a men-only event. The program indicates the progress of women's sport, given the fact that women were only admitted quite recently to some events. The triple jump was included in Atlanta in 1996, hammer throwing and pole vaulting in the 2000 Olympics.

Women were a minority in all events, the differences being around 5% in most disciplines. In the hammer throw 25 men and 22 women participated, in pole vaulting 29 male and 25 female athletes. In the shot put and the 10,000m the women's percentage was 41%, in the marathon and the 5,000m women made up 40% of the competitors.

An overview of the numerous events held during the European Aquatic Championship in Budapest 2010 – which included competitions in swimming, diving, synchronized swimming (synchro) and open water swimming – also reveals gender differences. The list of results reveals that female swimmers were a minority in most events, e.g. 40% in the two disciplines of open water swimming and 45% in the 1,500 m freestyle.

The gender ratios of the various teams taking part in this event were analyzed in more depth: 15 of the 42 countries had slightly more women and five an equal number of men and women while 22 had more men or only men in their teams.²⁸ The list of participants shows that the overall gender difference is caused by the tendency of countries to send either gender-balanced teams or teams which were dominated by or consisted only of men. There was not a single women-only delegation. However, 150 women competed in the women-only synchronized swimming events, thus balancing the overall numbers of female and male participants.²⁹ Another swimming meet took place in 2010, the European Championship in water polo in Zagreb, in which eight women's and 12 men's teams participated.³⁰ Women's water polo became 'Olympic' at the Sydney Games after protests by the Australian national women's water polo team, which had played in international tournaments since 1975.

This overview of the participation of female athletes in European events reveals a continuing marginalization of sportswomen, but also a degree of progress, which has gathered speed since the beginning of the new millennium. It is evident that the "gendering" of a sport still has an effect on women's participation in top-level events and that women have different opportunities of competing depending on the country. The positive development is above all the continuous inclusion of women in all types of sport. Until quite recently, women's participation in sports such as boxing, wrestling, hammer throwing or pole vaulting was unthinkable and rejected with medical, psychological and moral

26 Since the re-introduction of the European Championships in 2007 women and men have competed in altogether 30 events; in 28 events there were more men's crews, in one case the number of men's and women's crews were equal and in only one case did more female crews compete than male crews.

27 The source of information is <http://www.tilastopaja.org/staticresults/eaal2800102.htm>

28 <http://www.omegatiming.com/swimming/racearchives/2010/index.html>

29 <http://www.omegatiming.com/swimming/racearchives/2010/index.html>

30 <http://www.omegatiming.com/swimming/racearchives/2010/index.html>

arguments. Today, female athletes in these disciplines have become reality and are taken for granted, which obviously does not raise questions or doubts – at least not openly – about the ability of female athletes to compete in these events. But the question remains whether the gender gap among the participants in top-level events will close in the near future.

6.3 New trends, new sports – where are the women?

In recent decades new and extreme sports have gained popularity, in particular among young men. Base jumping (parachuting from a fixed object), snow- and skateboarding, moto cross, BMX (bicycle motocross) are only some examples of the rapidly expanding world of “X Games”. X Games are “Olympic” summer and winter events for action sports developed and organized by the American TV channel ESPN, but the X game idea as well as the various disciplines have quickly spread all over the world, and also to Europe. Many “new sports” have started as informal activities of boys and young men but have soon developed rules for competitions. Some events such as “snowboard big air” (jumping from a ramp and performing tricks in the air) are men-only; in others women take part, but they form only a small minority. A good example of this is the Burton European Open snowboarding competition in Laax, Switzerland, which is one of the major events in this discipline. In 2010, 151 snowboarders competed in the half pipe (tricks and jumps) and 172 in the slopestyle (tricks and jumps on an obstacle course) events; around 30% of them were women.³¹ Burton is an extremely successful snowboarder and board manufacturer. Snowboarding is big business, and the income of some athletes is considerable. In 2010 Shaun White, the superstar, had an income of \$9m.³²

Among these new extreme sports are outdoor sports such as free climbing and sky surfing, as well as endurance sports like the XTERRA “off-road triathlon”, consisting of competitions in 1.5km swimming, 30km mountain biking, and 10km trail running. This competition was developed in the 1990s by a Hawaii-based television events and marketing company and currently has worldwide adherents. During a European tour competition, which took place in five countries, the participants were listed according to their performance. Of the 547 competitors, 21% were women. The gender difference increased with age: of the 194 athletes competing in the over-40age group, only 14% were women.³³ In extreme endurance sports such as iron-man competitions and ultra-long distance races the participants aim to test the boundaries of human abilities. As several studies have revealed, “extreme sports” are spaces where male identities are constructed and re-affirmed and where culturally normative and hegemonic masculinity is re-produced and re-presented (Rinehart & Sydnor 2003; Robinson 2008).

This overview of the participation ratios of male and female athletes in a number of global and European sports meets, as well as in traditional and new sports events, shows a clear picture. Women are a minority even in those sports which seem to be gender-neutral; and they are outsiders in sports which are, as actions sports, newly constructed as male domains.

However, there is continuous change. Women are proving that they can compete in sports which focus on endurance and strength or on the willingness to take risks. They have entered male spaces such as

31 <http://opensnowboarding.com/Coverage.aspx?openid=BEO>

32 http://www.ehow.com/info_11384286_snowboarders-salaries.html#ixzz1Ysi3oMXU

33 2010 Point Standings, 2010 XTERRA European Tour Final Standings <http://xterraeurope.com/2010-point-standings/>

football and rowing, from which they were long excluded. In addition, women still compete in women-only sports, but these are sports which have relatively few participants and which attract little public attention.

6.4 Numbers in the squads of elite athletes in various European countries

As shown above, at major sports events women form a minority among the athletes. Further, there are not only differences between the various sports but also between countries. Despite having contacted selected national sports organizations and NOCs, it was very difficult to get information about gender ratios in national squads. Therefore, only examples from a number of countries can be provided. In Portugal, 482 athletes train at the Portuguese Institute for High-Performance Athletes. In 2010, only 25% of them were women.³⁴

The national squads in Slovenia³⁵ comprise 1,030 athletes: 120 athletes in the world class, 404 in the international class, and 506 in the “perspective class”. In all classes men dominate with a share of 70% of the athletes.

In Denmark, 542 women, 1,278 men and 14 women’s as well as 14 men’s handball teams are reported as elite athletes by 19 sports federations to “Team Denmark”, the institution in charge of top-level sport in the country. The percentage of women is 30%. However, not all federations indicated the gender of their athletes. Data are lacking from sailing, shooting, swimming and equestrianism.³⁶ 38% of athletes with scholarships from the Norwegian Olympic Committee are female (Fasting et al. 2008).

In the UK, 26 sports are included in the “World Class Programme” of UK Sport, which supports 1,460 athletes with “medal winning capabilities”, 43% of whom are women.³⁷ “The organisation UK Sport co-ordinates policy, which is mainly focused on the support of elite sport at the UK level as well as UK-wide programmes ... UK Sport is funded by, and responsible to, the DCMS” (Department for Culture, Media and Sport of the United Kingdom government). (Sobry 2011, in print)

A list provided by the German Olympic Sports Confederation contains the numbers of elite athletes in the German national squads in Olympic sports: 44% of the 5,925 athletes are women.³⁸

In Italy, the elite of elite athletes, 70 women and 93 men, are members of the “Club Olimpico”.³⁹ Although in each country and within each sport federation a specific definition of “elite athlete” may exist, along with a specific system of grouping them according to their performance level, the figures reveal an uneven gender ratio in all countries, with women forming a more or less small minority.

6.5 Female athletes in national squads in different sports

34 Info: Cristina Matos Almeida [cristina.matosalmeida@gmail.com] (email: September 26, 2010)

35 I thank my colleague Rado Pišot [rado.pisot@upr.si] for this information.

36 The information is on the website of Team Denmark;

<http://www.teamdanmark.dk/CMS/cmsdoc.nsf/content/tdwb7m51w4>

37 Amy Lowe, Senior Athlete Investment Officer, UK Sport (email: March 10, 2011); UK Sport 2010

<http://www.uk sport.gov.uk/pages/wc-performance-programme/>

38 For the elite sport system in Germany see <http://sportfak.uni-leipzig.de/~fg-sportiabtw/LSP.PDF>

39 <http://coni.it/index.php?id=1858>

The number of female athletes varies substantially according to the sport. The lists of German athletes show that women compete in all sports. However, the gender ratios in the various sports indicate a typical pattern: women make up 60% of the athletes in the German Gymnastics Federation (DTB), which is not surprising as the DTB is responsible for rhythmic gymnastics, which is a women-only sport. In addition, more female than male athletes compete in equestrian sports and figure skating. Women are underrepresented in all other sports and form a relatively small minority in traditional male sports, e.g. cycling, weightlifting, boxing, ice hockey and snowboarding.

In Denmark, 19 federations reported the number of men and women among participants as well as elite athletes in their sports. In all sports, with exception of team handball, women were a minority at the “sport for all” as well as elite levels. In cycling and skiing less than 20% of the squad members are women; in wrestling there is a men-only team. As mentioned above, four federations did not provide gender-segregated data.⁴⁰

In the UK, 26 sports are included in the World Class Programme.⁴¹ In nine sports more women than men are funded, but the differences are small (under 5%), with the exception of equestrian sports with 69% women and synchronized swimming with 100% women among the world-class athletes. In some games such as handball, basketball and hockey women form only a slight majority. In 16 sports more men than women are involved in this program; in some sports the percentage of women is under 35%, e.g. in boxing (17%). There is not a single woman in the wrestling team. However, weightlifting, another former male domain, has 50% women in this program.

The information available confirms the results already outlined above: female athletes are underrepresented in elite sports. In many countries they make up between 30 to 45% of the national squads. However, there are large differences between countries, and the percentage of female and male athletes also depends on the sport. Women dominate in some countries in equestrian sports and gymnastics, but they are underrepresented in most other sports, in particular in traditional men’s domains.

6.6 Education and income of elite athletes

In the last decade the IOC and sports organizations has increasingly become aware of the necessity to provide athletes with an education and professional perspectives after their athletic careers. The study undertaken by Aquilina & Henry (2010) shows that most European states have developed regulations and strategies which make it possible for athletes to optimize their sporting performance and continue formal education or undergo vocational training at the same time. In Denmark, for example, sporting talents find various opportunities to combine sport and a school career. They can attend special high schools where opportunities are provided for learning and training; they can prolong their education; or they can receive additional hours of teaching if they miss too many lessons.⁴² The survey carried out by Breuer and Wicker (2010a) of German athletes supported by Sport Aid revealed that 69% of the respondents went to school, studied at university or underwent some form of training. Unfortunately,

40 <http://www.teamdanmark.dk/CMS/cmsdoc.nsf/content/tdwb7m5lw4>

41 Amy Lowe, Senior Athlete Investment Officer, UK Sport (Email March 10, 2011); UK Sport 2010 <http://www.uksport.gov.uk/pages/wc-performance-programme/>

42 <http://www.teamdanmark.dk/CMS/cmsdoc.nsf/content/webb8e7aw6>

none of the studies dealing with athletes and education includes a gender perspective. According to a pilot study conducted in Denmark, education is of higher subjective importance for young female than for young male athletes. However, we do not know if similar gender differences can be found in other countries.

In European countries, top-level sport is supported by public funds in accordance with criteria developed by sports organizations and the relevant state institutions. Often lottery money is used for this purpose. These criteria focus on the potential success of a sport and its athletes at the international level.⁴³ In some countries priorities have been developed, and sports are only given support status when the athletes have the potential to compete successfully at an international level. In other countries all sports federations have national squads, but the resources given to the federations, among other things for coaches, are also dependent on success. In some countries specific institutions such as Team Denmark or UK Sport administrate the funds and work for the advancement of elite sport; in other countries the sports federations are responsible.

Elite athletes receive subsistence money, which is staggered according to the performance levels. In many countries, e.g. in Denmark and the UK, it comes from public funds.⁴⁴ In Germany, a charitable trust, German Sport Aid, supports around 3,800 talents and top athletes with an amount of 10 to 12 million Euros per year.⁴⁵ In the UK, for the next Olympic Games in London, a new concept was created called the “World Class Performance Programme” “to ensure that the UK’s most talented athletes have every chance of realizing their potential”.⁴⁶ “Podium and Development level athletes will be surrounded by a performance programme that includes coaching, training and competition support, medical and scientific services and access to the best facilities that the UK (and often the World) has to offer.”

Male and female athletes meeting the criteria are supported equally, at least in principle. But there may be cases of “traditional” (i.e. men’s) sports being prioritized. In Germany, the percentage of women among the athletes supported by Sport Aid is 44%, the World Class Performance Programme in the UK includes 1,460 athletes, 43% of whom are women.

Despite these support systems, the situation of elite athletes is extremely diverse, depending on the country and the sport. Some are amateurs, others are full-time professionals – but most are “in-between”.

A recent survey of athletes in the German Sport Aid program provides an insight into the financial situation of elite athletes in non-professionalized sports. Their income from Sport Aid depends on their success, but even the best athletes in the A-squad are not paid enough for them to make a living.⁴⁷ Therefore, the athletes are often part-time, gainfully employed, supported by their families and/or subsidized by sponsors (Breuer & Wicker 2010a). Their income depends, among other things, on the sport as well as the degree of popularity of the sport, and participation in Olympic Games is also an

43 Sports federations may, in addition, invest in athletes in accordance with their own priorities.

44 UK Sport is funded by, and responsible to, the DCMS.” (Keech Sobry)

45 https://www.sporthilfe.de/Ueber_uns.dsh?ActiveID=1046

46 <http://www.uksport.gov.uk/pages/wc-performance-programme/>

47 https://www.sporthilfe.de/Wie_wir_foerdern.dsh?ActiveID=1048

important factor. The assumption that gender has an impact on the income of athletes was not supported by the data (Wicker & Breuer 2011).

In Germany, athletes are offered employment by the armed forces, where there are granted time for training and competitions. After finishing their sporting careers, they are offered a position in the various occupational areas of the army. Currently, 818 individuals, 30% of them women, are officially soldiers but in reality full-time athletes.⁴⁸

As the analyses of the various sports federations reporting to “Team Denmark” revealed, in Denmark, too, most athletes cannot live from their sport. It can be assumed that they use similar options to earn a living to those of their German colleagues.

An interview study with female Olympic athletes by Gal (2008) focused on the situation of sportswomen in Hungary after the system change in 1989/90, which did away with the privileges of sports federations, clubs and athletes. Today the income of athletes comes from various sources, among them sports federations, sponsors and foundations. It is dependent on success and popularity, although “Hungarian” sports such as team handball have a considerable advantage over “new sports” like women’s water polo. As in other countries, the athletes try to continue their education to improve their job chances when their sporting careers come to an end. But in contrast to Denmark or Germany, there is no institutionalized support of their academic careers. The women interviewed did not think that men had any advantage in terms of income and benefits. However, they reported that men were more likely than women to “launch some kind of business venture during their sporting career (Gal 2008, 206). A high salary and good training conditions were named as reasons why many female athletes, in particular team players, accepted offers from abroad. It can be assumed that athletes in other former Eastern Bloc countries have to struggle with similar problems to those of Hungarian sportswomen and men.

In popular sports a major part of athletes’ income is generated by sponsors. Successful athletes are given advertising contracts, but there is no exact information available whether and, if so, how gender influences the availability of sponsorships and the income generated in this way. Depending on their flair, fame and success, sponsors are willing to support athletes, and good-looking women can make more money than many men. However, to get a sponsor athletes have to attract media attention and, as numerous studies have shown, the mass media cover men’s sport to 90%. Female athletes gain more attention at large events such as the Olympics. But even then they are underrepresented in comparison to male athletes (Bruce, Hovden & Markula 2010).

6.7 Professional sports

Elite sport can be “big business”, but this refers in particular to professional sports: football, car racing, cycling and tennis. Most money is made in the American professional leagues and in soccer.

In the Forbes list of the most valuable teams and athletes no women’s team is among the top 50 teams, and among the 50 most valuable athletes there is only one woman, the tennis player Maria Sharapova.

48 Email from Gitta Axmann, German Olympic Sport Federation, 28.2.2011

With the exception of tennis, professional sports are men's affairs. In many countries huge sums of money are invested in professional sport, for example in football stadiums or race courses, which are built with public funds but reserved for men. In addition, football games burn up large resources for security measures in order to prevent fan violence. In both sports, football and car racing, the organizers and athletes have large revenues. From a gender equality perspective, it must be questioned whether the public sector should pay for measures which benefit only male athletes and players.

6.8 Elite athletes – gender-specific issues

Although the same support systems and criteria exist for female and male athletes, the question is whether the “same” also means “just” or “fair” with regard to the specific needs of women and men.

There are several issues which have a specific impact on and importance for female athletes and it is important to invest personal and financial resources to find solutions for these unresolved issues.

In some sports, such as artistic gymnastics, the average age of the female athletes is much lower than that of male athletes, which raises concerns about their health and their personal development (Mountjoy et al. 2008). In the 1970s, the average age of female gymnasts from Eastern Bloc countries decreased. This development caused debates in some Western countries about the well-being of these athletes, who had started to train at preschool age already because the bodily changes at puberty have a negative impact on gymnastic performance. The *Fédération Internationale de Gymnastique* (FIG) raised the age eligibility of women gymnasts in 1980 from 14 to 15 and in 1997 to 16 years (Paul 2010). However, gymnasts still begin to train at a very young age. Although studies have shown that most gymnasts manage to balance sport and education, the health and well-being of gymnasts and other very young athletes cause concern because child athletes are prone to injuries because their bones and their musculoskeletal systems skeleton are still developing.

In artistic and rhythmic gymnastics, as well as in endurance sports like long-distance running or cycling, slimness is an advantage. Female athletes in these sports are endangered by the “female triad”: intense training and inadequate nutrition can cause amenorrhea, which may have a negative impact on bone density and eventually lead to osteoporosis. Athletes affected by the triad have a bone density of women three times their age.⁴⁹ Awareness of the problem, consultation of coaches and physicians, and tailor-made training and nutrition are some of the factors which help to cope with this problem.

A further important issue with a large impact on women's sport is sexual harassment and violence. Studies in several European countries have revealed that women in various sporting roles are more often confronted with sexual harassment than men.⁵⁰ Sexual harassment of female athletes has multiple and complex backgrounds. “Particular dangers arise where such athletes become emotionally reliant on or obsessed with their coaches and where their coaches are not subject to independent monitoring.”⁵¹ Differences in age and power, as well as the need of athletes for emotional support, can facilitate sexual

49 Morgenthal 2002; Lebrun 2006; Zach et al. 2011. see also the material on the home page of WSI (WomenSport International) http://www.sportsbiz.bz/womensportinternational/taskforces/triad_tf.htm

50 See the special issue in *Journal of sexual aggression* 8 (2002), 2.

51 See WSI (WomenSport International)

http://www.sportsbiz.bz/womensportinternational/taskforces/harassment_brochure.htm

relations or even sexual abuse. Although cases of sexual harassment may not be frequent, they pose a major problem for the affected athletes. Codes of ethics, as well as awareness, information and the establishment of 'help lines', are suitable means of fighting sexual harassment and abuse.

Trafficking of athletes is a current problem which affects men and women. However, it may be more dangerous and damaging for female than for male athletes because women can be exposed to sexual harassment and violence.

Over the last decade sports federations have attempted to increase interest in their sport through a sexualisation of the female athletes. The best example of this is the required dress code, such as the bikini in beach volleyball. Other federations are also considering a "modernization" of their sports dress. Sponsors and the media, moreover, contribute to the commodification of sportswomen, selling their products via sexualized bodies. However, it must be taken into consideration that athletes are mostly not only victims but also agents in this "game", using the public attention for their own purposes (Schaaf & Nieland 2011).

The growing participation of Muslim women in elite sports has led to the question of "doing sport" in a hijab. Whereas some groups, such as the members of the "Atlanta Plus" initiative, insist on banning the hijab from sports arenas, some federations, such as the Iranian Sports Federations, insist on an "Islamic dress" for their female athletes. The declaration "Accept and Respect" drawn up by an international working group proposes accepting the faith-based choices of Muslim women and rejecting any form of pressure from sports federations and from religious leaders (Pfister 2010).

Gender verification is another issue which raises numerous questions that are not easily answered. Gender verification means the confirmation of the eligibility of an athlete to compete in an event which is dedicated to men or to women. However, from the data available it seems that this has only been a problem in women's events. Doubts about the eligibility of athletes for women's events arose in the 1960s, which led to so-called sex tests at major sports competitions. However, these tests are difficult, not always accurate and, in addition, humiliating. Therefore, routine tests are no longer conducted.

Gender verification tests revealed that there are individuals who have a genetic abnormality, a specific medical condition or have undergone a gender change. Questions were raised about the eligibility of those athletes to compete in women's competitions. In 2003, the IOC published a statement and proposed rules for the eligibility of transgendered athletes. However, research on the competitive advantage of these athletes is still lacking, as are concepts of how to guarantee fair competition and how to treat transgendered athletes in a way that they do not feel discriminated against in the world of sport.⁵²

Homophobia is an issue which concerns both male and female athletes. For men, in particular in "men's sports", it appears almost impossible to be open about their homosexual orientation. The situation of women depends to a great degree on the country. In western and northern Europe lesbian

52 On the issue of gender verification and transgendered athletes see http://www.sportsbiz.bz/womensportinternational/archives/2011/documents/The_Transgender_Athlete_2011_Recommendations.pdf

athletes are widely accepted; in other regions homosexuality is still a taboo which has a negative impact not only on their sporting careers but also on their lives (Griffin 1998). Homosexual athletes should be encouraged to work together with sports organizations and institutions and develop concepts in the fight against homophobia (Griffin et al. 2002).

Further issues which have to be addressed are pregnancies of female athletes and athletes with children. Can pregnancy be a reason for exclusion from a team? Do these women get financial support during maternity leave? Which arrangements are made in order to allow women (and men) to combine motherhood (or fatherhood) with a participation in elite sport?

7 Women, sport and leadership

Since the rise of modern sport in the 19th century women have always been greatly underrepresented in decision-making positions in sports organizations and institutions; this applies, moreover, to all sports and all areas of sport and to all levels (Doll-Tepper & Pfister 2004, Pfister 2006). Worldwide as well as in Europe, men dominate in the governing bodies of sport organisation, as among other studies an overview provided by Pfister (2004).

Various decisions, initiatives and programs (e.g. those of the IOC and sports federations) have not removed the barriers that prevent women from gaining access to leadership positions, as the following “mapping” of gender ratios in key executive positions of sports organizations shows.⁵³

7.1 Gender ratios in key executive positions in international sports organizations

The most powerful sport organization at the international level is the IOC. Currently, the organization is governed by a male president, and 17% of its members are women.⁵⁴ Important tasks of the IOC are carried out by 25 commissions, but around one quarter of these, including the important commissions responsible for marketing and TV rights, do not include women. Only in the Women and Sport Commission do women form a majority. Merely three of the 25 commissions are headed by a woman.

The International Paralympic Committee (IPC) is also headed by a male president. Its governing board consists of three women and 11 men, and men also form a large majority in the five councils.

The average percentage of women on the boards of the more than 70 international sports federations is less than 10%. Of these federations, 29% do not have a single woman on their executive boards, and in 86% of them the proportion of female members is under 25%. The average proportion of women in the boards of these federations is 9.75%. Only five federations (curling, equestrianism, triathlon, bowling and netball) have elected a female president.

A similar underrepresentation of women in key positions can be found among European sports organizations: the proportion of women on the boards of 52 European sports federations is 11%. More than one-third of the federations have men-only executive boards, while the only sports federations

⁵³ This “mapping” was conducted in the context of the project “Olympia: equal opportunities via and within Sport”, funded by the Sport Unit of the EU. It was carried out in 2010, but not least because of the long terms of office in sports organizations, it can be assumed that these figures also reflect the current situation.

⁵⁴ The following information is taken from the websites of the organizations.

with a majority of women in key positions are those of netball and squash. Two female presidents chair the netball and the bowling federations.

ENGSO, the umbrella federation of European non-Governmental Sports Organizations, has 80% male and 20% female members on its executive committee, but has a woman president. EOC (European Olympic Committees) has an executive committee composed solely of men.

7.2 Women in key executive positions of sports organizations in Europe

Instead of analyzing more than 50 sports federations in 50 European countries, a sample of 11 countries and six sports was chosen for an in-depth exploration on the assumption that the results are representative of the situation in all organizations and countries.

The 11 countries are meant to represent the variety of European nations. The intention was to select countries from different parts of Europe: the UK, Germany, France, Austria, and the Netherlands were chosen to represent countries in western and central Europe; Denmark and Norway to represent Scandinavia; Italy and Spain to represent southern Europe; and Hungary and Slovenia were selected as former Eastern Bloc countries, where not only the political agenda but also the sport systems have changed radically.

The gender ratio on the executive boards of the umbrella sports organizations in these countries is 79% to 21% in favour of men. Only three of the 18 umbrella federations have a female president: the British Sport and Recreation Alliance (the former CCPR), the Norwegian Olympic and Paralympic Committee and Confederation of Sport (NIF), and the British Olympic Association (BOA), which is headed by Princess Anne. NIF complies with gender equality legislation in Norway, which requires positive discrimination to increase the proportion of women in decision-making processes.

The analysis of the executive committees of the selected sports in these countries, all in all 62 national sports federations, revealed similar gender ratios to those found in organizations at the international level.⁵⁵ Only three of the 62 sports federations surveyed (i.e. 4.8%) have a female president; these are (listed simply as country and sport): Austria, gymnastics; Germany, swimming; and the Netherlands, tennis. 19% of the federations do not have a single woman on their boards. The football federations in particular are governed by men-only committees, i.e. the football federations of Austria, France, Hungary, Italy, Slovenia, Spain, and the UK. In the majority of the federations, women form a small minority, not even reaching a proportion of 25% in 73% of the federations. Norway is the only country in which all six sports federations have more than a 25% share of women on their executive committees. Only three of the 62 federations have executive committees with a fair balance (around 50%) of women members (again listed as country and sport): Denmark, gymnastics; France, aquatics; and Norway, gymnastics.

A next step would be to analyze the role of women in the administration of sport in governments and governmental agencies. A brief search in the UK, the country hosting the next Olympic Games,

⁵⁵ We have no data from France, Slovenia, and the UK in weightlifting, and none from the Netherlands in athletics.

provides a mixed picture. UK Sport, “the strategic lead body for high-performance sport in the UK” and responsible for the allocation of funds, is governed by three women and six men, but has a female president. Sport England, responsible for sport for all, has a main board of 12 members, of whom three are women. The board of the London Organising Committee of the Olympic Games and Paralympic Games (LOCOG) consists of 19 members, among them one woman, HRH Princess Anne.

The low number of female leaders in sports institutions and organizations is astonishing, given the fact that more than 50% of women in Europe participate in sport and physical activities. In countries like Denmark and Germany around 40% of the members of sports clubs are female, and such numbers are strong evidence of women’s interest in sport. However, just as in many other areas of society, the categories of gender, ethnicity and social class also play an important and intersecting role in the sphere of leadership. A report on the integration of ethnic minorities in European sport has revealed a large measure of discrimination: “With respect to leadership positions, all available data document the glaring under-representation of ethnic minorities and migrants.” (European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights 2010, 49). The combination of being a woman and belonging to an ethnic minority reduces the chance of gaining access to decision-making boards and committees in sports organizations to virtually zero.

7.3 Women, sport and leadership - conclusion

These data confirm the results of other studies, e.g. on “Women, Leadership and the Olympic Movement” (*Comité international olympique & Loughborough University* 2010), which have been conducted in recent years with slightly different approaches. They also confirm the results of numerous projects conducted in Europe and worldwide (e.g. Hovden 2000a; b; Doll-Tepper & Pfister 2004; Matos Almeida & Cruz 2010). Women form a minority in leadership positions in all sports (except women-only sports), at all levels, and in all countries. With very few exceptions, the apex of the sport hierarchy, the position of president, is occupied by men.

These unequal ratios of women and men in decision making in sport violate the fundamental rules of democracy and human rights, as well as the demand of the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), issued as early as 1978. They damage the credibility of sports institutions and prompt calls for a reform with the aim of achieving the equal participation of men and women at all levels and in all areas of sport.

8 Women as Coaches

Anja Anderson is something of a celebrity in Denmark. Often appearing in the media and giving interviews, she is an esteemed person whose comments are taken seriously. So who is Anja Anderson? No, she is neither an astrologist nor a talk-show host; she is a handball coach and has a position as an assistant coach in a men’s team.

Anderson is an absolute exception, not only in team handball but in the world of sport in general. The scarcity of female coaches has been an issue explored by researchers since the 1980s, and the gender hierarchy in coaching has not changed decisively since then, as a thirty-three year update in 2010 shows (e.g. Holmen & Parkhouse 1981; Hart 1986, Knoppers 1987; Acosta & Carpenter 2010). Acosta

& Carpenter (2010) have documented a continuous underrepresentation of female coaches in US collegiate sports during the last three decades. In 2010, only 43% of the head coaches of women's teams were female. On account of the extensive gender segregation in sport but also because of the great influence of sports teachers' organisations, the percentage of women among the coaches employed in the area of women's sports was traditionally very high, for example 90% in 1972. Subsequently, the implementation of Title IX, a regulation stipulating that women's sports must be allocated the same resources as men's sports, has made coaching jobs in women's sports attractive for men as well, with the result that in 1988 only 48% of the coaches working with female students were women (for Canada Demers 2004). However, the studies of coaches in the USA cannot simply be transferred to the situation in Europe: in contrast to European top-level sport, elite sports in the USA are organised by high schools, colleges and universities, and coaches have relatively secure and well-paid positions. In comparison to the gender ratios of coaches in Europe, female coaches in the US still seem to have a very good chance of coaching athletes and teams.

Research conducted in Europe since the 1980s have revealed that female coaches, in particular in team sports, are a rare exception (e.g. for Germany Gieß-Stüber 1995, Willmann & Zipprich 1995; the Czech Republic Fasting & Knorre 2005; or UK Sports Coach UK 2007).

In Europe the situation of coaches is very diverse, depending on the age and gender of the athletes/sports participants, the level of competition and the sport. Coaches/instructors working at the "sport for all" level, e.g. in women's gymnastics programs or being in charge of children, are often volunteers or paid per hour. Many women are engaged in these types of "coaching". The focus of this report is on coaches in elite sport, because only these have positions of power.

8.1 Male and female coaches – in selected sports, events and delegations

In principle there are no rules or statutes in sports federations preventing women from qualifying as coaches or denying them equal access to the profession of coaching itself. In "theory" women are allowed to work as coaches in all types of sport and at all levels of performance. All over the world, however, the mass media convey the impression that the job of coach is a male preserve. TV broadcasts feature time outs in basketball when male coaches gather and instruct their players, news papers discuss the new engagement of soccer coaches. Are women coaches really such a rare phenomenon? Athletes and their coaches present themselves in competitions. Therefore, sporting events provide excellent information about coaches in various sports.

The most recent women's global sports event was the 2011 football world cup in Germany, where not only players but also their coaches were at the centre of public attention. 16 teams competed, five of which were coached by 5 female head coaches, two teams had in addition a female assistant coach, two teams were supported by female and male coaches, but the head coaches were male, and nine teams were coached by altogether 15 men. All in all, 29 coaches participated in this event, of whom less than 30% were women.⁵⁶

⁵⁶ <http://www.fifa.com/womensworldcup/index.html>

However, the question remains as to how this ratio of male and female coaches is to be evaluated. Is this share of 30% of female coaches a low or a relatively high percentage in comparison with former world cups or with others sports and other events? At the Women's World Cup in 1999, four of the 16 teams had a female head coach, so there has not been any great progress in the last decade.⁵⁷

A similar underrepresentation of female coaches can be observed at the UEFA European Women's Championship, also called the UEFA Women's Euro, which is the main competition in women's football in Europe. 38 teams entered the qualification competitions for the Euro 2013, 34 listed their coaches on their webpage, 29 % of them had a female head coach.⁵⁸

At the national level Denmark, a country which encourages gender equality, may serve as example. Of the ten teams which compete in the highest women's league, eight provided information about their coaches. These eight teams are trained by a male head coach; among the assistant coaches was only one woman.⁵⁹

In the UEFA handbook (2009/2010), which provides gender-segregated information about players, teams and referees, the number of female coaches is not reported. This might be an indication that female coaches are so few and far between that they are not recognizable as relevant entities. At the European level female football coaches seem to be a rare exception. In 2007, only seven women had acquired the UEFA "A" license (Bradbury et al. in print, 47). "With few exceptions, most notably with respect to Germany, Sweden and Norway, interviewee narratives indicated the 'relative paucity' and 'virtual non-existence' of high-level, qualified women coaches in Europe" (Bradbury et al. in print, 47). In contrast to football, team handball is regarded in some countries (e.g. Norway) as a women's sport. At the women's handball world championship in 2009 in China, information about the best 13 teams (out of 24) is available: all of them were coached by men, with one exception. The Hungarian team came with Eszter Mátéfi, a former world-class player, as a coach. (The gender of Kim Yin Soo, the South Korean coach, could not be identified).

The same unequal gender ratio among coaches could be observed at the 2010 world championship in women's volleyball in Japan. Of the 24 teams which competed, only one team, Kazakhstan, had a female coach (there is no information about three teams).

At the European level the picture is very much similar. Teams from 16 European nations competed at the 2011 Euro Basket in Poland. They were coached by 34 men and four women; all the head coaches were men. At the European Water Polo championship eight women's teams participated, trained by 12 male and four female coaches. Again all the head coaches were men.⁶⁰

A further perspective is provided by an analysis of Olympic delegations, which consist of not only athletes but also a large number of officials and staff, among them coaches for all sports. As Norway is

57 <http://www.fifa.com/tournaments/archive/womensworldcup/usa1999/teams/index.html>

58 <http://www.uefa.com/womenseuro/index.html>

59 <http://tema.3f.dk/article/20110801/FODBOLD02/50321010/1865/fodbolportal&template=fodbolportal>

60 <http://www.omegatiming.com/swimming/racearchives/2010/index.html>

a country with gender quotas in many areas of society, including sports organizations, one would expect equal proportions of women and men in the Norwegian delegation.⁶¹

In Beijing Norwegians competed in 16 sports, in some of them only with a few athletes. Each sports team was accompanied by staff, sometimes only a coach but mostly also a “team leader”, medical officers, physiotherapists and technicians. There were all in all 66 individuals, among them 12 women accompanying the athletes. Among the 33 coaches was only one woman, the head coach of the women’s handball team. The other 11 women were: six physiotherapists, three grooms and two women working with video analyses.⁶² The underrepresentation of female coaches is astonishing, given the fact that women formed the majority in the national team; 64% of the Norwegian athletes were women, a rare exception in Olympic history. The high percentage of female athletes was caused by two women’s teams competing in football and handball.

In 2010, at the Winter Games in Vancouver, Norway participated with 99 athletes (25 women and 74 men) in 11 sports, among them men’s ice hockey. 85 experts supported the Norwegian athletes, among them three women: two of them carrying out administrative tasks and one medical officer. The 33 coaches were men.⁶³

Even in tennis, a sport which appears to be gender neutral, top coaches are men, as revealed by the list of speakers at the Worldwide Coaches Workshop conducted since 1983. The speakers at the workshop in Turkey in 2005 were 37 male coaches or other experts. Among the five female speakers was one coach. Taking part at the workshop in Valencia in 2009 were nearly 700 coaches from more than 100 countries; all the 15 speakers, coaches and other tennis experts, were men. In 2011, six female and 28 male experts were invited to give presentations; three of the six women were coaches.⁶⁴

The exploration of the gender ratios of coaches in various events reveals a considerable underrepresentation of women, and football turns out to be a sport in which female coaches have an even better chance than in other disciplines.

8.2 Male and female coaches – information from various countries

Given the large variety of sport systems in European countries and the numerous forms of coach education (depending, among other things, on the type of sport), it is impossible to present a comprehensive picture of the numbers, the qualifications and the roles of male and female coaches. But available studies and snippets of information from sports organizations provide an overview of gender ratios among coaches in various countries.

61 See the media guide published by the Norwegian Olympic Committee
http://www.olympiatoppen.no/ol/tidligereol/beijing_2008/mediguide/media3284.media

62 See the media guide published by the Norwegian Olympic Committee;
http://www.olympiatoppen.no/ol/ol_guide/media3848.media.

63 www.olympiatoppen.no/ol/ol_guide/media3848.media

64 The lists are published on the ITF website <http://www.itftennis.com/coaching/education/workshops/worldwidecoaches/previous.asp> and on the websites of the events.

In France the National Sport Institute (*Institut National du Sport, de l'Expertise et de la Performance*, INSEP) contributes to the French agenda of sports development, in particular at the elite level. The institute is responsible, among other things, for the training and preparation of elite athletes. Currently 630 sportsmen and women train at the institute in 27 sports. Its website shows a list of 24 sports and the names of the coaches/staff in 22 disciplines: 111 men and 19 women. Five of the women listed as staff work in synchronized swimming. In badminton, tennis, table tennis and taekwondo women work with female athletes while three other female employees provide mental training or life support.⁶⁵ It seems that the “hard core” training of sports skills is, with few exceptions, reserved for men.

According to a report conducted by Kari Fasting, the Norwegian sports federations employed 265 coaches in 2006, only 8.3% of whom were women. This percentage is lower than in 1984, when a study revealed a proportion of 14% of female coaches in the federations. Even in sports in which the participants are predominately women, such as gymnastics, more male than female coaches were employed (Fasting 2008; Hovden 2000a; b).

In Denmark an investigation focusing on female coaches was conducted in 2003. A questionnaire was answered by 1,597 coaches and instructors, 41% of them women, working in five selected sports. The relatively high percentage of female coaches/instructors can be explained by the choice of sports, which also included (besides ball games, athletics and tennis) gymnastics/ aerobics. Only 68 (i.e. 4%) of the respondents were coaches of elite athletes, only 14 (21%) of them were women who worked exclusively in tennis and gymnastics, and they primarily trained women and girls (Ottesen & Jensen 2007, 79).

In Portugal more than 21,000 coaches work in 42 sports federations, 15% of whom are women. 80% of the female coaches work in seven federations, most of them (45%) in swimming, 12% in athletics and the same percentage in gymnastics (Matos Almeida & Cruz 2010, 69).

Referring to the situation in the UK, Norman (2008, 448) reports that “less than a quarter of all coaches are women” and that “women are especially underrepresented in team sports and at the elite level.” Recent data from Sports Coach UK on “Coaching in the UK III” (2011) lists more than one million coaches: 69% are men, most of them without any specific training. Only 31% of male and 18% of female coaches have some form of qualification or, from another perspective, only 20% of the qualified coaches are women. Most of them volunteer at the “sport for all” level. “Across 25 sporting governing bodies in the UK, there are 600 full-time coaches (both men and women) working at elite level performance.” 52 coaches hold positions as head coaches of national senior squads (both men and women). Only 9 of these are women (Norman 2008, 448).

A recent Canadian PhD study presents an overview of available national and international studies, including European research about female coaches, and confirms the insight gained by the above data; coaching at the elite level is a male domain (Sundstrom 2011).

⁶⁵ <http://www.insep.fr/FR/Pages/accueil-insep.aspx>

Germany as an example

For more than 20 years various empirical studies have been conducted in Germany on the number and the situation of female coaches (for an overview see Weigelt-Schlesinger 2008).⁶⁶

A first survey was carried out by Mrazek & Rittner (1991), which revealed that in the late 1980s 23% of all instructors and coaches were women, although great differences were to be found between individual sports federations and between different levels of performance. Women made up only around 10% of the coaches working in elite sports.

Later studies (Giess-Stüber, 1995; 2002; Willmann & Zipprich 1995; Cachay & Bahlke 2003; Weigelt-Schlesinger 2008) confirmed the findings of Mrazek and Rittner. Information about the current situation, provided by the German Olympic Sports Confederation, reveals that 245 individuals work as national coaches in Olympic sports at the three highest performance levels (A, B and C squads), 11% of whom are women. 9% of the 236 coaches on the federal level who are not employed but get an honorarium and 13% of the 176 coaches working at Olympic Sport Centres with young athletes are women.⁶⁷ These figures indicate that no great progress has been made since the 1990s.

Gender ratios among coaches differ considerably depending on the sport. At the national level the sports federations are in charge of hiring coaches, just under half of the federations hiring only men; by contrast, the proportion of women coaches in the German Gymnastics Federation (including rhythmic sportive gymnastics) amounts to nearly 50% today (the percentage of women among the five million members of the gymnastics federation is 70%).⁶⁸ Women face considerable marginalization in other federations, for example in the German Ski Federation, which employs 118 coaches for six sports (not including the Nordic combination). Among the 118 coaches are ten women (8%).⁶⁹ However, this is a change in comparison to 2003, when not a single woman was on the ski federation's coaching team.

Coaches for top-level sports are also employed by regional federations or clubs, for example in teams playing in the national leagues in ball games. The ball game with the highest percentages of women among the players is volleyball. In the 19-40 age group (180,000 players in the volleyball federation) women form a majority of 53%. However, the head coaches of the 15 women's teams playing in the German National League (*1. Bundesliga*) are all men. Among the 36 coaches there is only one female assistant coach. The survey carried out by Cachay & Bahlke (2003) revealed that, of the 328 coaches in the national leagues of nine ball games, only 9% were women.

To conclude, studies conducted in Germany, Norway, England, Portugal and other countries, as well as the information retrieved from various sources, show that the coaching profession is a male preserve. Only in women's sports such as rhythmic gymnastics are female coaches the rule. In sports played by more or less equal numbers of men and women female coaches form a minority while in 'typical' men's sports like football female coaches are a rare exception. Studies also reveal that women mostly

66 An overview of the elite sport system in Germany is provided by <http://sportfak.uni-leipzig.de/~fg-sportiabtw/LSP.PDF>

67 Email 10.9.2011 from the German Olympic Sport Confederation.

68 Email from Swantje Scharenberg 3.9.2011: at the national level the German Gymnastics Federation employed 13 male coaches (artistic gymnastics men/women, and trampoline men/women). Currently there are 21 coaches, among them seven women.

69 http://www.deutscherskiverband.de/leistungssport_ski-alpin_betreuer_de,354.html

coach young children, adolescents and women at less competitive levels of sport (Fasting & Pfister, 2000; Lyle, 2002; Cachay & Bahlke 2003; Fasting 2010).)

It goes without saying that men's teams taking part in European or world championships, in the Olympics or in national leagues are coached by men. There are very few exceptions, such as a female assistant coach in the German basketball league (Cachay & Bahlke 2003, 67). In other sports, too, women coaches at the elite level are confined to female athletes and teams.

8.3 Conclusion: Coaching a male domain

If we compare the available data on men and women in the coaching profession, we discover similar developments and trends both in European countries and worldwide, which can be summarized as follows:

1. women are a small minority of the coaches employed in elite sports;
2. the higher the level of performance, the lower the percentage of female coaches;
3. female coaches are more likely to be found in women's sports rather than in typical men's sports; and
4. women coach almost exclusively either women or children and adolescents.

But women are not "victims". A study conducted in the UK revealed Analysis of the interview data revealed "that exclusionary and demarcationary strategies operated to limit women's access to coaching roles. Such strategies included gendering the coaching role as a masculine role and closing access to networks of coaches". However, the interviews with the female coaches showed that they challenged such strategies relying on their successes as athletes and coaches (West et al. 2001, 92).

9 Potential reasons and explanations of gender inequalities in sport

Gender equality in the various fields of sport can only be achieved if the necessary changes are based on knowledge about and understanding of the potential reasons for existing gender differences. However, there is not just one reason, and there is no simple explanation. At first sight, women's roles in sport seem to be the result of their individual choices, but a closer look reveals that gender hierarchies are embedded in intersecting traditions, cultures, structures and institutions, and interwoven in social arrangements as well as in individual lives. There are gendered roles and rules, but they can be negotiated or even declined (e.g. Claringbould 2008, Pfister 2010).

Gender is rooted in biology, but constructed and performed in cultures and societies. The diversity of "doing gender" inside and outside the sports arena is the result of individual, interpersonal, societal and cultural processes. Lorber (1994, 5) understands "gender as a process of social construction, a system of social stratification and an institution that structures every aspect of our lives because of its embeddedness in the family, the workplace and the state, as well as in sexuality, language and culture", and –most importantly – in sport (Lorber 1994, 5; Connell 2002). Gender is embedded in institutions determining how power is distributed, and gender is integrated in identities, staged and negotiated in interactions. The current gender order provides "scripts" for everybody to "do gender" because gender is not something we have or are, but a performance, something that we do. Women and men follow these scripts more or less closely and acquire in all cultures appropriate abilities, habits and tastes in

life-long socialization processes (Bildén 1991; Pfister & Reeg 2006). From this perspective, the gender arrangements in sport are not normal and natural, but constructed, negotiated and changeable, as shown by developments in sport over recent decades, for example the inclusion of women in all sports.

9.1 Theoretical approaches and empirical evidence

Two intertwined approaches provide an insight into the constructions of gender hierarchies in sports and societies: the distribution of work and the culture of organizations. Modern societies organize work in a specific way. As an effect of industrialization during the 19th century, places of employment became increasingly separated from homes and families, which resulted in the segregation of work. Men went out to work in offices or factories while women stayed at home and took care of the children. Housework was (and still is) unpaid and is not considered to be “real” work (Beck 1992). The gendered segregation of work is the basis of modern industrial societies, integrated in juridical, medical and moral discourses and legitimized by sexism or, better, biologism. Biologistic thinking refers to the belief that bodily characteristics, the female body or black skin, are indicators of cognitive as well as social abilities and skills and that the biology or “nature” of women and men accounts for their positions in families, organizations and institutions and explains the unequal distribution of power in traditional and modern societies (Honegger 1996). Vocational choices, personnel decisions and labour market structures are not “simply” the expression of an economically rational distribution of people among the various occupations and jobs but ... in the context of the ‘cultural system of gender duality’ ... [must be considered] the result of complex processes of defining work and qualifications and distributing them among the players involved according to gender (Hausen 1993; Pfister 2004; Weigelt-Schlesinger 2008).

The seemingly normal and natural gender arrangements can be unmasked by history. Since the 19th century a continuous “intrusion” of male domains by women has been observed, from space flight to boxing. However, even today women are expected, and feel obliged, to take care of the family. Family responsibilities make it much more difficult for many women, at least in certain periods of their lives, to combine life, work and leisure than for men. The challenges of integrating life and work, as well as their anticipated or imagined priorities, also have an impact on women’s opportunities of becoming involved in sport – as coaches or leaders and also as participants and athletes.

The opportunities and challenges of women in various sporting roles depend on the sport systems, i.e. the way sport is organized, structured and financed, in different countries. Although there are similarities in the organization of sport in Europe, e.g. the prevalence of clubs and federations, each country has developed specific sports structures in accordance with traditions and current specific situations. An overview of sport systems in European countries is provided by (Sobry 2011).

9.1.1 Women in key executive positions

Numerous studies reveal that the gender hierarchy in the executive positions of sports organizations is the result of various interdependent processes, in which processes of marginalization and exclusion interact with women’s expectations and decisions.⁷⁰

70 An overview about the literature is provided by Pfister 2004b.

The gendered segregation of work described above may support the labelling of women as “unreliable” leaders and exclude them because the men in charge assume that women could prioritize their families and are not able to invest the time, flexibility and energy that are believed necessary in important positions. Other factors which may also play a role are stereotypes, defence mechanisms (for example attempts to preserve football as a male space), discrimination processes and the reluctance of men to give up their posts (Doll-Tepper, Pfister & Radtke 2006; Bradbury et al. in print).

However, there are also studies which indicate that many women are not eager to get involved in sports organizations (Pfister 2010). The lack of interest of many women in holding key executive positions raises numerous questions. Are the incentives (for instance power) not as attractive for women as they are for men? Is the workload too heavy on top of employment and work in the family? Do women not meet social expectations and gain social support when they strive for influence and power. There may also be conscious and unconscious messages that women are not supposed to be coaches or key executives. In addition, there is a lack of role models, i.e. of women who demonstrate that holding a key office is not only possible but also rewarding. Women may also be discouraged by “organizational cultures” orientated to the needs of men (Calas & Smircich 1996; Acker 1999, Smithson & Stokoe 2005; Pfister 2004a).

Studies on leadership highlight the importance of the cultures of organizations in determining the definition and distribution of tasks, the way people interact and the expectations which members and leaders have of each other. Organizational culture is created, enacted and also “gendered” via discourses, symbols, rituals and practices in everyday situations, and relates to aims, corporate identities and modes of operation in companies, administrations or sports organizations. It determines who does what work, how, when and where. Modern organizations emphasize equal opportunity, but they reproduce gender hierarchies through the notion of the “ideal leader”, whose characteristics and behavioural patterns are derived from men’s capabilities and life circumstances. The gendered nature of organizations is thus masked by the assumption of a “disembodied and universal leader, who is actually a man, exposing hegemonic masculinity” (Acker 1990, 139). Women are marginalized since their aspirations and personal circumstances are not taken into consideration.

As research indicates, the “ideal leader” of a sports organization is a person with a long and continuing commitment to sport, and with extensive networks, the knowledge and attitude of an insider and a “demonstrative” investment of energy and time. Time and flexibility are considered to be useful benchmarks for measuring the quality of a person’s work, as well as his or her commitment (Hovden 2000a; b; Pfister 2006). Many women do not have long careers and large networks in sports organizations as they are a minority among members of sports clubs; they may also have difficulty attending long meetings at odd hours, and their abilities may not be suited to the tasks which are “sex-typed”, defined and described in such a way that one gender, in this case men, are addressed. In short, it is difficult for women to acquire the characteristics of an “ideal leader”.

Executive positions in sport are often filled by means of co-option, i.e. appointing a person by general agreement. In addition, organizations prefer candidates that reflect the members of the group, improve its image and add to its power. In a men’s world, women are different; they may even be regarded as “troublemakers”, especially if they promote women’s rights (Hovden 2000a; b; Pfister 2006; Knoppers & Anthonissen 2008).

“Head hunting” and recruitment, calls for candidates, periods of office, eligibility rules and election procedures and practices can also discriminate against one and benefit the other gender. If only the members of an executive board are allowed to be elected president, if officials hold office for long periods or if elections are decided by acclamation, insiders – and these are mostly men – have a better chance than newcomers (e.g. Claringbould & Knoppers 2007; *Comité international olympique & Loughborough University* 2010).

9.1.2 Professional coaches

The question concerning the reasons for the lack of female coaches in elite sport has both a simple and a difficult answer. The simple answer is that in many sports few women have the licenses necessary to coach elite athletes or teams. In addition, women who intend to work as top-level coaches face similar problems to those of women aiming at leadership positions, for instance with regard to recruitment, stereotypes about their abilities, sex-typing of tasks, recruitment and so on.⁷¹

The difficult question is why relatively few women acquire the qualifications which enable them to coach at the elite level. Do the qualification process and/or the working conditions of coaches deter women from becoming a coach? Here, one must take into consideration that in many countries, e.g. Germany or Denmark, women form a majority among instructors at the “sport for all” level.

Unfortunately, most of the surveys and studies dealing with coaches have been conducted in the USA or Canada, and the results cannot be transferred to Europe because elite sport and coaching take place in different contexts and under different conditions.⁷²

The education/training of coaches

The training of instructors and coaches is under the authority of the individual sports federations in the various countries. It is impossible to collect information about the specific regulations and practices in more than 50 sports in 50 European countries. However, the training of elite coaches has similar patterns in the various sports federations, which are in charge of hierarchical course, examination and licensing system qualifying individuals to coach athletes and teams in different sports at different performance levels. Cushion, Armour & Jones (2003) criticize the vocational and technocratic orientation of this system in the various countries and emphasize that the coaching culture is often acquired “through observing and listening to more experienced coaches” (218). However, they do not discuss the gender perspective in their approach.

In general, coaching licenses have to be acquired in a series of courses and examinations, the highest qualification entitling its holders to work with the national elite.⁷³ Norman (2008, 448) describes these “pathways to coaching in the UK” as follows: “the first step for an individual to become a qualified coach is to undertake appropriate coaching qualifications offered directly by the governing body of

71 A discussion about the reason of the lack of female trainer provides Lyle 2002, see also Weigelt-Schlesinger 2008. An overview of studies undertaken in the 1980s and 1990s is provided by Norman 2008. For Portugal see Matos Almeida 2010.
72 I have not included literature published before 2000 because the situation of women’s sport as well as of coaching has changed over the last decade.

73 The regulations of the training of coaches in the German Football Federation are to be found at: http://www.dfb.de/uploads/media/09_Ausbildungsordnung_03.pdf

his/her sport. The individual then attends courses relevant to the level to which they are aspiring to coach, progressing by the sequential coaching awards and structure.” UK coaching qualifications can also be obtained through further and higher education institutions. In 2002 the “UK Coaching Certificate” was created, which endorses coach education programs and guarantees consistent standards of abilities and skills as well of tasks and responsibilities of coaches.

According to Patrick Mignon, a sociologist at the French Centre for Elite Sport, INSEP, three levels of coaching qualification exist in France, where the first level allows coaches to work mostly with young people.⁷⁴ The second level is compulsory in order for coaches to obtain a paid position in coaching adults, and the third level is designed to provide qualifications for supervisors/teachers on coach education programs. However, few coaches have reached this step. The majority of coaches have the second level of qualification, which also allows them to coach Olympic athletes and teams. Currently, a reform of the training system for coaches is under discussion in France.

In addition to the training of specialized coaches, academies have been established in some countries which offer a supplementary general education and provide a diploma for coaches already in possession of the highest license. In Germany training takes place at the Academy of Coaching in Cologne,⁷⁵ and in Switzerland it is organized by Swiss Olympics and the Federal Sports Office (Bundesamt für Sport) in Magglingen.⁷⁶ In 2001, the percentage of women among the coaches with a German diploma was 9% (Cachay & Bahlke 2003, 63).

It is difficult to establish the percentages of men and women with licenses at the different levels because they are awarded by a large number of national and regional sports federations.⁷⁷ According to a survey conducted in Germany in 2001, less than one percent of “A level” coaches in football, around 3% in athletics and around 4% in volleyball were women (Cachay & Bahlke 2003, 65).

In Germany the requirements and conditions of education/training are the same for men and women in all sports and in all license categories.⁷⁸ This means formal equality of opportunity; however, it does not necessarily mean that women have the same opportunities in practice. Admission rules, which may include an examination of skills, the demands and the atmosphere during the courses and the tasks and standards in examinations are oriented towards men’s athletic performance and life circumstances, as well as to male norms and values, thus putting women at a disadvantage. A look at the demands of examinations in various federations, the German Football Federation among others, reveals that sporting abilities and skills are a decisive issue.⁷⁹

74 Email from Patrick Mignon, September 5, 2010.

75 The sport federations are members of the coaching academy which offers a two-year course of full-time study; a combination of remote and direct study is possible, see <http://www.trainerakademie-koeln.de/>.

76 See the “Spitzensportkonzept Schweiz” [elite sport concept Switzerland] at: http://www.swissolympic.ch/Portaldata/41/Resources/03_sport/verbaende/spitzensport_konzept/Spitzensport-Konzept_Schweiz_2010_05_01.pdf

77 In:

<http://www.baspo.admin.ch/internet/baspo/de/home/dienstleistungen/bildung/beruf/trainerbildung.parsysrelated1.29813.DownloadFile.tmp/trainerbildunschweiz.pdf> manchen Sportarten decken sich die Landesverbände nicht völlig mit den Bundesländern.

78 See Gieß-Stüber 1995; 1996; Zipprich 2000; Cachay & Bahlke 2003; Weigelt-Schlesinger 2008.

79 <http://www.dfb.de/index.php?id=11284>

In addition, it must also be borne in mind that in many sports the education/training of coaches is almost exclusively in the hands of men,⁸⁰ who direct their teaching towards the majority of male students and may find it difficult to acknowledge the discrimination of women as such. Courses are mostly co-educational, and many women feel marginalized in this male-dominated environment. Interviews with female coaches in the UK revealed a “flawed coach education which does little to facilitate women’s personal and professional development” (Norman 2008, 451), and this is also true of coaches in women’s sports such as netball.

Little information is available about the experiences of women in the training courses. However, interviews carried out by Zipprich (2000) with female handball coaches reveal that the informants were convinced that both the contents of the courses and the methods used in them were oriented towards male interests and levels of performance. A relatively large percentage of the women interviewed felt neither accepted nor happy in these courses. Women-only courses in team sports, which were very successful in Germany, for example, have the image of being not good or not “tough” enough. But they seem to offer women a fair chance of gaining coaching licenses as well as of motivating them to pursue a career as coaches. In the interview study conducted by Norman (2008, 460), the female coaches agreed that “the current structure and culture of women’s sport with minimal support constitutes part of the reason as to why women never reach the highest echelons of coaching”.

A further problem is the accessibility of coaching programs, and the requirement of having coaching experience at a high performance level can be a barrier. In the German Handball Federation, for instance, the requirement for admission to training courses in order to qualify for the highest license is a successful period of coaching in the topmost league (Zipprich 2000). Since, as has been shown above, women are *de facto* not employed in the coaching of men and rarely of women at the highest level, a vicious circle arises: women are very seldom coaches of elite athletes, which means that most of them do not satisfy the admission requirements to the highest level of coaching education, thus leading to their lack of opportunity in getting jobs as top coaches.

At the elite level the general question arises as to the role which the athletic abilities and performance of coaches play, not only in the training of coaches but also in working as an elite coach. Do gender-specific performance levels have an impact on women’s standing in the courses and later in their work? In the survey conducted by Cachay & Bahlke (2003, 201) almost half of the female coaches, 45% of the officials, 39% of the female athletes but only 30% of the male coaches attached very great importance to sporting skills/ competencies, and all respondents agreed that skills have at least some importance. Interviews with female coaches indicate that some of them regard the performance advantages of men and the focus of training on performance alone as a problem (for the UK see also Norman 2008).

The gender-specific differences in sporting performance may also explain the preference of women to coach women and children. However, there is no proof that the sporting skills of coaches have an impact on their coaching abilities.

⁸⁰ The German Ski Federation has centralized its entire training program. The conditions and personnel are thus easy to find on its website. Around 100 people work for the German Ski Federation; with few exceptions these are all men.

Working conditions of top coaches

The lack of female coaches – or, better, the reluctance of women to qualify and work as coaches – can, at least partly, be explained by the remote career prospects and the tough working conditions. Coaches report heavy workloads, as well as schedules which do not fit into “normal” working weeks. Training hours are often in the evenings and competitions at the weekends, which make the job unattractive for people who have to or want to take care of their families (e.g. Cachay & Bahlke 2003 for Germany; Fasting 2008 for Norway; Knoppers 1994 for the Netherlands). Weigelt-Schlesinger (2008, 143) conducted an interview study with officials and coaches of a regional football federation in Germany. According to the statements of her interviewees it is nearly impossible for women with children to work as a football coach. A survey of Portuguese female coaches indicates also major problems in combining working as a coach and caring for a family. 50% of the Portuguese coaches in this study are single, only 30% have children, and they have to find ways of balancing their jobs and their family responsibilities (Matos Almeida & Cruz 2010, 103 ff.).

Little is known about the salaries, the type of employment or the job security of coaches in Europe, i.e. conditions which vary according to the sport, performance level and country. Among the most important employers of coaches are regional and national sports federations. The latter employ coaches who are in charge of top-level elite sports at the national and international levels. The information on national coaches funded by the German Ministry of the Interior shows clearly that the number of full-time coaching positions at the highest performance level is small,⁸¹ and this holds true for all countries. German national team coaches are paid according to a salary scheme proposed by the Ministry of the Interior and resulting in pay roughly on a level with middle-ranking office workers with the opportunity of improvement depending on success. Little is known about the remuneration of other coaches.

Large clubs, too, hire coaches who can even earn a fortune in team sports, e.g. in men’s football. However, most coaches, in particular women, work part-time or only several hours a week. Less than 25% of German top coaches are employed full-time. Most of them are paid a fee rather than a monthly salary (e.g. Cachay & Bahlke 2003). A survey conducted in Denmark presents a similar picture. Very few and mostly male coaches work full-time (Ottesen & Jensen 2007). In Portugal only 15% of the female coaches polled by Matos Almeida and Cruz (2010) were employed full-time as coaches, and many of them also worked as PE teachers.

A recent representative survey conducted in the UK revealed that 69% of the more than one million coaches and 82 % of the qualified coaches were men; this means that 36% of the female but 61% of the male coaches had a coaching qualification (Coach UK 2011). More than three quarters of all coaches were volunteers. On average a coach working full-time received a salary of £19 and a part-time coach £16 per hour, but only 24% of the coaches received any payment.⁸²

⁸¹ Email Dietrich Gerber, 21.9.2010 German Olympic Sport Federation.

⁸² <https://nextstep.direct.gov.uk/PlanningYourCareer/JobProfiles/JobProfile0336/Pages/default.aspx>, information about the professional situation of coaches in the UK.

Regardless of the type of sport or performance level, coaches' contracts are signed as a rule for a limited period only, the renewal of their contracts depending on the sporting achievement of their athletes and teams. According to Matos Almeida & Cruz (2010) only 47% of the female coaches in Portugal had a contract, but a mere 10% of these coaches had a permanent position.

The preference of women to coach other women or children also has a negative impact on their careers. As women's sports, including women's football, do not generate major revenues, most clubs cannot afford to employ full-time coaches for their women's teams; nor are many full-time positions available in children's and youth sports or for teams at lower performance levels.

A survey carried out among coaches in Germany by Helmut Digel, a former vice-president of the International Association of Athletics Federations, revealed that almost half of those interviewed considered their remuneration to be inadequate. Lack of security in later life and meagre prospects after leaving their job were further criticisms voiced by 42 to 60 % of the coaches. The coaching profession, Digel concludes, cannot be recommended to young people (Digel 2000).

Other studies mentioned above confirm that the career prospects in coaching are bad for men and even worse for women, who mostly work with girls and women, often at a low performance level, where there is little money to be earned and even less prestige to be gained.⁸³

Recruitment of coaches

The recruitment of male or female coaches depends on the pool of people to choose from, the rules and regulations which apply, how these rules and regulations are communicated, the hidden agenda and, finally, the preferences of the decision makers in office.

As a rule, vacancies for coaching posts are publicly advertised; however, no studies exist on the actual mechanisms and procedures of the recruitment of coaches. How advertisements are formulated, which groups are addressed and which selection procedures are used have yet to be researched. It can be assumed that the job descriptions, i.e. the expectations and demands placed on potential candidates, are derived from the way the job is "traditionally" conducted – that is to say by men.

Moreover, since in most sports the majority of individuals who enter and complete coach education programs are men, a much larger number of men than women are in the pool of individuals qualified for positions as top-level coaches. Besides qualifications, sporting success is a decisive asset for individuals aiming at a career as a coach because successful athletes are well known and have a high standing in the sports community. As shown above, women form a minority among elite athletes, and thus also in the "pool" of potential candidates for jobs as coaches.

As a rule, the decision makers in recruitment cases are men, as are the members of "old boys' networks", which play a significant role in all decisions that are made. As in the recruitment of

83 See the extensive list of studies presented by Weigelt-Schlesinger 2008, 153-162.

executive officers, mentioned above, the principles of co-optation and “homosocial reproduction” work in favour of men who seem to “fit in” and provide power and prestige for the existing group.⁸⁴

There is no doubt that not only individual choices but also the discrimination rooted in the institutions and cultures of the various sports impede access to or the advancement of women in this profession.

9.1.3 Gendered sport participation

Sports participation at the grass-root or elite levels and the choice of sporting activities depend on complex, interacting processes and conditions. The German sport sociologist Klaus Heinemann (2007) proposed that we understand socialization as an interaction of individual choices, social and cultural influences and environmental conditions. In complex and life-long socialization processes individuals develop sport-specific abilities, attitudes and tastes and attach specific meanings to sport which depend on the intersecting categories of gender, age and ethnicity. Sporting habits are influenced by dominant discourses and actual personal circumstances, which also depend on gender, social class and ethnic origin. But there are also sporting opportunities, incentives as well as positive and negative “sanctions” for playing sport, which may or may not meet the demands of individuals and groups, of women or of men. People will take part in sporting activities, for example football, when the activity is suited to their aptitudes, tastes, expectations and aspirations, and when it promises rewards. Sporting habits and competencies are acquired during life-long socialization processes in which the various environments, i.e. families, schools, clubs, peer groups and informal sporting spaces, as well as the policies of sports institutions, are of major importance because they may provide options, but may also impede access to sport for all and elite sport (see also Bottenburg et al. 2005). Physical education is a good example of the ambivalent impact of socialization at institutions such as schools. The Euro barometer data presented above show a declining interest of girls in sporting activities, and, on the basis of several studies, it can be assumed that Physical Education in schools (PE) contributes to, or at least does not prevent, the high ‘drop-out’ rate of girls from sport and exercises (Bailey, Wellard & Dismore 2005). In particular in co-education classes, PE is often orientated towards the demands of the boys, which means that many girls are marginalized – with the result that a considerable number of girls drop out of PE and may lose all interest in sport.

Sport is a gendered institution, and doing sport is always doing gender. Girls and boys develop specific sporting “tastes” and abilities which fit into the current gender cultures and fashions of the various countries. In recent decades horse-riding stables have become female spaces while skateboard arenas have always been male domains. In many countries football, too, is a male space where women and girls, as ‘latecomers’ and outsiders, are often not welcome.⁸⁵ In other countries girls’ football is growing, and girls who play the game have a certain prestige. If football is labelled “male”, boys and men (at least those who are good at the sport) gain self-affirmation, while female players have to defend their choice of taking up a men’s or a “lesbian” game. But the growing interest of women in football shows the social constructions behind the seemingly natural “gender” of football.

⁸⁴ The mechanisms are similar as in the recruitment of female leaders.

⁸⁵ This is emphasized by sexist and chauvinist fan cultures, see Pfister 2011.

In many countries women who take up sport, particularly a men's sport like football, face institutional discrimination, such as a lack of financial support, as well as insufficient infrastructure, administration and organization (Bradbury et al. in print).

The conception of football and other sports as a male spheres and, as a consequence, the emergence of "female sports" such as equestrianism may influence the opportunities and decisions of women and men to coach, run for office or compete at an elite level in sports which are regarded as belonging to the other gender.

9.1.4 Gender differences in elite sport

Elite sport, i.e. the selection, training and support of elite athletes, varies considerably according to the sport and the country in which it is practiced. But there are certain general trends and factors which contribute to the uneven gender balance in the world of top-level sport. Embarking on a career as an athlete, and continuing it or dropping out, depends not only on a person's talent but also on the decisions made by girls and women and boys and men, as well as by institutional conditions and the cultures of sports organizations.

A career in sport starts as early as in childhood, and whether it is continued or not is not just a matter of sporting success, individual choices, and environmental influences. The phenomenon of adolescent girls 'dropping out' of sports clubs and their waning interest in sports mentioned above indicates that organized sport and competitions do not meet the "taste" of the majority of teenage girls. This may also be the case with female sporting talents. A pilot study of young athletes in Denmark has shown that more girls than boys decide against a sporting career, among other things because they prefer to focus on their education (Bech et al. 2004).

The relatively low number of female athletes can be caused by the lack of interest among girls to participate in sport competitions or by the "drop out" of girls or young women from competitive sport at a relatively early age. Maybe both trends occur. This means that girls have to be supported and encouraged to enter and continue competitive sport at an early stage of their "sporting careers".

Girls and women predominate in some sports such as horse riding and gymnastics at both the grass-roots and elite levels. Comparisons between the percentage of women in various sports and the percentage of female athletes in Denmark and Germany reveal correlations.⁸⁶ This indicates that sports appeal to the one or other gender, which influences not only the participation rate but also their interest in training and competing in this sport. The gender of a sport depends on the country and its culture. Team handball, for example, is a women's sport in Norway and a men's sport in Germany. In addition, boys are traditionally encouraged to be tough and strong, to be competitive and take risks – abilities and attitudes which enable them to take part in extreme sports. Based on these considerations, it can be

⁸⁶ See the information about sport participants and athletes on the website of Team Danmark; <http://www.teamdanmark.dk/CMS/cmsdoc.nsf/content/tdwb7m51w4>. In Germany, the numbers of athletes in the different sports, provided by the DOSB, and the members of the federations correlate in many sports. The membership numbers can be accessed at <http://www.dosb.de/de/service/download-center/dosb-organisation/bestandsdaten/>

assumed that gendered socialization processes and the gender order in a society contribute towards explaining the uneven gender ratios among elite athletes.

In many (or all?) European countries, top-level sport is supported by public funds in accordance with criteria developed by sports organizations and the relevant state institutions.⁸⁷ These criteria focus on the potential success of a sport and its athletes at the international level.⁸⁸ In some countries specific institutions such as Team Denmark administrate the funds and work for the advancement of elite sport. In other countries the sports federations are responsible. Male and female athletes meeting the criteria are supported equally, at least in principle, but there may be cases of “traditional”, i.e. men’s sports, being prioritized.

Although the same criteria apply to both female and male athletes, the question arises as to whether the “same” also means “fair” criteria with regard to the specific needs of women or of men. As mentioned above, there are specific issues – from the “female triad” to pregnancy – which affect female athletes but are completely irrelevant for male athletes. The support of athletes should also take into account their ability to generate an income by way of sponsors.

Many athletes seem to be able to attract sponsors and obtain advertising contracts, but there is no exact information available as to whether and, if so, how gender influences sponsorships (Breuer & Wickert 2010a). Depending on their success, but also on their personality and flair, sponsors are willing to support athletes, and good-looking women can make more money than most men (Schaaf & Nieland 2011). Here, media attention has a huge impact as sponsors foresee media coverage for their products.

9.2. The media and the gendered sport coverage

Studies in numerous countries and of different media indicate that media sport is men’s sport. Women are a rather small minority among sports journalists and the media contents address men’s tastes and expectations.

Worldwide, female athletes receive less media coverage than male athletes and women and men are presented in different ways (Bruce, Hovden & Markula 2010). Newspapers grant women’s sport less than 10% of their space.

This small degree of media exposure makes it difficult for female athletes in many sports to find sponsors.⁸⁹ However, the increasing sexualisation of female athletes may stimulate the interest of the media and sponsors, but then the question arises of whether women want to be regarded and remembered as athletes or as playboy bunnies.

⁸⁷ The sport systems of the European countries are described in the articles published by Sobry 2011.

⁸⁸ Sports federations may, in addition, invest in athletes in accordance with their own priorities.

⁸⁹ Portrayals of players and narratives in the media do not provide glamorous images, although some female players were “gendered”, sexualized and commodified during the last World Championship.

The Football World Championship had a large audience, at least in Germany, which may indicate the increasing importance of women’s football. It remains to be seen whether this event will have an impact on the development of women’s football, at least in the participating countries.

As the qualitative content analysis of the coverage of the women's football world championship has shown, the presentation of the women players was predominantly positive; nevertheless, articles appeared which focused on the appearance of the players, some players underwent "beautification projects" and the women's play was often compared with men's football. Female football players even appeared in the German playboy. Moreover, the question put by many journalists was: "Do these women play "real" football?" Although the majority of journalists agreed about the high quality of the women's games, the existence of this type of coverage clearly devalues women's achievements. There are many reasons for the sexualisation of female athletes in media sports, the most important being to sell the story and increase the revenues for the media and the athletes (Schaaf & Nieland 2011).

The media shape the public's perspective of women's sport, and the lack of athletes as role models may contribute to the disinterest of many girls in playing sports. On the other hand, a positive coverage of female athletes could influence girls' aspirations of becoming an athlete or an athlete's decision to continue her career.

10. Conclusion

The information gathered in this report reveals gender inequalities in all areas and at all levels of sport. Women form a small minority in the executive committees of European sports federations, of national umbrella federations and of sports federations in European countries. The coaches working in elite sport are predominantly men; men coach men, and with few exceptions female athletes and teams have male coaches, too. The Euro barometer 2010 "Physical Activity and Sport" has revealed that women are less physically active than men and form a minority among members of sports organizations. The mapping of participation in sport and physical activities also shows large differences between regions and countries, with a decrease in physical activity rates from north to south. As information from several countries has revealed, women are also a minority among elite athletes in national squads. This is true of most sports, exceptions being in some cases sports labelled "women's sports", such as equestrianism and gymnastics.

Gender differences in sport are intertwined with the current gender order prevailing in European societies which is based on gender duality and gendered structures and institutions. Sport-related discourses provide sporting activities with different meanings and contribute to their attractiveness for the one or the other gender. Life-long socialization processes and the acquisition of sport-related tastes and skills, along with stereotypes as well as marginalization and exclusion mechanisms, have an impact on the opportunities and challenges of women (and men) who aim to become athletes, leaders or coaches. In addition, the actual conditions of training to become and of being an athlete, leader or coach in one of the European countries have to be taken into consideration. In addition, the training and working conditions of coaches, the recruitment of leaders and the situation of athletes have a different impact on and different consequences for women and men, which influence the choices and decisions of individuals in sport for all as well as in elite sport.

The information provided in this report reveals large gaps in our knowledge, a lack of information and the necessity for further and more in-depth research with a focus on the perspectives of the women involved in sport, as well as on the effects of existing strategies and programs aiming at gender equality in sport.

11. Recommendations

Girls and women are underrepresented in many areas of sport and there are some general recommendations which refer to sport organisations.

Raising awareness about gender hierarchies in various fields of sport is necessary because too many people believe that gender equality has been reached.

Gender neutrality of language and measures has to be used carefully because it may sustain women's under-representation in top positions disguising specific assets and specific needs of women and men. Gender neutral job advertisements for football coaches, for example, will not encourage women to apply because they will assume "automatically" that men shall be addressed.

In all areas of sport, goals and action plans for the advancement of gender equality have to be developed, implemented and monitored/evaluated.

A focus should be on athletes, leaders and coaches with children and strategies should be developed which allow a reconciliation of family life and sporting roles.

Measures to improve women's opportunities should focus on individuals, but also on structural changes, e.g. changes of eligibility rules of sport organizations, of working conditions of coaches or of physical education at schools.

There should be incentives for individuals, groups and institutions for reaching gender equality, not or not only sanctions. Incentives could be a financial support of sport federations which increase the number of women in key executive positions.

The exchange of best practices should be intensified and institutionalized, e.g. by the international women's sport organizations.

In all considerations and measures, intersections of gender, race, ethnicity, sexuality and (dis)ability should be taken into consideration and women with a minority background should get specific awareness and support.

Women and men with a minority background (e.g. with regard to sexuality or impairment/disability) should be heard and included in the development of measures.

Worldwide and in Europe, women are a small minority in executive committees of sport organizations on the international, national, regional and local levels.

Recommendations for the increase of women in executive committees

States of the Council of Europe should:

- raise awareness about gender inequalities in the executive committees of sport bodies in the relevant ministries
- implement legislation ensuring gender equality in sport organizations, e.g. by incentives for organizations which improve the male-female proportions in their executive bodies or by sanctions for organizations who do not comply the demand for gender
- earmark funds for projects and organizations which contribute to an increase of women in leadership position

-The sport movement (public and private organizations, e.g. federation, clubs, companies) should:

- raise awareness of gender inequalities in the executive committees in sport organizations
- identify barriers impeding the advancement of women to leadership positions
- provide gender segregated numbers and figures referring to executive bodies and leadership positions
- initiate and implement gender mainstreaming in all areas and all levels of sport organizations
- identify reasons for the lack of female leaders, e.g. with regard to recruiting of candidates, elections, support during office, drop out processes.
- create open and transparent recruitment and election procedures
- improve the accessibility to executive positions by introducing flexible eligibility rules and by reducing the duration of offices
- reduce the work load of leaders, e.g. by letting two persons share tasks and responsibilities
- reduce the meetings in evenings or on weekends, e.g. by using modern communication tools
- organise child care for women in leadership positions
- recruit women for temporary management tasks, e.g. the organization of an event, where they can gain insight in the organization but do not have to accept a long term obligation
- conduct training for women and prepare them for leadership roles
- initiate and implement mentoring programs which encourage and qualify young women for leadership positions
- initiate networks of female (and male) leaders and among potential leaders which can provide information and support careers
- address young women and provide an opportunity to learn about the work of key executives (shadowing)
- invite qualified women from “outside” to enter a career as executive in a sport organization
- create a “pool” of potential leaders, e.g. of female athletes, who could be recruited after the end of their careers
- address and recruit women in various environments, e.g. in clubs, trainings centres, sport departments of universities,
- earmark funds for the development of innovative projects, tools and programs which help to increase the number of female leaders
- be creative, develop new approaches and learn about women’s advancements from other areas such as companies or politics

The advancement of women in the sport hierarchies can also be supported by quota. This can be decided for specific or for all leadership positions in an organization. In addition or instead a quotation of executive positions, “intelligent quota” could be applied, for example quota systems at the lower levels of organizations, which guarantee the availability of qualified candidates for key executive positions.