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## SOCIOLOGICAL RELATION OF SPORT AND GENDER CONCEPTS

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### ABSTRACT

**Aim:** In this study, it was aimed to investigate the information obtained from the literature about the sociological relationship of sports with gender, how sports went through processes in societies in the historical process, what kind of position it is in between social class and status. **Material and Method:** The research was conducted using qualitative research methods. It is a compilation study to explain the concepts of social class, status and stratification in history, depending on the sociological relationship of the concepts of sport and gender. **Results:** In the historical process of sports, it can be thought that social class differences, status assigned to individuals in society and sociological stratification concepts may be related to gender. It can be seen that sports have a more patriarchal structure from ancient times to the dates of the renaissance and reforms. **Conclusion:** The concepts of gender and sport can be thought to be related to certain historical events in societies. In ancient times, sports could be done for war in societies, but as time progressed, some sports branches started to appeal only to the bourgeoisie, so sports in which money was at the forefront emerged. In some studies, there is an opinion that women are in a relatively handicapped state compared to men, therefore, more men can do sports and be successful. Women exist mostly to realize the social role and status assigned to them. Today, scientists argue that since women and men are considered equal in sports, as in every platform, individuals should have equal rights regardless of gender.

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## INTRODUCTION

Sport is one of the most famous and most discussed phenomena in our society. In ancient times, sport served a variety of social or social situations, from spiritual and religious expression to warfare. Historically, sport has been used for both recreational and social purposes, spectacle to the public. The sport also offers professional opportunities for athletes and coaches. Whatever its purpose, sport is an essential part of our modern social fabric. Sports as entertainment is a way of having fun and establishing positive social interactions with oneself and other competitors. Good sports background and when paired with good training can help build positive personal traits such as morale, leadership and social sports behavior (Weinberg and Gould, 2011). In recent years, sport has also served as a catalyst for social change. It is seen that racial barriers have disappeared in sports environments, gender gaps have decreased, and inequality problems related to socioeconomic status have disappeared.

Sport, which first appeared on the stage of history as a means of playing, hunting, fighting with nature and rivals in the primitive ages, has been monopolized by certain classes as preparation for war, gaining prestige in the society and religious practices, although it varies according to societies in ancient times. After the Renaissance, it started to spread rapidly in all societies, partly with the industrial revolution that took place in Europe in the 18th and 19th centuries and started to spread rapidly in all societies such as leisure, healthy life, professionalism, politics, propaganda, education, economy, racism, tourism, violence, law and international relations. It has become an indispensable part of daily life, which is constantly actively expanding, with a very wide range, which concerns the vast majority of life (Kusan, 2020).

Unfortunately, sports do not always lead to positive results. Many sports scientists have exposed the "dark side" of sports by critically examining the world of sports (LaVoi and Kane, 2011). While sports offer many opportunities, it can also reinforce harmful and dangerous social

patterns such as racism, gender inequality, homophobia and extreme violence. Sports researchers have demonstrated how sport both reinforces and challenges dominant ideologies that often lead to discrimination. It is believed that sport can begin to serve a powerful social change through this structure of criticism that challenges our ways of thinking. In order to examine the relationship between sport and sport, it is important to define the two terms first. The term gender is a social construct used for a set of behaviors appropriate to the feminine gender, or, according to Parratt, gender is a social construct that develops over time. Gender is behavior performed as a function of how society expects men and women to behave. Parratt (1994) stated that this gender phenomenon can vary in time, space and discourse. In order to examine the concept of sports in the context of gender, it is necessary to look at which sports boys and girls are encouraged to play at a young age.

Our society clearly defines certain sports as suitable for boys (ie football, wrestling and boxing) and girls (ie dance, gymnastics and figure skating). However, contrary to these norms, there is no biological reason why a woman should not play football or a man should practice artistic gymnastics. It has been stated that sport reinforces a gender power gap that is not only favorable to men but can also be restrictive to women. (Henderson et al, 1996). Clasen (2001), Arguing that the label of "female athlete" is a paradox based on traditional dichotomies of Western culture, she explored the inconsistency of being both a woman and an athlete. According to Clasen, all major dualisms tend to be hierarchical. Male and masculine traits are typically described as being better than feminine and feminine traits. Clasen, states that American culture generally accepts a male/female dichotomy. The same processes can be followed when focusing on the conceptualizations of how sport's national identity is produced.

The two reviews have been simplified for heuristics to reveal two different analytical paths.

It emerges from an intersectional analysis that, on the one hand, national and gender-based identities have meanings, and on the other hand, national identities create diversity on gender. It evolves to show a trend in sociology where intersectional analyzes of gender and identity are followed as critiques of inequality and respectively. Sports sociologists tend to think along the same lines when examining the intersections of gender and national identity in sport. Because intersectional analysis is essentially feminist and how social inequalities intersect in practice, it can be seen as a common ground for ideas.

### **SOCIALIZATION AND SPORTS**

The concept of stratification used by sociologists to denote inequalities between individuals and groups in society is not just economic inequality; religious affiliation is a phenomenon that examines many systems such as age, gender and military rank (Giddens and Sutton, 2017). There are different groups and classes in society. These 19 groups and communities have unequal rights and status. Many factors such as religion, military, cultural, economic power and gender determine the basis of social hierarchy and class differences. Historically, it is possible to talk about four types of social stratification. Slavery is a system of caste, class and property. It is possible to clearly see the effects of stratification in sports fields in Victorian England. In this period, tennis was a sport that only the rich class was interested in, while golf was a sport that only rich men and their spouses and children could play. In a study conducted in Germany in 2011, the interaction of the economic and social status of individuals who do sports in their tendency to do sports was investigated. As a result of the study, it was concluded that the majority of those who do sports are male, well-educated and non-immigrant individuals (Ruseski and ark, 2011).

Although it is obvious that economic and social status affects participation in sports, it is an undeniable fact that culture plays a major role in which sports branch individuals will choose. The

concept of elite in some branches of sports was born as a product of stratification, and the type of sport that was done or participated in was seen as a representation of status. Elite sports have been the reason for preference of the upper class in terms of economic status; The middle and lower classes tended towards non-elite sports such as weightlifting and wrestling. At the same time, sport has the characteristics of an actor that causes horizontal and vertical mobility of individuals within the layer. Since both the economic and social environment of a player transferred from the first league to the super league will change, vertical mobility; A transfer to another team within the same league, that is, the transfer of a league player to another team, can be shown as an example of horizontal mobility, since it will cause an environmental change rather than an economic change.

Sport is one of the most widespread and effective social institutions of modern societies of our age and is a very active social phenomenon in creating a modern society (Yetim, 2010). In addition, sports are among the most important factors that help the individual in socialization and integrate the individual with the society. According to Kuter, especially in developed countries, sportive competitions are considered as an important means of socialization. In the United States, this trending adult organizes playful activities and encourages their children to participate in sports programs that emphasize the importance of goal setting, skill-building, and reward-winning success. ([www.sporbilim.com](http://www.sporbilim.com)). Another effect of sports on socialization is that it provides the development of certain emotions in the individual. With its sports structure, it allows the development and settlement of emotions such as winning, losing and competition.

Research shows that sport is one of the gains in the socialization process. Some current studies in our country show that sports are one of the factors that affect the socialization of university students. (Özdiñç, 2005; Şahan, 2008; Filiz, 2010). Sports, especially team sports, teach children and young

people how to behave in a group, how to control their behavior and excitement. According to a study, after young people start sports; It is seen that they use their free time usefully (98.6%), understand the importance of teamwork (97.2%), become conscious of their responsibilities (95.8%), and acquire the habit of planned and measured work (94.4%).

It is seen that sports have an impact on socialization in terms of understanding the importance of division of labor, sharing and solidarity (93%), being more attentive and sensitive to the rules (92.3%), being more tolerant towards the ideas and beliefs of others (88.7%) (Bulgu and Akcan, 2003). Studies reveal that decisions made in groups are riskier than decisions made by individuals alone. In addition, the interests of the individuals may conflict with the interests of the group and the team, and individuals may prioritize their own short-term wishes and interests instead of considering all the people in the group. According to Kağıtçıbaşı (2005), such situations can create social stalemates and conflicts. This means that psychologists are more concerned with social development; on the other hand, it requires a discussion that sociologists call socialization and determining the role of sports as a means of socialization (Kaplan and Çetinkaya 2010).

### **SOCIAL CLASS AND SPORT**

In the most general sense, social class is concerned with social and cultural explanations of an economic relationship. Social class consists of designated individuals and defines their contribution to economic production, their access to and control over them, as well as distinctive class cultures and lifestyles. Although social classes in modern societies are shaped by the place of individuals and groups in the economic and industrial process, the more important criteria of social class distinction are expressed as wealth and occupation. Social class consists of various categories with similar opportunities, similar economic and occupational positions, similar

lifestyles and attitudes and behaviors. A society that has several social classes and allows for social mobility is based on a system of class stratification (Tischler, 2013).

Pierre Bourdieu is a name that has been emphasized recently in sports and classroom-based studies. Social class forms a fundamental analytical category in most of Bourdieu's work. One of his main works, *Distinction*, deals with the relationship between social classes and status groups (lifestyles) based on data collected in France in the 1960s-1970s. For him, differences in status are manifestations of social class. Bourdieu's conception of social class is clearly based on Marxist and Weberian ideas and a critical examination of Althusser's structuralism (Wagner and McLaughlin, 2015).

### **SOCIAL ROLE AND STATUS**

Although sports are one of the cultural universals that exist in all societies throughout history, it is seen that the meaning and purposes of sports have changed in parallel with the change in social structure and relations. Sports, XX. Until the second half of the century, while it was an activity that the elite of the society participated mostly for the purpose of health, pleasure and entertainment, after this date, it turned into a practice that included the middle and lower classes but was articulated in different ways from the upper layers. In particular, it can be said that sports have become an important means of gaining income and reputation for the lower class, who do not have sufficient opportunities in terms of access to mobility channels in the society.

While sports were an activity that a small minority did in their free time, today it has become one of the most important sectors of the economic field and turned into a professional activity with the influence of commercialization, professionalization and industrialization processes. The transformation of sports into a professional activity, in other words, a profession, also means that it is a vertical mobility tool. At least, this professionalization in the axis of elite

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sports, with the influence of mass media, has increased the high rewards in sports and caused many people to turn their attention to this field. Elite sports can be briefly defined as professional or performance sports. In a study on elite athletes in England and New Zealand, it was revealed that the children of families with high socio-economic status had more opportunities to do sports. When the sports performed on the basis of countries are examined, it is seen that gymnastics branch is more common in the lower class in Belgium, in the middle class in Germany and in the upper-middle class in the USA (McPherson, Curtis and Loy 1989).

In terms of its socio-political origins, football was originally a sport played in village communities and open to everyone. XIX. This situation has changed since the middle of the century. While football was first an aristocratic sport at elite English universities, it later became a bourgeois. At that time, football players were playing sports as amateurs, especially in the working class, they were playing football as a profession, that is, they were trying to be kept away from football fields in order to win. British industrialists and engineers were the first to practice this sport in Europe as an amateur. Later, the professionalization of football and the interest of the working class in sports allowed football to spread among the working class. The rate of blue-collar players in professional clubs reached 90% and football was associated with Vienna in particular.

## CONCLUSION

Sports should not be seen only as a result of the best achievements in the psychomotor sense and physical activities that we participate in for financial gain. Athletes, coaches, managers, etc. who participate in sports as a social phenomenon. It is a social system that affects and shapes the lives of individuals involved in sports within the framework of different responsibilities. With the influence of cultural and social factors, the sports branches that we watch or like to participate in are no longer our personal preferences, and our

preferences are shaped by the social structure. Individuals participate in sports for many different purposes, and in this case, the scope of a field sport is revealed. In business and social life, individuals do sports to get rid of the pressures and troubles of daily life. Similarly, for women living in traditional families, sports can be a free space to get rid of the limited living space of gender stereotypes and family responsibilities. In this sense, participation in sports can be shaped and changed according to the individual's social life (Aritan, 2012).

One of the most important issues to be addressed while examining the social phenomenon of sports is the concept of gender. In order to understand the effective relations in the field of sports, the phenomenon of gender, which has a historical and cultural meaning, should be particularly emphasized. In this context, sports and gender should not be considered independently of each other. The concept of gender is involved in research on the social analysis of sports. This is a social/cultural/historical concept to consider. Hall (1988) stated that in order to understand power relations, it is necessary to accept that sport is a gender-based cultural practice. Theberge (1993) found that physical and physiological performance is very important and that the sports environment is influenced by gender ideology. This situation provides a strong environment for the formation and continuation of ideologies in sports. It carries a very strong message of masculinity and femininity, especially when considering competitive sports. It is considered a male activity that requires masculine gender role characteristics and masculine gender role characteristics. Athletic performance is seen as equivalent to masculinity. Research on the construction of gender in the sport environment shows that sport is a cultural practice that reinforces gender inequality and therefore reproduces the gender order defined by Connell (1987). For centuries, sports fields have been an active area and women have always been disadvantaged physically, emotionally and spiritually. Therefore, according to the degree of

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femininity and masculinity, sports have aspects that can be considered masculine, feminine and neutral. Masculine sports are sports that involve physical contact, competitive, aggression and power. Feminine sports, on the other hand, are those that emphasize elegance and aesthetics. These stereotypes affect the performance of women in sports and ensure their exclusion from these fields (Gentile et al, 2018).

## DISCLOSURE STATEMENT

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

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