

Introduction

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**SPORT AS A MEANS OF SOCIAL INCLUSION
AND EXCLUSION
INTRODUCTION TO THE SPECIAL ISSUE
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Organized sport “was created in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century by and for White middle-class men to bolster a sagging ideology of ‘natural superiority’ over women.”

(Dworkin and Messner 2002:17)

The aforementioned quote describes the beginnings of professional sport in the late nineteenth century. Although today sport seems to be available for everyone and participation in sport is perceived as a human right, there are still some categories of people who have difficult access to this field or are excluded from it. This concerns both leisure (amateur sport) and professional sport. As for the excluded groups, these include women, ethnic minorities, poor people, disabled persons, older people, youths/children (Collins and Kay 2003:25–6) and sexual minorities.

The issue of different constraints on sports participation has been widely discussed in the subject literature. Taking into account a multiplicity of factors, the authors have usually grouped these into larger categories. Collins, Henry, and Houlihan (1999), for example, distinguished three types of constraints: (1) structural/environmental factors (e.g., poor social environment, lack of transport); (2) personal/internal psychological factors (lack of time, fears for safety, poor body image, etc.); and (3) mediating factors. The last category refers to ‘gatekeepers’; i.e., people such as coaches, managers, and teachers who decide who is included and who is excluded from a particular activity. Tsai and Coleman (1999) proposed seven types of constraints: (1) interpersonal, (2) religious, (3) resource, (4) affective, (5) access, (6) socio-cultural, and (7) physical. The distinguished categories have been used in the following years, as illustrated by the studies conducted, for example, by Tracy Taylor (2004) or Joe Wan Kang (2013). Some of these have also been developed; e.g., Sawrikar and Muir (2010) divided socio-cultural constraints into three elements: (a) gendered and cultural expectations, (b) acculturation, and (c) direct and indirect racism.

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People who are excluded from sports participation can be affected by different factors and multiple constraints (Collins and Kay 2003:25). For example, a disabled person can be excluded from sport because of difficult access to a sports venue, a lack of appropriate infrastructure, low self-esteem, etc. One should also note the differences within a particular excluded group; e.g., the opportunities to participate in sports activities are much greater for a white middle-class woman from Europe or North America than a black woman living in Africa or a Muslim woman living in the Near East. Therefore, an intersectional approach (Crenshaw 1991) should be applied to understand and explain exclusion from sport.

In this short introduction, it is not possible to present the unfavourable situations of each of the above-mentioned groups and the research that has been carried out about them. Without a doubt, one of the most often described categories in this context is women, who were excluded from the first modern Olympic Games in 1896 and have gradually entered into sports venues (Hargreaves 1994; Dowling 2000). Although nowadays their number in the Olympic Games is almost equal to that of men, women remain excluded or marginalized in different dimensions of the sports field. As an example, one can consider media coverage dominated by men's sport (Cooky, Messner and Musto 2015; Jakubowska 2015; Sherry, Osborne and Nicholson 2016) or women's scant presence in sports organizations (Hovden 2000; Pfister and Radtke 2009). Special attention is also given to the situation of some Muslim women who cannot participate in sports activities (neither as fans nor athletes), because they can only participate in the presence of women and/or by covering their bodies (see, for example, Benn, Pfister and Jawad 2010).

Women constitute a minority in professional sport, but they also participate in physical leisure activities less frequently than men (EU Commission 2018). Even if in some countries (e.g., the Netherlands) women's and men's participation in sport seems to be equal, one can still observe some differences in the practised activities (the number of women has risen because of the increasing popularity of fitness activities) and women's and men's exclusion from sports disciplines than have been traditionally perceived as inappropriate for one gender (Elling and Knoppers 2005).

As already mentioned, another important category is ethnicity, which not only distinguishes the sports experiences within gender categories, but also regardless of them. Black athletes were excluded from common competition, as illustrated by sports history in South Africa during the time of apartheid and in North America during segregation. Although nowadays, this form of discrimination is no longer possible, one can still observe racial discrimination in its 'hard' and 'soft' forms. White men constitute a majority among sports journalists, sports managers, club owners, and fans, even if the sports discipline is dominated itself by black athletes, as in the example of basketball or, more precisely, the NBA. Teun van Dijk (2000) describes the media as one of the 'white institutions' which reproduces racial hierarchy and dichotomy. Different forms of discrimination also concern other ethnic groups. The data from the

report “Racism, ethnic discrimination and exclusion of migrants and minorities in sport” (FRA 2010), reveal incidents of racism, anti-Semitism, and antigypsyism in European football and basketball. On the other hand, professional sport, mainly in the case of black athletes growing up in poor families and impoverished areas, is perceived as a possibility of escape from the ‘ghetto’ – a way to earn money and raise personal and familial status. (Cashmore 2010; Dubrow and Adams 2010)

Another category affected by exclusion and discrimination in sport is homosexual athletes. Although sexual orientation itself cannot be a reason to exclude someone from a sport (as can be the case for gender, age, or lack of money), it still remains taboo in some sports disciplines (e.g., male football) or a label which influences an athlete’s perception. Sport is perceived as a heterosexual matrix (Butler 1990) that imposes the perceptions of women and men and their relations and as a field of hegemonic masculinity reproduction (Connell 1987). Homosexual athletes, mainly men, question the gender order and the majority of them, fearing rejection and discrimination, remains in the closet. The situation of homosexual female athletes is slightly different, because they belong to two minorities: lesbians among the heterosexual majority and women in a male field (Griffin 1998; Lenskyj 2003). There are a significant number of publications that describe examples of homophobia or ‘homohysteria’ in sport; however, the authors have also noted some positive changes in attitudes towards homosexual athletes (Anderson 2002, 2011; McCormack 2011; McCormack and Anderson 2014). In any discussion of exclusion and inclusion in the case of this group, it is also worth mentioning The Gay Games, which have run since 1982, and the existence of LGBT sports leagues and federations. On the one hand, they have an inclusive character: lesbians and gays (as well as heterosexual athletes) can participate in sports competitions without being discriminated against. However, on the other hand, they are – to some extent – exclusive, maintaining the conviction that there is no place for homosexual athletes in heteronormative mainstream sport.

The other excluded group – disabled persons – also have their own competitions, of which the most important is the Paralympics. Contrary to the previous categories, separate games allow people with disabilities to participate in ‘real’ sports rivalry, win a medal, and become a champion. In competition with abled athletes, almost none of them would compete on an equal footing. The status of the Paralympics has risen (e.g., since 1988, the Paralympics have taken place in the same cities as the Olympic Games), but they still remain in the shadow of the Olympic Games, which is very well illustrated by the disparity in media coverage and the related recognizability of athletes (Rees, Robinson and Shields 2017).

The problem of exclusion of disabled persons is also visible in amateur sport. A lack of access to sports venues, sports venues unsuited to their needs, and lack of money keep a lot of disabled persons away from sports activities. The decision to not practice sport can be also related to low self-esteem and shame

about one's body, which is paradoxical when one takes into account that sport influences self-perception, perception of one's own body, and quality of life in a positive way (Hanrahan 2007; Smith and Sparkes 2008; Silva and Howe 2012). Nevertheless, a significant number of disabled persons do not have the opportunity to practice sport, which is – to a large extent – related to socio-economic conditions of individuals' lives and sports organizations.

Financial barriers are also perceived as crucial in the case of other categories; i.e., old people and children. Children's participation in sport has been considered mainly in relation to the economic status (income, social class) of their family (see, for example, White and McTeer 2012), access to physical education (see, for example, Hardman and Marshall 2000), and gender (see, for example, Pfister 2013). With regard to older people, there is usually a combination of two or more factors related to age and health, being poor, loneliness, etc. Finally, class differences are perceived as one of the main factors that influence participation in sport and exclude people from lower classes from many areas of the sports field. (Bourdieu 1979; Sugden and Tomlinson 2002; Wilson 2002; Collins and Kay 2003; Scheerder, Vanreusel and Taks 2005)

As this review has shown, different categories of people are excluded from sport or do not have the right to participate in it on an equal footing. While non-participation does not equal social exclusion because not everybody wants to practice sport (Spaaij, Magee, and Jeanes 2014), if one wants to do it and cannot, one can speak about exclusion. The right to practice sport and real opportunities to do it are very important when one considers the benefits of sports participation both for individual and collective dimensions. On the basis of literature reviews conducted by different authors, Collins and Kay (2003:28) indicate five forms of benefits: (1) personal (e.g., ensuring health, giving self-esteem); (2) social (e.g., promoting ethnic/cultural harmony, reducing alienation/loneliness); (3) economic (e.g., cost-effective health prevention; attracting new/growing businesses); (4) environmental (e.g., ensuring a sustainable environment); (5) national (e.g., integration/cultural cohesion, international influence/representation).

In the last two decades, another role of sport has been widely discussed. It has begun to be perceived “as an intervention tool in order to pursue wider, non-sporting social goals” (Giulianotti, Hognestad, and Spaaij 2016:130); e.g., peace-building, health education, and youth empowerment. Sport as a tool for promoting development and peace (SDP) was first used in areas of conflicts and poverty in the global South. It was subsequently also implemented in Europe and North America, which can be illustrated by the projects dedicated to youth (see, for example, Hartmann 2001).

The inclusive role of sport has also been noted by the European Union. In October 2016, the Council of Europe established a resolution entitled “Sport for All: A Bridge to Equality, Integration and Social Inclusion.” Whereas, the role of sport in achieving suitable development goals is emphasized by the United Nations in the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* and its *17 Sustainable*

Development Goals (UNOSDP, n.d.). Apart from governmental and intergovernmental organizations, other stakeholders of these initiatives include private businesses, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), new social movements, and campaign groups.

Therefore, sport plays an important role in the processes of social inclusion, as well as social exclusion. A number of categories of athletes and fans have been excluded from taking part in sports competitions and sports events. At the same time, sport gives opportunities to support and acknowledge marginalized individuals and groups of people, reflected in Olympic Games participation under the Olympic flag (in this context, it is noteworthy that the first ever Refugee Olympic Team took part in the Rio 2016 Olympic Games) or in football clubs' and football fans' attitudes towards refugees. Moreover, sport is perceived as a tool for social change, enabling mobility and improvement of social status for individuals and the collective. Although the issues of sport and social exclusion/inclusion have already been analysed in a number of publications (e.g., Collins and Kay 2003; Kennett 2013; Spaaij, Magee, and Jeanes 2014), the global political situation and the socio-cultural changes in different countries constantly provide new contexts and cases for sociological analysis.

This issue consists of nine articles, followed by two books reviews. The contributions reveal that the issues of inclusion and exclusion can be analysed in very different contexts of the sports field, with relation to different sports disciplines, and different groups and countries. The authors provide analysis of their own research, analysis of secondary data, as well as theoretical frameworks and a large number of references. The topics raised and case studies analysed are predominantly very recent.

The issue begins with two articles focused on refugees and immigrants. The first one, written by Enrico Michellini, Ulrike Burrmann, Tina Nobis, Jacqueline Tuchel, and Torsten Schlesinger, analyses "Sport Offers for Refugees in Germany", focusing on organizational conditions of voluntary sport clubs (VSCs) to promote or hinder the implementation of these offers. The article is based on the analysis of interviews (n=49) conducted with people responsible for sports activities for refugees in VSCs. The results reveal the meaning of human resources within sports clubs, for the individual person and small groups. The authors also indicate formal and informal conditions that influence the implementation of sport offers.

The second article, written by Nico Bortoletto and Alessandro Porrovecchio, is a comparative study of social inclusion of immigrants by sport in Italy and France, the countries which are among the main destinations for refugees. After describing the general situation and migrant politics in the two countries, the authors present sport as a potential tool for refugees' integration/inclusion into society. The analysis of particular French and Italian case studies allows the contributors to indicate the similarities and differences in the realized practices and politics in both countries.

The next articles are focused on ethnic minorities living in Turkey and Poland. In his article, Dağhan Irak discusses Kurdish identity in the context of Turkish

sport, using the example of football club Amedspor. This analysis is made in the theoretical framework of Manuel Castells' conceptions of legitimizing, resistance, and project identities. Katarzyna Czarnota, the author of the following chapter, describes the situation of Romanian Roma living in Poland. This account provides a wider context of the analysis of local sports initiatives available to Roma children living in the Poznań encampment. Their presentation is based on the author's research and activist experience.

The fifth chapter is also focused on children, but in a totally different context. Christine Mennesson and Lucie Forté propose to extend and complete Bourdieu's concept of social classes and related *habitus* by adding the issue of gender. The intersection of gender and social class offers the opportunity to analyse the sports activities of children living in France and growing up in families with different socio-economic backgrounds. The authors describe particular case studies (e.g., boys who do not practice sport or girls practising rhythmic gymnastics) which reveal that family *habitus* has a large impact on children's sports practices. Moreover, patterns of gender construction and parents' attitudes towards gender norms should be considered to be an important element of family *habitus*.

A gender perspective is also applied in the next chapter, written by me. In the article, I analyse the discourse on the decision taken by Liberty Media, the owner of Formula One (F1), to drop so-called 'grid girls' from race weekends beginning with the 2018 season. In the theoretical framework, I refer to the second and third waves of the feminist movement and the concepts of sexual objectification and agency. The discourse on grid girls in F1 fits into the critical discourses on female (sexualized) body images in sport. Its analysis reveals that the grid girls' presence is perceived both as unsuitable for modern times, values, and the #metoo cultural climate, but also as 'normal' and a 'good tradition.'

The next article, prepared by Emőke Török, is based on a survey conducted among youth athletes between the ages of 15 and 29 from Budapest and the region around it in Hungary. The author begins her contribution by presenting differentiated impacts of sports activities on both the individual and society. She also notes that in the National Sports Strategy, the role of sport as a tool to promote the inclusion of socially disadvantaged groups is emphasized. The analysis of the survey results reveals that although being a member of a sports club has positive impacts on a youth's life, low income and low education are the main factors which limit access to sport and its benefits.

In the following article, "Sport Organizations and Environmental Pressures: An Institutional Analysis", its author, Dobrosław Mańkowski, analyses the exclusion of voluntary, non-profit sport organizations from sports competitions in elite sport. He describes how the processes of bureaucratization, professionalization, and commercialization have changed the sports environment and transformed extant organizations into formal organizations with professional staff. In the last section of his paper, the author presents an alternative way to perceive volunteers in the sports industry.

Dagmara Kostrzevska, an early-stage researcher, prepared the article “Effects of Sport in Resocialization of Minors”. Her contribution is based on a desk research analysis and personal observations during her two-year service as a probation officer. Its main aim is to show how participation in sports activities changes the behaviour of young and socially maladjusted people. Therefore, sports is perceived here as a tool of resocialization.

The issue is completed by two book reviews. Both of these are related to the main subject discussed in all articles. Kacper Madej reviewed the book *Sport, Leisure and Social Justice*, edited by Jonathan Long, Thomas Fletcher, and Betsy Watson (2017), while Jacek Burski reviewed Sine Agergaard’s book entitled *Rethinking Sports and Integration. Developing a Transnational Perspective on Migrants and Descendants in Sports* (2018).

I would like to thank all the authors for their contributions. We have shown that sport as a tool of social inclusion and exclusion has a lot of meaning and can be analysed in many differentiated contexts and meanings. I am very glad that we have managed to gather research and case studies from different countries and parts of Europe. I consider this issue to be our common publication and I look forward to further opportunities to cooperate with these academics.

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