

Sports Science

(Sports Teaching)

Course: Sports Science

Group of courses: Sports

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Course objectives:

Students should learn about gender-related research in the social sciences, humanities, natural sciences and medicine, and about their consequences for practice. The aim is for students to identify and explain gender-related phenomena in sport, and critically reflect on them for their teaching and planning practice.

Teaching content/subject-specific gender studies content:

Gender studies in sports science is a multi- and interdisciplinary area traditionally made up of the disciplines of sociology, psychology and pedagogy. In recent years, work has also been done from a natural science standpoint and using interdisciplinary approaches. Gender studies in sports science addresses various issues in theory, research and practice on various subjects. The following list describes the most important fields.

Sociological gender studies in sport

Recent sociological studies usually build on constructivist theories. The focus is on the social construction of gender and gender relations in and through sport, in the various fields of sport. The paradigm of intersectionality has only recently been adopted from the social sciences, so that some studies now analyse the intermingled effects of social inequality in sports. The most important subject areas include (in brief):

- **Participation and practice** - practising sport from a gender perspective. A central theme of sociological gender studies is the question of the changing reasons, needs and motives that prompt women and men, girls and boys to take part in sports (performance, leisure, health), in various life phases, places and ways. Many different empirical findings indicate that sporting involvement has gender-based structures. Further research has looked into the issues of: how strong is this gender structure in the various sporting fields? What changes have taken place in sports in recent years as a result of the transformation of gender relations? How is gender-related participation in sports interlinked with other categories of social inequality?
- **Social structures and organisations in sport from a gender perspective.** This area concentrates on the character and influence of structures, rules and cultural values of the various sporting organisations in relation to the structure of the gender hierarchy. The focus is thus not on individuals, but on the corporative actors who set the parameters for sporting activities. Using organisation and gender theories, the research looks at areas such as the school with its 'hidden curriculum', sports clubs and associations traditionally run by men, and commercial providers such as fitness studios which propagate specific images of women and men. Following the sociological analysis of organisations in sport, political activities for gender equity are developed and evaluated, e.g. gender mainstreaming and diversity management in sport.
- **National and international development of sport and equality policy.** Women's and gender studies in sport has a close relationship to women's and gender policy in sport. One subject becoming important in this area is gender mainstreaming and its implementation in sports organisations. The subject of women in managerial positions has been studied in detail inside and outside of sport, as women remain conspicuously under-represented in positions of responsibility in society and particularly in sport. Several studies have investigated this phenomenon from an international perspective.

- **The social construction of gender in sports media.** The immense importance of the media for our knowledge of the world is also firmly established in sport. The presentation of sport in the media is essentially responsible for the image of sport in society. Research in this area addresses how the media constructs gender relations in sport, in the traditional sports reporting media (newspapers, television, radio) and in other media (cinema, books). Content analysis from quantitative and qualitative research into reporting on male and female athletes is placed in a constructivist and communication theory context. Research sketches the construction of gender as a communication process on several levels, involving the sportspeople who market themselves through the media, the viewers/readers/listeners, and the communicators in the sports media. There are also initial research approaches on the presentation of gender in sports-related entertainment films and children's books dealing with sport. Recently the relevance of sportswomen and men as media heroes has come into focus, and especially their relevance as a role model for the youth. This research is based on the fact that studies identified a high number of boys who are orientated towards media idols from sport.
- **Violence and risk behaviour in sport from a gender perspective.** Violent actions and risky behaviour patterns generally involve how the body is handled, and are therefore particularly relevant in sport. Furthermore, specific violent phenomena occur in sport, which are not found in other areas of society (e.g. stadium violence; fouling in team sports). Although this subject has only been marginally dealt with from a gender perspective to date, there have been some initial studies, e.g. on sexual violence in sport, violence between male football fans and risk behaviour in sport (e.g. extreme sports, eating disorders).

Gender studies in sports teaching / physical education

The aim of gender-inclusive teaching is to create equal opportunities and freedom of development for men and women. The category of gender is relevant for at least three elements of teaching processes: teacher, student, and content. Concepts for gender-inclusive teaching have developed in two different areas: school sports teaching, and sports-related youth work outside of the school context.

- **The coeducation debate:** should girls and boys do sport together or separately? This discussion was particularly popular in sports teaching in the 1970s and 80s. Having disappeared from the agenda in the interim, the subject is now being addressed again from the perspective of social construction of gender in sports lessons.
- **Girls' and boys' work in sport.** On the basis of the discussion of partisan girls' work and reflective boys' work outside of sport, concepts for girls' work in sport were developed in the 1990s. These were followed by concepts for boys' work.
- **Identity-building, sport and gender.** Individuals build their identities in a process of constant confrontation with their surroundings. The relationship to the body as a visible sign of identity plays a central role in this process. Developing a positive body image seems to present different challenges for women in general than for men. Body concepts, in turn, are always connected to sport and exercise. Research has investigated these connections and how men and women, girls and boys deal with them in various areas, such as in infant exercise, women in male-dominated sports, in relation to sport, performance and masculinity, and sport, ethnicity and gender.

Psychological gender research in sport

Psychological gender research in sport deals with a broad range of subjects based on various theoretical approaches in psychology. The most important subject areas include (in brief):

- **Psychosocial development and its significance for sport.** Research focuses on the psychosocial determinants of sporting activity (e.g. competitiveness, team skills, propensity for violence etc.) and their gendered forms, particularly from the life-phase perspective.
- **Training from a gender perspective.** Training in competitive and amateur sport is determined by the interaction between the trainer and the athlete or team. Research focuses on the role of the trainer's and the athlete's gender in this interaction, and to what extent this influences performance.
- **Careers and dropouts in competitive sport from the gender perspective.** Research in sport psychology has analysed the significance of the parameters of competitive sport for athletes, the ends of careers in sport and particularly dropouts. Differences and similarities have emerged between male and female athletes. Various projects aim to improve advice-giving and care during careers in sport, to avoid them ending prematurely, and to support individuals whose careers end in a planned or unplanned manner and to help them develop their future prospects.
- **Eating disorders among male and female athletes.** The risk of athletes suffering from eating disorders varies strongly between sports. Athletes in aesthetic, weight-related and stamina sports are at particularly high risk, and women more so than men. Studies look particularly at how eating disorders first arise. The aim is to develop preventative educational measures for trainers, allowing early intervention.
- **Self-image and body-image from the gender perspective.** Psychological studies investigate to what extent sporting activity is connected with individuals' self- and body-image. Important issues relate to the structure and development of self-image over the course of one's life, how these are influenced by sport and exercise or how they influence the identities of athletes, for instance. The socialising effects of sport, particularly on children and young people, are studied outside of the sporting arena, emphasising the significance of gender.

Biomedical gender studies in sport

Sporting activity and physical performance are partly determined by biomedical factors. For many years this viewpoint ignored the subject of women in sport, or discussed it from the perspective of women as a peculiar category. This is documented in academic discussion of the 'sporting women's triad' (osteoporosis, cycle disturbances and eating disorders). Only recently and following interdisciplinary approaches has scientific research in sport attempted to stop accepting gender differences in sport as a matter of course, and to deal with the existing findings on gender differences in sport in a more critical way. Critical Research especially focuses on gender bias in the field of sports medicine and health-related research.

Integration of gender studies content into the curriculum:

Gender issues are relevant across the entire discipline. The content above should ideally be integrated into the various areas of teaching. To do so, Bachelor's courses (natural sciences, social sciences and teaching aspects in sport) would have to address theories of gender and gender relations and empirical findings. This content should be dealt with in greater depth and more specific areas in Master's degrees. This can take place in general subject modules or in explicit gender modules. A combination of the two would be the most effective solution. Gender studies modules could include:

- **Managing Diversity**, sensitising students to social inequalities in sport and showing the consequences for planning and teaching practice, taking gender mainstreaming into account
- **Gender-inclusive Teaching**, working on the relevancy of gender in teaching situations and concepts of gender-inclusive teaching

- **Modules presenting empirical findings on specific areas of sports science from the gender studies perspective**, and deriving the consequences for various areas of sport (e.g. policy, schools, sports organisations, leisure). Possible modules:
 - "Health, Sport and Gender"
 - "Media, Sport and Gender"
 - "Gender Relations in Sports Organisations"
 - "Age, Sport and Gender"
- **Gender and Sport from a Natural Science Perspective**, presenting empirical findings from the natural sciences relevant for sport from the gender studies perspective, and their implications for training, leisure, rehabilitation, prevention, etc.

Degree Stage:

Gender theories should be addressed in the introductory seminars. The module "Managing Diversity" should also be offered at the beginning of the degree, as it sensitises students for the subject in general. The other modules outlined above should be offered from the third semester, building on the introduction.

Gender issues can be dealt with in greater depth in Master's degrees.

Basic Literature/Recommended Reading:

Brehm, K. & Petzsche, K. (1998). Mädchen und Frauen im Sport - Natur- und Geisteswissenschaften im Dialog. (Tagung der dvs-Kommission Frauenforschung in der Sportwissenschaft vom 31.10. - 02.11.1996 in Berlin). Hamburg: Czwalina.

Gieß-Stüber, P. (2000). Gleichberechtigte Partizipation im Sport? Ein Beitrag zur geschlechtsbezogenen Sportpädagogik. Butzbach-Griedel: Afra

Hartmann-Tews, I., Gieß-Stüber, P., Klein, M.-L., Kleindienst-Cachay, C. & Petry, K. (2003). Soziale Konstruktion von Geschlecht im Sport. Opladen: Leske + Budrich

Hartmann-Tews, I. & Pfister, G. (2003). Sport and Women- Social Issues in International Perspective. London, New York: Routledge

Hartmann-Tews, I. & Rulofs, B. (Hrsg.) (2006). Handbuch Sport und Geschlecht. Status Quo und Perspektiven für Forschung, Lehre und Sportpraxis

Kugelman, C. (2002). Mädchen und Jungen im Sportunterricht. Hamburg: Czwalina

Pfister, G. (1999). Sport im Lebenszusammenhang von Frauen. Schorndorf: Hofmann

Rulofs, B., Combrink, C. & Borchers, I. (2002). Sport im Lebenslauf von Frauen und Männern. In H. Allmer (Hrsg.), Sportengagement im Lebensverlauf. (Brennpunkte der Sportwissenschaft, 23, S. 39-60). Sankt Augustin: Academia