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Analysis of the Management Positions Gender Structure in Sports Organizations in Slovakia

Viera Guzoňová¹, Kateřina Bočková^{1*} 

¹ Department of Management and Economics, DTI University, Sládkovičova 553/20, 018 41 Dubnica nad Váhom, Slovakia.

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Abstract

The aim of the presented paper is to capture the gender aspects of sports culture through the gender structure of Slovakia's national sports organizations members and their management positions. In order to fulfill the aim of the paper, a hierarchical cluster analysis was applied using IBM SPSS Statistics. As a part of this analysis, due to the cardinality of the input variables, the Euclidean distance measurement method and the Ward method were used. The results of the research examining 65 national sports organizations in Slovakia confirmed that the gender in Slovak organized sports is manifested on the one hand by the dominance of men in the membership of sports organizations, with the exception of sports those are explicitly understood as female, but also in the representation on the management and decision-making positions. Furthermore, we managed to find out that there is a relationship between the gender structure of the membership base and the gender structure in management and decision-making positions, which is reciprocal and at the same time asymmetrical.

Keywords: Gender Inequalities; Sports Culture; Gender Structure; Management and Decision-Making Positions.

1. Introduction

Sport is a phenomenon of today's time; its popularity is constantly growing among people of different genders, ages, and educational backgrounds. The range of sports activities is constantly expanding; we can choose from dozens of types of individual or collective sports, summer or winter, outdoor or indoor sports, as well as from the possible forms of practicing the particular sport: individually, with family or friends, in a group or organized sport, i.e., within a specific section, union, or organization. It is in the case of organized sports that one of the negative sides of sports can be pointed out, which is gender inequality. Despite the fact that the status of men and women is equal in many aspects of life, sport and the management of sports organizations are still the prerogative of men [1, 2].

From a sociological point of view, sport can be viewed through the lens of various theories, while in our opinion the most appropriate view of the issue of gender and gender inequalities in sport is the critical feminist theory, which is based on the assumption that sport represents a gendered activity, where *"the meaning, organization, and purpose of sport are rooted in men's values and experiences while also highlighting the dominant forms of masculinity"* [3]. We can thus justify gender inequalities through a masculine sports culture, in which anything somehow connected with masculinity is considered to be natural and correct. The explanation is easy because *"organized sport was created by men and for men"* [4]. Access to sport, as a strongly masculine environment, was denied to women from the beginning. Nevertheless, female athletes won their place on the playgrounds, running tracks, and slopes. The number of male and female athletes at the Olympic Games has leveled off in recent years.

However, the increase in the number of top female athletes does not correspond to the number of female sports officials. *"A woman in the leadership of a sports organization is rather an exception"* [5]. Building a career in a primarily

* Corresponding author: bockova@dti.sk

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male profession places certain barriers in front of them, which they subsequently have to face in their careers [2, 6–11].

The topic of the position of women in decision-making positions resonates strongly in the current public debate. Among other things, it is sport that mirrors the social relations in society; the involvement of women in decision-making processes is so important because it can help deconstruct gender stereotypes and their negative consequences. Society has accepted the supremacy of the male sex, or rather gender, as a norm, according to which masculine characteristics are taken as the right ones or as a standard that a person must have in order to be able to hold functions that are primarily performed by men [12]. Although the narrative of the superiority of masculine qualities in senior management is gradually being reshaped so that feminine qualities or abilities such as communication, motivation, and care are seen in a positive light, the representation of women in leadership positions in sports organizations is still very low. Among the difficulties a woman may encounter on her career path is working in a discriminatory environment, gender income inequality, or difficult access to traditionally male industries [13].

Foreign studies in the context of gender issues and imbalances not only in sports began to take shape from the 1980s. Its authors were Anglo-Saxon feminist-oriented researchers, feminist literary scholars from Yale University, Mary Jacobus, Shoshana Felman, Barbara Johnson and Gayatri C. Spivak, who responded to the striking disparity between men and women in key sectors in post-industrial societies. However, many studies, for example [14-17] have not yet agreed on a theory that could identify the factors leading to such a low involvement of women in the management of organizations. However, there is a number of hypotheses that explain this phenomenon based on feminist theories.

Among the most important feminist theories that can be applied to the management of sports organizations belongs the libertarian feminist theory based on the belief that women are limited in society due to the gender segregation of the labor market. This theory is very succinctly characterized in Grundy [18] as follows: *"You can work in this limited range of occupations, while men can choose from all of them"*. Another feminist theory applicable to the management of sports organizations is the social feminist theory. This theory is most accurately described in Wajcman [19], when the author claims that the combination of men and sports is the result of both ideological and cultural processes in society. Since sport is still associated with masculinity in today's society, in the case of women entering the world of sport, they must first renounce their femininity. This theory is further defined and explained in Fox et al. [20] and Kristová [21]. Another valid theory is the radical feminist theory. In this case, gender is seen as a static and homogeneous category, *"radical feminism is so intertwined with masculinity and patriarchy that it cannot be addressed to women"* [22].

We decided to focus on the topic of gender and its connection with the management of sports organizations mainly because it has not been researched in Slovakia yet, on the other hand, this topic has already been discussed many times abroad. This is evidenced by many scientific studies, for example [2, 6-11]. Due to the fact that previous foreign researches focused mainly on Western countries, it will also be interesting to compare the results of our research with existing foreign ones.

Several global international researches have been conducted on the issue in question, while the Czech Republic participated in the researches from 2010, 2014 and 2018 (but not Slovakia), which, compared to the other 38 participating countries from around the world, achieved the sixth worst result. The aim of the research was to find out the gender composition of the executive committees of sports organizations in the given countries, as well as the gender of the chairman and the general secretary (the general secretary is an executive who is responsible for the overall running and activities of the organization, he is usually elected by the executive committee. Sometimes this position is called the general director, secretary or householder). In the Czech Republic in 2018, out of a total of 632 members, 72 women (i.e., 11.4%) were represented in executive committees. In contrast, in Norway, for example, 37.4% were women, in the USA 28.8% or in France 20.6% [23].

Within the EU, the Slovakia shows above-average results in terms of women's employment. In 2018, female employment was 64.7% [24]. However, when we take a closer look at the Slovak labour market, we find that gender segregation by sex is strongly reflected in it, primarily in the low representation of women in management and decision-making positions and in senior management [25]. This phenomenon is referred to as a labour market vertical segregation, which according to many studies, e.g. [26-28] can also be applied - with certain limitations - to the field of sports, or sports organizations that represent the non-profit sector.

The situation in the field of sports merely copies the state of current Slovak society, where we encounter a lack of women in leadership and management positions in almost all areas (primarily in politics, media and education).

2. Material and Methods

The aim of the presented paper is to capture the gender aspects of sports culture through the gender structure of Slovakia's national sports organizations members and their management positions, among other things in a time perspective, through which the considerations about stability or change can be conducted. We focus on the women holding the positions of presidents of sports associations or commissions within a sports organization.

Researchers working on the topic of the underrepresentation of women in the management of sports organizations

emphasize the importance of a multi-level research structure, as cited in [12, 29, 30]. *"The specific levels include the micro level, which represents the level of personal values, strategies and experiences of the respondents. The second level, i.e., the meso, represents the environment of the sports organization and the atmosphere in executive boards and workplaces. At the macro level, sports organizations and gender diversity are viewed from a socio-cultural perspective."* [13].

Following the model of the multi-level structure used by authors in Sotiriadou & de Haan [30], the research questions were formulated in the context of the aim of the paper as follows:

- Main research question: *How does the gender aspect of sports culture manifest itself in sports organizations?* Based on a detailed analysis of information sources, we expect the hypothesis H1, that the gender aspect of sports culture in sports organizations will be manifested by the dominant position of men - specifically, the predominance of men both in the membership base and in representation in management and decision-making positions. This condition is due to the masculine nature of sports culture, in which men, men's sports and masculinity are seen as inherently dominant. It can thus be proven that sports organizations, as one of the main actors of the sports environment, contribute to the maintenance of hegemonic masculinity in sports.
- The next two hypotheses, which we will try to confirm in the research, concern the relationship between the gender structure of members and the gender structure of management positions.
 - As part of second hypothesis H2: we expect that there is a reciprocal relationship between the gender structure of members and the gender structure of management positions. Specifically, the higher the ratio of men/women among members, the higher their representation in management and decision-making positions.
 - Third hypothesis H3 further escalates this relationship, in the sense that it is not symmetrical. This means that: while male representation on executive committees will be relevant for women's sports, female representation will be insignificant for male sports. We assume the mentioned relationship due to the fact that both of its aspects - reciprocity and asymmetry - are a manifestation of the culture of the given sport and are generally related to male dominance in sport.

The partial question to which we will try to get an answer as a part of the research is research question RQ1, *whether manifestations of the gender aspect in sports, or sports organizations, do they remain unchanged or are they transformed?* We will look for the answer through the historical development of the membership base of individual sports organizations, when we understand this statistic as an expression of gender ideology, or the culture of the given sport, and thus we can find out to what extent the gender structure remains stable or changes. The expected hypothesis H4 is: the gender meanings associated with individual sports are relatively constant, and therefore the gender structure of sports organizations will not change much. A possible explanation for the immutability of the gender structure is that, although new sports and thus new sports organizations are constantly being created, men are once again pushing themselves into management and decision-making positions, as they have a greater chance due to the masculine nature of sports and the gender hierarchy in sports organizations achieve a higher status.

2.1. Research Sample, Sources and Data Collection

74 national sports organizations of Slovakia were included in the research. Considering the aim of the research and the availability of data, only organizations that:

1. have a sufficiently large membership base (at least 200 members for the entire monitored period 2020-2022),
2. are engaged in one type of sport, i.e., they do not group several different sports under themselves, as in that case umbrella organizations would be included.

The final research sample thus consists of 65 national sports organizations in which 877 653 members were registered in August 2022.

In the gender analysis of the management positions of sports organizations, we are based on our own data, collected for the purpose of this research. Specifically, the following information was collected for each sports association:

1. the number of members of the executive committee, including the number of men and women,
2. who holds the position of chairman (male/female),
3. who holds the position of general secretary (male/female).

Data was collected during August 2022 from the websites of sports associations, from statutes, annual reports and via e-mail, most often with the secretaries of individual associations. As part of data collection, we managed to obtain almost complete information from all unions.

We processed the obtained data in the form of an Excel file, which contained numerical data for certain characteristics for individual sports in the years 2020-2022.

The characteristics were as follows:

- Total number of members,
- Number of men,
- Number of women,
- Number of adults,
- Number of adolescents,
- Number of pupils,
- Number of youths,
- Number of partitions.

The data were in the form of absolute numbers and had to be processed in some way into other variables/characteristics to be usable for further analysis. The aim of the constructed characteristics was to create data from which an adequate description of the gender composition of sports organizations can be obtained while capturing the time dimension as well as the differences between adults and youth, and on the basis of which a hierarchical cluster analysis using statistical software IBM SPSS Statistics was carried out. Specifically, the following gender-demographic characteristics were concerned:

- Share of youth (in %);
- Average proportion of women in adults (in %);
- Average proportion of women in youth - teenage girls + schoolchildren (in %);
- Difference in the share of adult women in 2020-2022.

The share of youth was calculated as of January 2020 and it is the share of the sum of male and female pupils, male and female adolescents from the total number of members of the organization, which is in the interval (1; 75). In the case of the other two characteristics (average proportion of women in adults and average proportion of women in youth), this is the average value of the given category for the monitored period. The resulting values ranged from (2; 99). The last characteristic calculated was the difference in the shares of adult women, when the values in 2020 and 2022 were subtracted from each other. The resulting numbers were in the interval (-9; 29). For the characteristic recording the development, several options were made, which were recorded in the graphs (e.g., the values of the beginning, middle and end), however, in the vast majority of cases the results were not very different, and based on this, it can be concluded that for the development line, only start and end values.

As a part of a hierarchical cluster analysis, due to the cardinality of the input variables, the Euclidean distance measurement method was used, and the Ward method, which is considered the most suitable for cardinal data, was chosen as the clustering technique. Since the variables entering the analysis take on values on different long scales, which would result in variables with longer scales having a greater influence in the analysis, the individual variables were standardized by converting them to z-scores. When deciding on the "ideal" number of clusters, a tree graph, the so-called dendrogram, were used, according to which 5 clusters were chosen, while the correctness of this decision was checked using the resulting table created by SPSS, in which we entered a range of 2 to 5 clusters in order to compare the results and choose the most suitable solution.

In solving the ethical questions, we drew on the Code of Ethics and the Ethical Guidelines of the Slovak Association of Social Anthropology (SASA).

2.2. Methodology Process

We present below (Figure 1) the Methodology process workflow flowchart of presented paper.

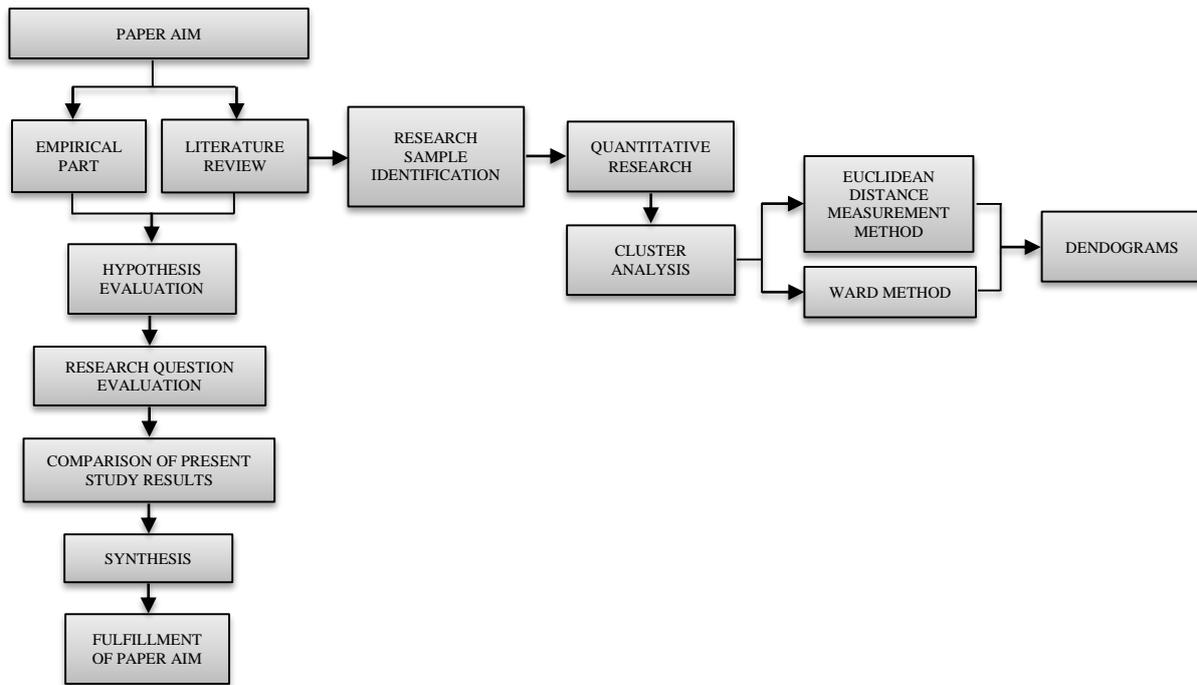


Figure 1. Methodology process workflow flowchart

3. Literature Review

3.1. Sport and Gender

When studying topics such as the management of sports organizations, it is necessary to remember the fact that sport is gender-oriented, which means that in the world of sports, long-held ideas about what is masculine or feminine, how men and women should behave, what is natural for them etc. are appearing. In the field of sports, everything that is somehow connected with masculinity is considered natural, and therefore sports culture can be described as masculine. In other words, *“the meaning, organization and purpose of sport is rooted in the values and experiences of men, while also highlighting dominant forms of masculinity”* [3]. The explanation is simple. Originally created by men and for men, sport has always been considered a typically male domain in which men naturally dominate [31]. On the contrary, due to the characteristics attributed to men, sports were not suitable for women - they are weak, fragile, vulnerable, and thus it was perceived to do sports as unnatural. Their expected role in sports was to cheer and support the men, creating a naturally beautiful environment for them at races or matches [31].

Sport is associated with explosiveness and aggression; the athlete must possess these and similar characteristics together with a masculine body structure. As the mentioned characteristics were not assigned to women, they were put aside on the edges of playing areas or tracks and their only task was to encourage men performing sports activities [31]. *“The idea of a woman as an athlete was completely unthinkable and considered as a sexual deviation or an emotional disorder”* [32]. For example, even the founder of the modern Olympic Games, Pierre de Coubertin, was of the opinion that sports activities should be left to men. According to him, the participation of women should consist in celebrating the achievements of men. He literally said, *“The participation of women in the Olympic Games would be impractical, uninteresting, unesthetic and incorrect”* in 1912 [3]. Sport is not only entertainment, which is doubly true in professional sports; it is also a system in which gender segregation is rooted. Through sport, we can observe what is happening in society. *“The ubiquitous differentiation of men and women in the sports sector brings to light the gender diversity, but also the socially constructed gender order in our society”* [26]. Like other activities, physical activities are shaped by people, they bring their own values and ideas [32], that they acquired through socialization in a given society. It is therefore possible to find similar patterns of behaviour in sports and everyday life.

As mentioned above, earlier sports were denied to women and their place was in the stands where they encouraged and looked after their male counterparts. An analogy can be found in stereotypical ideas about the social role of women, such as the role of mother and caregiver. The position of women in sports clearly corresponds to the position of women in society, where they are also expected to play a supporting and caring role, i.e., that they will be at home, raising children, taking care of the household, supporting the family.

3.2. Women in the Sports Organization Management

As stated in the previous chapter, women had limited access to sports activities because they were assumed not to be suitable for sports. Although individuals believe in these ideas in a given period of time, in the longer term they have a

dynamic character and are transformed. For example, two centuries ago it was thought that women could not participate in competitive sports such as soccer because they would *"harm their fertility"* [28], but nowadays women's soccer is a very popular sport. Evidence can be found in the 142 registered countries within the International Federation of Football Associations in which women play football [33]. So far, the most extensive shift in numbers has occurred in the case of female athletes, whose number is becoming equal to the number of male athletes [5, 28, 34]. However, at the level of leadership and decision-making positions, despite all efforts, only a slight change was recorded [5].

The development of women's participation in sports activities is clearly visible in the current on the history of the Olympic Games (hereafter Olympics) [26]. The first Olympic Games were held completely without women as athletes, the first female athlete participation took place only in 1900, when only 22 of the total number of 997 athletes were female. A greater increase in the number of participants was recorded at the Antwerp Olympics in 1920, when 10% of the names on the starting list belonged to female athletes, and in Montreal in 1976, the percentage rose to 21 [34]. Since the beginning of the 20th century, there has been a significant increase in the number of professional female athletes. In the last two editions of the Olympic Games, i.e., in 2018 and 2022, 45% and 43% of female athletes took part. Equal representation of male and female athletes is one of the goals of the International Olympic Committee (hereafter IOC), which it succeeds in achieving.

Sport lacks women in leadership and decision-making positions, at all levels of sports management and in all countries. Even though in terms of the number of male and female athletes participating in sports, the situation can be described as almost gender-balanced, in terms of management and leadership in sports organizations, it is strongly unbalanced in favor of men, who have a complete advantage. This is also confirmed by the Council of Europe, which acknowledges in its 2014 report that *"the number of women who occupy management positions in sports governing bodies and in coaching activities is still low"* [35], while this means both nationally and internationally.

An example can be the IOC itself, which achieved the expected 20% only in recent years. In 2004, there were 6.6% women in the IOC executive committee, in 2016 it was already 26.7% [36]. Of the specific countries, the "required" 20% was achieved, for example, by the European Nordic countries (Norway, Sweden, Finland), then Australia, Iceland and New Zealand [37].

In 2016, only 10.8% of IOC executive board members were women on average, and 6 (Cyprus, Iran, Italy, Pakistan, Poland and San Marino) out of 45 countries surveyed did not have a single woman sitting on the executive board [37]. Nevertheless, the IOC did not stop in its efforts and in 2016 added the Agenda 2020 project to other initiatives regarding the equality of men and women, which aims not only to achieve 50% participation of women in the Olympics from the total number of athletes, but also to leadership positions related to the Olympic Games [36].

Today, the situation is different than in 1996, there are already 33.3% of women on the IOC board, but the transformation of masculine-dominant organizations into workplaces offering opportunities to everyone, whether from the point of view of race, ethnicity, faith, sexual orientation, gender or gender identity occurred only on a small scale. An example of this can be the recent controversy behind the head of the Tokyo Olympic Games Committee, Yoshiro Mori. The former Japanese prime minister commented on the decision to increase the number of women in the committee he leads with sexist insinuations. Specifically, he did not like that *"women talk a lot"* [38].

If we focus on Slovakia, even here sports organizations are faced with a low representation of women in management positions. For example, out of the total number of 55 national sports associations within the Slovak Sports Union, only 6 of them have a woman as a president or a chairperson. National sports associations are in a position to help on the way to increase the gender balance. However, the situation was not and is not so favourable. In the second half of the 20th century, a gradual increase of female athletes started, but their representation in leadership positions in sports remained very low, often zero. It was only in the 1960s that the first voices from several countries began to be heard to the IOC that women should participate in management and decision-making in sports. Their appeals were not immediately heard and it was not until several years later that the IOC recognized that women should have the opportunity to be members of the IOC and also that their share in the governing bodies of the National Olympic Committees and in general in all other organizations should be increased. Women were first elected as members of the IOC only in 1981, followed gradually by others. The IOC was aware of the unfavourable state of the lack of women, and in 1996 it sent a recommendation to the national Olympic committees that women should have at least 10% representation in management positions by the year 2000 and even 20% by the year 2005. This number has never been approached by most countries; however, most countries have made some progress [39].

The results of Fasting & Knorre [40] of female athletes across performance levels show that 30% of female athletes would like to become a sports official in the future. In the case of top female athletes, the interest was the highest, the reason may be their desire to *"give something back to sport"* [40]. Among the main reasons why they would not want to become an official, on the other hand, the research participants ranked first "I am not interested in this profession", followed by "too much time", "low salary", "too much travel", "sports officials do not have enough respect", "men predominate among sports officials" and "physically too demanding".

Marginal interest in the topic of the low representation of women in the management of sports organizations is evident from the number of conducted researches. So far, neither qualitative nor quantitative research focused on the discussed topic has been conducted in Slovakia. The majority of research and specifically qualitative research is carried out in the United States, the Netherlands and Great Britain. Specific practices that increase the number of women in management positions include education and institutionalization of the issue through conferences and specialized commissions. For example, since 1996, the IOC has held a conference focusing on women and sport (the IOC World Conference of Women and Sport) every four years. On the domestic scene, the Commission for Equal Opportunities in Sport is dedicated to the fight against gender inequality, which has also been supporting women at all levels of sport since 1996.

A controversial practice, already used for example by the Norwegian government, is quotas. Mandated quotas contribute to a rapid increase in the number of women, but the causes of the issue of insufficient representation in decision-making positions still persist. A solution of this type focuses only on women in a disadvantageous position, but no longer pays attention to the preferential position of men [30]. In the case of quotas, consensus is not found in society, nor in feminist theory. Quotas are approached in different ways, for example in a company or organization where the low representation of women in higher management positions is not considered a problem, because it treats women and men as equals, therefore they have the same access to opportunities, or in short it does not pay attention to gender inequalities, quotas are irrelevant as a solution. In a society and organization that notices the issue of low representation of women in management, quotas as a solution tool can be viewed negatively, as they only give priority to a group considered disadvantaged, but it already neglects or directly blocks the policy of equal treatment. In the context of the view that "women represent women best" and the new discourse regarding feminine qualities as suitable for management positions, quotas are viewed positively [41].

3.3. Post-Structuralist Explanation of the Causes of Low Representation of Women in Leadership and Decision-Making Positions of Sports Organizations

Statistics and research conducted across the world reach the same conclusion, namely that in the sports environment there is a phenomenon of low representation of women in the positions of chairmen and members of the executive boards of sports organizations [5, 37, 40].

One of the main causes is reported to be feminine behaviour, which is stereotyped as unfit for leadership positions. In the context of sports organizations, this cause is underlined by the character of the sports environment as primarily masculine. Women performing sports activities is now a generally accepted reality, but their performances and abilities are still considered inferior. It is precisely because of the perceived inferiority that women are denied access to leadership positions [13]. Managers in sports organizations are required to be competitive and ruthless just as it is in stereotypically masculine sports, therefore it is assumed that women do not meet the prerequisites necessary for leadership positions [41]. The lack of women is therefore explained by their lack of self-confidence and, at the same time, excessive self-limitation. These explanations are based on the generalizations and do not deal with individual differences. At the same time, they do not take into account the existence of structural discrimination [13].

Men play a large role in the issue of insufficient gender diversity in the workplace, and just as they can contribute to increasing the number of women in leadership, they can make it difficult or completely deny women career growth [5]. Men who move in a gender imbalanced organization or executive board have a stronger tendency to choose the second option and at the same time are less interested in gender issues than men in organizations with a higher representation of women [42]. The members of the gender-balanced executive board consider the topic of gender important and continue to strive to maintain a balance between men and women represented. On the other hand, the members of the gender imbalanced executive board do not consider this phenomenon to be an important subject of interest, and thus it is not part of their agenda. These male managers do not realize or deny their discriminatory behaviour towards women or other minority groups. Men try to keep decision-making positions in the hands of men only [28]. This phenomenon is called homologous reproduction. Kanter [43] describes homologous reproduction as the need of a characteristic group of persons to protect their power and privileges from others in admissions and career advancements. Those who are already on executive boards tend to elect their peers, i.e., heterosexual white males elect heterosexual white males. Thus, men, as the dominant gender, are allowed not only to select new members, but also to decide which work roles and behaviour patterns belong to which gender [28].

The higher up the job hierarchy we look, the fewer women we see [42]. However, if we focus on hierarchically lower positions, on positions stereotypically described as female position, we find a relatively high number of women, which, however, continues to lead to the marginalization of women in leadership positions [13]. According to Bryan et al. [13] the questions about the gender diversity are specifically answered by football clubs, which are characterized by the dominance of masculinity, by "peripheral inclusion", in other words, women occupy positions outside the true core of the organization, which really deals with key decisions.

In the sports environment, the idea of absolute time flexibility of the manager is generally accepted. Based on the statements of their respondents, [41] describes the complete dedication of sports officials to their work, in other words,

they devote all their energy and all their time to activities related to their sports organization, although constant presence at the workplace is not always a guarantee of quality and higher performance. According to male representatives, the characteristic elements of a quality manager in a sports organization include the already mentioned time flexibility, constant presence, work in the first place and, last but not least, a partner who takes care of the children and the household and at the same time understands the partner's work commitment. However, in the case of women who want children, time flexibility is strongly affected, as the woman is expected by society to take care of the housework and childcare [41].

4. Results and Discussion

The conclusions of the research among Slovak female sports officials coincide with the conclusions of qualitative research conducted abroad, for example [44-48]. As can be seen from the literature and statistics, the low representation of women in executive boards and in leadership positions of sports organizations still persists despite efforts to change [5, 34, 41]. Slovakia is no exception [37], as is the Czech Republic [40, 49].

4.1. Creating a Typology of Sports Organizations

On the basis of a hierarchical cluster analysis, the aim of which was to create several clusters from 65 sports organizations in which sports with similar gender-demographic characteristics will occur, and on the contrary, individual clusters will differ from each other in terms of these characteristics, 5 clusters were identified. The resulting division into clusters is as follows (the number in brackets indicates the number of sports organizations):

- Women's sports: aerobics, acrobatic rock and roll, horse riding, yoga, figure skating, modern gymnastics, sports gymnastics, volleyball (8);
- Mixed mainstream sports: athletics, badminton, basketball, handball, canoeing, karate, korfbal, archery, skiing, modern pentathlon, national handball, orienteering, swimming, field hockey, radio orienteering, speed skating, sledding, softball, fencing, taekwondo, tennis, rowing (22);
- Non-Olympic alternative sports: American football, curling, golf, yachting, bodybuilding, skittles and bowling, dog sledding, powerlifting, ski bobsleigh, water skiing, water motoring (11);
- Leisure sports games: extreme sports, mountain climbing, throwing, mini golf, pétanque, squash, triathlon, water polo (8);
- Men's sports: baseball, billiards, boxing, cycling, floorball, soccer, hockey, judo, ice hockey, muay-thai, netball, rugby, table tennis, chess, weightlifting, wrestling (16).

4.2. Analysis of Gender Dynamics in Sports Organizations

From the above typology and on the basis of a closer examination of the individual clusters, it is clear that the clusters differ from each other in many aspects, while the differences in terms of gender dynamics are a very interesting result, given the topic of the paper, where the cluster of leisure sports games shows significantly higher differences than other clusters. Sports in this cluster saw an average increase in membership of 15 percentage points during the period under review, while in the other clusters the share remained constant or increased only slightly. From a closer analysis of the development of the membership base of individual sports organizations, when we focused on the initial and final values, i.e. values in 2020-2022, it emerged that this increased gender dynamics can manifest itself in different ways, while below we outline several possible forms that we identified from the research.

1. The most expected development, when the increase in the share of women is in the form of an increase in the number of women and at the same time a decrease or stagnation in the number of men. This situation occurred, for example, with mini-golf.
2. The most common possibility is the simultaneous growth of both the number of men and the number of women, in which case the size of the membership plays a large role. The opposite case can also occur, when both the number of women and the number of men decrease at the same time. This is, for example, the case of water polo.
3. In the last identified possibility, the values are more or less balanced at the beginning and end, however, during the course they went through a certain development, which again can be very variable, which is the case of mountain climbing.

Within the framework of this paper, there is not enough space to go into detail in this characteristic, and therefore the resulting possibilities cannot be taken as a final solution, because if the development were analyzed year by year, or if the beginning-middle-end were considered, the results could partially distinguish. As we can see, this is a rather complex, but interesting issue, which would certainly be worth investigating in more detail in further research.

4.3. Gender Analysis of Executive Committees and Management Positions of National Sports Organizations

Key findings include:

- Only 8% of Olympic sports federations have a woman president. These are horse riding, modern gymnastics and triathlon.
- 9% of the 57 vice-presidents of the 36 Olympic sports federations are women.
- Fencing and wrestling federations have an even ratio of women and men in the positions of vice presidents (the same number of women and men).
- 25% of sports federations have women at the head of their executive boards.
- The Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic has one woman and one man in administrative/managerial positions.
- THE Olympic Committee is chaired by a man and none of the four vice-presidents is a woman. The Olympic Committee is headed by a man.
- Sports federations and the Olympic Committee have a high representation of men in their executive boards (86%). Only 14% of these councils are women.
- Only in one sport, horse riding, is the ratio of women and men on the executive board balanced (three women and three men).
- 42% of Olympic sports federations have no women on their executive boards.

4.4. Connecting the Typology of Sports Organizations with the Gender Structure of their Management Positions

When analysing the results, we are based on the typology created above. The clusters are ranked according to the average proportion of women in adults, as gender plays the main, but not the only, factor in their characteristics. In general, it can be stated that the original hypotheses were confirmed in the vast majority of cases, although in some respects the results did not turn out to be statistically significant.

Based on the results, it can be clearly stated that there are significant differences between the individual clusters, with the biggest differences being between the first and last cluster, i.e., between women's and men's sports. While in the case of women's sports, the representation of women in executive committees is 46%, in the middle three groups around 11% and in men's sports only 2%.

It is evident from the results that the influence of masculine sports culture is manifested in the management of sports organizations, because although in the case of mixed mainstream sports women have a relatively high representation in the membership base (32%), their representation in management and decision-making positions is the same as a cluster of leisure sports games where women make up 24% of the membership. These are customary and traditional sports in which men firmly hold their positions.

The main management function in the organization is the position of the chairman, and as part of the research we found out who performs this function - whether it is a man or a woman. From the point of view of this characteristic, the results match the original hypotheses only partially. Again, there was a significant difference between women's and men's sports, in which no woman holds the position of chairman, however, the results were not very different for the other clusters - in mixed mainstream sports and in leisure sports games, one organization is always headed by a woman. The percentages are higher for mixed mainstream sports, as 22 sports make up this cluster, while only 8 sports fall under leisure sports games.

As a part of the research, we also found out the gender of the general secretary. It is worth reminding here that not all associations and organizations have this function in place and for this reason the totals do not correspond to the total of 65 sports organizations included. Women perform this function more often, and the inter-cluster results are not so different. Non-Olympic alternative sports have the largest share of general secretary positions (69%), followed by women's sports with 45%, mixed mainstream sports in third place with 33%, and the remaining two clusters - leisure sports games and men's sports have almost identical results, and less than 13%. From the point of view of this characteristic, the results in terms of percentages for women are pleasing, but not from the point of view of gender ideology. This situation only proves that gender roles and job hierarchies, in other words vertical segregation, are still maintained in sports organizations.

Based on the above results, it is possible to answer the research questions and confirm or refute the hypotheses. In general, we can summarize that the hypotheses were confirmed in almost all cases, and thus we can state that the gender aspect of sports culture in sports organizations is manifested both in the predominance of men in the membership base, but above all in the representation in management and decision-making positions. Regarding the relationship between the gender structure of members and the gender structure of management positions in sports organizations, we can also

confirm the defined hypotheses. There is a reciprocal relationship between the gender structure of members and the gender structure of management positions, but it is not symmetrical. In women's sports, the representation of men on executive committees is relevant, while in men's sports, the representation of women is negligible. Last but not least, as part of the research, we found out how manifestations of the gender aspect in sport are (not) transformed, or how they reflect on the dynamics of the gender structure of the membership base. Through the historical development of the membership base of individual sports organizations, a significant increase in the proportion of women was recorded only in the cluster of leisure sports games, and therefore we also confirm the hypothesis that the gender structure, which is understood as a reflection of gender ideology, remains relatively unchanged.

4.5. Final Summary

In general, it can be summarized that individual organizations have a different ratio of men to women, while this ratio remains relatively stable. This state of affairs is caused, on the one hand, by which sports, in terms of gender importance in society, are cultivated by individual organizations, whether they are men's or women's sports, when it was found that in all sports apart from those that are explicitly perceived as women, men predominate in the membership base, but also by the organizational culture of the given organizations, which means that different job positions are more or less open to men or women, regardless of the dominant image of this sport (e.g. in the media). Specifically, management and decision-making positions are more often occupied by men, as dominant and more capable, while women can be found in the area of middle and lower management, i.e., in the position of secretaries, accountants, recorders, etc. The employment of women and men in the field of sports is related to the nature of sports culture, but also with the social policy of the state, or with what gender roles the state supports. This situation is referred to as vertical segregation, which is typical for the Slovak labour market.

4.6. Discussion

For the analysis of the gender structure of the membership base and management positions, we chose a quantitative research, where, on the basis of adjusted numerical data, we can describe in detail the situation in the field of organized Slovak sports, we can find out if there are differences between organizations, how the situation develops over time. However, we are aware of certain limitations that this type of research brings. A legitimate criticism of the choice of this research method can be the fact that through the quantitative research we cannot find out and answer why a given situation, in this case the gender inequality in the management and leadership of sports organizations, occurs, what are its causes, how the situation is seen and perceived by the stakeholders. However, as stated in the paper and as claimed by many authors, for example [50-52], this is a very complex problem, the understanding and explanation of which can only be arrived at by a combination of research methods, techniques and approaches.

Another topic suitable for discussion may be the selection of a research sample, or listed organizations. Not all sports organizations in Slovakia were included in the research, as they did not meet certain criteria that we set with regard to the available data and the aim of the research. At the same time, two large sports organizations - the Slovak Shooting Association and the Slovak Biathlon Association - were not included in the research, as we did not have access to the necessary data. We are aware that the inclusion of these sports could have a certain influence on the division of sports into clusters, and thus also on the resulting typology.

It is also possible to discuss the choice of chosen methods and techniques in hierarchical cluster analysis, which represents a subjective method, and the researcher can thus influence and obtain different results. We chose these methods based on the fact that (according to renowned authors, for example [53-55]) they are the most typical and most suitable methods for cardinal variables. Regarding the distance measurement method, we chose the Euclidean method preset in SPSS metric, while we have tried other methods with similar results in most cases, however some have varied more. It is also up to the researcher what final number of clusters they choose. However, in this case, we think the chosen number of five clusters is the best and most correct solution.

4.7. Comparison of Results with Existing Knowledge

From the results of our analysis, it is evident that even within the management of sports organizations in Slovakia there is a so-called barrier of gender prejudices. Although we believe that this is a consequence of the so-called "typical Slovak nature", it is a barrier that also corresponds to the findings of foreign researches, e.g. [2, 6-11]. They refute the assumption that this is a barrier typical for Slovak society, on the contrary, they confirm that this barrier is also common in the management of sports organizations in more western countries.

There is an assumption among managers and officials of Slovak organizations that women historically know less about sports than men, and therefore this eliminates them from leading positions in the management of sports organizations. This assumption is also confirmed by the results of the study [10], which literally states that women in the management of sports organizations often have to adhere to higher standards in the performance of their work than their male colleagues. This finding is in absolute correlation with research results [7-9].

The common assumption that women do not belong in sports, let alone in the management of sports organizations, does not appear much in the results of foreign researches. One of the possible explanations is the fact that, while in

western countries such views are already unacceptable, in Slovakia such a set-up of society does not yet prevail. Even so, in the results of foreign researches, we can find indications that lead us to this prejudice. They include, for example, the so-called "symbolic violence" manifested by the exclusion of women, their neglect or the fact that they are placed on the side-lines of sports management [7, 8, 11].

5. Conclusion

The aim of this paper was to point out one of the negative sides of sport, which is gender inequality, while specifically dealing only with organized sport. Gender inequalities in sport can be justified through a masculine sports culture, as sport has always been considered a male domain in which men have complete superiority. Women were only able to penetrate this male environment over time, especially in the second half of the 20th century, when the view of women's sports and women in sports in general changed and women began to be considered a full-fledged part of the sports environment.

Based on the number of athletes at the Olympic Games, we can state that the ratio of men to women has almost equalized. However, if we look at the representation of men and women in management and decision-making positions in sports organizations, we find that women are still underrepresented at all levels of sport and in all countries of the world. In the Slovak Republic, the field of sports is still relatively unexplored terrain, and therefore, with this paper and research, we wanted to capture the situation in the Slovak sports environment, or how the gender aspect of sports culture manifests itself in sports organizations. The results of the research carried out when we examined 65 national sports organizations in Slovakia confirmed that gender in Slovak organized sports is manifested on the one hand by the dominance of men in the membership of sports organizations, with the exception of sports that are explicitly understood as female, but also in representation in management and decision-making positions. At the same time, it should be emphasized that individual sports organizations are very variable, and not only in terms of gender. The size of the sports organization or the tradition of the sport also plays an important role.

Furthermore, we managed to find out that there is a relationship between the gender structure of the membership base and the gender structure in management and decision-making positions, which is reciprocal and at the same time asymmetrical. In the research, we tried to capture the development, or, in other words, the gender dynamics. Through the development of the number of members of the membership base, from which we calculated other characteristics, we found that gender dynamics can manifest in different ways, e.g., simultaneous growth/decrease in the number of men and women, decrease in the number of men and growth in the number of women, balanced values at the beginning and end. The conclusions we reached cannot be taken as the only possible ones, since we captured the development only on the basis of initial and final values, while detailed research could reveal other findings.

Last but not least, we would like to point out the results for the position of general secretary, which women hold more often than men. Even though the situation is positive for women, from a gender point of view, it points out that there is a deep-rooted division of labour in sports organizations. Men manage and make decisions (as part of the research, their complete dominance in the position of chairman was confirmed), and women are in charge of ensuring everything else. Their role is secondary. In general, this confirms the fact that masculinity is superior to femininity in sports.

Looking at the results from other countries, e.g., the Nordic countries [44] or Germany [27], or at the results published in Bem [56] or Wheaton and Thorpe [57], it can be clearly stated that the situation may not be so unfavourable to the achievement of gender equality. To improve it, the cooperation of all interested actors in the field of sport is necessary, both at the national and international level, as is regular information on the current situation in individual countries, support and help for women so that they have the opportunity to gain leadership positions, organizing conferences and seminars, and generally perceiving women in sports as equal partners and paying them sufficient attention.

6. Declarations

6.1. Author Contributions

Conceptualization, V.G. and K.B.; methodology, V.G. and K.B.; investigation, V.G. and K.B.; resources, V.G. and K.B.; writing—original draft preparation, V.G. and K.B.; writing—review and editing, V.G. and K.B. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

6.2. Data Availability Statement

The data presented in this study are available on request from the corresponding author.

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6.5. Institutional Review Board Statement

Not applicable.

6.6. Informed Consent Statement

Informed consent was obtained from all subjects involved in the study.

6.7. Declaration of Competing Interest

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

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