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# WOMEN ON ICE - GENDER EQUALIZATION

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**Abstract:** In the last decades the women started to do sports which were originally masculine (Pfister, 1990). The parity led to the slow transformation of the old-school thinking about the traditional roles of sexes (Hall, 1996). The main questions of our investigation were whether the athletes' thought of the figure skating and the ice hockey are different according to their sport or to the existing stereotypes in the Hungarian sport society. We used semi-structured interviews to gather opinions of two different gender type icy sports' top women athletes (figure skating and ice hockey) to see their viewpoints about the gender equalization. We can verify Metheny (1965) findings, that the social acceptance or refusal of women in sports on the basis of traditional features is changing slightly.

Research questions were: Are there differences in the childhood sport socialization processes of the representatives of the two sports? What was the motivation behind their choice of sports? Are there differences in the gender identities of female athletes? What is the athletes' opinion on one another and the representatives of the other sport? Method was semi-structured in-depth interviews and the samples were the members of the Hungarian women ice hockey and figure skating national team.

According to our results family and siblings were decisive in the childhood socialization process. Early age patterns do not seem to have much influence on the selection of sport. Although among water polo/ice hockey girls there were a few tomboys. Among the ice hockey team members there were girlish girls and boyish girls as well, but among the figure skaters there were no one who was boyish. No differences can be observed in their views on gender roles concerning for example employment or housework.

**Keywords:** gender, female roles, gender identity, ice hockey, figure skating (JEL. Code: Z29)

## INTRODUCTION

Gender is the variety of physical traits relating to the appearances of the two genders of human beings: masculinity and femininity. These may join with the biological sexual category (male, female or intersex), sex-based community structures (gender roles and social roles), or sexual individuality. In modern times, during the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Women fought parity in sport participation independent of the chosen sports' original tradition. After the women began to appear in masculine sports these disciplines were opened for both gender, meanwhile, thanks to sport, the gender stereotypes in society have been changed. This is a very positive phenomenon, but the old-school stereotypes exist in societies as well. Metheny (1965) defined in his theory that the social acceptance or refusal of women in sports is the basis of traditional features, but this "old" routine is changing slightly. In the last fifty years several scientists (Postow, 1980; Riemer & Visio, 2003) verified this theory. These scientists recognized that there are stereotypes behind Metheny's categories. These phenomena are the barriers of the neutralization of gender type sports. Although

Metheny did not do so himself, we can categorize ice hockey as masculine based on the descriptions (body contact and occasional fighting between players) of her category.

Metheny wrote in her study about the socially lower and upper class recognized sports, so we investigated this issue in our research as well.

The primary environment of socialization is the family, and it is the first influential factor of the sport alternatives as well; the parents force their children to choose the sport which would be ideal for them. The children of the former athletes do more sport; the girls' sport socialization is more successful if their mothers were sportswomen or if they are still active in sport today (McPherson, James and Loy, 1989). Furthermore the economic status and the level of the education also determines the selection of the sports or if the children do sport at all (Velenczei and Gál, 2011).

The world of today has been educated to think of sports in terms of genders: boys are encouraged to partake in aggressive, competitive, energetic team sports (Schmalz and Kersetter, 2006), while the girls seek feminine sports. Isolating sports by masculine and feminine features inspires women to accept the corporal parameters they have (Birell

and Theberge, 1989). The world of sports has been connected with the masculine sphere, in this atmosphere preconceptions exist against the female athletes. This tendency has been provoked and tested in the last decades; girls and women have begun to include physical strength and athletic skills into the definition of feminineness.

Figure skating is currently a feminine sport, although it was traditionally male-dominated (Adams, 2011). This interesting exploration caused a change in her research towards a historical investigation on how gender expropriation occurs in sports. For example, traditional stereotypes for women have gradually been shifting, and as a consequence, the sport has become an effective way to gain masculine attributes. Thing (2001) wrote about Danish female soccer, basketball and ice hockey players, where the interviewees defined aggressiveness as a key factor in victory. Ice hockey is an excellent example of a former taboo sports which is unquestionably a very tough sport. In the upper levels of ice hockey, the male and female athletes require a similar skill set; these skills are explosive strength, aggression, and full body contact. Women's ice hockey in Canada is held in similar regard to men's ice hockey, but the Canadian women did a lot for it.

These efforts resulted in a great development in the thinking; in 1998 Sport Canada announced the Gender Equity Snap Shot which focused on Canadian national teams' gender equity. But the story started in North-America with the United States Education Amendments Title IX (1972), which says that *"no person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving federal financial assistance"*. In 1974 the Department of Health Education and Welfare proposed implementing regulations, which clarified that the intercollegiate athletic activities are also donated by the governments.

Turning back to ice hockey, the fans of the women's game say that the girls play better, the speed and finesse are the same, but they play the game without violence. Now, female ice hockey players love the game for nearly the same reasons as the men. They like to take their physical strength to the edge, as well as the physical contacts during the game. Women ice hockey players feel relaxed when they enjoy the physical side of the game and are accepted more broadly on the ice than in society. This feeling gives them more freedom as well (Gilenstam, Karp and Henriksson-Larsen, 2007).

In the history of the summer Olympic Games, Hungary is very successfully, but the winter sports do not have enough facilities and possibilities to achieve good results. In figure skating and ice dancing we have historical traditions but women's ice hockey started only 30 years ago.

We investigated two sports which appear on the two ends of Metheny's scale in order to explore the thoughts of women in ice hockey and in figure skating about the gender stereotypes and the possibilities of gender equalization. We focused on their socializations and family backgrounds, and their motivation in selecting their given sport. During

the investigation we used other indicators to observe the differences; these were the gender identities of the examined athletes and their feelings or ideas about the other sports' athletes. We also tried to see the role behavior plays in determining the sport selection in childhood, and if the gender socialization and sport socialization show a tight interaction to each other? Lastly we made an attempt to indicate the athletes' different personal standards to their mates and the opposite sports' athletes.

### Gender stereotypes and sport

*"...traditional gender roles and stereotypes continue to have a strong influence on the division of roles between women and men in the home, in the workplace and in society at large, with women depicted as running the house and caring for children while men are depicted as wage-earners and protectors"* says the Report on Eliminating Gender Stereotypes in the EU (European Parliament, 2012).

Gender stereotypes distinct groups based on gender characteristics. Whereas gender stereotypes have been usually supposed to have undesirable meanings, they can also have positive meanings as well.

A lot of investigations run on the differences of the genders, specifically in the masculine or performance sports. The theme of gender appears also in psychological or sociological studies, and a lot of similarities are interrelated in these papers according to the personalities and social role (Gill, 2005; Chalabaev et al 2013). The ideas will get closer to each other if the newly investigated results of the gender researches are understood perfectly in the society (Connell, 2002). But this can be dangerous if this procedure is a degrading one, or causes unacceptable behavior from the participant; as a result, the self-valuation of the stakeholders may decrease. For example, if the mates of a strong woman are always girding at her body, she will lose her feminine outlook. In this case, there is a good solution to look at her feminine side; on one hand, to see the role of a very hard working, providing wife or mother, and on the other hand, the role of a strong, sporty female image should be reconciled.

In the elite level of sport, male competitors who seem to not be aggressive enough may be categorized "womanlike" or "queer". Denham (2009) described the man as heterosexual, characteristically aggressive under pressure and the main issue of his behavior is leadership. Also the definition of hegemonic masculinity by Connell (2009) involves the traditional gender ideals; the male is authoritative, self-governing, pokerface, severely heterosexual, unconcerned with discomfort, and there is no chance to change these core values. But beyond controversy, sport renew the leading ideas of maleness by alleviating doubts of feminization in the men's thinking (Brod, 1987). According to Hoberman's (2005) thoughts the women have become more and more self-governing; while the men have become ever more focused on their handsome outfits.

The norm and values of the society have shown that women who choose female sport are much more masculine than feminine. Agreeing to this stock phrase, Kimmel

(1996) described the development of the well-set women's body development as the only valued thing for the masculine world. And, if the mental stereotypes suggest to us that these kinds of women have virile behavior, we can practically think of them as men. Bem (1974) investigated this phenomenon, and wrote about the stereotypical conception of women and recognized that it is not really a conscious decision, but rather the effect of the opinion shaper ideologies.

Zimmerman and Reavill (1998) wrote that more and more girls and women are partaking in boxing, football, and wrestling. They also found, that female participation in extreme sports (inline skating, skateboarding and snowboarding) increases continually. The possible explanation of this trend is that the members of the X generation do not care about the traditional gender stereotypes.

The traditional roles of both genders have a stiff and restrictive framework which is a barrier to having a good and healthy personality, hence it would be a great deal for both gender if they choose the behavior which conforms with the situation. According to Bem's (1974) opinion the genders are not perceptible; the sexes are not independent from each other, but todays' explanations of sexual identities give us the chance to define the „social gender” better, or to categorize them into more levels.

In a modern society, the men are the trustee of the success, after a wash-out, they receive a lot of pejorative remarks, whilst by the women it is not perceptible. If the women achieve great success, this is attributable to super skills or they are only considered lucky winners. These kinds of stereotypes cause the phenomenon that if somebody does not adhere to the conventions; she/he receives a lot of negative, pejorative remarks or responses just think about a male dancer or a female shot putter. They do not try to achieve success in a masculine sport although they have enough talent to succeed in it. For these women, the only gift is to behave according to the social expectations which are not so easily attainable. If a woman breaks these social barriers, or if she is very ambitious in a sport, she just runs the risk of doing harm to her reputation or her peace of mind. Being prejudiced against a group of people is a negative or hostile attitude, based on statements with the background of not enough or inadequate information (Aronson, 2008). According to former mentioned investigations, anticipation and attribution plays a big role in the appearance of the stereotypes. Festinger (1957) wrote about the impulse of the stereotypes, which is a need for excuse making and frustration; inside the human being exist two inconsistent ideas about one issue. This is an intellectual disagreement which creates great unrest humans.

In the history of human activity, the investigator can split the sports into two separate worlds. These two fields are the female and male sports. One can say that there are typical male sports (combat sports), and that there are also traditionally female sports (sports with music). Following Ostrow, Jones and Spiker (1981) and Ignico (1989) ideas, there are sports for both genders, called neutral sports (tennis, table tennis). The androgynous personalities have advantage not only in the neutral sports in the adaptability

of the roles; they are more interested in participating in sex atypical sports (Bem and Lenney, 1976). Matteo (1986) found, that the androgynous women customarily like men's sports more than the feminine women, and the androgynous men choose the womanlike sports more often than the strongly masculine guys. Contrary to this, there were absolutely no alterations between the genders from the aspect of sex roles in the appropriate or not fitting sports (Burke, 1986). In the modern, emancipated society there have also been found differences, in Salminen (1994) research the Finnish women liked the masculine sports more than the conventional female sports. While “outdated” sexual category typecasts have remained fairly persistent over the past periods, they have also been tested and provoked by many women and “women's libbers”.

Sports and physical activities are the exact area in which traditional gender stereotypes have been evaluated and analyzed. Associating the traditional female gender stereotypes with the current women in sports, we can say that the female athletes are beginning to find the right roles in the sports world. The data of the national and international federations show us the phenomena that girls and women are participating in greater numbers in “traditional virile sports”.

Gill's (2005) investigation dealt with high school, college, and intercollegiate athletes and non-athletes and of both sexes. He wrote that the differences between the genders are bigger among the non-athletes compared to the results of athletes regarding competitiveness and goal orientations. This study found that the sportswomen were more competitive than even the non-athlete men, and this explains why the non-athlete men are not concerned with competitive sports; but it would be more appropriate to study athletes of different gender who compete in the same or comparable sport.

As we described before, nowadays the number of women who take part in a former taboo sports for women is increasing. They participate in water polo, ice hockey, biathlon, soccer and cycling, which were strictly masculine sports until the 70's of the past century. But the women are not as performance-oriented as the boys despite having the same talent (Kugelmann, 2009). Kugelmann expected that this difference lies in the expression of their drives or that the women have dissimilar views, probably because of their social activity.

McClung and Blinde (2002) supposed that the participation in intercollegiate sports can influence the social feelings of the female athletes to gender concerns. The investigated athletes felt that gender discrimination exists in sports but they could not recognize it in their normal lives. The same research shows that women could play in their chosen sport as long as they were accepted by the men. Although the women could participate, the gender differences were not eliminated within the group. This phenomenon causes innovative and more refined forms of gender topics in many sports. In todays' sport the real important thing is to break the paradox that women should be better and better whilst they should maintain their femininity. Female athletes in masculine sports (boxing, body building or ice hockey) have to present themselves as women although their body shapes are pretty masculine.

There were public dialogues in the 19th (*Sandow*, 1898) and in the early 20th centuries (*Webster*, 1930) about the female uniqueness and physicality which established typecasts regarding performance and competences (*Hills*, 2006; *Kamberidou*, 2007). But in 2003 Heywood and Dworkin stated in their book, that the presence of ladylike behavior and eroticism increases women athletes' market value, which is more and more generated by the media.

And now we should ask the main questions of the gender problems in sport. If sport is so beneficial and offers advantages for men, why can't the women do it as well? Why do the men and the organizations resist offering these benefits to women as well?

Sport is traditionally hyper-masculine and the access to this world is more or less directed by men. In the last decades the women started to do sports which were originally masculine (*Pfister*, 1990; *Kirk*, 2002), and the parity on the sport field led to the slow transformation of the old-school thinking about the traditional roles (*Hall*, 1996). According to the feminist authors who were interested in sport, this was the most important step to eliminate the differences between the genders (*Guttmann*, 1991). While *Epstein* (2007) found that the absurd resistance concerning the women's inclusion in sport is generated by individual men and some institutions that is why the social background is very important in the children's development.

*Statham* (1986) recognized the difficulties of the fight against the existing sexuality patterns in the modern societies. In a community, the people expect others to behave adequately according to their gender (*Bourdieu*, 2002). It is very similar to *Giddens* (2008) idea, in which he stated that the biological aptitude of women is not a real obstacle, but the traditionally accepted roles of the women are. In some feminist theory (*Smith*, 1996; *Butler*, 1990) the authors described that the men think they have normal behavior, but that the women are deviant. The gender creates expectations for characters; it defines the social routine of normal life; it is an essential part of the main commune (eg. a family or a team) of the culture; and it is an entity as well (*Lorber*, 1995).

### *Gender and sport socialization*

The gender socialization is the procedure of learning about the rules of the male/female behavior; we also study the concepts of the contemporary values and norms of both sexes. Only the conventions are the basis of these stereotypes, the human ethology and evolutional genetics have not found any gender feature which is specialized only for the women or men. The sexual identities have close contact with the differences of the genders even as the individual behavior and gender roles (*Zapico et al* 2014). According to Freud theory, there is a big influence of the penis on the maturing of youth. The girls envy the penis in the early childhood and they are inferior to their father similarly to their mothers' behavior. *Mitchell and Rose* (1982) wrote in their feminist theory that Freud made a very close linking between the genitals and the gender identity; in their concept the fathers have not so great

an influence and disciplinarian power because the mothers are more strict regarding child rearing.

The most important revolution of the women's gender socialization was the increase in legal rights; in the 20th century the women received more and more equal legitimacy to vote or to work in the modern societies. The women could work in the same positions as men, they weren't only housewives anymore, and nowadays there are a lot of single ladies who have great carriers with international organizations. In the decision making processes, women can undertake a big role in politics, in culture and in sport too.

*Connell* (1995) mentioned in her theory that the children make individual experiences in the schools; there are not just masculine and feminine features, both gender qualities appear when the students compete against each other in a sport event. According to this theory, in the different societies there are different appearances of this phenomenon, but the determining factor of the effeminacy is of interest to the masculine. The society determines the gender identity, although this is a secondary effect, because the people develop their own gender identity. It seems to be fairly clear, but *Collins* (1990) interviewed an iron man athlete who could not exactly define masculinity although he lives an absolutely masculine life. During this interview *Collins* (1990) recognized that "a particular form of masculinity (to be) hegemonic means that it is culturally exalted and that its exultation stabilizes a structure of dominance and oppression in the gender order as a whole".

The sport socialization has a tight contact with the previously mentioned gender socialization, albeit the sport socialization of the girls shows weaker effects of growing up compared to the boys' sport socialization. Unfortunately, girls participate less in sport than the boys (*Vilhjalmsson and Kristjansdottir*, 2003; *Slater and Tiggeemann*, 2011), so the socialization effect of sport reaches fewer girls than boys. In many societies the sport is an effective tool to form the youngsters to be feminine or masculine. The parents of a girl traditionally try to direct her to the feminine or neutral sports and with this effort they influence the attitude of their child to the chosen sport as well. But this is not the only effect on the girls; the peers, the school and the media have great impression on bequeath of the traditional gender roles (*Trolan*, 2013). On one hand the researches of the women gender identity in masculine sports show us the effects to orient the athletes towards handball, boxing or soccer; on the other hand, it shows how these sporty women do different feminine or masculine functions. *Scranton, Fasting, Pfister and Bunuel* (1999) observed in an international soccer investigation that all the interviewed girls were tomboys. These girls were better at collecting experiences from football than from the feminine sports. *Mennesson* (2000) wrote in her study about women's boxing, all the interviewed athletes remember their boyish behavior from childhood, they wore boy clothes and they played with masculine toys. The common part of the above mentioned investigations was that the influencing people were the fathers, the older brothers inside the families, or as was mentioned in same case, the

friends among the boys. These people had a very good opinion about the boyish behavior, in many times in return for the opinion of the mothers. The observations have counter meaning comparing to the result of the earlier researchers (Snyder and Spreitzer, 1973; Watson, 1975; Hasbrook, 1993). The boyish behavior, also the masculine identity and the obstruction to the feminine activities were the indicators of this phenomenon. There were absolutely no problems till adolescence, but after puberty the shape and outlook had been changed to more feminine.

Laqueur (2000) wrote about the social changes of the gender roles over time and accordingly about the changes of the physical outfit ideas of both gender. Reading this book we can see the development of the human body symbolism; from the most surrealistic one body scheme to the modern representation of both gender shapes. Related to the previous issue, Messner (1996) described the differences between the theoretical thoughts and the sport praxis, where the women athletes were experienced. According to Davis and Louveau (1998) findings, female athletes should train very hard; they do this through physical contacts. Also thought to be important by the authors is that the elite female athletes should cope with the high level of aggression and tension too.

There are traditionally masculine sports where the assertion is a compulsory element (American football, ice hockey) not only an advantage. These sports assist to support the masculine identity and its social tribute (Postow, 1980), but the effect is weakening nowadays.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

The main purpose of our investigation was to find out what the views of the interviewed female athletes had about their own characteristics and on the other examined sports' masculine or feminine character (synchronized figure skating and ice hockey). The other purpose was to detect the differences between the views of the female athletes about the other sports' athletes, whether they are considered masculine or feminine.

### Data collection and method

For data collection we conducted semi structured deep interviews. We updated and altered to the examined sports, a previously developed questionnaire prepared and used by the Author in two other studies. Earlier, two pairs of sports have been compared, one of which was considered feminine, while the other sport was considered masculine - boxing vs. rhythmic gymnastics as examples of individual sports (Béki and Gál, 2013) and handball vs. volleyball as examples of team sports (Béki, 2012). In this study we conducted a face-to-face, 60-minute long, recorded deep interviews in autumn of 2013.

The research subjects have been the complete teams (all members) of the adult National women's teams of figure skating and ice hockey (N=14 in figure skating and N=18 in ice hockey).

Demographic data: the youngest athlete of the figure skater subjects was almost 18 years old; the oldest was close upon 34 years of age, and the mean age of the total sample was 23.43 years. The youngest ice hockey player was 17 years old, the oldest was 24 years old and the mean age of total sample was 21.86 years. Most of the respondents were university or college students (94 %), the rest was employed (3%). All the investigated athletes were from bigger cities or from the capital city of Hungary. Even if some of the athletes were born in a village or in a smaller city (<10.000 inhabitants) they had moved to bigger cities at the beginning of their sports carrier.

### Data analysis

We used qualitative data analysis method of the answers of the interview questions. This way we have found out how and why they had chosen their sports. We have gained a detailed description of their self-characterization, leading us to key data on feminine and masculine identification of persons and the activities people get involved in (such as types of sports). We were also interested in their opinion about their own and the other examined sports, as well as those athletes who are from these two sports.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

According to our results, we didn't find any differences between the feminine and masculine sport athletes' family background. We also established that the value preferences of the parents determined their children's attitude to sports. In our investigation there were parents with better and also weaker economic status in the examined sports. Comparatively, the costs of the figure skating were almost the same as we found in ice hockey.

In the last decades, the personal higher economic status allows higher prestigious sport to be participated in or to watch as a fan. We found that this statement is not true in our sample, women's ice hockey is a successful sport although the recognition is not the same compared to men's ice hockey. There are national team programs, but they are training and competing in their clubs only.

All the investigated female athletes' families had a long tradition in sport; here we could observe the meaning of the parental intention. According to our findings, the figure skaters' mothers' positive attitudes to sports were very important, but they suggest their children the adequate gender type of sport. The mothers of the figure skaters were former gymnast, basketball player or ballet dancer; only one athlete's mother didn't do any sport (her father was a sportsman). All the same, almost all of the mothers (n=16) of the ice hockey players did handball previously, which is a masculine sport as well. As we could observe by the figure skaters, in each case the parents were the deciding factors in the sports selection which is absolutely understandable according to the specification of the skating; it is an early mature sport. For those athletes who do not enter to figure

skating in the optimal age range (around 3-5 years of age) would be difficult to become successful in the international venues later on. In our investigated sample we found that all players who came from another sport, they decided to choose ice hockey.

*„I started figure skating, but after I saw ice hockey players and I could try this sport I loved it and I stayed there”.*

Observed the parental support, by the beginning of the ice hockey, the ice hockey players' parents would like to discover a new sport for their daughters in many cases. But after a few months they accepted the girls' choice.

*„They were pretty afraid of ice hockey, they thought I would injure them. But after some success they accepted when they saw I found what I really want to do”.*

We found 5 athletes who did both sports: the first was figure skating and from there she directed herself towards ice hockey. The athletes learn all types of typical gender behavior during the sexual socialization, and the transition of the gender sport passing behavior started only entering the chosen sport. Both of the above mentioned processes have great influence on each other, the sport as a socialization tool has a bigger role in the male's upbringing than on the girls' development. The family, especially the parents, can influence the children's gender identity and their attitudes towards the sport, so the girls are directed towards the traditionally feminine or the acceptable sports.

*„My parents were enthusiastic about my sport from the beginning” – a figure skater*

As we wrote earlier, there are tight connections between the role playing behavior in childhood and the sport selection, so firstly we investigated the figure skaters' activities in infancy. All the same we didn't find any significant association between the infant activities and the sport selection; the children played feminine or masculine games according to the family orientation. We think that the effect of the brothers and the game options of the habitat are important influencing factors as well. In our hypothesis we supposed that the ice hockey players exhibited boyish behavior in their childhood. But during the interviews, we recognized that this is not a common phenomenon in our sample. We found womanlike and manlike behavior as well - mainly in families where a younger or older brother lives. We didn't find any „tomboys” among the investigated ice hockey players; they explained non gender stereotypical behavior they had in childish games. We found that the brother or sister influenced these activities.

We asked them about their feelings and opinions of the usual gender traditions, because in Hungary the difference between the genders appears primarily in the house work with the women spending more time with this activity. The investigated athletes were very young, most of them didn't have their own household, although according to their memories all the work types in the household were recognized by them. We asked them if the roles of their family (with

their parents) are acceptable for them or if they will change the roles in their present or future family. They answered that the role models were very traditional in their family and also that they followed the seen examples; usually 80% of the house work is woman's work and only the 20% is male work.

*„In my opinion the cleaning and the cooking is not only woman work, the women should work in a workplace for salary similarly to the men.” – a figure skater*

The ice hockey players thought that women should take responsibility to perform the household work - they only shared the work because they didn't have enough time to do them. We found the same when we asked the parental sample. It didn't have any effect on the chosen masculine sport or on their thoughts about the typical genders' role; we found the usual patriarchal thinking.

The figure skaters thought that their sport is a very feminine and special sport; the ice hockey is associated more with the men. The specialty of their sport is that only a few athletes do it. All the coaches were women as well; we found only one athlete who had a male coach. They said that the women ice hockey players are pretty aggressive, behavior which is allowed according to the rules of ice hockey. They never chose such a sport where they couldn't use their effeminacy. All the same, they thought that their sport to be a very hard sport where the trainings are very hard although it is not as popular as it can be.

On the TV channels in Hungary there were not any women ice hockey games broadcasted, so the population of Hungary could not get enough information about the games and players; contrary to this, international figure skating is widely broadcasted. We also found that the ice hockey players found their sport very positive, and they know all the specificities of ice hockey which results in negative notions about it. The players believe that ice hockey is a masculine sport, which requires a lot of technical skills and willpower to do. They don't consider their sport to be really hostile, and according to our question about the injuries, they said it is a very safe sport because of the protective equipment. They know that their sport is less acceptable as a women sport, but they like their skill (coping, fast decision making) developed by the ice hockey. These skills are very usefully in their civil life as well.

*„The fans only recognized the womanlike outfit (pink gloves or helmet) on ice, the speed and the solutions of our game are the same than the boys' game.” an ice hockey player*

*„We played with boys also, and I don't feel that the boys had another behavior towards me.” an ice hockey player*

To summarize, we can say that figure skaters are pretty feminine contrary to ice hockey players who were much more virile. The figure skaters criticized the ice hockey players' choice; they don't like the aggressive ice hockey and they prefer the female sports.

*“The ice hockey players are harder and merely aggressive; their sport socialized them to be harder and aggressive and they can gratify their masculine passions.” a figure skater*

Almost all the figure skaters were repulsed by the female ice hockey players, only one skater showed sympathy with masculine sport, especially in woman's boxing.

*„I don't think that they are not feminine women, they just found something interesting in those sports.” a figure skater*

The ice hockey players didn't agree that there are more „tomboys in their sport” than other sports, and they stated that the common behavior of the women ice hockey players is similar to other feminine sport' athletes.

They try to be feminine and sporty in their civil life, like a typical Hungarian lady. They feel that figure skating is an esthetic sport, but this is not enough for them. Concerning the figure skaters, they said that the skaters are a little bit vainglorious. As they said, the figure skaters are pretty and good looking, but their inside values are not on a high level.

*„We do the trainings in the same sport facility, and if we are entering they don't receive our welcome.” an ice hockey player*

The investigated figure skaters had a very high opinion of the male figure skaters. Contrarily, the findings of Adams (2011) described that in some case there is big problem with boys in figure skating, it is not such a cool a sport for men. One interviewee said that the media influences this phenomenon. Male skaters of today don't have the pressure on their shoulders that their forerunners who overreacted for their choices did. According to her book, this slight change in collective perception of virility in figure skating has been aided by an increasing discernibility of gay people in the western societies. The parents who are traditional thinkers assume that the figure skating is not masculine enough, but these voices are starting to change as well.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Currently, there are more and more women in every sport and this phenomenon creates a question about the stereotyping of the sports and the athletes of these sports. In our investigation we focused on two sports which have strong gender stereotyping in the society. In one of the most masculine winter sport, women have been participating for decades, and the former masculine, nowadays feminine, figure skating changed the gender standardization. So what about the gender stereotyping of these athletes? Is it a real question anyway?

The main questions of our investigation were whether the athletes' thought of the so called “feminine” figure skaters or the “masculine” ice hockey players as different from each other according to their sport or to the existing stereotypes in Hungary. We should take care when it comes to sport

socialization, and also the circumstances of the sport selection and the societies' opinion of the gender roles. In this research we found the same activities by both sports' athletes in their childhood that is why our hypothesis was not acceptable. We also recognized that the sisters or brothers had great influence on the activities in early ages. But if we are focusing on the process of the sport selection, we can see big differences. In figure skating, in most cases, the mothers had a great influence on the choice of sport and this sport was their first sport, in ice hockey; however, it depended on their own decisions sometimes against their parent's will, and ice hockey wasn't the first sport in their sport carrier.

According to our previous thoughts we should recognized that there was no significant difference between the two sports' athletes in the gender role of the normal life. The athletes accepted the traditional, patriarchic family roles, where the tasks of the household belong to the women.

We found that sex-typed women described significantly less commitment to masculine sports in comparison with androgynous and cross-sex-typed women, which consequence verifies Matteo's (1986) results. Our main finding was that the feminine sports' athletes have been stereotyped though on the masculine sports' participants.

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