
Biological Discrimination in Artistic Gymnastics?

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Résumé

Since the beginning of the modern Olympic Games, artistic gymnastics - for men - has been part of the portfolio of Olympic sports. Can we spot systemic biological discrimination in the development of artistic gymnastics over the last 130 years? Based on Luhmann's systems theory, striving for autopoiesis, the focus of this paper is on the development of Artistic Gymnastics - for men (MAG) and women (WAG). The Olympic Games as an event and also as a four-years period is decisive in artistic gymnastics. Because the code of points is re-written by the Federation International de Gymnastique (FIG) after each Olympic Summer Games and valid for the next four years. Today, the men's six-apparatus competition and the women's four-apparatus competition take place in 'Olympic order' for each individual competition, where the most attractive apparatus will finalize the rotation, which is high bar (MAG) and floor (WAG).

At the 1936 Olympic Games women could chose between doing their routine on the parallel or the uneven bars. Standardised gymnastics apparatus (since 1958) led to biological and gender discrimination by having an impact on body height and figure. The name 'double bar' (instead of uneven bars) indicates how the exercises on uneven bars have changed or become androgynised.

Since 1954, the FIG has classified gymnastics elements (men) according to difficulty (A=easy to C=difficult). For the final score performance is also taken into account. Initially, the elements were named after those who performed them. The structural groups developed for men's apparatus gymnastics (1958f.) led to a change in terminology. A Code of Points (first one for men/ a couple of years later one for women with sections of leaps, jumps and hops and one for turns/ none for the third gender), which is always valid for one Olympic cycle, was developed and judges were trained accordingly.

Mots-Clés: biological discrimination, Gender inequalities, sports development, systems theory

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