

Coaching work as a professional career of a woman

Ph.D. thesis

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INTRODUCTION

Writing about lives mean to save individuals from oblivion. Analyzing stories of lives means to find the common experiences behind the individual ones. In short, this can be the arts poetic of this thesis. The aim of analyzing interviews with women coaches of rich life experience is to examine this little-researched occupation in a new view, through women professional career. At the same time, there are also few writings dealing with sports in recent years, among home-made women' research, social and cultural publications.

The topic selection and processing have been influenced both by foreign feminist and interpretative sport sociological writings. Although these two trends are accepted internationally, relatively few of these publications can be found at home, therefore I have chosen an unfamiliar way in the theoretical point of view as well.

OBJECTIVES

During the complex analysis of the position of women in sports, the interaction of social, organizational and individual levels has to be considered. Accordingly, the objective system of my research directed to the following topics:

- ◆ social level: analysis of social discourse evolving by the entry of women into competitive sport
- ◆ organizational level: expectations of the profession, role characteristics; degree of the organizational support; exploration of social network established with sport leaders, male colleagues, athletes
- ◆ individual level: personality and value system; exploration of solving strategies for conflicts arising from the collision of roles between the occupational and family roles for women

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In order to achieve the objectives defined as the realization of complexity I use more sociological theories. This paper primarily builds on the role theory related to Goffman's name. For the analysis of the women's roles - athletes, coaches, woman role in the family - and the historical discourse of the social gender I have also used the emerging new trend of role theory of the 1990s.

The examination of organizational and personal level are both built on a social network analysis. This will be completed by an organization theory researching organizational support and organizational membership and a micro-political analysis, which analyzes the (symbolic) communication between the organism and the individual.

For the analysis of the athletic career of women coaches the Luhmann's theory of the functioning of social systems is applied.

From the theoretical study of writing I use those publications which deal with the development and peculiarity of competency and expert knowledge skills and also with the reflective skills.

METHODS

I have chosen the research methods according to target systems of my research. I have applied two methods in favor of the historical character, the monitoring of career and the detection of personal experiences: a critical discourse analysis and the narrative life interview.

Discourse analysis is based on source criticism, one of the basic methods of historical research, which is also used in the occupational history section. By the analysis of sources and documents, I focus on the internal, criticism of content. The two parts researching the historical background are not only common in their methodologies but their purpose are common as well: both form the background of the life stories. The socio-historical background has to be a part of the analysis, even if the interviewees while telling her life does not refer to it, or she is not aware of these effects.

Interview is the most commonly used methods of qualitative research, of which I use the narrative life interview. This method enables:

- ◆ me to follow the careers of interviewees and the evolution of their consciousness in process and in historical character;
- ◆ woman coaches could determine the important elements of their professional identity and their attitudes toward role models developed by men;
- ◆ through questioning techniques woman coaches could tell their own design without effecting anyone; and could deeply explore the internal decisions, motivations and attitudes;
- ◆ to examine the interaction of the individual, social and organizational effects

During the processing of the interview data I was looking for the report units proper to the themes of specified objectives. At the final text version and in the interviews I have changed or left any details that might be violate the woman coaches' privacy and anonymity.

Sampling

In order to overview the full employment profile and the horizontal and vertical levels of the sport system I was looking for interviewee who have long been dealt with adult competitors or selected sportsmen. I have prepared 14 interviews in the following sports: athletics, canoeing, handball, shooting, volleyball, skiing, gymnastics, swimming and fencing. In advance I have only told the interviewee that the woman coaches are the topic of my research, and I have started the conversation always with the same sentence: " Please tell me those events, and experiences of your life that were important as a coach woman!" Firstly, after the main narrative I have asked questions about the told events, and secondly I have mentioned issues that I considered important after reviewing the literature.

RESULTS

Social discourse about the female competition sport

It is typical for the reasoning system of those opponents of women's competitive sport that treat women as an object and only a biological body, so in their case they either keep quiet the mental effects of sports or they treat it as an incidental thing. Men try to maintain the status quo with the normative aesthetic categories set up by them - charm, grace and kindness - they still want to determine the criteria of feminine behavior, and the sports women can do. Choices are presented to women because of the conceptions of the male society where the successful woman and the woman athlete are mutually exclusive categories.

Basis of the reasoning system of men in the discourse is the positive male self-representation: emphasizing information and facts beneficial for them beside keeping quiet about the negative knowledge affect them. Even though their argument is apparently objective - references to scientific, and especially medial facts - there are evaluation and morally qualifying moments present throughout the whole dispute. The most obvious form of this is the scapegoat: the masculine women cause of the sport will not be able to contribute in the processing of the national tragedy.

The initial dominance of the subject gives the men the opportunity to represent the subject in black and white, positive-negative view, but as the discussion progresses, they transform from the exclusive cue - which represent the subject - into the advisory role. Men even at this stage try to vindicate themselves the control, but women' personal success and results allow this for them less and less. Although women at the beginning can reach less

professional publications and narrower reading bands with their writings but the knowledge they gained from their personal experience is more credible than the theoretical construction of sport politicians.

The contemporary statistical data clearly reveal that behind the internationally significant success of women sports there are not a large, organized and extensive woman sport. Regional and social concentration can be observed because those girls' regular sport activity that leave and stop school and learning will almost disappear; women sport is big city- more precisely Budapest-oriented; the leisure activities of middle-class. The reaction of women' competitive sport opponents shows the signs of over-sensitivity. There are basically two reasons for this intense reaction. One of these is the "species of health issue" raised into the level of public policy, the "many people problem". The other reason is that sport is not simply one of masculine world: the ideal type of man manifest himself in the sports ground. During this activity the hegemonic masculine type of construction is created who role over not only women but over all of men who is unsuitable for this role.

History of the coaching profession

In the 20th century sport life can receive impulse from three directions: civil sphere, the state and the economic life. During the first half of last century, sports of the civil society are not coach-demanding sports and because of the limited state of the middle-class capacity supporting area is restricted as well. The state's role concentrates on the physical education of schools, where, after all, gymnastic teachers receive the leading role. Professional sports organized on market basis are established only in soccer, which however possesses low social prestige and this effect the judgment of coaches working there. Despite the unfavorable trends all four fields of the professionalism of occupation - full-time employment, training programs, establishment of professional organizations and the creation of scientific background - there are initiatives, but these are not comprehensive enough and not of long standing. The coach matter leaves the club level and rises to federal and national levels but do not receive state aid. However the professional representatives fulfill the most important criteria of becoming a professional coach, as they create a systematic expertise, which substantiate the Hungarian sport success up to the sixties.

With the launch of college-level training in 1960, the profession makes a very important step, it becomes an intellectual profession, and can integrate into vocation considered among occupations. The result of the state support is that the self-organization of the profession is wither, become fully exposed to the sport policy and sport management. The

economic and social challenges reaches the profession after the regime when it needs to take steps at the international level as well. At the same time it has to come up to multi-directional expectation to meet and also at this time unfolds itself the lack of a professional organization, the lack of a screen. We cannot find comprehensive, profession-wide solutions to born, but there are individual-sport success stories. Nor the role description reflecting the social expectations of the profession, neither the collective identity image developed by the profession is fixed. Such fluid perception based on symbols and beliefs operated by those in position makes the integration and acceptance of the coach women difficult.

The professional career of women coaches

The career of the women coaches meets the requirements of the profession: a long athletic career, during which they are getting hold of high level of technical knowledge. The competency for coaching profession should become obvious not only for themselves but also for the environment around them, and we could assume a career orientation and choice. However we cannot mention this, despite of the fact that during their period of active athletes they already received a physical education teacher and a (professional) coaching qualification, but their learning was not based on firm decisions and ideas. They drift toward their future occupation. One of the reasons for this drift is that they do not have a (female) role model of what they could follow.

They learn the practical, technical and organizational skills held fundamental by the profession during their sports career, but they put theory beside practice as well.

The attitude of the professional identity is defined by a theoretical framework that allows the individual to interpret the experience.

This base of knowledge contains both values, norms, rules and methods. The "coaching road" builds on the methods. With learning and their formal participation in trainings the coach women broaden the theoretical foundations of their knowledge, the interpretation framework. This is the active period of their coaching career, when they anticipate into events and they try to form, manage the events. While the early career is about the elimination of weakness, this stage is the domination of strengths. The jumps of quality reside in the fact that they look upon their coaching as their profession.

Sports professional relationships of women coaches

The sport clubs are less regulated as workplaces and their structure and their occupational roles are not clearly delimited. Therefore the formal and informal latitude of the leaders is relatively large. This is the most important moment of the relationship between the sport leaders and the women coaches. Due to the informal relationship system the interviewees will be in the course. Proceeding upwards to the organization to the on the pyramid of competitive sport, their relation to the leaders changes. The sport leaders by reference to the performance displace women meaning more important risk and thus confirming the male dominance. One of the interviewees calls the sport leaders as background people for whom he/she uses one attribute: life-threatening. One reason for the friction is that coaching women are good managers themselves and this type of task represent a part of their work.

The perceived organizational support the work experiences as well: what kind of feedbacks, authorizations and privileges are given to the individual during the practice of the profession. These supporting reinforcements may come from the sport leaders and the colleagues as well. A delicate moment of the collegial relationships is that who asks for advice from who and who helps to whom. This is an open form of recognition which immediately unfolds, spreads in professional circles. Men consider the lack of professional competence if a woman colleague asked them something. On their part not asking questions express the fact that women are not considered to be enemy, nor may come into account in the professional rivalry. This behavior is a way to preserve the male superiority of this profession.

Women coaches strive to caught up the educational goals and their implementation to the professional goals. This richer target system allows them to build a more dimensional relationship system with their athletes.

Willpower, fighting ability, thinking and improvisational skills are those qualities which make the behavior of athletes the most predictable - women coaches believe. They can imagine their ideal way of cooperation based upon these qualities. In connection with athletes more people mentioned the importance of attunement. Female coaches consider this an instinctive - less typical of men - a very useful feature. The "female instincts" or their decisions and actions resulting from the co-operation of their professional and emotional intelligence.

Female coaches and the family

When female coaches choose this career - even from their past as athletes - they are aware of the extra work conditions, requirements and compliance does not cause them internal conflict. Collisions starts with family formation. Work-family conflict occurs from the fact that they want to achieve certain goals on both areas, so they can see the balance of their lives insured. The consequence of the goals kneading together is that challenges arrive from the work of life into private life and form the private life into the work of life. They try to make rational and very effective decisions, but the higher the engagement to the occupation, and energy investment, the more likely to be in conflict with the family roles.

Despite of the high number of risk factors of divorce their private life is successful because the husband also reckon sport as an important store of value and value formation activity. This value consensus, the organization of family life will not be upset by the arrival of children because husbands not only endure their wives' occupation but they also tolerate it and the family roles develop according to this. In the upbringing of children not only the husbands but the grandmothers, and the mothers of the women coaches assume irreplaceable role.

The two areas, family and profession values and are equally important for women coaches in theory. They can keep the balance in narrative level, but not in the level of action. In decision-making situation they subordinate the family responsibilities to their work. This arises the compunction which is included in each interviews. They can meet the job requirements with family sacrifice. Although they make their decisions with the consent and support of their husbands, mainly the poor attendance from their children education left deep marks in them.

People making their work in constant readiness, continuous proof appreciate the family background, the offered security, trust and acceptance. The absence, weakness and uncertainty of external relations can be offset by strong family, kinship and friendship networks. This network will be an appreciated source of self-esteem, self-assessment contrary to the professional environment which displays their professional competence and efficiency in an ambivalent way. They receive that support, and force from the family which is essential not only for staying in the field of occupation but also for moving forward in their profession.

DISCUSSION

With my chosen topic I have examined areas which has not been examined by the domestic sport science and the women' studies therefore I could contribute to both in many ways with new results. The originality of the thesis comes not only from the research topic, but also from the methods I used. I think here not only the already mentioned narrative life interview, but to the historical approach and the application of macro-, meso-, and micro level approaches as well. Processing the topic in these aspects made it possible to highlight not only the current situation, but with the knowledge of past I could make statements for the future of the profession as well.

Discourses about the body multiplies in the 20th century, because the body is a part of both the symbolic and material culture: ideas and social norms associated with it, but it is also a tool which can be used, decorated and "consumed". The versatility of the body causes a multiple-body approach during a specified period of time in a given society at the same time. In the discourses of these, crucial effects arrive from three directions: from the civil, the public and the market-economic sectors. The competition sport of women is inherently a non-governmental initiative, an innovation which harms the traditions. The emerging of a strong, powerful woman with fighting ability endangers the male role understanding. The social gender roles are not separated from each other, there is a dynamic co-movement between them. Until the 20th century this movement and the division of areas were carried out arbitrarily by men, forming right to the determination of effeminacy and the female body. The new body experience offered by the sport allows women to question and change these traditions. More specifically, they can erect a new one into the existing typical age of body culture.

The historical overview confirms the current feminist research that during our lives we need to take sides several times about the relation to our own corporeality. It is important for us to make it in an active, creative way and do not allow the right to do this to others, to our environment. The dynamics of body and mind arise from the fact that not our bodies sense our bodies, but our personality and minds have experience about it (body). Moreover this experience depends on how the body is considered to be determining and its behavior predestined. An active body definition is an active self-definition at the same time.

In the historical overview I have presented the social acceptance process of the female athlete role. The women coaches pathways of a similar way in side their occupation as well, because the coaching role belongs to a different power level of sport. One of the most exciting

questions of this mechanism is that those skills and capabilities acquired in the athletic role and highly appreciated by the system how will be judged during the career choice by the same system. To what extent can a male dominant profession be able to decolonize the aptitude, knowledge from the social gender. Drifting toward the occupation, the career selection indicates that there is an individual and personal support behind the choice of profession instead of an organization. Therefore one of the key issues of remaining in the career and sport will be the organizational, structural response: to what extent will the subsystem be able to adapt to women and learn from them.

Coaching profession, by indicating the athletic past as a condition of career competency, it builds on the existence of this knowledge: long and high-level career = extensive career experience. Women coaches, however, possess not only declarative knowledge skills, but from the proof of their necessity state force them to reorganize and structure their knowledge from their athletes ages, namely they acquire a procedural knowledge. This kind of systematic knowledge in the basis of expertise. However neither they nor the environment are aware of the existence of this. Beside the conscious review of their personal abilities the lack of low social support can be the reason for career drifting.

New occupational role requires new female role expectations, which are always constructed at organizational level instead of the level of collegial relationships. The women coaches are not prepared for this change. Partly because they are given opportunity to exercise their occupation through the informal channels of organization which is a sign of acceptance. The junior education and the teaching of the bases of sport is not performance-oriented therefore the organizations leave greater scope for the qualities and abilities attributed to women. The organization at this level is even evaluating them. By the growing age of athletes and by going up in the system of competition, the performance-discourse will be dominant and despite of their result women are primarily not detected as an expert but their social gender what is rather count by the system.

They use varieties of strategies in their conflict management. They mainly rely on the role features of the occupation: they take advantage of the autonomous nature of the coaching job and the importance of the coach-athlete relationship. The path they tour is different, but their aim is the performance similar to their male colleagues, since this is considered to be the most important legitimizing factor. Meanwhile their role conception changes but they cannot get their important elements across to the profession as a whole; the holistic understanding of the coaching of athletes; the insurance of a proper environment for the continuous learning of coaches and athletes. The reason is that their number within the organization do not reach the

critical weight. They do not cross the threshold after which the environment can no longer ignore their approach and perception. We can consider the 30% participation rate as a "dream limit" often mentioned in the sport because of their isolation they cannot enjoy even a looser forms of cooperation and solidarity. From the personality moving patterns the coach women limit the forms of the women role (self)expression in sport in order to protect their self. They believe that this part belongs entirely to their private life and they have to show that "face" to the family.

CONCLUSION

My research topic can be described with the body - knowledge - power category triad. Either we consider women sport or the occupation of coaches, both are about body use, about the resulting self-knowledge and knowledge. A knowledge that is mainly the product of the 20th century.

A long sport career related to one sport club mentioned by the coach women, which gives a necessary relationship of trust into the choice of a career, is uncharacteristic for most sports nowadays. The profession and the professional sport associations should develop a support system which would give an opportunity for preparing coaching near to the end of sport career. A more conscious form of recruitment for the profession should be developed at the case of women. This can only be successfully achieved if the masculine role conception of the profession is also be modified.

The growing expansion of economic life has no positive impact on the situation of coach women either. The application of a woman coach means innovation which involves risk. As the stakes and the related benefits are rising, the risk taking level reduces in the organization level, and the importance of informal channels and the influence of social capital increases at the same time. None of these are favorable to women because these trends lead to the glass ceiling phenomenon. Here we have to mention the sport leaders as they have unique role in the facilitating of the values circulation and an accurate perception of social expectations. One of the key questions of the frequently mentioned renewal of the Hungarian sport is in what way can the sport give adequate answers to the challenges in the present economic and social environment. The duty of the sport leader would be the reconciliation and balancing of civil, state and market values and norms, up to the sport application of the social responsibility which extends even in the economic life.

In order to ensure the nature of occupation of the coaching profession in a long term basis, the profession should go forward in two areas. One is the training, in which the

acquisition of the reflective thinking skills should be given priority because this could ensure the openness and renewal quality of the profession. The common good and the emphasizing of social usefulness is essential at all levels of the training and the acquisition of the necessary ethical standards for the practicing of profession. The aim is to generalize a behavior mode which is appropriate to an ideal-typical perception of coaching and not the inheritance of norms adapted to the custom sequences of sports or sport clubs. The transformation of training will only be an effective tool if the profession can exercise control over the accession of jobs as well. A professional body should assign the scope of duties to be performed and the degrees of education and occupational hierarchy and watch over observance of criteria. This is difficult to implement partly due to the dispersion of body cultural training, partly of the marketing business nature of the sport. The fragmentation of national sport structure and the consideration interests of the remaining elements are also hindering factors. The leisure and competition sport and some sports have not an idyllic existence beside each other. Under these conditions it is difficult to develop a uniform professional action and training.

SUMMARY

The sport and hence the coaching profession is characterized by male dominance. In my dissertation I have examined what resistance women have to deal with when they want to prevail in these areas. The women competition sport unfolding in the beginning of the past century gives such a body experience to women which help them to challenge the traditional approach of that time: instead of a fallible, in need, vulnerable, charming but frail woman, a female capable of fighting with strong will is displayed. The stake of this newly emerging discourse is nothing else than the rights of women over the possession of their bodies and for the resulting self-determination. With the relative expansion of women sport the segregation of coaching profession takes place at the same time. This requires an external observer, a look which has the power of discipline. A person whose knowledge and experience is sufficient exert power over the athlete and the team. This power is based on the declarative knowledge accumulated in their bodies and acquired during their athletic career. When the interviewees choose the coaching profession they do have this knowledge but they are not aware of them. When they become coaches they should transform not only their professional skills, but they have to re-learn the sport clubs as organizations as well because the expectations are quite different against them as professionals and as women. Moving up in the competition system of sport the performance principle is ruling, but women, even though their result, the system primarily perceived them not as an expert but according to their social gender. During their

conflict management strategies they mainly rely on role features of occupation: they emphasize the autonomous nature of coaching work, the importance of theoretical training, the holistic understanding of the preparation of athletes and the insurance of an environment necessary to a continuous learning of coaches and athletes. Their self-limiting action in a token situation can be detected in a lesser extent as the coach role, and the woman role in a greater extent. In order to their self-protection they limit the forms of actions of women role in their workplace because they believe that it entirely belongs to private life. Beside the coordination of family and work they prefer their profession but because of the secure family background or despite of it their choice results in an internal struggling.

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