

Honorata Jakubowska, *Gra ciałem. Praktyki i dyskursy różnicowania płci w sporcie* [Body in the game. Gender differentiation in sports—practice and discussions], Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, 2014, pp. 580

Body in the game. Gender differentiation in sports—practice and discussions by Honorata Jakubowska offers a new approach to the perception of gender differences. The author explicitly emphasizes (in the *Introduction*) that her publication is firmly set in the field of gender studies and corporality, and sport serves merely as a means of displaying a varied approach to gender. This book is a continuation of the author's interests as evinced in her previous work *Socjologia ciała* [The sociology of body]. Presented analyses focus mainly on (gender) equality dilemmas and (gender) differences in sport.

Sport is a field where gender division is clearly visible. The segregation of sports disciplines based on sex (principle of dividing sports competition) is justified by differences in biology between the sexes. Joint competition of women and men (however not in all disciplines) would prejudice women's chances of victory. Further, the measurability of sport performance allows to accurately compare the results of men and women. Finally, sports analyses refer to the identification of gender what entails the dilemmas of gender questioning. Perceiving sports as the bastion of masculinity paves way to the violation of gender equality. The author suggests using a term "gender justice" instead of "gender equality" what would be reflected in equal access to sports on all education levels and in acknowledging the female dimension of sport.

The author's deliberations on justice are based on the concept of Nancy Fraser who sees any given phenomenon in three connected dimensions (cultural, economic and political). Indeed, the author provides all of these perspectives, at the same time pointing out social consequences of gender and corporality diversification.

The early cases of women's exclusion from sports in the 20th century were closely connected to a discourse stemming from the Victorian era when feminity was associated with the frailty myth. The other reason for preventing women from participation in sports was the conviction that their body was not suited for sports. The proponents of that stand claimed that sports activity may cause female body to lose its appeal, and most of all, impede a woman's fundamental duty—motherhood. Ms Jakubowska thoroughly presents the development of women's Olympic movement and the accessibility of Olympic disciplines for women, supporting her statements with many figures on the participation of men and women in Olympic competition.

Inarguably, it was difficult for women to enter the world of sport (at first they were not allowed to participate in competitions), sometimes even with certain political undertones behind their participation. To mark their presence in sport, women formed associations and set up organizations to highlight the issue of discrimination. Of particular importance is the emphasis on the situation of female athletes from Muslim states.

Having in mind the necessity of defining gender, imposed by the competition in given disciplines, the author analyses the definition of gender and the difficulties arising therefrom. These inquiries are complemented by the analysis of the cases of transsexual and hermaphrodite athletes.

Further in her book, the author investigates the larger context of women's absence from sports which may stem from social and political determinants. Ms Jakubowska touches upon the issues of sport socialization and various ways of encouraging children to participate in sport activities. The author also highlights the problem of doping both with the use of supplements and the so-called textile doping—smart performance-boosting sportswear backed by large clothing corporations. Finally, Ms Jakubowska comments on defining certain sports as female or male ones, and on the socio-linguistic dilemmas of maintaining the male perspective as the standard one and deprecating the female one.

The presented analyses clearly show that women's sports are less popular in the media. The author indicates that as much as 85% of sports broadcast refer to men's sports. A telling example may be the fact that in Poland a women's football game was first televised only in 2011 on TVP Sport. Ms Jakubowska presents quantitative analyses which clearly show that football is the most popular sport discipline and the media tend to focus on the men's sports. Television plays a significant role in promoting women's sports. Since women's sports receive less attention in the media, they are worse paid and, more than anything else, undervalued by the viewers. The author also highlights the idea of attracting the public, especially men, by modifying sportswear so that it accentuates the sex-appeal of female athletes. She also pays special attention to the financing of sports, leading to a conclusion that the richer the sport discipline, the more gender differences.

All the issues addressed by H. Jakubowska in her book are based on her own qualitative research. She has conducted forty-three interviews with female athletes and persons directly involved in sport: coaches, trainers, presidents of clubs and associations activists. She has also held three focused interviews with people interested in sport and 10 in-depth interviews with feminist activists. Such a diverse group of respondents brings diverse data what is a great value of this book. It allows to see all the discussed issues from various perspectives: woman's, man's, participant's or viewer's.

The presented surveys explicitly show that the existing differences in sports do not arise from gender but they are created by women themselves.

Reading Ms Jakubowska's book one notices how well acquainted with sport and sports disciplines the author is, although the reader may at times feel overwhelmed by all the information on the formal aspects of selected disciplines. On the other hand, lack of such information would leave certain gap for an amateur not familiar with the world of sport. The introduction of a reader into the world of sport is inarguably a great value of this publication (detailed history of sport development or the issue of the social definition of gender) and makes all the aspects presented further in the book complementary to each other.

The author quotes not only the reference books, but she also mentions press or television news. The press results emerged from the author's involvement into *The International Sports Press Survey 2011* co-ordinated by herself. This variety of sources is a strong point of the book and demonstrates how the awareness of the women's participation in sports is created and propagated on the social level.

Despite its academic style, what in itself is a merit, the book may be of interest also for athletes (including female athletes) and sport fans. *Body in the game...* is worth reading to see what usually remains unseen.

Anna Mazurowska-Domeracka

Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznan (Poland)