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## **THE GENDER SUBJECT IN OLYMPIC SPORTS**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Three decades of research conducted in the social sciences has established that we live in a gendered society and that, today, gender or the gendered subject is one of the central organizing principles of modern societies, one of the basic axes around which social life revolves. Today, research has established that "to belong to one gender" is a result of many complex social processes, other the 'biological difference' (Social Determinism, Differential Socialization etc.). The meaning of gender, which is a term of Anglo-Saxon origin, refers us to the social subject. In the framework of the gender subject, a significant factor that has been inactivated as a social category of difference is that of the biological sex .

However, gender categorization in sports has always been and remains actively present. Gender categorization in competitive sports or in Olympic sports, is not a negative, detrimental or mistaken factor/element as it would be in other social spaces or professional fields. The question of the gender subject, in the framework of Olympic sports/games and in general in competitive sports, has not been a subject of methodic research internationally, and especially in Greece. For instance, in contrast to the majority of other social spaces or professional spheres where gender neutrality is evident and has been established, in the social space of competitive sports and Olympic sports, we do not observe an 'operational neutrality' as far as gender is concerned. On the contrary, there exists a "structural guarantee-safeguard" of Difference. As a result questions and issues arise and need to be researched, such as: What is the meaning and purpose of this "established-structural guarantee"? Does this structured gender division framework or structural guarantee of Difference produce inequalities? Does this Gender Difference or categorization in sports surpass, exceed or go beyond the boundaries of competitive sports or Olympic sports, thereby projecting 'inequalities' and social discrimination--for instance in the staffing of the sports institutional hierarchy, that of the Olympic institutions, the sports federations, organizations etc.?

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