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## GENDER ISSUES IN RHYTHMIC GYMNASTICS

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### Introduction

Rhythmic Gymnastics (RG) is exclusively a woman's sport, in other words, men are explicitly excluded access. However, the characteristically female-dominated 'nature' of this sport (RG) is not without cause. The sport has been formulated according to predominating and prevailing social views and social values, including gender stereotyping, and thus is considered inappropriate and unacceptable for the so-called masculine nature or image of masculinity, including the male body aesthetic. On the contrary, it is considered the ideal means for the construction, the structure, the constitution and the expression of 'femaleness', 'femininity', and 'womanhood', as defined when this sport emerged. Today, although women are not denied access to sports, men are excluded. Namely, they are denied access to rhythmic gymnastics on the competition level. Discrimination, due to biological sex, is an element of social exclusion and social elimination that is actively present—a factor that is inconsistent with prevailing social and sport values, such as gender equality and gender equity. The purpose of this study is to convey and examine the current gender views of rhythmic gymnasts, judges, trainers, members of the technical committees, the audience and journalists, regarding the potential or imminent entrance of men in this sport (RG).

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## Method-Methodology

Two hundred and ninety-nine (299) participants— rhythmic gymnasts, trainers, judges, journalists, members of the technical committee, parents and spectators (audience)— responded to a closed questionnaire. The statistical evaluation of the data was prepared with the SPSS v. 13 statistical package-program.

## Results

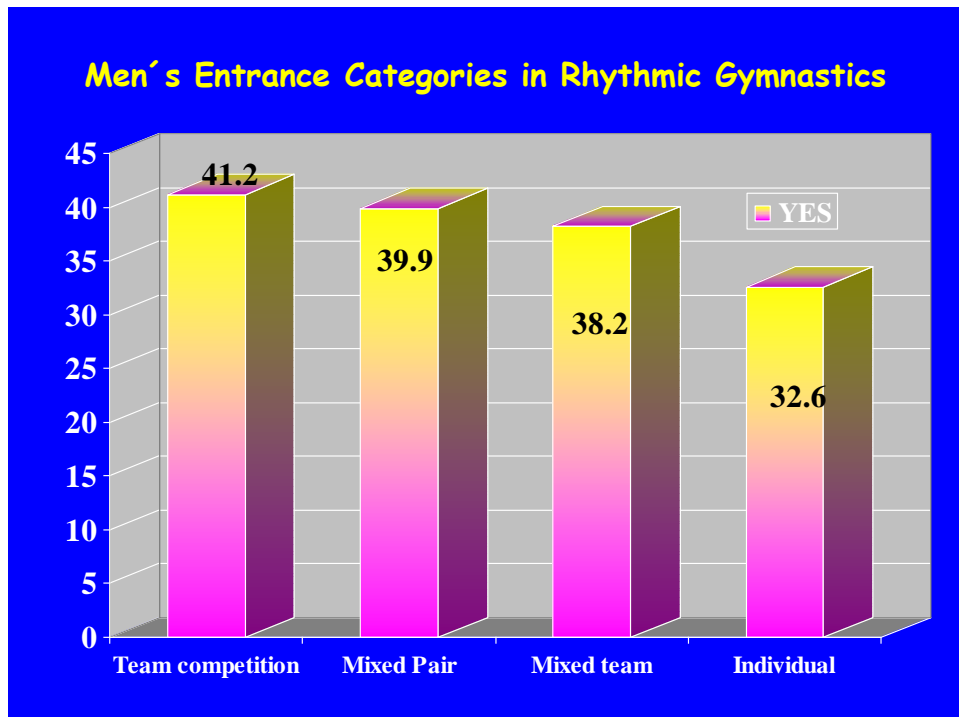
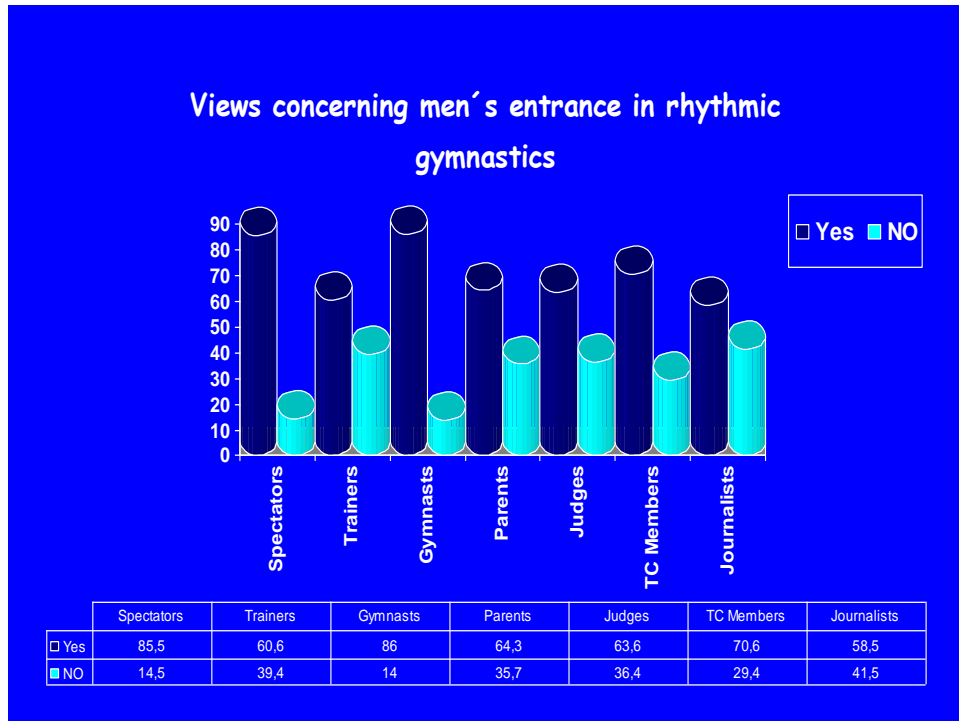
In all the above-mentioned categories, the majority supports the entrance and participation of men in the sport of Rhythmic Gymnastics (RG). A small differentiation is displayed in the responses concerning the proposed competition programs, whereas enormous and conflicting differences of opinion are indicated, concerning probable-imminent higher ratings due to the entrance and participation of men in the sport. The trainers, the judges, the rhythmic gymnasts, the administrative and technical members favor the participation of men in RG., in contrast to the parents, the audience and the journalists.

## Conclusions

The results of this study indicate that the gender issue concerning men's access to RG must be examined, unreservedly, by the members of the International Federation of Gymnasts. Today, social exclusions and social elimination based on biological gender (sex), as observed in sports and sports competitions, are outdated and anachronistic, not only in relation to wider-broader social values, but also to the value system of sports.

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### Discussion samples:



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