

## THE IMPACT OF STEREOTYPES ON SPORT PARTICIPATION IN AZERBAIJAN

*Programme director Daniel Mason  
Master's student Məmmədova A.M.  
Azerbaijan State Academy of Physical  
Education And Sport*

### **Nəşr tarixi**

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**Key words:** sport, gender issues, society, stereotypes, disability

**Abstract:** This article aims to explore the role and significance of the stereotypes of sport in Azerbaijan. For many years, there have been stereotypes about sport in all society. Some countries have overcome these challenges through gradual education and awareness. However, some prejudices still remain, especially in developing countries, that's why the topic is always actual. For example, no women or slaves were allowed to compete in the first Olympic Games in Greece (6). There are numerous other examples. Given the number of factors involved, it is difficult to assign blame for the establishment of stereotypes on individual communities. However, it is the responsibility of societies to be aware of stereotypes and actively avoid transferring them to the future generations. As attitudes within societies have evolved, so has the wider understanding of the negative effects of stereotypes, including within the sphere of sport. The rules and ethics within sport have undoubtedly changed and developed over time. However, stereotypes continue to be presented throughout sport, and represent an ongoing challenge to the power of sport as a force for good in a wider society. As a result, the purpose of this article is to show how stereotypes exert a negative influence on sport and to suggest that only effective education and enlightenment can improve the situation.

**Introduction.** The article examines patterns in the sport field. The fact that these ideas exist in so many countries continues to be valid

today. These clichés are common in the development of Azerbaijan. The aim of the article is to investigate these clichés, to present them to the society and to convey that they are wrong. The existing clichés are based on gender, gender discrimination. The aim of the article is to move all prejudiced ideas into a single piece. This allows society to change their minds and show that sport is unlimited. The differences in the participation of men and women in sports affect their wages. For example, the income of a female footballer is not the same as the male footballer. Public awareness campaigns should be conducted to eliminate such patterns. Azerbaijan is considered a successful country in the field of sports. However, according to the The State Statistical Committee of the Republic of Azerbaijan (3), the majority of Azerbaijani athletes participating in the competitions are individual. If we pay attention to the list of athletes who won the medals, we still see that men are at the forefront. This can be explained by the fact that women are not well supported in sports.

There are many stereotypes about gender, disability sport in society. These stereotypes can be divided into several groups. For example, gender discrimination and physical impairments may be included. Let us start with gender. In Azerbaijan, we can see female and male imbalances in many sports. For example, girls are discouraged from taking part in 'heavy' sports. Some people think women are weak and are therefore destined to fail in sports such as weightlifting. Women do not, it is argued, have physical strength. Instead, females were led towards sports such as volleyball and gymnastics. However, if we look at the results of sporting events, we will see that women can be very successful in "heavy" sports competitions. Women do show curiosity about a wide range of sports from their childhood, but due to stereotyping their interest becomes channeled remains unrealized. With a greater level of support, especially within the family context, this narrow stereotyping can be confronted and overcome.

The other gender issue concerns to men. In

a mirror image of the challenges facing women, many people feel that light or 'soft' sports are not appropriate for men. For example, such sports might consist of gymnastics that present potential champions from developing their natural talents. This is particularly pronounced in developing countries such as Azerbaijan. Even though today shows that this attitude towards stereotyping is a myth. Men can indeed excel at sports such as gymnastics. According to the report from the Gymnastics Federation (4), this reality is still in place.

A huge barrier to success in sport also confronts the people with disabilities. Many people think that physical impairment prevents successful participation in sport. This is not only false, but itself further adversely affects the psychology of people with disabilities. As a result of this stereotyping, people with impairments feel a lack of confidence and self-belief, leading to failure in all aspects of life. With a greater motivation and support, people with disabilities can be very successful. Indeed, in terms of overcoming personal challenges in sport, people with disabilities often need to push harder and go further to succeed. The incredible achievements of Paralympic athletes, far from being of a lesser quality of Olympic, often demonstrates a near super-human determination and commitment that service as an inspiration to all.

Lack of confidence, triggered by the impact of stereotyping is also a factor in the underachievement of sexual minorities. All too often, groups of people who are distanced from societal norms, through personal choice, medical factors or peer pressure, are prevented from reaching their potential. Such high expectations to conform to stereotypes can result in severe psychological trauma, and an inability to harness the self-confidence and self-esteem required to compete effectively in the sporting arena. A more empathetic, supportive attitude from families and peers has been shown to result in greater community harmony as well as increased chances of success on an individual basis. Treating others with respect, dignity and understanding is the

key to eliminating the stigma associated with negative stereotyping.

On the macro level, Azerbaijan itself suffers from the negative effects of stereotyping. There is a general feeling that Azerbaijan is not mature enough or strong enough to succeed at the highest levels of sport, achieving major success on the international stage. This approach can come from weak scores of Azerbaijan's football, gymnastic, swimming. For example, if we look at the women's national volleyball team, we see that many players are of Russian origin. Of course, there may have other reasons of the situation. This reinforces the stereotype that Azerbaijan needs foreign support to succeed. However, according to information received from the National Volleyball Federation of Azerbaijan (5), the issue of national athletes' disbalance can be found in the national team of athletes within the team.

Very few journalists know these facts in sports journalism. On this topic Phil Andrews in his book "Sports journalism a practical guide" writes: "Keeping abreast of the daily developments in a major sport is a full time job. Only a few journalists are able to pick and choose the sports and events they cover. These are usually the brightest, wittiest or most incisive writers" (1).

The most important media type is television. Because there are sports competitions. In their book "Converging Media" Pavlik and McIntosh write about it: "Today, for many, sport and television go hand in hand. Every year international sports competitions held in our country draw a large television audience" (2).

However, as we said on the Azerbaijani television, stereotypes are not the subject.

**Conclusion.** In conclusion, it can be stated that stereotypes exist at the individual, family, community and national levels. While stereotypes exist for different reasons and motives, they have the same effect, because all of stereotypes can be barrier for development. It also affects to prevent the valuable members of our society from reaching their potential. By identifying the attitudes that "feed" stereotypes, we can begin to spotlight the

solutions, supporting all athletes in their quest to give their best. The result can only be positive for a country striving to become more diverse, modern and successful.

### References

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### Azərbaycanda idmana qoşulmaqda stereotiplərin təsiri *Ayişə Məmmədova*

**Açar sözlər:** idman, gender, cəmiyyət, stereotip, fiziki məhdudiyət

**Xülasə:** Bu məqalə Azərbaycan idmanında stereotiplərin rolu və əhəmiyyətini araşdırma məqsədi daşıyır. Uzun boyu, bütün cəmiyyətlərdə idman haqqında stereotiplər mövcud olub. Bəzi ölkələr tədricən təlim və maarifləndirmə sayəsində bu çətinlikləri aradan qaldırıblar. Ancaq xüsusilə inkişaf etməkdə olan ölkələrdə bəzi önyargılar hələ də davam edir. Buna görə də bu məsələ hər zaman öz aktuallığını qoruyub saxlayır. Məsələn, Yunanıstanda keçirilən ilk Olimpiya Oyunlarında heç bir qadın və ya qulun oyunlara tamaşa etməsinə icazə verilməyib. Tarixdə buna dair bir çox nümunələr var. Ümumi faktorların sayını nəzərə alsa deyə bilərik ki, fərdi icmalarda stereotiplərin yaranmasında cəmiyyətləri günahlandırmaq çətinidir. Ancaq cəmiyyətlərin bu stereotipləri fəal surətdə qoruyub saxlaması və gələcək nəsillərə ötürməsində biz məsuliyyət daşıyıq. İdman sahəsi də daxil olmaqla, cəmiyyətlərdə münasibətlər inkişaf etdikcə, insanlar stereotiplərin mənfi təsirlərini daha geniş şəkildə anlaşırlar. İdman qaydaları və etikası, şübhəsiz ki, zamanla dəyişmiş və

inkişaf etmişdir. Ancaq stereotiplər idmanda hökm sürməyə davam edir və idmanın cəmiyyətdə geniş qüvvəyə malik olduğunu nümayiş etdirməsi üçün maneələr törədir. Nəticədə qeyd edim ki, bu məqalənin məqsədi stereotiplərin idmana necə mənfi təsir etdiyini göstərməkdir. Eyni zamanda yalnız effektiv təhsil və maarifləndirmənin vəziyyəti yaxşılaşdıracağını təklif etməkdir.

### Влияние стереотипов на участие в спорте в Азербайджане *Аиша Мамедова*

**Ключевые слова:** спорт, гендерные проблемы, общество, стереотипы, инвалидность

**Аннотация:** Эта статья направлена на изучение роли и значения стереотипов спорта в Азербайджане. В течение многих лет во всем обществе были стереотипы о спорте.

Некоторые страны преодолели эти проблемы путем постепенного образования и повышения осведомленности. Однако некоторые предрассудки все еще сохраняются, особенно в развивающихся странах. Например, ни женщинам, ни рабам не разрешалось соревноваться на первых Олимпийских играх в Греции. Есть множество других примеров. Учитывая количество вовлеченных факторов, трудно возложить вину за установление стереотипов на отдельные сообщества. Однако общества обязаны знать стереотипы и активно избегать их передачи будущим поколениям. По мере развития отношений в обществе расширяется понимание негативных последствий стереотипов, в том числе в сфере спорта. Правила и этика в спорте, несомненно, изменились и развивались с течением времени. Тем не менее, стереотипы попрежнему присутствуют в спорте и представляют собой постоянную проблему для силы спорта как силы добра в обществе в целом. Цель этой статьи - показать, как стереотипы оказывают негативное влияние на спорт, и предположить, что только эффективное образование и просвещение могут улучшить ситуацию.