



Reasons suggested for the imbalance of males and females in coaching also include the consideration of the social-structural conditions of coaching such as opportunity, power and proportion suggested by Knoppers [13] as based upon Kanter's theory of occupational sex segregation [12]. Opportunity is defined as "the shape of one's career ladder, perceived obstacles and satisfaction, access to training and availability and type of feedback" [13, p.123]. Power is "one's capacity to mobilize resources" [13, p. 126], including control over one's own career as well as the ability to influence others who have control. Proportion is defined as "the ratio of men to women" [13, p. 128], and, when the proportion of women is too low, women can be subordinated and marginalized. One of the ways in which women are potentially marginalized is by being restricted to low-level, low-paying coaching positions, where there are few opportunities to advance and few role models to demonstrate how to coach [14].

Knoppers' application of Kanter's theory to understand the under-representation of women Coaches, adds to other possible institutional barriers that include 'the old boy's network' [15], an inadequate pool of women candidates [2, 16], treatment and access discrimination [3], and Witz's model of occupational closure [17]. Within this model, as in Kanter's theory, gender (as well as social class) serves to create hierarchies within the workplace and the dominant group (in this case, men) utilise exclusionary mechanisms to preserve their privileged status [17]. Subsequently, West et al. [18] have applied Witz's theory of occupational closure to the context of coaching. Their conclusions were that the exclusionary mechanisms employed in coaching to maintain the profession as a male domain include gendering coaching in favor of male attributes and preventing women from accessing coaching circles [18].

At European level, it is generally acknowledged that there is a significant underrepresentation of female coaches across all fields and levels of sports. As concluded in a report commissioned by the Council of Europe's Enlarged Partial Agreement on Sport (2011) [19]:

- Women represent a small minority of the coaches employed in elite sports
- The percentage of female coaches tends to decrease the higher the level of performance
- Female coaches are more likely to train athletes enrolled in typical women's sports rather than in traditional men's sports
- Female coaches are almost exclusively training either women, youth or children

In some areas of the world, qualified women coaches are plentiful, especially in places with high-density populations or where women's sport has a strong presence and history. However, women's sport is still not fully and universally embraced [20]. There is a scarcity of women who have the skills to play sport and the competency, confidence and knowledge to coach.

Coaching in varsity and professional sports has consistently been dominated by men, even on women's teams. While professions that have been historically dominated by men, like medicine or law, have been working to increase the number of employed women, professional coaching has not had the same progress.

As of now, women only account for 16 per cent of coaches at the university level, and that number has been declining in recent years.