



GENDER, ENTREPRENEURSHIP, SPORT AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY IN FRANCE

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INTRODUCTION

Physical activity, health and well-being are valued in France, where over 65% of the population practice sport (Schann, 2014). French towns provide sport clubs, athletic facilities and parks for jogging, running or cycling and most workplaces include gyms, fitness programs or sport activities. Companies like Apple have integrated gyms in the workplace; the bank Société Générale provides dance activities for employees and managers; the Valeo group-smart technology for smart cars organizes sport events resembling the Olympics, etc. Physical activities are encouraged to improve or maintain employee health while developing-strengthening cooperation and teambuilding for both genders. In contrast, gender inequality prevails, especially in sport leadership and entrepreneurship. This study focuses on the major obstacles confronted by women entrepreneurs in France and in francophone countries.

Method

In depth literature review (30 studies) on women's entrepreneurial activities over the period 2002-2018, a topic not sufficiently studied in France, including two studies on gender inequalities in sport.

Results

Gender barriers: The leaky pipeline, a barrier to retention, along with the family/work conflict, lack of funding or access to capital, limited-inadequate networking and funding.

The banking sector more reluctant to trust women; initial start up capital less than that of men and lack of credibility. Lack of self-confidence: Women tend to self-censor or devalue their entrepreneurial endeavours. Conversely, women with sport or athletic experience are more dynamic, self-confident and successful in entrepreneurship.

Discussion/Conclusion:

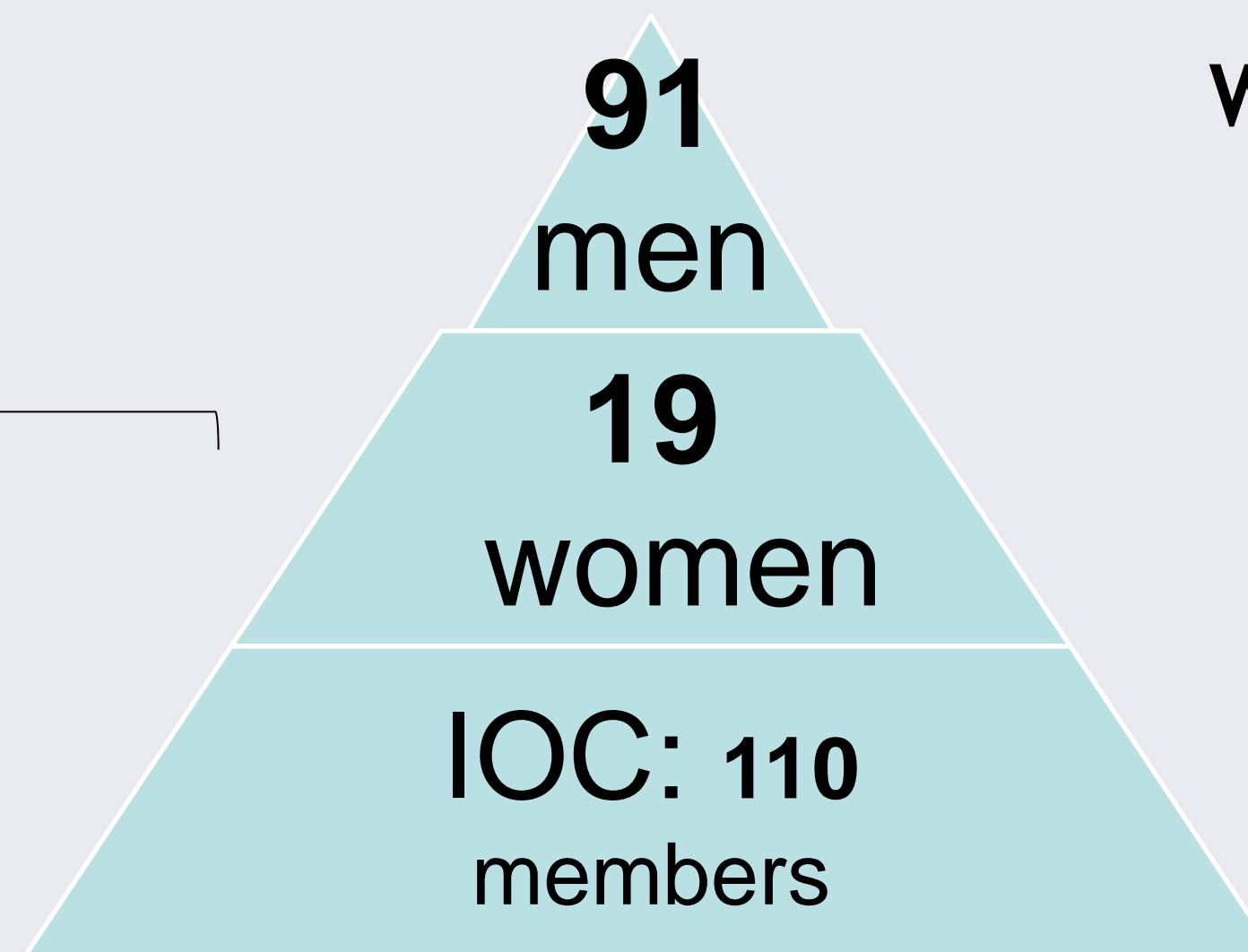
Need to eliminate gender stereotypes in France. Out of the 30 million people over 18 years of age who play sport or engage in physical activities at least once a week, almost half are women (14.5 million). On the other hand, women continue to be *invisible* (underrepresented) in sport leadership and entrepreneurship, usually turning to social entrepreneurship: education, social or health care services. This underrepresentation is observed in the mass media as well. In 2013, less than 15 percent of media coverage was devoted to women's sport and only 7 percent of TV sports broadcasts concerned women's sport, of which 95 percent were pay channels (Schann, 2014). Moreover, only 12 out of 121 sports federations have just about reached gender parity with between 40 and 60 percent of women on their boards.

Future studies required to identify obstacles confronted by women entrepreneurs in France, the country of the first woman Olympic entrepreneur, Alice Milliat, who in 1922 was compared to Pierre de Coubertin for the successful organization of the "Women's Olympic Games" in Paris on August 20, 1922, an event which attracted **20,000** spectators (Kamberidou, 2012, 2016).

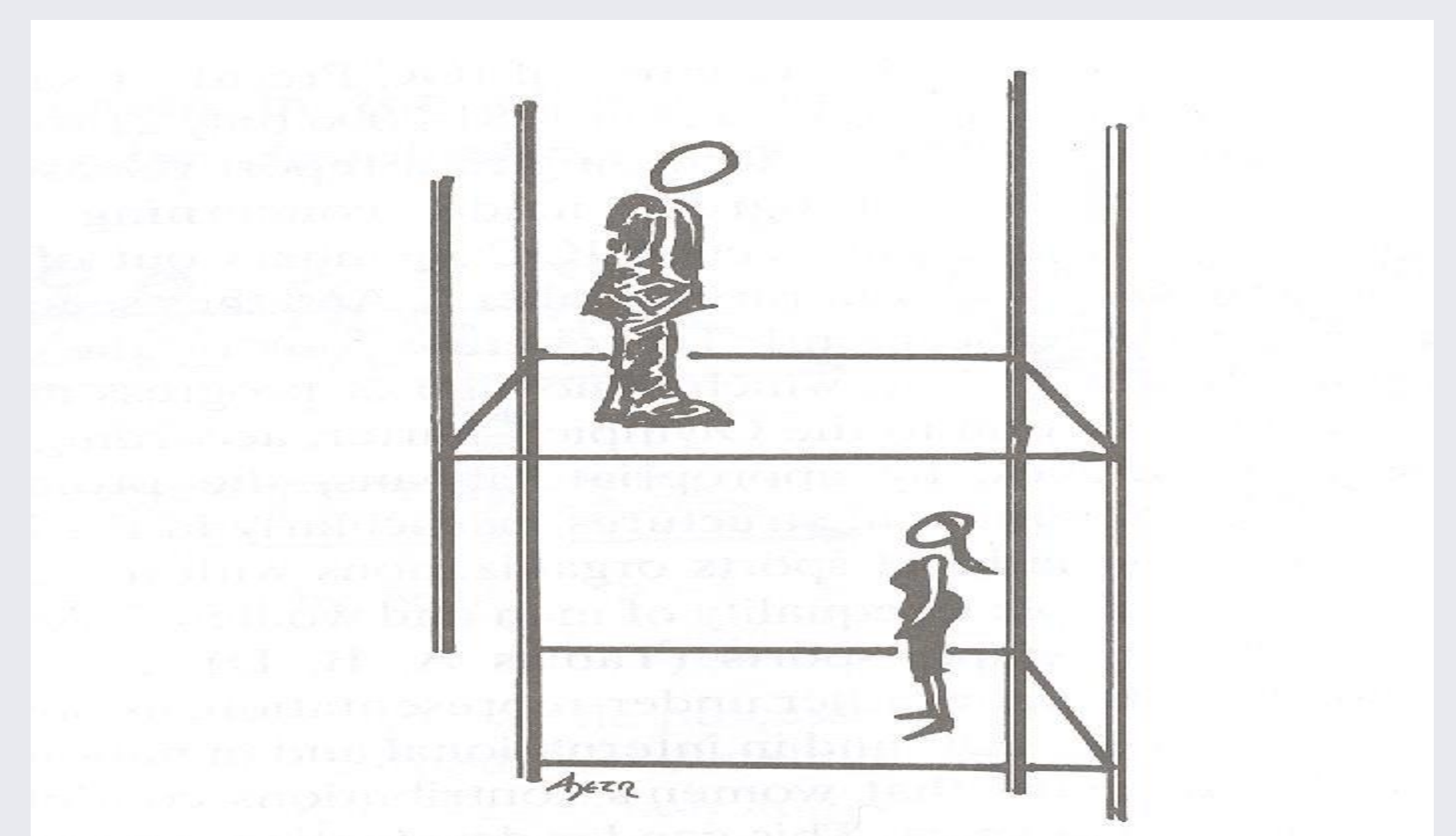
First woman
Olympic
Entrepreneur



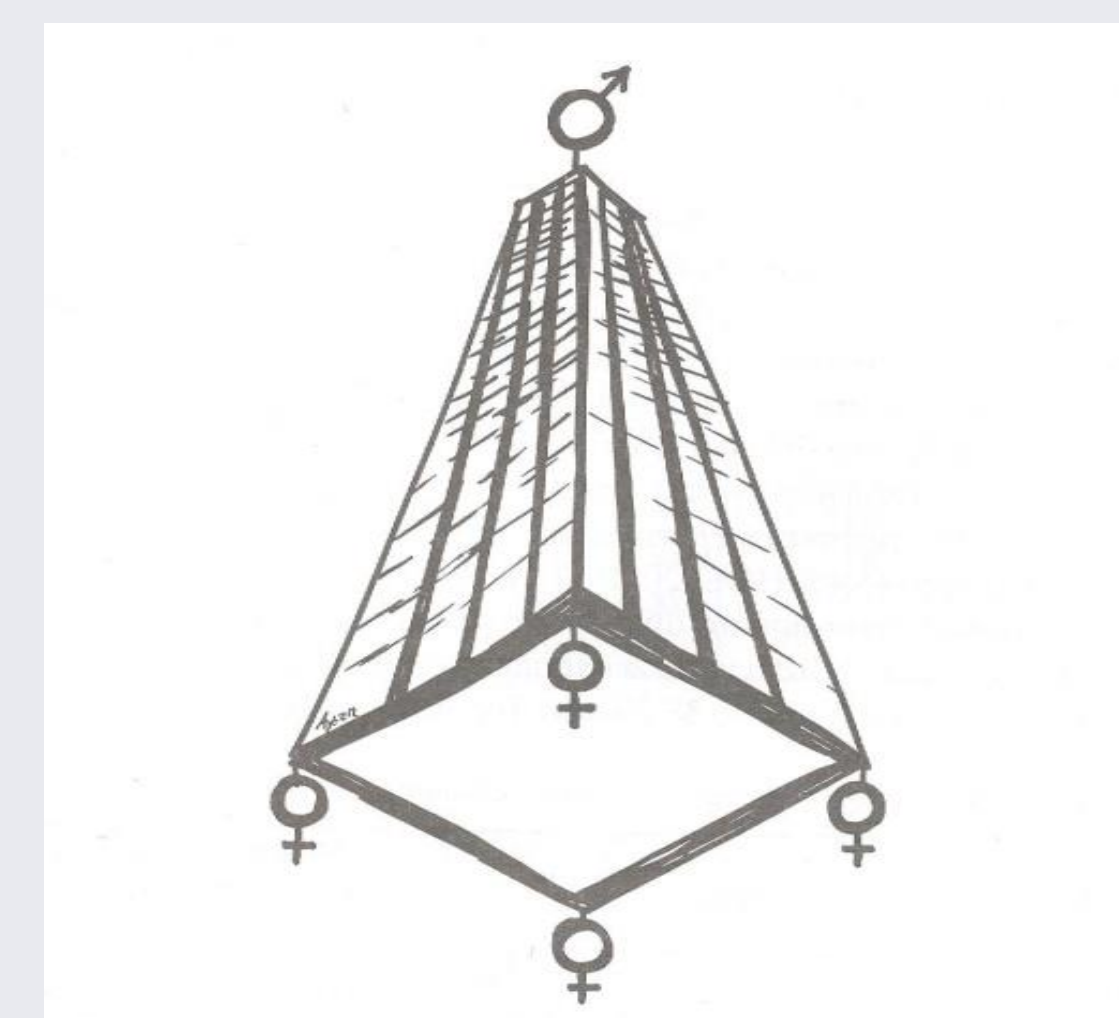
Alice Milliat (1884-1957): Organized *Women's Olympic Games*, and other successful Women's Sport events



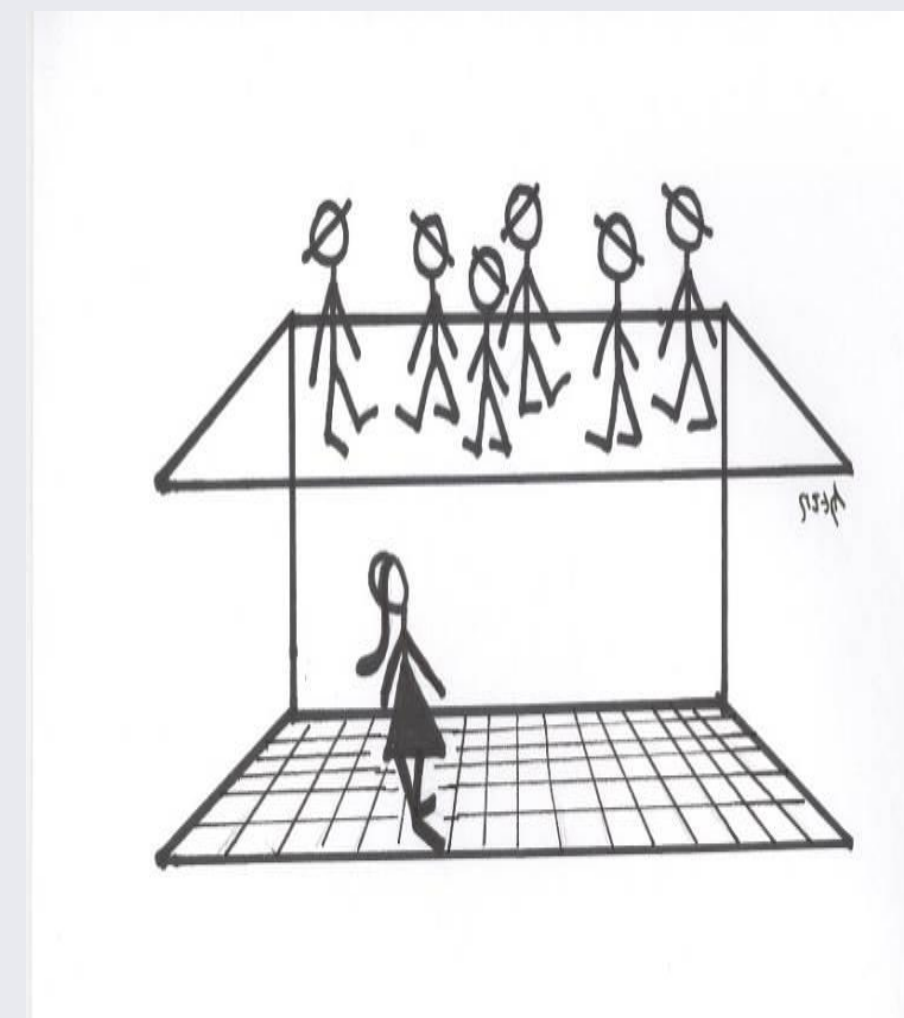
"Invisible" Barriers to retention The Glass Ceiling



Gender leadership gap



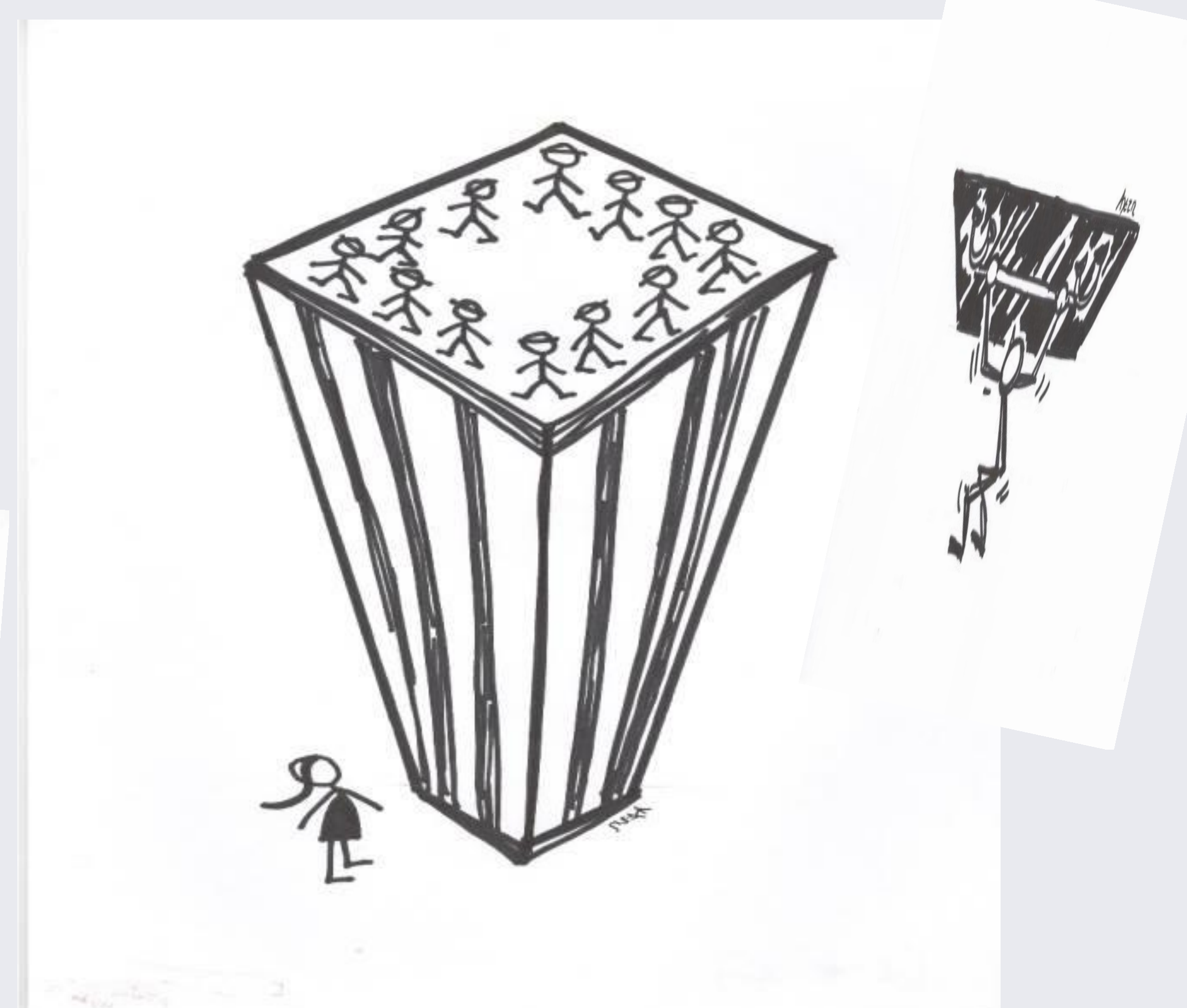
Glass ceiling



Result: the leaky pipeline:

(women abandoning their careers/positions, dropping out of workforce (Kamberidou, 2006)

Women only 15.5% of sport federation leaders are women



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© A special thanks to the Greek artist Areti Kamperidis for her sketches/artwork on women's under-representation and invisible barriers: glass ceiling, leadership gap, leaky pipeline, first published in Kamberidou 2011, 2015.