



Degree Program in
Politics, Philosophy and Economics

Course of Political Sociology

“It’s not ladylike!” – Women
and football:
is it still time for prejudice?

Prof. Michele Sorice

SUPERVISOR

Bianca Maria Tornambè

ID 097852

FIRST CHAPTER

SPORT AND SOCIOLOGY

- 1.1 Introduction
- 1.2 Sociology of a sport: football
- 1.3 Football as a team game: socialization factors

SECOND CHAPTER

THE HISTORICAL-SOCIAL EVOLUTION OF THE ROLE OF WOMEN IN SOCIETY AND IN SPORT

- 2.1 Gender differences in sport
- 2.2 The introduction of women into the sports field

A symptomatic case: women's football

THIRD CHAPTER

WOMEN ATHLETES

- 3.1 Female identity and sport
- 3.2 Prejudices and stereotypes about female athletes
- 3.3 The psychology of the female athlete (personality research)

FOURTH CHAPTER

WOMEN'S FOOTBALL: Italian Realities

- 4.1 Introduction
- 4.2 Summary of Italy's women's football history
- 4.3 <<ASD Gorilla Calcio>>: an enlightened reality

Interview with the President

4.4 Conclusions and future perspectives

BIBLIOGRAPHY

FIRST CHAPTER

SPORT AND SOCIOLOGY

1.1 Introduction

In the modern world, sport stands as a pervasive and influential institution, captivating the hearts and minds of millions across the globe. Beyond the sheer spectacle and entertainment it offers, sports have become a powerful reflection of society, encapsulating its values, norms, and challenges. The study of sport through the lens of sociology unveils a profound interplay between these two interconnected realms, highlighting how athletic pursuits serve as a microcosm of the larger social fabric.

Over the years, the significance of sports has transcended mere recreational activity, assuming an emblematic status in various cultures and communities. From the Ancient Olympics, where physical prowess was celebrated as a manifestation of divine favor, to the modern-day Olympics, a global spectacle promoting international unity and cooperation, sport's evolution mirrors the evolution of human civilization itself. Throughout history, sports have been intertwined with social hierarchies, politics, nationalism, gender roles, race relations, and economic interests. Whether it be the racial segregation in early 20th-century baseball or the emergence of female athletes challenging traditional gender norms, sport has often been at the forefront of societal change and resistance. In the annals of sporting history, the narrative of women's participation and accomplishments has often been obscured, relegated to the periphery of a predominantly male-dominated arena. However, the evolution of women in sports stands as a testament to the resilience of human spirit and the struggle for gender equality. As women break barriers and redefine societal norms, the intersection of women and sport becomes a compelling subject of sociological inquiry.

Sociology, as a discipline, seeks to understand the intricacies of social life, analyzing the ways in which individuals and groups interact, and how social structures influence human behavior and opportunities. When applied to the realm of sports, sociological inquiry unravels the underlying dynamics that govern the world of athletic competition and its broader societal impact. By examining the relationships between

athletes, coaches, fans, media, and corporate entities, sociologists shed light on the intricate web of power, identity, and social stratification that characterizes the sporting landscape. In particular, Sociology offers a critical lens to examine the dynamic interplay of gender, power, and culture within the realm of women's sports. By analyzing the unequal representation of women in coaching and leadership roles, the media's portrayal of female athletes, and the persistent gender pay gap, sociologists unravel the intricate web of social forces that shape the experiences of women athletes. Moreover, the intersectionality of women's experiences in sports, considering factors such as race, ethnicity, class, and sexual orientation, adds complexity to the analysis, revealing the multifaceted nature of discrimination and inequality. The transformational power of women in sports extends beyond the playing fields. As female athletes defy societal expectations, they challenge established norms, fostering a sense of empowerment and self-belief in countless girls and women worldwide. By transcending traditional gender roles and asserting their right to excel in sports, women become agents of change, inspiring future generations to dream big and strive for equality in all aspects of life.

This thesis will delve into various aspects of the women-sport-society relationship, exploring the historical context of women's exclusion from sports, the efforts and achievements in the fight for gender equity, the impact of media representation on perceptions of women athletes, and the broader implications of women's sports on the advancement of gender equality, bringing special focus on “male-dominated” sports such as football.

1.2 Sociology of a sport: football

Football, known as soccer in some regions, stands as the world's most popular sport, captivating the hearts and minds of millions across diverse cultures, continents, and societies. Beyond its immense popularity as a form of entertainment and competition, football offers a unique platform for sociological exploration. The sociology of football delves into the multifaceted dynamics that underpin this global phenomenon, examining how the sport reflects and shapes societal values, identities, and interactions. From grassroots to the professional level, football's impact reverberates far

beyond the pitch, influencing the fabric of communities, the complexities of nationalism, and the economic forces that govern the sport's existence.

The history of football is intertwined with the development of modern society, evolving from localized recreational games to an international spectacle. The sport's origins in 19th-century England are emblematic of its working-class roots, providing a way for communities to come together and forge identities amidst rapid industrialization and urbanization. Over time, football has transcended social and cultural boundaries, unifying people from diverse backgrounds under the banner of their favorite teams and national squads. This universality of football has fueled the sport's power to foster a sense of belonging and collective identity, transcending geopolitical borders and language barriers.

The sociology of football unravels the complexities of fandom, exploring how fans invest their emotions, time, and resources in supporting their teams. The rituals, symbols, and social gatherings that surround football fandom become important avenues for bonding and communal expressions. Moreover, the darker side of fandom, such as hooliganism and tribalistic rivalries, reveals the potential for football's unifying force to incite conflicts and social tensions. At a professional level, the commodification of football has reshaped the sport's landscape, bringing it under the influence of global capitalism. The influx of enormous sums of money, lucrative broadcasting deals, and commercial sponsorships have transformed football clubs into transnational corporations. This shift has engendered debates surrounding financial inequality, player exploitation, and the erosion of local community ties. The sociology of football, therefore, examines how economic forces intersect with the sport's cultural significance, potentially distorting its essence as a communal activity. Furthermore, football also acts as a powerful agent in shaping and reflecting societal attitudes towards race, ethnicity, and gender. The representation of diverse players on the field highlights the sport's potential to challenge stereotypes and promote inclusivity. However, the underrepresentation of minority groups in coaching and administrative positions raises questions about structural barriers and the persistence of discriminatory practices within the footballing world.

Football, as a sociological phenomenon, provides a lens through which we can observe the profound connections between sports and society. Its ability to unite, divide, and mirror societal complexities makes it a fascinating subject of study. The sociology of football opens doors to discussions on collective identity, economic dynamics, and the potential for sports to serve as a vehicle for both progress and challenges in the modern world. Football is undoubtedly one of the most organized sports in terms of the defined roles, customs, and rules that mirror social reality as a whole. There are several reasons why a youngster would take part in this form of activity, many of which are not necessarily obvious. Usually, the family makes the choice. Boys are more likely than girls to play football because of the sport's appeal, which has become part of our culture thanks to media coverage. The coach or, in a more fairytale-like scenario, the football star and the team he represents fulfils the child's need for a stronger male role model, but there is also a more conscious need for the child to have a personal and concrete understanding of what it means to be an independent while also contributing member of a community.

Competition and pushing one's boundaries are fostered by the game, and if this practice is properly overseen by an effective framework, it will help the young football player develop not just as an athlete but also as a man. The youngster is taught by the coach, along with his friends, behavior modules that are thought to be typical for men. On the football pitch, the idea of resistance is taught as a symbol of virility. Verbal communication also helps to further this goal by demeaning any display of tenderness and referring to it as a "male game," which incites a heated conflict. This concept has been used to describe the atmosphere in the sports organization ever since it was founded. This template obviously marginalizes and demeans individuals with the weakest personalities or those with the wrong physical characteristics, making them frequently the target of derision from other people. Therefore, under the direction of masculine adults, boys learn male duties outside of the home. All of this occurs on the football team, completely apart from the other sex. A kind of forced reaction against female impulses that could undermine the foundations of the male role within society.

1.3 Football as a team game: socialization factors

Analyzing the football phenomenon and the reasons underlying the choice to play it, we cannot fail to consider the peculiarities of team play and the elements of socialization that underlie it. The group is, by definition, the psychological place for sharing an unconscious collective project. The soccer team is a small group and its purpose is to meet the emotional and social needs of the members. Basically, the experience of the group is fundamental for the first socialization, a phase in which behavior is mainly characterized by three factors: collaboration, imitation and competition. As age progresses, socio-cultural factors become more important such as, for example, the motivation for success, through which the young footballer finds stimuli and strength to support such a onerous job with determination.

Another motivation that pushes children towards the game of football is the need to be part of something. The boy feels the need to be appreciated by peers, integrated, and identified as a member of the group itself. This also promotes fulfillment from an emotional point of view. Hence the desire for social approval. To be such, the group must determine in its members a sense of belonging and the search for common objectives without, at the same time, hindering the realization of individuals as individuals. Here, the coach has a fundamental role: they must be capable of compacting the group, but also of enhancing the potential of the individuals without mortifying them for the sacrifice of the team.

Group rules, values and ideology are the "glue" necessary to keep the locker room together and to strengthen the "sense of belonging". Football, often referred to as the ultimate team sport, epitomizes the essence of collective effort and collaboration. As players come together on the field, their performance is not only a reflection of individual skill but also an intricate interplay of socialization factors that influence team dynamics. The process of socialization in football goes beyond developing technical proficiency; it molds players into cohesive units, instilling values, norms, and communication skills that are essential for successful team collaboration.

Many key socialization factors can be associated with football as a team game. Football is all about teamwork and collaboration. Players must work together to achieve a common goal, which is to win the match. This emphasis on teamwork helps individuals learn how to cooperate, communicate effectively, and support each other. These skills are transferable to various aspects of life, including relationships, work, and social interactions. On the one hand, it is played and watched by people from diverse backgrounds, cultures, and nationalities. It serves as a platform for cultural integration and exchange. Supporters of different teams often come together to celebrate the sport, and this shared passion for the game can bridge cultural gaps and promote understanding among people from different backgrounds. On the other, football teams often represent a specific locality, city or country. Supporting a football team gives individuals a sense of belonging and identity. Fans feel connected to their team and its history, creating a sense of community and shared pride. Watching football matches with friends, family, or fellow fans at stadiums or in local pubs can be a bonding experience. The shared emotions, celebrations, and disappointments during games contribute to stronger social bonds among individuals' history, creating a sense of community and shared pride.

The role that football has in promoting the value of fair play and sportsmanship is also very important. Players are encouraged to play within the rules and respect their opponents. This sportsmanship extends to fans, fostering a sense of respect and camaraderie even between rival supporters. It offers opportunities for players to develop leadership skills and take on responsibilities both on and off the pitch. Captains and team leaders learn how to motivate their teammates and make critical decisions, which can translate into leadership roles outside of football. Therefore, football as a team game has significant socialization factors that promote teamwork, cultural integration, identity, social bonding, and healthy lifestyles. It provides a platform for people to connect, make friends, and develop valuable life skills while fostering a strong sense of community and belonging.

SECOND CHAPTER

THE HISTORICAL-SOCIAL EVOLUTION OF THE ROLE OF WOMEN IN SOCIETY AND IN SPORT.

2.1 Gender differences in sport

The historical-social evolution of the role of women in society and in sports has been a complex and multifaceted journey, marked by progress, setbacks, and ongoing challenges. In ancient civilizations women's roles were primarily confined to domestic duties and child-rearing. In some societies, women were allowed limited participation in religious rituals or cultural activities, but their involvement in sports was generally non-existent. During the Middle Ages, European societies were heavily patriarchal, with women's roles primarily centered on the household. However, the Renaissance period saw a shift in attitudes towards women's education and participation in artistic and intellectual endeavors. This period set the stage for later advancements in women's societal roles. The 19th century brought about significant social changes, including the women's suffrage movement, which aimed to secure women's right to vote. This period also witnessed the emergence of the first women's colleges and the beginning of organized women's sports activities, though participation was still limited and often met with resistance. The early 20th century saw the culmination of the women's suffrage movement in various countries, leading to legal recognition of women's right to vote. World War I and World War II provided opportunities for women to take on new roles in the workforce, including jobs traditionally held by men. This contributed to a broader shift in societal attitudes towards women's capabilities. The latter half of the 20th century witnessed a surge in feminist activism and a reevaluation of gender roles. Women's participation in sports expanded significantly, driven by the passage of Title IX in the United States in 1972, which mandated equal opportunities for women in educational programs and activities, including sports. The Olympics also played a role in promoting women's sports participation and recognition.

In recent decades, women have made great strides in sports, excelling in various disciplines, and achieving recognition on the international stage. Increased media

coverage and sponsorship opportunities have contributed to the visibility and growth of women's sports. However, challenges persist. Gender pay gaps, disparities in media coverage, and issues related to the sexualization of female athletes continue to be areas of concern. Additionally, some sports, particularly those involving physical contact or traditionally masculine stereotypes, still face resistance to full gender integration.

The historical-social evolution of the role of women in society and in sports has seen remarkable progress, with women breaking down barriers and achieving greater equality. While significant strides have been made, there is still work to be done to ensure equal opportunities, representation, and recognition for women in both society and sports. One of sociology's main objectives has always been to define and analyze gender in respect to both the biological standpoint and attempts to comprehend its social ramifications. Rubin used the term "*sex-gender system*" to refer to the entire complex of practices, attitudes, and connections by which society converts biological sexuality into social distinctions between men and women, hence giving origin to the very idea of gender. [Rubin, 1975]¹. This kind of categorization, or decoding, enables people to categorize themselves and others in accordance with exact systems without undermining the certainty amassed over the course of millennia on an almost scientific level.

The distinction between the masculine and the feminine persists and varies over time, but the category of gender is not static; it is a reality that is ever-expanding and continually altering. There is a connection between sex and gender in that the latter refers to the former by mentioning the bodily distinctions that already exist. This is important to note since the sexual body and the creation of the self are intertwined. The process of developing one's identity, both on a personal and social level, must include accepting that one belongs to one sex or the other. Most critics have long adhered to the biological theory of sexual difference, viewing a woman's capacity to procreate as her fundamental characteristic. Children maintain the expectation that a woman will take care of them in the future during the process that results in their separation from their mother, while females disidentify as being taken care of and are ready to take care of others. The two genres are therefore based on a biological legacy that diversifies them but are also

socially produced, according to this research. As a result, gender serves as the vehicle via which historically and socially significant meanings are assigned specifically to those physical variations that constitute social differentiation. Despite this, no differentiation between men and women in this perspective is unaffected by shifts in historical perspective. In the end, a social construction process begins with gender.

Gender differences in sports can be attributed to a combination of biological, physiological, and sociocultural factors. It is important to note that while there are general trends and differences, individual variations within each gender are significant, and not all individuals fit neatly into these categories. The objective factors that determine gender differences in sport are various, for example there are biological and physiological factors. On average, males tend to have greater muscle mass and strength compared to females due to higher levels of testosterone. This can lead to differences in performance in activities requiring power and strength. Also, the body composition is different: females typically have a higher percentage of body fat, which can impact buoyancy in swimming and may affect performance in activities where a lower body weight is advantageous. Hormonal differences are also relevant: hormones, such as testosterone and estrogen, play a role in muscle development, bone density, and other physiological aspects that can affect athletic performance differently in males and females.

Equal important are the sociocultural factors and the media representation: traditional gender roles and societal expectations can influence the types of sports and physical activities that individuals are encouraged or allowed to participate in. These norms may limit opportunities for both males and females in certain sports. The way sports are portrayed in media can impact the perception of gender roles in sports. Limited media coverage and representation of female athletes can perpetuate stereotypes and discourage girls from pursuing certain sports.

Cultural and social influences can shape the motivations and goals of male and female athletes. For example, males might be more motivated by competition and achievement, while females might prioritize social aspects and personal growth. Moreover, gender differences in risk perception can influence the willingness to engage in certain sports or activities. Males may be more prone to taking risks, potentially affecting the types of sports they participate in. Also, the access and opportunities are different, historically, males have had more access to sports facilities, coaching, and competitive opportunities. This can affect the development and performance of athletes from both genders. Tailored coaching and support structures can help athletes of both genders reach their full potential by addressing specific needs and challenges.

In general, it is important to approach these differences with sensitivity and avoid generalizing that can perpetuate stereotypes. The sports landscape is evolving, with increasing recognition of the importance of gender equality and opportunities for athletes of all genders to excel and pursue their passions.

2.2 The introduction of women into the sports field

A symptomatic case: women's football

Biological variables that provide a value of sexual attribution are also grafted with assigned sex and gender, i.e., socially acknowledged characteristics. It is easier to comprehend the diversity and non-comparability of the two sexes as well as their complementarity when we comprehend how identity is organized from biological to psychological aspects. When sport embraces this equality, all it does is re-propose the existence of undeniable distinctions. The physical characteristics of women have also undergone anthropological modification; the varied body conformation is a cultural outcome. This indicates that a woman's nature is not constant and that she shares biological potential with men as well as having a unique capacity for adaptation.

Sporting activity clearly brings out some odd traits in people of both sexes, at

least on a physical level, but this should not cause people to think that women are less suited for sport. The conversation surrounding sports also relates to this larger picture because, while women have always had to struggle to enter the worlds of politics and culture, it is even more true that they have struggled twice as hard to do the same in the world of sports.

Modern sport began in England's public schools, where it was believed that it could be used to educate students about the social structure and ideals of the ruling elite of the time. Young people from the middle class are beginning to absorb selection as a fundamental principle and see life as a form of competition, whether it be between individuals or groups. Therefore, it is claimed that sport serves as a means of regulating and sublimating capitalist ideals. This was the conviction of the French baron Pierre De Coubertin, who sought to revitalize the socialization process to the values of industrial society through competitive practice. Now, it is obvious that modern sport was created as a function of man because bourgeois capitalist society is typically masculine in nature. It was thought that women's participation in athletics was wholly shameful for them. This explains why it was difficult for the girls to overcome the machismo barrier that dominated the society at the time.

However, it must be acknowledged that despite everything, women are beginning to participate in active sports, albeit very slowly, thanks in part to the pressure that liberal emancipatory movements have placed on culture. This in no way implies that prejudices have suddenly vanished. Women's advancement in sports has been slow and arduous, made considerably more difficult by the pseudoscientists who have long advocated against them participating in competitive sports. What made matters more difficult was the fact that women's sport not only developed under difficult circumstances because of the social prejudice of a capitalist society built on purely masculine values like competition and competitive spirit, but also because it presents itself as a copy of the sport forged on traits of men. In other words, while competitions and competitions are qualitatively reduced to a woman playing sports to make the game more tolerant of her frailty, the sports disciplines themselves stay completely equal in terms of their core

qualities. In essence, the female athlete is required to compromise herself in order to emulate men, adopt their traits, and uphold their beliefs. In this regard, sport appears to be an additional component of the female mentality that alienates her.

Therefore, it is obvious that in sporting practice, discrimination is more pronounced to the extent that female performance is lower than that of men. This is because all competitive activities are viewed as belonging to men, and girls must adapt to them rather than taking part in competitions specifically designed for them and for their bodies. Women are now recognized in the realm of sport but are always given a subservient role in the post-fascist, consumer society age. In actuality, there is still a gap between the sexes in athletic competition due to the types of sports, rules, and training techniques that are still tailored for men.

Unfortunately, some experts did not start looking more closely at the phenomenon until the end of the 1970s. The findings gave rise to the theory that the lack of women in the sports industry was directly related to the social culture of the present, which is a holdover from the past and holds that women are intellectually and physically inferior to men. The main trend, it turned out, was the idea that sport is inappropriate for women because it degrades their femininity and makes them appear unattractive. It is so evident that social discrimination has always been the greatest barrier to the growth of women's sport, and society has also developed false excuses of a medical and psychological character to explain why females do not adapt to a competitive spirit.

The introduction of women into the sports field, particularly in traditionally male-dominated areas such as football, has been a significant and transformative development in recent decades. One notable case that exemplifies this progress is women's football, which has experienced remarkable growth and acceptance worldwide. This shift in attitudes and opportunities for women in sports reflects broader societal changes toward gender equality and diversity. Historically, women's participation in sports, including football, was often met with resistance, skepticism, and societal norms

that restricted their involvement. However, over time, as gender stereotypes began to be challenged and women's capabilities in various fields were recognized, the landscape of sports began to change. Women's football, has undergone a profound transformation that mirrors the broader evolution of gender roles and expectations. The journey of women's football from obscurity to prominence has been marked by several key milestones.

Women's football has existed since the late 19th century, but it gained significant attention in the 20th century. The establishment of women's national teams and the organizing of international competitions helped pave the way for its recognition. Women faced numerous challenges in gaining acceptance and legitimacy in football. Discrimination, lack of resources, and limited media coverage were among the barriers they had to overcome. However, the 1991 FIFA Women's World Cup marked a turning point for women's football, providing a platform for female players to showcase their skills at an international level. The tournament's success helped increase interest and investment in the women's game. As attitudes evolved and more opportunities were created, the number of women participating in football increased significantly. Grassroots initiatives, youth development programs, and improved access to training and facilities played a crucial role in fostering growth.

The 21st century saw a shift towards professional women's football leagues in various countries. The establishment of professional leagues allowed female players to pursue careers in football and receive compensation for their efforts. With the rise of digital media and streaming platforms, women's football gained more visibility. Major tournaments, such as the FIFA Women's World Cup and the UEFA Women's Champions League, started receiving greater coverage, contributing to increased awareness and fan engagement. Women's football has also been at the forefront of advocating for gender equality in sports. Players, coaches, and organizations have been vocal about issues such as pay equity, equal treatment, and opportunities for women in leadership roles. Successful female footballers have become role models for young girls, inspiring them to pursue their dreams and break down barriers. These role models have helped challenge stereotypes and perceptions about women's capabilities in sports.

To sum up, the introduction of women into the sports field, exemplified by the case of women's football, is a testament to the progress made in challenging gender norms and promoting inclusivity. The journey of women's football reflects broader societal shifts towards recognizing and valuing women's contributions in various domains, and it serves as an inspiring example of the transformative power of sports in driving positive change.

THIRD CHAPTER

WOMEN ATHLETES

3.1 Female identity and sport

In all spheres of society, and particularly in the sporting one, women have traditionally held a submissive place because it was thought that their participation in this activity would challenge the rules of their identity and weaken those of men. The girl matures by affiliation on her growth path, whereas the child does so through opposition. As a result, as an adult, she is more reliant on the opinions of others when judging herself. It is considered that, in addition to socio-organizational issues, there are psychological and cultural resistances among the women themselves given the low percentage of sportswomen participating, particularly in some sports. This is because their decision to participate in sports that are deemed masculine threatens their sense of femininity.

The position of the woman in society has always been subordinate, in all fields and especially in the sporting one as her inclusion in this field has been perceived as an attempt to subvert the rules of her identity and to undermine that of man. In his growth path, the child matures by opposition, while the girl does so by affiliation and therefore as an adult, in evaluating herself, she is more dependent on the judgment of others. Considering the low number of practicing sportswomen, especially some sports, it is assumed that, in addition to socio-organizational factors, there are psychological and cultural resistances among the women themselves. This is because the choice to play sports considered masculine puts their female identity in crisis. Young individuals struggle to break free from societal expectations and their internalized role, even when they are progressive. The statement that a female athlete must overcome obstacles both inside and outside of herself is thus not hasty. Both men and women share a fundamental personality that corresponds to the roles and actions necessary for the pre-existing social structure.

Female identity in the context of sports refers to the unique experiences,

challenges, and opportunities that women and girls encounter when participating in athletic activities. This includes aspects such as gender equity, representation, physiological differences, social perceptions, and the broader impact of sports on shaping female identity. Historically, women have faced barriers to full participation in sports, including limited opportunities, unequal funding, and fewer resources compared to their male counterparts. Female athletes have advocated for equal pay, access to facilities, and representation at all levels of sports. Gender stereotypes and societal perceptions about femininity and athleticism can impact how female athletes are viewed and treated. Women who excel in sports may face challenges related to public perception, body image, and societal expectations about femininity.

Engaging in sports can contribute to the development of self-confidence, empowerment, and a positive sense of identity for women and girls. Participation in sports can help challenge societal norms and empower females to embrace their athleticism. Participation in sports can have positive effects on mental and physical health for women and girls. Regular physical activity can contribute to improved self-esteem, stress reduction, and overall well-being. The skills and values learned through sports, such as teamwork, discipline, leadership, and resilience, can extend beyond the field or court, shaping the broader identities and aspirations of female athletes. Visibility of successful female athletes as role models is crucial for inspiring future generations and breaking down gender stereotypes. Female athletes can serve as powerful symbols of strength, determination, and achievement.

It is important to acknowledge that female identity intersects with other aspects of identity such as race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, sexual orientation, and ability. These intersections can influence an individual's experiences and opportunities in sports. Creating inclusive and accessible sports environments is essential to ensure that women and girls from diverse backgrounds can participate and thrive. This includes addressing issues such as cultural barriers, financial constraints, and opportunities for athletes with disabilities. While progress has been made, challenges remain, including pay disparities, media representation, and the lingering effects of historical discrimination. Advocacy

and ongoing efforts are needed to continue advancing gender equity in sports.

Promoting a positive and inclusive environment for female athletes involves addressing these various aspects of female identity in sports. It requires collaborative efforts from athletes, coaches, administrators, policymakers, and society as a whole to create a more equitable and empowering landscape for women and girls in sports.

3.2 Prejudices and stereotypes about female athletes

As was already mentioned, the purpose of sport has always been to emphasize masculine potential and to project an image of virility, maintaining the notion that women are less valuable than men. However, it was precisely the "positivistic" outlook of athletics that over time assisted in eradicating many prejudices. In other words, the commonalities rather than the distinctions between male and female athletes were highlighted more.

The female who participates in sports nowadays is by no means an exception, but this development should be viewed in the context of broader social changes. If the woman has remained away from widespread sporting activity for a long time, this is also due to the fact that a large part of public opinion has been skeptical about the psychological balance of certain sports practitioners, and in a certain way it still is today. This is because female sports participation undermines long-held notions of sexual categorization. The female athlete is a blatant example of a divergence from femininity and a virilization aberration that should be shunned, according to common sense. Occasionally, aspiring athletes would clip their own wings out of concern for ruining the appearance of their purportedly exterior femininity.

Sportswomen employ a reasoning mental strategy to combat this kind of cognitive dissonance in order to lessen their anxiousness. Prejudices and stereotypes about female athletes have persisted throughout history, often reflecting broader societal

biases and misconceptions about gender roles, athleticism, and femininity. While progress has been made in challenging these stereotypes, they still exist to varying degrees. A persistent stereotype suggests that female athletes are less skilled and less capable than their male counterparts. This stereotype ignores the incredible talent, dedication, and hard work that female athletes put into their training and competition.

Society often places emphasis on traditional notions of femininity and beauty. Female athletes may face scrutiny or criticism based on their physical appearance, including comments about their body size, muscle definition, or clothing choices. Some media coverage and public attention can focus more on the appearance of female athletes rather than their athletic achievements. This can lead to a perception that their worth is tied to their looks rather than their abilities. When the media publishes remarks that are sexist or discriminating toward female athletes, it is a very significant issue. These remarks contribute to the enduring of negative stereotypes and gender injustices in both sport and society at large. Sportspeople should be evaluated based on their abilities and accomplishments, not on their gender or outward appearance. Some remarks that place more emphasis on an athlete's physical attributes than her athletic prowess are sexist and impolite. It diminishes the commitment and dedication of female athletes to sport to reduce their athletic accomplishments to aesthetics. Emphasizing weakness or lack of ability owing to gender implies that female athletes are less physically capable than male athletes, which fosters an environment of inequity.

Then there are the comments that are sexually explicit or inappropriate; Linda Cerruti, a multiple Italian champion, and the queen of synchronized swimming, is emblematic in this regard. To commemorate an incredible European championship in which the athlete won eight medals, Cerruti posted a photo on Instagram that was, as she said: *"taken on the beach where I have always been, where I cultivated my first dreams, and which for me also has a strong symbolic value. With the eight gold I won at the best European championship of my career, I'm shown in a bathing suit in an artistic stance that is typical of my sport: upside down and doing the split."* When the article was picked up by several newspapers and shared on their Facebook page, it sparked a barrage

of offensive, sexist, and obscene comments that shocked and infuriated the champion. When questioned about the sad incident, she said: "*After more than 20 years of training and sacrifices, I find it nothing short of humiliating and it really aches my heart to read this horde of people making jokes that sexualize my body. Is the main topic of discussion really just a butt and two legs? The least I can do is oppose the inappropriateness of those remarks, which reflect a society that is still too chauvinistic and quite far from the one in which I hope to have my children one day. At the same time, I want to thank everyone who has disassociated themselves from these remarks, who has 'defended' me, and who has recognized the photo for what it is: a proud portrait of an athlete from artistic swimming. I happily carry the tricolor flag around the world to represent this Italy.*" Unfortunately, this is just one of many instances of sexism connected to social media and the media that downplay the incredible accomplishments made by athletes via everyday effort and sacrifice.

Female athletes may encounter assumptions or stereotypes about their sexual orientation based on their participation in sports. These assumptions can perpetuate harmful stereotypes and impact an athlete's sense of identity and privacy. There is a stereotype that female athletes are more emotional or prone to mood swings, which can undermine their credibility and resilience. This stereotype dismisses the mental strength and emotional resilience that many female athletes possess. Some people might view women's sports as less serious or less competitive compared to men's sports. This stereotype ignores the high level of competition and dedication present in women's athletic endeavors. Female athletes who are also mothers may face stereotypes that question their ability to balance their athletic careers with motherhood. This overlooks their capacity to excel in both roles through careful planning and support.

Another aspect can be the perception that female athletes have limited career opportunities outside of sports. This stereotype disregards the diverse skills and leadership qualities that athletes develop, which can be transferred to various professions. Female athletes often receive less media coverage and endorsement opportunities compared to their male counterparts. This lack of visibility reinforces the

idea that women's sports are less important or exciting. There is a tendency to focus on younger female athletes, particularly in sports that emphasize physical appearance, which can lead to marginalization and limited opportunities for older women athletes.

It is important to challenge these prejudices and stereotypes by promoting awareness, advocating for equal treatment, and celebrating the achievements and contributions of female athletes. Increased media coverage, better representation, and the recognition of the value of women's sports can help break down these harmful stereotypes and create a more inclusive and supportive environment for female athletes.

3.3 The psychology of the female athlete (personality research)

The psychology of female athletes is a multifaceted area of research that explores various aspects of their personalities, motivations, experiences, and performance. While there isn't a one-size-fits-all answer due to the diversity of individuals within this group, there are several key themes and considerations that researchers have explored. It is important to note that while there are common themes, individual experiences and personalities within the realm of female athletes can vary widely. Research in this area helps promote understanding, support, and the development of interventions to enhance the psychological well-being and performance of female athletes.

Two distinct "I"s—one social and one athletic—coexist in women, according to psychological interpretations. The latter would resemble the masculine athlete in every way. This does not imply that a woman is trying to emulate a male, but rather that both sexes exhibit the same signs of competitiveness. It was discovered at a CONI conference on "Women and sport" held in Rome that modern women use sport as a way to express their personalities. According to psychologists, ladies who have truly committed themselves to a sport, particularly football, have demonstrated a notable ambition and an iron will in following the goals established. These traits are frequently more tenacious and systematic than those displayed by male athletes. Therefore, it is simple to acknowledge that sport is a tool for women's emancipation and societal advancement. In

reality, it reveals that sport's existential scope is more characterized by culture than by nature in the ludic-competitive context of the game.

In-depth examination of the spread of women's sport, however, reveals that it has a greater impact on some social classes and, in this case, urban areas with more developed infrastructure. This suggests that the practice of women's sport is not yet uniform across the entire country. To determine whether and to what extent female athletes vary psychologically from others, there have been several research initiatives. The findings corroborated the hypothesis: sportswomen scored highly on their masculinity indices and comparatively poorly on their femininity indices. While girls are attracted to socio-emotional reasons like company, amusement, and social contact, males devote themselves to sport because they are compelled to place a high value on competitiveness and individual skill. The question of whether intense sport participation may be viewed as a cause or a consequence of androgyny in some female athletes remains unresolved.

The principle of symmetry, which states that male features are perceived as the antithesis of feminine traits, governs stereotyped perception. In comparison to those who define themselves with more exclusive masculine or feminine features, androgyny is typically accompanied by higher balance, self-esteem, intelligence, and creativity. In fact, research findings support the notion that women who exhibit feminine traits linked to the male dimension score higher on measures of self-esteem.

In conclusion, it can be claimed that sporty girls are critical of traditional feminine values; one's fulfillment of oneself is thought to be connected to values, orientations, like autonomy, mobility, and movement that aims to achieve a dynamic equilibrium. Goffman must be mentioned when discussing how the self is constructed because he says that the self "*may be understood as something that dwells in the system of agreements that prevails in a society. In this sense, it doesn't belong to the person to whom it is attributed but rather is a function of the dynamics of the social control that is*

exerted on it by both the subject and those around him”. Goffman (1961).

The early abandoning of many young athletes, which is mistakenly blamed on their inconstancy, must be assessed specifically from this perspective. As opposed to that, it is the paradoxical outcome of a social control that holds them in low regard. The female athlete aligns herself with a new set of behavioral norms that demand that she behave in a certain way because she sees sports as a potentially liberating experience. The girl is essentially required to conform her identity to what other people anticipate. Even a competitive spirit defies common logic and is not a part of the cultural baggage associated with femininity. Studies and research in this area show how women's motives for success are typically hampered by a number of issues, including the tension between one's own goals and those of others, low self-esteem, and inadequate social rewards. In general, girls strive more for acceptance than for accomplishment.

In contrast to the attainment of personal goals, their motives are more focused on the group and the accomplishment of socio-emotional goals. Sports competition has two meanings: first, social acknowledgment that results in receiving public endorsement of one's skills; second, self-affirmation and objective validation of one's own value through arenas of male dominance. Women occasionally reject success because of feelings of inferiority and helplessness, fear of losing their femininity, and social rejection. The psychological aspect of self-confidence being linked to sports competition puts female athletes at a psychological disadvantage compared to male athletes. This is due to the fact that the decision to participate in athletics causes a conflict inside the woman's identity, which she loses while the guy gains it on a social level. However, it must equally be acknowledged that women have more opportunity to enjoy the lighthearted pleasure that participating in sports affords because their athletic performance is given less weight. She suffers performance anxiety with less resonance than her masculine counterpart.

FOURTH CHAPTER

WOMEN'S FOOTBALL: *Italian realities*

4.1 Introduction

It is important to underline how women's football is the emblem of the difficult evolution of the role of women within the sporting world. Never for any other discipline has it been, and in some ways still is, so difficult to find space and consensus, even if it is fair to say that in recent years many more people are interested in it and closely follow the fate of their favorite team even if female. It is evident that football has always been thought of as a game made of resistance, speed, hard tackles and considerable effort; all components that seem to be an exclusive male heritage, and, sometimes, this corresponds to the truth.

However, women have shown that football is also a sport accessible to them, especially today when the focus is more on reasoning, tactical predisposition, the organization of the game, things to which women are very attentive. Furthermore, this partially justifies the growth and evolution of women's football in recent years. Of course, it is also important to add that being a female football player in Italy is rather difficult because, as I will be able to elaborate on later, the players are not recognized with the status of professionals, while, for example, in the US, it is normal and football is the principal women's sport there.

In the "*Bel Paese*", things are exactly opposite, and the excessive power of men's football completely displaces that of female "colleagues". It is clear that, on a social level, women's football is a "non-phenomenon" in the sense that we tend to leave it aside and bring it out only in exceptional cases, while on a strictly athletic level it is denigrated because we tend to consider more the negative effects than it can have on the body of athletes, rather than highlighting the advantages it can offer. Furthermore, it should not be forgotten that teamwork and the heterogeneity of the girls who approach football

allow for the amalgamation of young people of different ages, from different social classes, whose passion for this sport becomes the unifying element.

4.2 Summary of Italy's women's football history

The first reports of women's soccer activities in Italy date back to 1930, when the Women's Soccer Group was established in Milan. According to the referees of the day, unlike their counterparts in Germany and England, where it has, among other things, been played since 1910, Italian players take the field in skirts. The first Italian championship was played in two groups (North and South), each with five teams, and was awarded with a final match between Genoa and Rome in Pisa, which was won by the Ligurian team. The year 1968 is often referred to as "year zero" because it saw the birth of the Italian Women's Football Federation. The situation seemed to be going well, but on January 31, 1970, 10 clubs in Rome formally resigned from the FICF and joined Aleandro Franchi, the president, to form the Italian Women's Football Federation.

For the first time, we are referring to Serie A, which consists of a single group of 14 teams, and Serie B, which is split into four groups with a total of 24 teams. Additionally, rules regarding membership are defined, and the issue of medical tests arises. As a result, there are two federations, FICF and FFIGC, that manage the two Italian championships. This scenario persisted until 1972, when the United Italy Women's Football Federation (FFIUGC) was founded because of the efforts of Florence-based attorney Giovanni Trabucco. The structures of the regional and provincial committees, to which the promotional activities would be delegated, started to be created in 1983 after the Women's FIGC was recognized as a member of CONI and received a financial contribution.

The organization of the national activity is as follows: A single group of 16 clubs will compete in Serie A, while 14 teams will compete in Serie B. The winner of the Italian Cup and the Serie A Championship will play in the Italian Super Cup. The women's national team represents the tip of the iceberg in the context of growing interest, with a constant increase in memberships (9667 athletes) and clubs (396), and

participation in the World Cup will serve as a stage for the promotion of this sport that is looking to broaden its horizon and its dimension in the Italian football scene. The National Professional League (men's Serie A and B), the C-series National Professional League, and the National Amateur League make up the bulk of the FIGC (Italian Football Federation).

The National Amateur League does not allow its female players to play professionally, so this will continue to be the primary issue for women's football until its final season in 2022/2023. On October 14, 2000, the FIGC passed a new statute in response to those who hoped to grant women's football more freedom. With the overall goal of introducing more democratic and tolerant concepts, the new act generally alters the previous text and inserts some new items. In article 7, the Women's Football Division is first stated; it now has administrative and managerial independence. Not only that, but it is specifically demanded in article 17 of the Federal Assembly's Constitution that female athletes make up the representation of athletes.

In conclusion, the year 2000 was the year that women's football received full recognition from the perspective of what is the "constitution" of Italian football. As part of the ongoing transformation, in 1998, the Serie B teams were split into four groups of 12 teams, with a final play-off to determine which three teams would go to Serie A. To witness a day that Italian footballers will never forget, however, we must wait until July 1, 2022, when women's football enters the professional ranks on that day. A new era will officially begin. The rules necessary for the women's Serie A to effectively become a professional league were unanimously changed by the Federal Council of the Italian Football Federation (FIGC) on April 26, 2022. The FIGC president, Gabriele Gravina, remarked that "today is an important day" because "finally we have rules governing the activity and exercise of professionalism in women's football." We are the first Italian federation to adopt this crucial strategy. a lengthy but significant route. The year 2019 marked the turning point, or when the World Cup in France sparked media interest in women's football. Over 40,000 people showed up to watch Juventus-Fiorentina at the Stadium the next year. The pandemic outbreak put an end to record attendance, which is

still much below the 91,000 fans that showed up to see Barcelona play in the Women's Champions League 21/22 at the Camp Nou. To continue the development of women's football, the move to professionalism is a crucial step. What does professionalism mean, though?

Women's football, especially Serie A, has always been compared to amateur football. As a result, the firms recognized payments to its athletes in the form of private agreements or expenditure reimbursement. There was no contract that could ensure social security benefits, insurance coverage, and collective bargaining while really performing a full-time job. When they become professionals, the players will earn a minimum wage that fluctuates according on their age: 26,000 euros for those over 24 and 20,000 euros for those under 19. Additionally, the sportsmen will have access to social benefits including maternity leaves. Maternity leave was the equivalent of quitting football for female football players. This occurred because businesses, regardless of their size, were not obligated by law to provide any type of contractual protection. Understanding the unstable and humiliating working conditions that Italian female footballers have had to deal with up until now may be understood through the example of maternity leave.

Italian women's football is therefore attempting to boost its momentum with the shift to professionalism. Regarding TV rights, sponsorships, and most importantly, participation. Currently, the FIGC has 31,000 female athletes enrolled in Italy, which is a fairly small amount when compared to other nations. One million players have enrolled in Germany, 350,000 in Canada, 90,000 in France, 80,000 in England, and more than 15 million females play soccer in the United States, to name a few countries. These statistics are not just present in nations with the best teams and national teams in the world, but also in nations that have long acknowledged women's football as a legitimate professional sport. They have advanced further in the United States. The American Soccer Federation has secured a landmark agreement that guarantees women's national team players the same pay as men's team players. Given that a professional soccer player in Serie A earns the same minimum yearly income as a football player in Serie C, the

issue of the gender pay gap is also very relevant in Italy. Therefore, despite the recent improvement that is obvious, considerable work needs to be done before female colleagues can compete with their male counterparts.

4.3 <<ASD Gorilla Calcio>>: an enlightened reality

A.s.d. Gorilla was founded in 2015 by a group of friends from the III Municipality of Rome with the goal of fostering gathering and aggregation opportunities in their childhood neighborhood of Serpentara. They are all males and females between the ages of 26 and 31, experts in a range of fields (educational sciences, pedagogical sciences, ecobiology, communication sciences, languages and cultures of the modern world, historical-artistic studies, music, sport), and/or have had a top-notch education.

The association has been recognized as a place where everyone can feel like they belong to a family, leaving the private sphere and its logic that drives us to alienate and estrange ourselves from what is around us. This is due to the difference in skills, professionalism, and personality, as well as the strong bond that unites them. The goals of Gorilla's founding include pedagogical experimentation (especially in relation to the currents of outdoor education and libertarian education), as well as the desire to use the environment and public spaces as tools to improve the resources around us. This includes rediscovering a relationship of synergy, care, and respect with Nature, also and above all within the city, to make it the tool for creating an educating community.

In order to ensure that football is once again "suitable for girls and boys" and that it is once again one sport of aggregation, meeting, and comparison, an inclusive reality, they started experimenting with a meeting between football and pedagogy with the launch of the football trainings. The association's founders believe that education is an essential component of life and is not restricted to a certain age range, gender, or setting. As a result, the events that are held are varied and inclusive.

Gorilla was finally born on April 29, 2015, following a lengthy and demanding pregnancy. *"We have never felt omnipotent enough to assume we can change society, but we have always believed that by acting on oneself and on one's context, one may make a difference. Starting in our community seemed to be the best course of action."*

The name was present already. The most appropriate term to give to the brand-new, extraordinary paradise that was emerging was "*gorilla*": a name that encapsulated the spirit of the group and of being together, which did not create distinctions based on age, gender, number, or language, which defied logic, in which nature was present.

They thus convene at *Parco delle Betulle*, which has always been their home, only two days later, on May 1, to inform those who were interested in the project that will begin shortly after: "*Tutti in Fuorigioco*." That's where it started. They still get their motivation to advance from there, even now, eight years later. Even Gorilla has expanded recently: in addition to "*Tutti in Fuorigioco*," other initiatives have also been born, all of which are connected by a common pedagogical sentiment and a shared demand for change.

Gorilla has been and still is the example of how following one's own path does not require significant financial outlays if one can rely on one's effort, energies, and counting on the support of a solid, welcoming group that works towards a common objective. Never doubt the power of a small group of responsible and dedicated citizens to affect global change. Truth be told, that is the only thing that has ever occurred.

I first learned about ASD Gorilla football in September 2020, right in the middle of the Covid outbreak. I had recently relocated to Rome in order to attend the PPE degree program at Luiss University. Moving to a new big city is difficult because it requires leaving your home, your family, and your comfort zone. I had always wanted to play football, but there was no women's team in my hometown, so I gave up and chose volleyball instead, which is unquestionably seen as more appropriate for females. Later, I had participated in football (or soccer) for a semester at my Wisconsin highschool while spending a year studying there. Therefore, as soon as I arrived in Rome, I started looking for a football team that was close to where I was staying. I met the Gorillas on Facebook. A group where everyone was welcome; where fair play, the development of the individual, and at the same time, the idea of a group in the highest sense of the term, were the priority, even before sporting results, is what first caught my attention, and the positive impression was fully confirmed in the first trial lessons. Since that time, I have

never left them, and during that period, I have developed close ties with my teammates, the coach, and the supporters.

Interview with the President Gabriele Latella

1. HOW DID YOU DEVELOP THE IDEA FOR THE GORILLA PROJECT?

The urge to build a world in which to channel our professionalism led me and my friends (the other founders) to come up with the concept. The group was really established in 2015, when all of us founders were just beginning our careers and finding little to no enjoyment in them.

To this, it must be added that we felt we were missing out on what we had known as kids and teenagers—namely, life in the courtyard for the younger kids and life in the neighborhood for the older kids.

We intended to design a world where everyone could freely express themselves and that served as a center for bringing together individuals from all generations. Football was only a consequence of all this, in fact it represents only one of the many sections of the association.

2. WHAT ARE THE MOTIVATIONS THAT PUSHED YOU TO ALSO COACH A WOMEN'S TEAM?

The call came somewhat by chance from the manager of the first sports club I collaborated with. There was a group of girls who organized games every Wednesday and who wanted to do something more "serious" and the choice fell on me. Initially I was a little hesitant because I had never trained people older than me (when I started in the women's I was 23 years old) but in the end fortunately I accepted.

The strong motivation that pushed me to accept was to overturn the image that football is a man's business. Starting from myself because like it or not it was an imaginary that I passively accepted. All this happened before the foundation of Gorilla, which then merged with that group of girls.

3. DID YOU EVER FIND PREJUDICES IN THE PEOPLE YOU TOLD ABOUT THE FEMALE GORILLA REALITY?

Of course, it is regrettable that throughout the initial phase of my journey, sexual jokes and prejudices persisted. The situation improved with the formation of Gorilla since the environment in which the activity was and is conducted is already inclusive, and the entry of the women's team was regarded as a chance for development and a huge affirmation for the association itself.

4. WHAT ARE THE BIGGEST DIFFICULTIES IN RECONCILING WORK AND FAMILY COMMITMENTS WITH TRAINING AND MATCHES?

Surely, my partner also being one of the association's founders makes things simpler and more shareable. I would confess, though, that the evenings are the most challenging. I give the women's team three evenings a week of my time, and I always get home at least after 11 PM.

We all give up our spare time for the team, and when this is done in a way that benefits everyone, it definitely puts a limit on things but also deepens our relationships with the other females on the squad.

5. YOU ARE ALSO A FUNDAMENTAL PAWL OF THE MANAGEMENT: CAN YOU ALSO MANAGE YOUR BUREAUCRATIC COMMITMENTS WITH NO DIFFICULTIES? BETTER TO SAY, IS BEING THE PRESIDENT MORE OF A BURDEN OR AN HONOR?

Managing the bureaucratic and technical aspects as best as possible is an aspect on which I continue to work year after year and on which I am still looking for a definitive balance also because the association is growing more and more. I often arrive at night without too much mental energy to face training but then I just need to get on the pitch to recharge.

On the duality between burden and honor I would say that I place myself in the middle, the pride of being president of the reality we dreamed of is an honor, but the responsibility of not betraying the philosophy and ideas of the association is certainly a burden.

6. IN YOUR OPINION, WHAT DIFFERENCES ARE THERE BETWEEN MEN'S AND WOMEN'S FOOTBALL, EVEN AT A TECHNICAL LEVEL?

The main difference I see is the athletic one, training both boys and girls I notice that the physical parameters are different even if some female footballers manage to express the same strength and power as the boys. I make it a hormonal issue and nothing more.

From a technical point of view, the difference is only linked to the fact that most girls only start playing football when they are adults, effectively losing the specific coordination and technical learning part that takes place in childhood and adolescence.

This is why I believe it is necessary to strengthen female youth sectors and fight the idea that playing football for a girl is a disgrace to the family. A reason that still keeps girls away from playing football today.

7. IN YOUR OPINION, DURING THE MATCH, IS COMPETITION MORE MODERATE THAN MEN?

Absolutely not. I believe that competitive spirit is equal as is the passion that animates footballers. Rather, I believe that sometimes women's matches get "lit up" due to the incompetence of the referees who underestimate women's football and referee in a distracted manner.

8. WHAT FURTHER STEPS DO YOU BELIEVE OUGHT TO BE TAKEN TO ENSURE THAT THIS DISCIPLINE IS GIVEN MORE CONSIDERATION IN THE MEDIA?

The most important step for me is always linked to the imagery of women's football. It is

necessary to change the narrative that the media make of women's football where we still talk about football in skirts and where it is the physical shapes that do the talking rather than the plays or sporting performances. It is also necessary for women to be present at all levels of a sports association, from managerial to technical.

In short, the idea that a woman cannot experience football like a man must be undermined and this must be done starting from the youngest boys. If they are shown a different reality they will naturally experience it without all the preconceptions and prejudices that revolve around women's football.

9. WHAT HOPE DO YOU HAVE FOR WOMEN'S FOOTBALL?

I hope that in the future a girl can approach the world of football with the same naturalness as a boy. I hope that we can break down the cultural barriers that limit access and above all I would like women's football to be recognized as having the same dignity as men's football.

It is a fundamental cultural battle for anyone who believes and works for gender equality because football is one of the areas in which patriarchal and macho culture continues to be predominant.

10. YOUR PERSONAL GOAL?

The great goal I have set for myself is to create a women's section for both 5-a-side and 11-a-side football as we can currently offer to boys.

4.4 Conclusions and future perspectives

After conducting research, we typically aim to draw generalizable findings. There are many cliches associated with women's football, and because they are typical, inflexible Italian beliefs, the players must work twice as hard to dispel them.

I hope I adequately emphasized the fact that there is some sexual discrimination in football. If female football players have just been regarded as professionals for a year, there must be a reason for this, and it is most likely not just legal but also primarily relates to issues with culture that have not yet been fully handled. While women's football is frequently a given abroad, “pink” football is still a fantasy in Italy. Serie A, A2, B, C, and D championships are held on a regular basis, although none of this activity has yet gained public attention.

The information gaps are filled by a few websites, a monthly magazine (*Calciodonne*), and a few places in specialized publications like *Guerin Sportivo* and the monthly *Calcio 2000*. Andrea Soncin’s senior national squad finds a little more room, but the title, which unquestionably deserves more, is given very little importance. Lack of funds from sponsors who do not think about long-term investments is another issue.

All relevant organizations have recently taken action in an effort to elevate women's football's status. Over time, even the FIGC and the Commission for Equal Opportunity have looked for a targeted programming agreement. It goes without saying that in order to make things better, we must persuade ourselves that the two opposing perspectives on reality—those of men and of women—lead to the efficient use of resources.

Italy needs to catch up to the rest of Europe and the USA, where you experience a different reality, in terms of women's sport, especially football. While there has undoubtedly been significant improvement over the years, we are still a long way from the assumption that women can simply participate in activities that are traditionally seen as being just for men. The goal is that society will soon see that women can be much more than just wives and mothers—roles that sport, on the other hand, cannot and must not undercut—and that women's roles have evolved. but which must be able to improve by granting women dignity in both the social and competitive spheres.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Andreoli P., *La donna e lo sport nella società industriale*, Ave, Roma 1974.

Antonelli F., *Psicologia dello sport oggi*, Società Stampa Sportiva, Roma 1977.

Birrel S., Cole S., *Women, sport and culture*, Editors, Champaign 1994.

Borms J., Hebbelinck M., Venerando A., *Women and sport: an historical, biological, physiological and sportsmedical approach*, S.Kranger, Basel, 1981.

Buttarelli A., Murano L., Rompello L., *Duemila e una: donne che cambiano l'Italia*, Pratiche, Milano 2000.

Cabrini M., *Psicologia nel calcio*, Società Stampa Sportiva, Roma 1999.

Cahn S., *Gender and Sexuality in Twentieth-Century Women's Sport*, Freen Press, New York, 1994.

Caroli A., *La donna nel pallone*, Graphot, Torino 2000.

Cina Bonizzoni L., *Il calcio femminile*, Società Stampa Sportiva, Roma 1988.

De Nardis P., Mussino A., Porro N., *Sport : in social problems social movements*, Seam, Roma 1997.

Dunning E., *Lo sport come riserva maschile : riflessioni sulle fonti dell'identità maschile e le sue trasformazioni*, Il Mulino, Bologna 1989.

Girelli A., *Storia del calcio italiano*, Einaudi, Torino 1972.

Leali G. Risaliti M., *Il calcio al femminile*, Società Stampa Sportiva, Roma 1996.

Lopez S., *Women on the ball*, Scarlet Press 1997.

Mandell R., *Storia culturale dello sport*, Laterza, Bari 1989.

Migliardo B., *Storia del calcio femminile*, Edigraf, Roma 1974.

Morace C., Perrone L., *Il calciatore donna*, Nuova Prhomos, Città di Castello (PG) 1999.

Piccone Stella S., Saraceno C., *Genere. La costruzione sociale del maschile e del femminile*, Il Mulino, Bologna 1996.

Pierangeli P., testa S., *Sociologia dello sport applicata al calcio*, Società Stampa Sportiva, Roma 1994.

Teitz C. C., *La donna atleta*, CIC Edizioni Internazionali, Roma 1998.

AA.VV., *Changing the Rules of the Game: Toward a Feminist Analysis of Sport*, in Women's Studies International Forum 10, n. 4, 1987.

AA.VV., *Lo sport e la donna*, Sportgiovane, G.d.G. S.P.S. CONI 1982.

Chamberlain D., *Attitudes toward female participation in sport*, tesi di dottorato, University of Utah, 1984.

Franke A., *L'odissea della femminilità*, in Psicologia Contemporanea, n. 102, Novembre-Dicembre 1990.

Kidd B., *Sport and masculinity* in Sociology of sport Journal, 1987.

Rey D., Sheppard P. & S., *Relationship of psychological androgyny in female athletes*

to self esteem, International Journal of Sport Psychology, 12, 1981.

WEBSITES

<http://www.divisionecalciodefemminile.it>

<http://www.atlete.it>

<http://www.calciodonne.net>

<http://www.gazzetta.it>

<http://www.donnalife.it>

<http://www.assoallenatori.it> <http://www.calciatori.com> <http://www.uisp.it>

