

Ulla Ruuskanen

In the shadows of Machismo
Ecuadorian women and football

University of Jyväskylä
Department of Sport Sciences
Master's Thesis
Social Sciences of Sport
Spring 2011

UNIVERSITY OF JYVÄSKYLÄ
Faculty of Sport and Health Sciences
Master's Degree Programme in Sport Science and Management

RUUSKANEN, ULLA
In the shadows of machismo
Ecuadorian women and football

Master's Thesis, 75 pages (+ appendices)
Social Sciences of Sport
Spring 2011

Football is a significant part of Ecuadorian culture. Female football, however, is not respected the same way than football of the opposite gender. This study looks into the Ecuadorian female football culture and the reasons behind its poor recognition. Also the role of the Ecuadorian Football Federation is under examination: what is its attitude towards female football and how the federation is, as the most important body in terms of female football in the country, enhancing its popularity.

This study has been conducted as a qualitative field study. Observations in Ecuador were made during five months and Ecuadorian women with diverse relationships to football were interviewed. Thematization was used in order to select certain themes from the interviews which played an important role in the formation of opinions of the women towards football.

Female football in Ecuador does not have long roots and it is a rather unknown topic among Ecuadorians. The structure of Ecuadorian society, i.e. gender inequality among other things, is a considerable reason behind the poor recognition of female football. The role of women in the Ecuadorian society is special: the role as wives and mothers still dominates in unison with aiming towards equality. Perception of a woman is also very traditional: women are considered as objects. On one hand the culture expects them to be objects, on the other hand they are exposed to the idea of their own volition.

The position of women and thus female football in Ecuadorian society has improved during the 21st century. However, reaching equality in the society and particularly in sports still seems a far ambition. Overall, the poor recognition of female football in Ecuador is a much more comprehensive issue than one might think at first glance.

Key words: gender equality, perception of a woman, female football

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION	4
2. RESEARCH TASK AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE STUDY	7
2.1 Research task, hypotheses and purpose of the study.....	7
2.2 The target country of the research.....	8
2.3 Qualitative research.....	10
2.4 Data collection	14
3. CULTURAL CATEGORIZATION	18
4. THE ROLE OF WOMEN IN ECUADORIAN SOCIETY	22
4.1 Gender equality in Ecuador.....	22
4.2 Gender equality in sports	29
4.3 Perception of a woman.....	32
5. THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN FOOTBALL AND ECUADORIAN WOMEN	39
5.1 A peek of history of women's sports and female football	39
5.2 Female football in Ecuador	42
5.3 Ecuadorian women's fandom culture.....	52
6. WHAT KEEPS THE ECUADORIAN WOMEN OFF THE PITCH?	59
7. DISCUSSION	67
REFERENCES.....	70
APPENDICES	75

1. INTRODUCTION

This study examines the relationship between Ecuadorian women and football. According to my previous knowledge, football is very popular in Ecuador but women do not tend to play themselves. The aim of this study is to find out how women perceive football and what keeps them off the pitch.

The topic was chosen purely on personal interest. I love football and getting to know different cultures, and I am to some extent a feminist. The first time I was in Ecuador, I noticed the different role of the local women in the society that I was accustomed to. For the second time, when I needed a topic for my thesis, it was easy to link my cultural observations with my passion: football. I believe women should have equal opportunity in terms of sport and according to my experiences in the country the situation proved to be far from it. Being familiar with the Ecuadorian culture, themes such as gender inequality or perception of a woman had become apparent. It was clear that these themes prevailed in the Ecuadorian society as a whole and thus in the football culture as well.

The poor recognition of female football in Ecuador is evident but the reasons behind it are not. Therefore it felt important to conduct this study. This topic has not been investigated before which increases the importance. There are several studies done about female sports but not especially about female football in a Latin country. I consider culture as an immense force behind the development of female football and therefore this study is based on different cultural aspects that have a clear influence on the popularity of female football in the country. The roles of the Ecuadorian Football Federation and FIFA in enhancing the poor state of female football will also be discussed.

The study was conducted as a qualitative field study including a five month observation period in Ecuador. In addition some Ecuadorian women were interviewed which were analyzed using thematization giving the study its framework. The two clearest themes

which affected upon the poor state of female football, according to the interviews and observations, were gender inequality and the perception of a woman. In Ecuador, despite the increase of equality, the role of a woman remains as wives and mothers. The order of importance is different for men compared to women as sport is not considered a priority.

Ecuadorian women have a different perception of a woman than Finnish women, for example. Ecuadorian women pay a lot of attention to their appearance, which from a Finnish point of view feels as an exaggeration. They are held as sex objects by the Ecuadorian men. Women need to be beautiful and thin at any cost, for men there is no such demand. The culture pressures women to strive more towards beauty than sport. Football is seen as masculine sport which does not coincide with the image of the perfect woman.

The conceptual, culturally significant reasons behind the poor recognition of female football are difficult to change. Therefore it is important to concentrate on the more concrete hindering factors. The foundation for female football needs to be stable with strong support from the Ecuadorian Football Federation, in order to enhance its popularity in the country. It is important to consider the role of the national football federations and FIFA when talking about the diffusion of female football.

The entire research process proved to be very interesting. The topic was chosen according to my personal interests as I have previously studied intercultural communication and Spanish language. I have also lived abroad, five months in Ecuador in 2006 (and other five months for this study in 2009), and one year in both Germany and Spain in 2001 and 2004. In this study I could attach my personal history to the implementation process finding my previous experiences abroad to be, in many ways, a great asset. It was extremely important that I spoke Spanish as in English this study would have been difficult to conduct. This study is the result of my cultural knowledge and language skills in unison with the passion for football.

When it comes to my sporting background, I have played Finnish baseball for ten years whereas I have never myself played football. Contrary to Ecuadorian women, I have

always had opportunities to play football though I chose Finnish baseball instead. As a sport fanatic, football ranks as one of my top sports to follow with its array of fascinating on and off the field qualities. Hopefully someday Ecuadorian women will also have equal opportunity to play football, if they wish to do so.

2. RESEARCH TASK AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE STUDY

In this chapter the topic of this research will be explained and how it was decided, what the research task is and how the research was completed. First, I will explain the background behind the topic selection. Second, the research task - and the hypotheses prior to the research - will then be described. In addition, this chapter will also discuss the purpose of the study, and the research methods that were used during the process. In the end, the data collection process will be explained as well as the analyzing method, which also defines the structure of the research.

2.1 Research task, hypotheses and purpose of the study

The idea for this research started already in 2006, when I was living in Ecuador for the first time. As a Finn, coming from a country where the gender equality is one of the fundamental ideas of the society, the cultural differences between my home country and Ecuador were striking. I could see and hear the machismo around me, as women played their part along with it. After spending five months in Guayaquil in the autumn of 2006, I always wanted to re-visit and the opportunity came three years later while in search of a topic for my thesis.

The research task of this study is to research the current situation in female football in the Ecuadorian culture and how the masculinity of the culture affects on the state and respectfulness of female football. The goal of this study is also to research, why so few Ecuadorian women play football and if the small number of female players is related to the masculinity of the country. My earlier experience in Ecuador guided me the way to my research task. Being already quite familiar with the Ecuadorian culture, this gave me a solid foundation of knowledge in deciding the research questions without actually residing in Ecuador. As strictly a football fan (a feminist who has never played herself), the decision was made to go back and research. With these ideas in my mind, added with my upfront knowledge about the culture, it was rather easy to go back and start doing the research. I speak fluent Spanish which helped in avoiding any

communicational problems during my research period. Speaking their mother tongue proved to be of great importance as no information was kept in the dark due to language barriers.

Based on my former experiences in Ecuador, certain presumptions existed regarding this particular topic. The main hypothesis concluded to be that female football is not a popular sport in the Ecuadorian culture. Another hypothesis was that the masculinity of the culture clearly has an impact on the status of female football within the country. The focus of my goal was to investigate if this hypothesis was indeed true and how and to what extent the masculinity actually affected the development and progress of female football and other hindering obstacles.

There is no previous research done concerning this topic, so the purpose of the study is to give the reader an insight of the Ecuadorian culture and the relationship between football and Ecuadorian women. This study will also discuss about the ways in which female football should be diffused in this particular part of the world.

2.2 The target country of the research

Ecuador, a former colony of Spain, is situated in Western South America, along the Equator between Colombia and Peru bordering the Pacific Ocean (figure 1). Ecuador became independent from Spain in the early 19th century. Its total area, 283 561 square kilometres, holds the 73rd position in country comparison in the world (Finland ranks 64th). The elevation extremes are vast: from the sea level to the top of the highest peak of Ecuador, Mount Chimborazo, the altitude is 6 267 metres. (CIA – The World Factbook.)



Figure 1. Map of Ecuador (Sintaxis Spanish School)

The population of Ecuador is nearly 14 million people. Being smaller than Finland but having almost three times more population, it goes without saying that the density per capita is rather high. Ecuador's Gross National Income (GNI) in 2008 was 49,1 billion euro and GNI per capita 3,640 euro whereas the GNI of Finland was in the same year 255,7 billion euro and GNI per capita 48,120 euro. (The Foreign Ministry of Finland.) These numbers are good indicators to show the current economical state of Ecuador. Between 2000-2007, 4,7 percent of the Ecuadorian population was living below the poverty line (ibid).

The majority (95 percent) of Ecuadorians are Roman Catholic. The official language of Ecuador is Spanish, but also some Indian languages like Quechua are spoken among the indigenous people. (The Foreign Ministry of Finland.)

2.3 Qualitative research

This research was chosen to be qualitative in order to extract the most possible knowledge. It was clear that this research needed to be a qualitative field research. It felt important to allow the Ecuadorian women to speak freely in an interview rather than having them filling in a questionnaire. I wanted to find out the reasons behind the poor recognition of Ecuadorian female football and what kind of feelings and thoughts this topic provoked in some of the local women.

Van Maanen (1979) explains the term ‘qualitative research’ the following way: it is “an umbrella term covering an array of interpretive techniques which seek to describe, decode, translate, and otherwise come to terms with the meaning, not the frequency, of certain more or less naturally occurring phenomena on the social world” (in Merriam 2009, 13). The meaning of qualitative research is to achieve an understanding of how people make sense out of their lives and the main interest should be focused on understanding the researched phenomenon from the participants’ perspectives. This ‘insider’s perspective’ is often referred to as the *emic* perspective, and the opposite, ‘outsider’s perspective’, is known as *etic* perspective. (Merriam 2009, 14.) Being familiar with the Ecuadorian culture but first of all being a foreigner, the perspective of this study is more etic than emic.

For a qualitative researcher it is impossible to capture an objective “truth” or “reality” (Merriam 2009, 215). One of the challenges of a qualitative research is objectivity versus subjectivity. Objectivity roughly explained means that the researcher is watching the research subject from the outside, like from an impartial point of view. Being objective requires recognising one’s subjectivity first. (Eskola & Suoranta 1998, 17.) As a researcher in Ecuador, I could not forget my own background. My own background was the grounding for the whole research! To that extent I was being subjective because I knew a totally different way of behaving and doing things. How the ethnographer’s cultural background affects the ethnography, is called reflexivity (Sands 2002, 15). You could consider it being a negative thing, but in this case it was not. Because of my own cultural background, differing so much of that of Ecuador, helped me to pay attention to

different aspects of the culture that were important for the research and also very common and normal to Ecuadorians themselves.

As a researcher I was also aware of ethnocentrism, where one easily judges other values and premises of the other culture than yours (Sands 2002, 12). In qualitative research the purpose is not to aim to statistical generalizations, but rather to describe a certain phenomenon or to understand a certain action (Eskola & Suoranta 1998, 61). In order to achieve the understanding, the researcher has to acknowledge ethnocentrism as a part of himself. For a qualitative research an important characteristic is the process to be inductive. Therefore it is very common in a qualitative research to move from the inductive to deductive, from singular to general. (Merriam 2009, 15 and Eskola & Suoranta 1998, 83.) In this study there are certain topics chosen according to the data that are important with regard to the research task and have therefore been set under scrutiny. The framework for the topics in question is based on cultural categorising (see chapter 3.1).

2.4 Ethnographic research

This research is an ethnographic field research. Michael H. Agar refers to ethnography as a “folk description”. It is the social research style where encountering alien worlds and making sense of them is emphasized. The ethnographer is trying to produce a report, where he or she tries to show the reader about the life of some group and how it makes sense. (Agar 1986, 12, 19.) This study attempts to describe the relationship that Ecuadorian women have with sports and particularly with football.

Ethnography is a form of observation that happens completely in the natural circumstances of the cultural reality. More than anything, it is learning by doing. In ethnography, the researcher lives “in the field” for a certain period of time aiming to learn the culture and the ways of thinking and acting of the people of the particular culture. The goal is to adapt in to the society in order to learn by doing: the researcher listens, asks, watches around him/her and tries to see the world the way the locals are seeing it by living the common everyday life. (Eskola & Suoranta 1998, 104, 106.) For this study I spent five months in Ecuador doing observations. Five months is a rather

short time for a field research, however, in this case, my previous experiences with the country and its people accelerated the adapting process and enabled me to advance with the investigation rapidly. According to Robert R. Sands, there are three fieldstones in ethnography. Firstly, the researcher should operate under good scientific aims. Secondly, he or she should live with the natives and thirdly, the researcher has to use good data-gathering techniques. (Sands 2002, 12.) All these fieldstones mentioned can be considered fulfilled in this study.

The goal of ethnography is to comprehend what is in the head of those being studied. That can be possible by observing and experiencing the symbolic, behavioural, and material representations of the particular country. (Sands 2002, 51.) When the different traditions are in contact, an ethnographer focuses on the differences that appear (Agar 1986, 20). Since my own culture differs greatly from the culture of Ecuador, the differences were easily recognized. For those, who are interested the different become familiar, ethnography is the most sensitive way to measure a culture and make it come alive. The ethnographer is searching for information that he/she does not know or needs to be clarified. (Sands 2002, 61, 108-109.)

The ethnographer is facing a dual purpose: he/she should get to know the culture as a member while watching the culture as an observer (Sands 2002, 22). This is where *emic* and *etic* collide. As Michael H. Agar argues, ethnography is neither subjective nor objective but it is rather interpretive (Agar 1986, 19). The ethnographer is trying to be part of the culture being studied while his or her background keeps him or her always a certain distance away from it. The fieldworker can never hope to understand completely the cultural reality of those being studied (Sands 2002, 11). He or she produces only an imperfect interpretation of what he or she observed, participated in, and later described (ibid.) No matter how good my Spanish skills were, I will never become Ecuadorian and entirely understand their premises.

Understanding the cultural perspective of the informant's culture happens through rapport with informants and the researcher's own participation (Sands 2002, 15-16). Rapport is "a codeword for the quality of the relationships the ethnographer has with the folks" (Agar 1986, 57). Rapport between the informants and the researcher is important,

because without it “people would not let you into their world or talk to you about it” (ibid.) Ethnography cannot be a successful research method unless the fieldworker develops rapport and friendship with the cultural members studied (Sands 2002, 36). Forming rapport with my informants was easy due to my internship at the local football club – I was treated rather as a colleague than an outsider one might feel suspicious about.

For ethnography, it is a necessity to gain and maintain trust and friendly relations with the cultural members. The more time the researcher spends with the culture and the more participatory the fieldwork is, the less intrusion is felt by the researcher and the cultural members. Cultural members are the key to what goes inside their minds and to decoding the behaviour that they express in everyday life. Therefore the relationship between the ethnographer and cultural members is critical to the advancement of fieldwork. (Sands 2002, 22, 37, 110.)

In the traditional ethnography, culture shock was not seen the way it is seen today. Culture shock is impossible to avoid but at least it is tried to be avoided or at least minimized. Today it is alright to experience culture shock and the interaction between fieldworker and behaviour is an integral part of ethnography. (Sands 2002, 33-34.) As I was already familiar with the Ecuadorian culture, for me culture shock was not a big issue during the fieldwork. At times it was hard not to have the same kind of circle of friends that I am used of having back home (see chapter 3), but that was just a trifle in the big picture and did not affect the research in any way.

As said by Carol A.B. Warren, the fieldworker’s initial reception by the host society is a reflection of cultural contextualization of the fieldworker’s characteristics, which include marital status, age, physical appearance, presence and number of children, and ethnic, racial, class, or national differences as well as gender (Warren 1988, 13). According to this I could not have been a more conspicuous researcher: a light-skinned, foreign, young female with distinct differing physical features such as blond hair and green eyes. In a masculine culture like in Ecuador, that did not result to be a problem because even though white, foreign female researchers lack the superior status of males, they acquire authority through association with the dominant, Western culture (Warren

1988, 26). That was exactly the case with me. What I, or my looks, represented, rather helped me during my time in the field.

2.4 Data collection

The purpose of the study is to achieve an understanding about the relationship between Ecuadorian women and football. In order to achieve this, qualitative research methods are needed. The uniqueness and power of ethnographic method would be diluted if the majority of data was quantitative (Sands 2002, 80). Sample selection in qualitative research is usually small and purposeful (Merriam 2009, 16-17). The main research method in this study was participant observation. In addition to that semi-structured interviews were conducted and also some enquiries were done via e-mail. The data consists also of a newspaper article and also some photographs which will be used in illustrating the phenomena. Combining different data gathering methods, like done in this research, is called triangulation (Eskola & Suoranta 1998, 69).

Participant observation

The term ‘participant observation’ was introduced by Bronislaw Malinowski and it describes a method of fieldwork. It is the main fieldwork method in ethnography and it is separated from other qualitative social science research methods by its emphasis on intensive, focused and time-consuming participation and observation of the life of the people being studied. Participant observation entails effort to establish rapport with the cultural members and the researcher has to learn how to act in the community in order to be accepted as part of the social landscape. (Sands 2002, 11, 21, 22.)

The primary method of data collection is the immersion in the site as a participant observer (Merriam 2009, 28). In this research participant observation was also the main research method used. During five months I was paying attention to all my surroundings. In order to remember all peculiar or otherwise important observations I kept an observation diary. Every time something interesting or otherwise worth mentioning occurred, I wrote it down. I was not able to write notes on the set so I

always wrote the diary in the evening at home where I had peace and privacy. I have altogether five pages of typed observations.

During these five months of participant observation I was working as a marketing assistant in a local football club. This allowed me easy access into the Ecuadorian football culture. Those in the club were aware I was conducting a research for a master's thesis but were not informed about my research methods. If I had exposed more details about the methods being used it may have affected their behaviour and overall cooperation. I always thoroughly addressed any questions asked concerning my thesis though careful not to offer any additional information with fear of possibly jeopardising the authenticity of the research. In general, everyone in the club was polite and friendly allowing me to receive all the help I needed.

In my observations I concentrated naturally on female issues. De facto it meant observing the women working in the club: how many women were there and which positions they occupied. This football club did not have a team for women so in that sense working there was a dead end. That, however, served as an observation per se. During my free time I tried to observe as much as possible by going out with my few friends or spending time by myself. Not only football related surroundings answered the purpose of observation but also, for example, a local shopping centre or a school yard when I was picking up my boss's daughter from school. Observations were made everywhere.

Semi-structured interview

During my five months of fieldwork, I completed seven semi-structured interviews. All the interviewed people were women. Five of them worked at the football club in different positions and two of them were players themselves. The five women from the football club were observer-identified interviewees, i.e. people who I decided to interview due to the observation (Sands 2002, 66). I had an interview prepared also for the head of female football of the national football federation, but despite several attempts she did not reply to my request.

A semi-structured interview is a productive way of interviewing. You have somewhat of a structure for the interview with all the questions being open-ended (Merriam 2009, 90). That way the interviewees are able to talk freely without the interviewer guiding their answers in any way. I had 18 questions for my co-workers in the club and 16 for the players (see Appendix 1 and 2). I had separate questions for them because in advance it was presumable that the level of knowledge about the issues I was going to ask differed between the two “target groups” of the interview. I was requested to keep the identity of some of the interviewees and contacts a secret thus only names that I am allowed to publish will be mentioned in the text.

In qualitative research it is almost impossible to estimate beforehand the quantity of data needed (Eskola & Suoranta 1998, 216). In terms of the interviews I reached the saturation point after the seventh interview. Saturation point is the point where a small sample reveals the theoretical pattern and no new information will come out in later interviews (ibid. 63). Thus the number of interviews conducted was enough for this research.

After my observation period was over, more information was still needed. There were a few topics that needed further investigation. Some of the information needed was not available during my observation period. There also was not the possibility to do a face-to-face interview with all the adequate people. Because of these reasons, a couple of enquiries were made via e-mail. An e-mail enquiry was conducted with a personnel worker from the FIFA, a personnel worker from the Finnish Football Federation, a couple of professional football coaches and a Finnish girl, who was an exchange student in Ecuador in 2009-2010. I will publish names of only those persons who did not request me not to. Answering the questions via e-mail can add reflection time that would not be unavailable in a face-to-face interview (Merriam 2009, 158). Due to this, this data is considered to be trustworthy and authentic.

Photographs and newspaper article

All but two of the photographs that are seen in this study are taken by myself that I took during the observation period. The two photographs were given to me, thus I have a permission to use them. The newspaper article used in this research is from Ecuadorian newspaper *El Universo*, which is the most popular newspaper in Ecuador.

Analyzing the data and the structure of the research

After gathering all the data I decided my analyzing method to be that of thematization. In thematization the researcher picks up certain themes that occur in the data and seem essential for the research (Eskola & Suoranta 1998, 176). In analyzing the data for this research, the essential themes were easy to recognize. Thematization requires inductive proceeding from raw data to abstract categories and concepts (Merriam 2009, 17). In thematization the theory and the empiric are in interaction (Eskola & Suoranta 1998, 176). That defines the structure of this research. In following parts of the research we move from introducing the Ecuadorian culture to the different themes that were discovered in the data as the most relevant subjects concerning the research topic.

3. CULTURAL CATEGORIZATION

“[Culture is] the collective programming of the mind that distinguishes the members of one group or category of people from others.”

(Hofstede and Hofstede 2005, 2.)

Culture is learned in a social environment, where at least partly people live and share the same culture. This makes culture a collective phenomenon. (Hofstede and Hofstede 2005, 2.) People living in one culture tend to share same kinds of values and norms. Norms are certain behavioural patterns: they tell people how to act in a social situation. Values on the other hand help people to evaluate their own behaviour and that of others and give them goals to reach and aspects of the environment to which to pay attention to. (Triandis 1994, 15.) As a Finn I feel more at home in Finland than in Ecuador; I feel that in Finland I am understood whereas in Ecuador I need to explain and justify my actions.

The prototypic individuals are in the centre of any description of a culture (Triandis 1994, 8). Focusing on the prototypic individuals gives room to stereotypes. Stereotypes are certain conceptions about the typical characteristics of a group of people which not necessarily are very accurate. There are, however, also accurate stereotypes. They are called *sociotypes*. (Triandis 1994, 107.) Determining national characteristics can cause inaccurate assessments and surprising exceptions but, nevertheless, there is such a thing called as a national norm (Lewis 2006, preface). More about the stereotypes and sociotypes of Ecuadorians will be discussed in chapter 4.1.

Hofstede and Hofstede (2005) have created a figure (Figure 2.) about the way how a culture and its people are built up. First, there is human nature which is inherited and all human beings have in common, like ability to feel fear, anger, love, joy, sadness or shame. We all also need to associate with others. What is modified by culture, is how these feelings and needs are expressed. (Hofstede and Hofstede 2005, 4-5.)

Ecuadorians, for example, show their feelings more openly than Finns. They are also noisy and somehow unsettled, whereas Finns try to avoid being conspicuous.

Second, there is culture. It is specific to a group or category and it is learned. Every person has his/her patterns of thinking, feeling and potential acting which are result of a lifetime learning. Early childhood is the most susceptible time to learn and assimilate; that is when many cultural patterns are acquired and learned. On the top of the diagram there still is personality. Personality is something unique for all individuals. It does not need to be shared with other human beings and it is a mixture of both inherited and learned characteristics for a human being or a culture. It is important to distinguish culture from human nature on one side and from an individual's personality on the other (Hofstede and Hofstede 2005, 2-5.)

The visible part of cultures is called *practices*. We learn new practices throughout our lifetime and they are rather easy to change, which accelerates a possible culture change. On the other hand values and norms, like already mentioned earlier, are learned in the childhood and they are deeply rooted. Many values can also be unconscious. Therefore culture change concerning these deeper sectors of a culture is slow. (Hofstede and Hofstede 2005, 10, 12-13.)

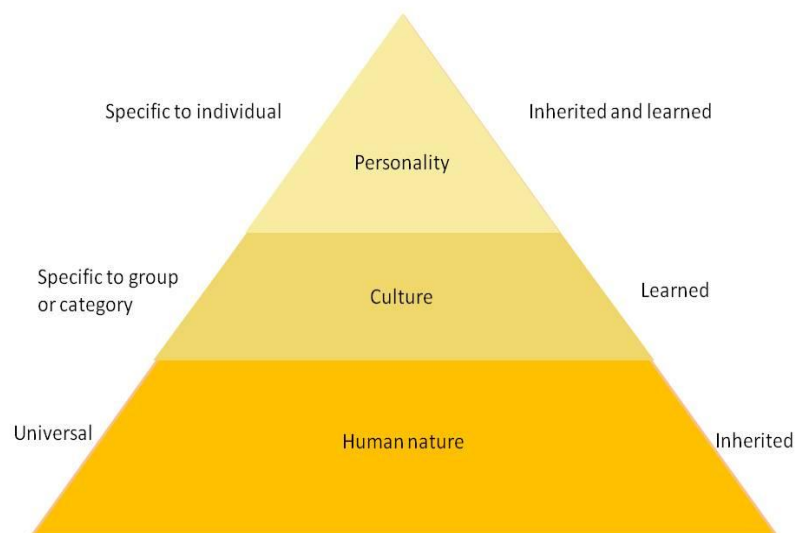


Figure 2. Three levels of uniqueness in mental programming (Hofstede and Hofstede 2005, 4.)

When various geographical regions have a rather similar culture with each other, these regions are called “culture regions” (Triandis 1994, 19). Therefore we are entitled to call South America a culture region, so similar are the South Americans with each other. They share the same language, family structure, religion and even same kind of values, which makes cultural distance minimal (Triandis 1994, 33). This can be also said about Northern Europe: Scandinavia can be considered as another culture region.

South American cultures and Ecuadorian culture specifically are collectivist cultures. In a collectivist culture the interest of the group wins over the interest of the individual. An individual’s personal goals are put aside. In collectivist societies people live in *extended families*: they consist of more than just parents and other children. Grandparents, uncles, aunts and cousins live closely together. (Hofstede and Hofstede 2005, 74-75.) It is very usual to call distantly related relatives as aunts, uncles and cousins and as a foreigner it is difficult to keep track of the real family ties.

Individuals of a collectivist culture are more likely to behave according to norms, roles and customs. They are more concerned about behaving appropriately than about doing what they would like to do. They are also more concerned with virtuous action like harmony or saving the other’s face than with the truth. (Triandis 1994, 4, 107, 191.) The conception of truth was one of the most difficult aspects for me to adapt in the Ecuadorian culture. As a Finn I think that the truth is always the best solution even if it hurts. In Ecuador, however, people try to avoid hurting people with lies, not realizing that the pain caused after the truth is revealed is multiplied. In the long run not being able to trust the people around you can be very frustrating and tiring. (Observation diary.)

In a collectivist society friendships are not especially important, because one’s friends are mostly prearranged by the family (Hofstede and Hofstede 2005, 81). For this reason, among other things, it was difficult for me to make new friends in Ecuador. People from collectivist cultures also tend to trust only those they know best: family members or one or two close, lifetime friends. This is why these groups are called *low-trust cultural groups*. (Lewis 2006, 146.)

A very important observation concerning collectivist and individualist cultures is that people in collectivist cultures rather change themselves or their behaviour to conform to the environment whereas people in individualist cultures more likely try to change the environment (Triandis 1994, 111-112). This applies perfectly to my study: in my point of view the Ecuadorian women are conforming to the current situation of their culture and there are only few women who are willing to try and change the environment. It is exactly this attitude that distinguishes others from their Ecuadorian counterparts and can be considered as one of the reasons behind the slow development of Ecuadorian female football.

Besides individualist and collectivist, cultures can be divided also into masculine and feminine cultures. A human being can be at the same time both masculine and feminine, but a culture of a country is principally one or the other. Masculine countries have different standards for men and women, mainly men being the subjects and women the objects. (Hofstede and Hofstede 2005, 125, 134.) South America and Ecuador particularly is a masculine culture.

4. THE ROLE OF WOMEN IN ECUADORIAN SOCIETY

The role of women in Ecuadorian society will be introduced by two main categories: gender equality and perception of a woman. These categories are a result of the interviews conducted in Ecuador in autumn 2009 and were chosen using thematization. These following themes are those that were easily recognized from the interviews and occurred various times – in a way or another – during an interview. In the interviews football was the main topic, but gender (in)equality in the country arose as one of the main issues. Subsequent to the interviews it became evident that Ecuadorian women also have a certain perception of how an Ecuadorian woman should be and that perception differs to some extent from the Western perception. These two aspects comprehensively form the role of women in Ecuadorian society which simultaneously elucidate why female football is not popular in the country.

This chapter will be divided into three parts according to the particular themes with their subcategories starting with gender equality. Gender equality will be followed by the description of gender equality in sports and the explanation of perception of an Ecuadorian woman. The chapter ends concluding the mentioned themes with the meaning of sport in the lives of Ecuadorian women. Some comments of the interviewees will be added into the text.

4.1 Gender equality in Ecuador

“Uff, muy marcada, aquí no hay igualdad.”

“Uff, very rigid, equality does not exist here.” (Interviewee 1.)

(The answer of an interviewee when asked to comment on gender equality in Ecuador.)

The Gender Gap Report

In 2006, The World Economic Forum introduced the Gender Gap Index to be able to capture “the magnitude and scope of gender-based disparities and tracking their progress” (The Gender Gap Report 2010, 3). From 2006 on, The World Economic Forum has annually published a Gender Gap Report, where the gender-based disparities are being discussed and their progress confirmed. In 2010 in the report there were 134 countries represented which makes over 90% of the world’s population (ibid). According to Klaus Schwab, the founder and executive chairman of World Economic Forum, the recovery process of the recent recession will need the skills and talent of women. As he states: “Girls and women make up one half of the world’s population – without their engagement, empowerment and contribution, we cannot hope to effectively meet these challenges nor achieve rapid economic recovery” (The Gender Gap Report 2009, 7).

In the report each country is ranked according to its overall performance in closing the gender gap and each country is given a ranking on a scale from 0 (inequality) to 1 (equality). The data has been collected from each participating country by four sub indexes that are 1) Economic Participation and Opportunity, 2) Educational Attainment, 3) Health and Survival and 4) Political Empowerment. These four sub indexes are divided into 14 different indicators, such as Literacy rate, Wage equality for similar work or Women in parliament. Each country must have available data for at least 12 indicators to be included in the report. (The Gender Gap Report 2010.)

In 2010 Ecuador ranked 40th after three years of improvement from the 82nd place in 2006 to 23rd in 2009 (Table 1). Ecuador had improved significantly in terms of gender equality between 2006 and 2009, however, the results of the Gender Gap Report from 2010 show how the situation has gotten worse Ecuador ranking only 40th. (The Gender Gap Report 2010.) Closing the gap three consecutive years but dropping back crucially after the fourth gives an impression of a rather fortuitous and incidental than a sustainable development.

Table 1. The development of gender equality in Ecuador 2006-2010
(The Gender Gap Report 2010)

YEAR	GENDER GAP INDEX	RANKING
2006	0.643	82
2007	0.688	44
2008	0.709	35
2009	0.722	23
2010	0.707	40

According to the report, education and health are the two aspects of the Ecuadorian society that can be considered equal, as the Figure 3 indicates (in the figure it is almost impossible to tell them apart). The reason behind the decrease in gender equality in Ecuador in 2010 is mostly due to economical and political reasons.

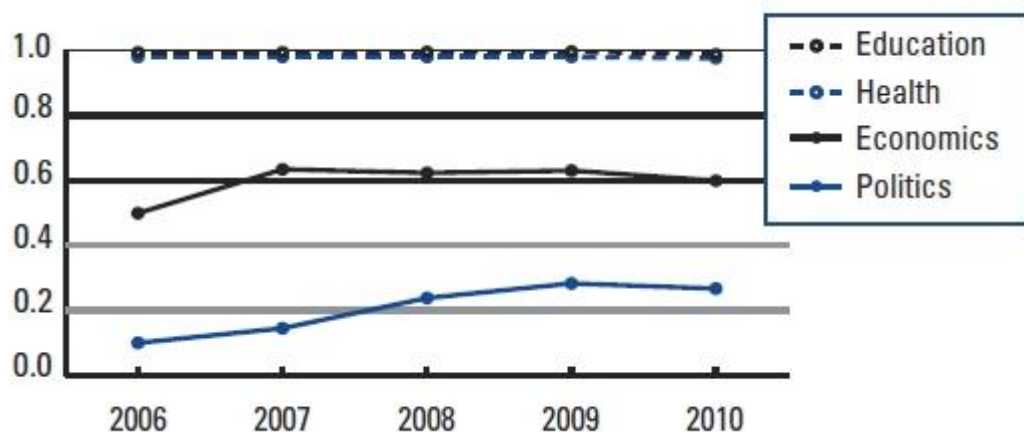


Figure 3. Equality ratios in different fields of the Ecuadorian society (Gender Gap Report 2010)

According to Gender Gap Report 2009, there is a clear correlation between the Gender Gap Index and nation's GDP per capita. In other words, gender equality is dependent on the level of development of nations. (The Gender Gap Report 2009.) The poorer part of the world, as long as the country remains poor, the swift towards more feminine values seems unlikely (Hofstede and Hostede 2005, 162). Striving for the gender equality is important for a nation's competitiveness and development. Therefore the female talent should be taken advantaged of and women should be given the same rights and opportunities as men. (The Gender Gap Report 2009.) Women differ from men by their personalities and characteristics and therefore their input as labour force can be significant (see 4.3).

One sociotype concerning Ecuador is the inequality between men and women. Ecuadorian women have lacked equality of opportunity in comparison with Ecuadorian men. Ecuador can be considered as a patriarchal culture, where men dominate women. Women are allied with Nature and to their reproductive roles and positions at home as mothers and wives. (Hargreaves 1994, 31, 43.) Like the Gender Gap Report shows, the situation is slowly changing, like one of the interviewees states:

“Ya no pasa en su casa cocinando, planchando... O sea ya que como un poco se ha aflojado eso, pero el hombre igual tiene su machismo muy, muy asentado si.”

“[An Ecuadorian woman] does not stay at home cooking and ironing anymore... I mean, that has changed a little, but a man still persists with the machismo, yes.”
(Interviewee 1.)

The Victorian ideal of the sexual division of labour constituted of a woman's role in the family as wife, mother and housekeeper. The woman's work-role has always been secondary. There is a qualitative difference in the psychological experience of being male or female which causes gender stereotyping in everyday life of many families. From the surrounding world – in relationships with other members of their family and neighbours, for example - children quickly understand the meaning of being a boy or a girl. (Hargreaves 1994, 51, 148.)

A social world full of cultural signs of sexual difference makes it difficult for children to behave like their biological sex would not be congruent with their gender (Hargreaves 1994, 148). Masculinity and femininity are products of social learning or socialization that are constructed in interaction (Connell 2005, 22, 35). In some families there has been a transformation of gender relations, but in many others traditional gender divisions based on male physical and economic power still persist. Although the number of working women is increasing, the idea of women's proper place being at home remains significant. The differences between gender roles are very hard to change, if they are institutionalized and left unchallenged. (Hargreaves 1994, 154, 186.) In Ecuador, 39 percent of the total labor force is in non-agricultural paid labor and the ability of women to rise to positions of enterprise leadership is seen low. There are no exact numbers of the Ecuadorian women who go to work, but the female-to-male ratio from the Gender Gap Report 2010 shows the situation of working women compared to men. (Gender Gap Report 2010). Comparing the female-to-male ratio of Ecuador with the female-to-male ratio of Finland, it is evident that the gender equality in terms of labor force participation of Ecuadorian women is significantly behind from their Finnish counterparts (Figure 4).

LABOR FORCE PARTICIPATION

ECUADOR	FINLAND
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Female-to-male ratio 0.61 <p style="text-align: center;">0.00 = inequality 1.00 = equality</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Ranking in the Gender Gap Report 2010: 100</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Female-to-male ratio 0.96 <p style="text-align: center;">0.00 = inequality 1.00 = equality</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Ranking in the Gender Gap Report 2010: 5</p>

Figure 4. Labor force participation in Ecuador and Finland (Gender Gap Report 2010)

The trend is, only with few exceptions, for men to hold authority posts and for women to occupy lower-status positions. Women holding high-status positions are in a minority and they cannot solve the problem of inequality unless being presented in approximately equal numbers with men. (Hargreaves 1994, 198, 199, 208.) In Ecuador, like in other Latin American countries as well, the pressure of the colonizers reshaped the gender consequences of local culture and the population was made into a subordinated labour force. It has been suggested that the conquistadors provided the model and ideology of female abnegation and economic oppression (Connell 2005, 198). The female independence started to increase before the First World War with a steady expansion of women's employment and since then the relationship between a man and a woman and the idealized model of a respectable family – a man being the 'head of the house' - has been changing. (Hargreaves 1994, 50, 51.) One of the interviewees describes the current situation in terms of gender equality in Ecuador as follows:

“Profesionalmente, yo creo que esto [igualdad entre géneros] se ha superado muchísimo [...] no le voy a negar que a todo nivel, al nivel ecuatoriano pues sigue habiendo un poco de discriminación. Porque las mujeres tienen que dedicarle tiempo a su familia, de repente tienen un embarazo en medio de un trabajo, entonces hay empresas que prefieren los hombres. Porque los hombres se quedan hasta cualquier hora, porque los hombres no se embarazan, porque no tienen este, mensualmente un periodo de tres días que les cambia el genio, entonces sí, se [discriminación] sigue todavía. En éste sentido solicitando, mejor que sea hombre.”

“Professionally, I think it [gender equality] has become greater [...] I will not deny, however, that in Ecuador inequality still would not exist because women have to dedicate their time for the family, suddenly they can get pregnant while they are employed so that's why there are companies that prefer men. Men can stay working late, men don't get pregnant, they don't get mood swings every month, so yes, it [discrimination] still exists. In this sense it would be better to be a man.” (Interviewee 2.)

Despite a greater gender equality the fact is that taking care of the children and household still remain primarily a responsibility of women. Especially in masculine cultures, women possess the power at home and in some cases they are not willing to give that up. (Vehviläinen & Itkonen 2009, 103.) That together with the conforming typical to collectivist cultures (see Chapter 3.), does not accelerate the development towards gender equality in the Ecuadorian society.

Machismo

It cannot be generalized that all Latin Americans are the same. There is, however, a common quality that distinguishes the Latinos from the rest of the people. Stereotypical characteristics for Latinos are, among other things, extrovert behaviour, loquacity, volatility, openly expressed emotions, a quick temper balanced by ready compassion, love of gossip and capacity for intrigue and conspiracy. (Lewis 2006, 521-522.) Like mentioned in Chapter 3, some accurate stereotypes can be called sociotypes. According to my experiences in Ecuador, the previous characteristics could be regarded more as sociotypes than stereotypes.

Men in Latin America and all Spanish-speaking countries are often characterized as macho. The word has become a popular term in most discussions of men and masculinities in Latin America. Throughout the world, machismo is used as a common expression for sexism (Gutmann and Viveros Vigoya in Kimmel et al. 2005, 123.)

Maybe the oldest justification for male dominance is from the Bible, where Eva is told to have been made from Adam's rib. The text gives priority to the male partner and defines the woman appropriate for the man. (Hofstede and Hofstede 2005, 157.) A more earthly explanation of the origin of machismo is given by Richard Lewis who claims that machismo is a Moor-influenced phenomenon that the Spaniards inherited from their non-Roman conquerors and imported to Central and South America (Lewis 2006, 522).

Alfredo Mirandé (1979) distinguishes negative and positive macho conceptions. The negative conception shows the man as a partying, drinking, fighting and womanizing

male whereas the positive way of being a macho is associated with self-respect, dignity and honour. (Mirande et al. 2010, 3.) In a working environment some ‘macho characteristics’ can be an asset.

It is claimed that machismo is largely a class-based rather than culturally based phenomenon. It appears more frequently among poor and uneducated, working-class men. (Mirandé et al. 2010, 20.) According to Peter M. Beattie, machismo as a whole is only an exaggerated stereotype (Beattie 2002, 303). Nonetheless, the Latin men are having problems with constructing a self-image that corresponds their own identities but also the social expectations of a man (Viveros Vigoya 2001, 239). All in all, machismo is a very diverse phenomenon that cannot be explained with a monolithic model, because there is a wide range of different masculinities among Latino men (Mirandé et al. 2010, 22). Football having “working class roots”, a conclusion could be drawn that the football surroundings would be even more macho. According to my observations, I would strongly disagree with that thought. Ecuadorian culture is equal macho everywhere. The machismo inside or outside a football field, however, may have an influence on women and their interest and perception of female football.

4.2 Gender equality in sports

“To feminize a male athlete’s ability is an insult, whereas to masculinise a female athlete’s performance is complimentary.”

(Faye Linda Wachs 2006, 45.)

Sports is an area where gender roles are re-established and confirmed (Clarke and Critscher in Hargreaves 1994, 33-34). The inequalities between men and women in sports have been defended by biological ideas that construct social ideas about gender. When men and boys were seen to play sports and women not, it confirmed this to be the ‘natural’ order of things. (Hargreaves 1994, 43.) In Ecuador, if I saw females doing sports, they were most of the time school girls at a PE class.

Men’s greater sporting prowess serves as symbolic proof of men’s superiority and right to rule. Recently, sport has become the leading definer of masculinity in mass culture

displaying continuously men's bodies in motion. The exemplary status of sport as a test of masculinity is by no means natural. (Connell 2005, 30, 54.)

According to some social scientists, girls are socialized to behave in feminine-appropriate ways. This socialization, which starts at birth, explains the differences between genders in displays of aggression and competitiveness. Besides displaying aggression and competitiveness differently, children learn attitudes towards sports that are affected by the gender relations in the home. (Hargreaves 1994, 9, 147, 185.) If men go to play football after work, women stay at home with the children. Sometimes a dad might take his son with him, but girls stay at home with their mothers. (Observation diary.)

The rooted perception that women are not good athletes hinders the acceptances of women's sports (Burriss 2006, 85). Men are generally stronger, speedier and more powerful than women but in sports men and women are still constantly being compared. Gender relations in sports are hard to change due to the strong connection they have with other social practices like those in the family, the school, the media and the state. These relations of power pervade the structure and culture of sports organizations themselves. (Hargreaves 1994, 208, 283.) It is not only the opinion of men, but a woman herself can regard herself as a worse athlete on the grounds of gender differences.

The public consciousness about gender is shaped by the sports media. The media are supposed to be unbiased but nevertheless, especially the sports media, present a gendered view. Women's sports in the press, on television and radio are under-represented (Hargreaves 1994, 193, 196, 197.) According to Cheryl Cooky, women's sports represents approximately 8 percent of all sports newscasts on the networks in Los Angeles (Cooky 2006, 99). Americans think they do not like women's sports, because the media has not convinced them that they should (Burriss 2006, 86). In Ecuador the sport news were fully covered with news about men (and mostly about football) – not even once during the five months I saw women in the sport news.

The audience cannot expect to have women's sports represented in the media because it has never had the opportunity – it does not know what it is missing. If female athletes are represented in the media, predominantly by male media, they are described by their physical desirability to men or by their domestic roles as wives and mothers (Messner 2007, 41). Therefore it is reasonable to say that sports media professionals reinforce rather than undermine gender inequalities (Hargreaves 1994, 198). Poor media coverage and small audience cause a great obstacle for women's sports: the lack of commercial sponsors (Carmichael Aitchison 2003, 99). So called 'female-appropriate' sports are more likely to be supported by sponsors than women who play traditional male sports. The fact that the number of women participating in sports is increasing rapidly, is overrun by poor media coverage and financial support (Hargreaves 1994, 203-204.) In contemporary Finland, women are actually doing more sports than men (The Finnish National Sport Survey 2009-2010). Broader media coverage would be free marketing for female football and arise interest in women, whose lack of interest could actually be lack of knowledge:

“Si uno no escucha nada de eso [fútbol femenino], entonces no va a tener interés.”

“If you don't hear anything about [female football], you can't become interested in it.”

(Interviewee 5.)

“Creo que es un poco desconocimiento, nada más [porque las mujeres no juegan al fútbol].”

“I think it's just lack of knowledge, that's all [why women do not play football].”

(Interviewee 4.)

In her doctoral thesis Riitta Pirinen (2006) divides the lack of media coverage of female athletes into two categories: marginalized athletes and trivialized athletes. Marginalization of female athletes in the media means simply smaller representation of female athletes in the sport news. Female athletes appear seldom in the sport pages of a newspaper, and when they do, they very seldom get to the front page. There are also few photos or figures illustrating the news. (Pirinen 2006, 37-38.)

By trivialization Pirinen means the ways how the sports media underestimate the accomplishments of female athletes. When there is a piece of news about some female athlete and her triumph, it is commonly accompanied with belittled commentaries about the level of the competition being very low. The centre of attraction is often led from the results to failures and the overall sound of the news is negative. Also the appearance of female athletes hit the news and they are described as ‘girls’ even if they were adult women. (Pirinen 2006, 41.)

One factor behind the hindering of women’s sports is men who hold controlling and decision-making positions and are therefore able to monopolize resources (Hargreaves 1994, 125). To ensure the progress towards gender equality in sports, more women are needed in leisure policy (Carmichael Aitchison 2003, 86). In the football club, where I was doing the internship, the women working there were secretaries or worked at accounting. The board of the club consisted of 20 business men. (Observation diary.)

4.3 Perception of a woman

In his book called “The Principles of Biology” (1867), Herbert Spencer argued that the most progressive and efficient form of human organization was that the women stayed at home devoting themselves to child-bearing and rearing (Spencer in Hargreaves 1994, 46). He was a strong supporter of the monogamous nuclear family and thought that women should be relieved of duties outside the home in order to save their energy for the family. During the nineteenth century, the concept of the ‘nature of woman’ became material reality after it was integrated into people’s attitudes and behaviour – even women themselves started believing in their own inferiority (Hargreaves 1994, 47), like one of the interviewees proved:

“Diferencia sí, en cuanto, una a la tecnica, bueno porque normalmente las mujeres no tenemos la tecnica de un jugador o la resistencia... No sé si duramos 90 minutos ahí dando vueltas.”

“There’s a difference in technique, well, because normally women don’t have the same technique or the endurance than a man... I don’t know if we can hold out 90 minutes running around.” (Interviewee 1.)

Sports were a symbol of masculinity, expressing manly virtues like courage, aggression and the competitive instinct. These characteristics were not suitable for women. A muscular physique was held ‘unwomanly’ – frailty and lack of appetite, however, were considered as attractive and normal. The physiological benefits were completely overlooked. (Hargreaves 1994, 55, 108, 146.) Ecuadorian women still tend to think which activities and characteristics are suitable for women:

“Todavía nosotros tratamos de cuidar, que las damitas, que las chicas, no son groseras y ese tipo de cosas.”

“We are still trying to avoid women or girls to be rude and that sort of things[that can be considered masculine]” (Interviewee 2.)

Margaret MacNeill claims that children learn automatically which activities are more appropriate for girls and which are more suitable for boys. The ways children are socialized at home shape even their future leisure patterns. (MacNeill in Hargreaves 1994, 198.) The girls are trained to service others: looking after younger siblings or helping with the domestic chores. Boys, on the other hand, are free of those tasks. The uneven sexual division of labour in the home can be held responsible for an uneven sexual division of leisure. (Hargreaves 1994, 149, 185.)

Young females fail to see varied and vigorously athletic images of women in the sports media, because we are bombarded with stereotypes of male athletes. If there is an image of a female athlete, it is most likely a sexualised one. There is a rather persistent idea that female sexuality is more important than sporting ability. (Hargreaves 1994, 165, 196.)

Women that do sports for the enjoyment of exercise and for the social interaction with others are in the minority compared to women who exercise in order to get a beautiful body. Featherstone (1982) aptly calls exercising as “sexercising”. (Featherstone in Hargreaves 1994, 160.) The term ‘sexercising’ is very descriptive. The only females I saw doing sports in Ecuador besides the school girls at their PE class were working women who came to the gym before going to work. One of the interviewees told me the reasons why she did not do sports. She had one exception, though:

“Por el trabajo. Bueno el gimnasio sí, lo mantengo, el gimnasio sí lo estoy manteniendo bastante, pero por el trabajo, estudios, por tiempo.”

“Because of work. Well, I go to the gym, I go to the gym pretty often, but because of work, studies, lack of time.” (Interviewee 5.)

Football is an obvious symbol of manliness and sexy women holding them send a provocative message: ‘real’ sports are for men and women are for excitement and arousal. Female muscularity is seen as a sign of masculinisation and for many women it is important to ‘keep in shape’ in order to attract the opposite sex. To ‘keep in shape’, women tend to favour those forms of physical activity which improve the body and enhance attractiveness. It is rather common to have surgical operations, go on liquid diets or exercise compulsively. (Hargreaves 1994, 156, 161, 167, 169.) It is said that one picture says more than thousand words. The woman in Photograph 1 is a wife of a former Ecuadorian football player and her photographs are openly seen on the internet.



Photograph 1. An Ecuadorian WAG – originally an English term for footballers’ wives and girlfriends (Private communication 11.2.2010)

Physical power and muscularity do not go together with the image of conventional femininity. Female athletes that have a muscular body, small breasts and who not necessarily fulfill the usual insignia of conventional femininity, can come across insinuations about defeminization. (Hargreaves 1994, 170, 171.) In order to avoid that, Ecuadorian women tend to look beautiful and wear jewelry when exercising, as noticed by the Finnish exchange student:

“Naiset tulivat peleihin urheilullisen oloisina, verkkareissa ja lenkkareissa. Mutta hiuksia oli laitettu ja koruja löytyi.”

“Women came to matches looking sporty, in sweat pants and sneakers. They had put their hair beautifully and were also wearing jewelry, though.” (Private communication with Minka Vekkeli, a Finnish exchange student in Ecuador, 19.7.2010.)

Not only in the football field, but especially in the audience it is important to look beautiful (photograph 2). Women pay a lot of attention to the way they look when they come to see a football match. All being similarly dressed, women try to find ways to stand out from the crowd.



Photograph 2. A female football fan adding lip gloss in the audience (Ruuskanen 2009a)

Homosexuality

Being labelled lesbian is a deep fear of many heterosexual sportswomen (Hargreaves 1994, 261). In Latin America, masculinity is often associated with heterosexuality while homosexuality is associated with femininity and passivity (Viveros Vigoya 2001, 253). Homosexuality seems to be a threat to masculine norms and therefore it is largely rejected in masculine cultures (Hofstede and Hofstede 2005, 135). In Ecuador this can be seen in the form of jokes and disrespectful speech about homosexuals. For example, gays and lesbians are not openly seen in public as frequently as they are in Finland. (Observation diary.)

Nearly 1,700 female athletes from the United States were asked about the relationship with sport and femininity. 57% of the interviewees claimed there still exists a dynamic tension between the image of an active, strong and even muscular woman and traditional prescription for femininity. However, 94% of the same female athletes interviewed stated that athletic participation was not threatening their femininity. (Messner 2007, 38, 39.) Ecuadorian women, however, do fear a decrease in their femininity:

“El cuerpo desarrolla otra forma ya no tan femenina, y aparte nuestros medios queremos conservar esa estética y esa imagen femenina.”

“The body develops in a different way which is not that feminine anymore, and we do not want to lose the aesthetics and the feminine look.” (Interviewee 2.)

Such as football and rugby, which can be considered as aggressive team sports, are some of the fastest-growing female sports (Hargreaves 1994, 109). Birgit Palzkill (1990) claims lesbians to be attracted to sports like football because it requires characteristics that oppose the popular images of femininity (Palzkill in Hargreaves 1994, 109). Women participating in ‘men’s sports’ reduces its power in defining masculinity and at the same time threatens the dominant images of femininity (Hargreaves 1994, 253). In Finland, however, ‘men’s sports’ are popular among women as well and football is the most popular sport played by Finnish children – both boys

and girls (The Finnish National Sport Survey 2009-2010). Conversely, most of the interviewed Ecuadorian women thought football to be a too rough sport for females:

“Lo [el fútbol] veo un poco fuerte como para una mujer. No me he atrevido porque creo que una patada no aguanto.”

“I think it [football] is a bit too rough for a woman. I haven't ventured to play because I wouldn't bear if someone kicked me.” (Interviewee 1.)

“Bueno, es un deporte muy fuerte para una mujer, para nosotras. Nosotras pensamos que las mujeres como que son más delicadas, entonces es un deporte tal vez muy grosero.”

“Well, it's a very rough sport for a woman, for us. We think that because we are more delicate than men, it's maybe a too vigorous of a sport.” (Interviewee 5.)

“Lo [el fútbol] consideran más un deporte para hombres, porque a veces, muchas veces es como grosero en el momento que patean y todo eso. Entonces las mujeres pueden salir lastimándose.”

“We consider it [football] a sport for men, because sometimes, many times it's vigorous when they kick and stuff. So many women could get hurt if they played.” (Interviewee 3.)

5. THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN FOOTBALL AND ECUADORIAN WOMEN

This chapter describes the Ecuadorian football culture and especially the relationship that Ecuadorian women have with football both as players and fans. Knowing the history helps us to understand the present – therefore in the beginning the historical aspect of women's sports and female football will be shortly introduced. Since I had not received a reply to my questions from the Football Federation of Ecuador, all the information concerning Ecuadorian female football has been taken from the web page of the federation.

5.1 A peek of history of women's sports and female football

In order to understand the subordination of women in sports, it is valuable to know something about the history of women's sports. In the nineteenth century sports were considered as the 'natural' domain of men and it was a symbol of masculinity and chauvinism, displaying physical power and competitiveness. Being good at sports was to be effectively masculine. (Hargreaves 1994, 37, 43.) In Ecuador, this perception is to some extent still valid.

Women's sport participation started to grow worldwide in the early 1970s (Messner 2007, 2). Physical education and the early forms of organized sports for females, however, had been established already in the late nineteenth century. The idea for 'feminine-appropriate' and 'masculine-appropriate' sports has a historical basis; the pattern of sex-role stereotyping in sports was established quite early as well. Another form of sexism in sport was the pervasive belief in innate biological and psychological differences between the sexes. For that reason the development of women's sports was hindered for years to come. (Hargreaves 1994, 30, 43.) Football, especially, is easily regarded as 'masculine-appropriate' sport in some parts of the world even today.

Victorian and Edwardian sports generated and reproduced patriarchal assumptions and were preserves of masculinity. The 'sport feminism' started in the early twentieth century, when both working-class and middle-class women got increasing opportunities to do sports. In general, the home and domestic labour and mothering still limited women's leisure, and the balance of power between men and women in sports has always been uneven. (Hargreaves 1994, 35, 42.) Today the situation is more equal but in South America inequality of opportunity is still to be seen.

One major factor behind the progress of women's sports was development in female education in the end of the nineteenth century. After women gained access to paid employment, women's involvement in sports increased at the same time with their growing independence and social position. However, apparently detrimental effects of female exercise were still published and they continued to have credibility, which effected on female participation in sports still in the twentieth century. (Hargreaves 1994, 50, 105, 108.)

It has officially been acknowledged that any biological differences between the sexes cannot restrict women's participation in sports. Nonetheless women have diverse cultural and economic resources and depending on their background, they might experience the gender-based inequalities differently. After all, women are not a homogeneous group and they do not share same needs and desires. (Hargreaves 1994, 188, 240.) In Latin culture, for example, machismo and aggressive competitiveness can be reasons why women avoid sports. They prefer another setting that coincides more with their values and life-styles (Hargreaves 1994, 242).

Football was brought to Latin America by the English in the end of the nineteenth century (Biriotti del Burgo 1995, 53). Football was established in locations where the British had a strong commercial presence, i.e. in Europe and in Latin America. In the beginning of 20th century many young English women moved to towns and villages after a job which ensured them new opportunities for leisure. Astonishingly, football became the third most popular form of leisure of those women, after dancing and swimming. (Eisenberg et al. 2004, 44, 184.) Among Latin American women, football or sports in general has never been a popular form of leisure.

The first international women's football match was played between England and France in Paris in 1920. FIFA, however, was very sceptical towards female football for a long time. It was not until the early 1980s that FIFA's opinion towards female football started changing and they decided to develop international football for women. Female football was getting more popular and it became indispensable for FIFA to show that it was the controlling body for all football. (Eisenberg et al. 2004, 185, 191.) The popularity of female football at least in Ecuador is growing and proceeding so slowly, which raises the question if the national football federation and FIFA are motivated enough to enhance its diffusion. Anyhow, the development of female football has started almost 80 years later than the men's game started to become popular, thus the contemporary popularity of female football is understandable.

Female football surely has had and still has its difficulties in developing and becoming more popular around the world. First it was difficult to find enough women to play and after finding enough women, there were no coaches. Not many coaches wanted to train a female team. There also were few female teams which meant large distances and more expenses for the teams. The difference in quality of the players and teams was wide. The lack of appreciation was not helping the development, either. (Itkonen & Vehviläinen 2009, 52, 55, 66.) In a masculine culture like Ecuador, the gender of the coach can also have an influence in the number of participation. For some women training with a male coach can be an obstacle:

“Tal vez más mujeres como profesoras de este deporte, tal vez así las mujeres se interesarían mas por esto.”

“Maybe if there were more female coaches, maybe then more women would be interested in playing football.” (Interviewee 3.)

Female football developed the fastest in the US, Germany, Sweden and Norway, where the national football federations were supporting female football giving them financial, administrative and coaching support. Football becoming a part of the school curriculum for girls was considered important in introducing the game for girls and that way making it easier for them to join a club. (Itkonen & Vehviläinen 2009, 26, 94.) USA, Germany, Sweden and Norway are all individualist cultures where women are more

equal with men compared with their counterparts in collectivist, masculine cultures. This can have a correlation with the number of female football players. In Ecuador, football is already part of the school curriculum but basketball, for example, is more popular among school girls than football (observation diary).

The first FIFA Women's World Cup was held in China in 1991 (Eisenberg et al. 2004, 228). Today there are a half a million of female players which is a tremendous minority compared to men with 12,5 million players. The differences are more uneven in Latin America, where – as well as in Asia and Africa – a very low number of women are playing football compared to women in Europe and North America. In general, football continues to be very much of a male domain. (Eisenberg et al. 2004, 201.) We have to bear in mind that, compared to men's football that was established more than 100 years ago, women's football could not have developed very far only within a couple of decades.

5.2 Female football in Ecuador

The governing body of football in Ecuador is the national football federation: la Federación Ecuatoriana de Fútbol (FEF). It was established in 1925 although football had arrived in Ecuador already in 1899 by Juan Alfredo Wright, who had lived in England and learned the game there. FEF affiliated with FIFA in 1926 and a national league for men was established in 1957. (Ecuadorian Football Federation.) The men's national team has participated the FIFA World Cup twice: in 2002 and 2006. In 2009 Ecuador did not qualify for the 2010 World Cup in South Africa (Photograph 3). (FIFA official webpage.) The World Cups of 2002 and 2006 have increased the popularity of football in the country from before (observation diary).



Photograph 3. The men's national team of Ecuador before the last preliminary match against Uruguay for the 2010 World Cup in October 2009 (Ruuskanen 2009b)

FEF has a national team for women (Photograph 4) but women do not have a national league of their own like men do. According to the data collected for this research, the knowledge about female football in Ecuador is very modest. Very few women know about the existence of a national team for women, for example. One of the interviewees told me that if more Ecuadorian women would be interested in playing football, the federation certainly would find a team for women:

“Yo creo que si las mujeres les ponen más interés, la federación ecuatoriana sí podría lanzar un equipo de fútbol femenino.”

“I think that if more women were interested in playing football, the Ecuadorian federation would find a female team.” (Interviewee 3.)

There is a minor threshold in searching information about female football. If the information is not given through the media or marketing, people will not look for the information off their own bat – it needs to be delivered for them:

“No tengo información a la mano [sobre fútbol femenino en Ecuador], y no voy a irlo a buscar tampoco.”

“I do not have knowledge [about female football in Ecuador], and I would not search for it either.” (Interviewee 5.)



Photograph 4. The Ecuador female national team at their practise (Ruuskanen 2009c)

Growth of female football in Ecuador has started very recently: before the year 2002, in Ecuador there were no registered female players. Thus the development of women’s football in Ecuador has started not even a decade ago. (FIFA – Women’s Football Today.) One of the problems in sport is the pursuit of results: people have little patience supporting a sport or team which does not achieve quick, concrete results. A typical characteristic for Ecuadorians is impatience: the concept of time differs from ours. They find it difficult to plan and carry through long-term projects. (Observation diary.) This quotation describes well the oversized expectations of Ecuadorians:

“Tenemos una selección de fútbol femenino, pero no cumple pues con las expectativas que todos deseáramos como a nivel de Europa por ejemplo.”

“We have women’s national team but it doesn’t correspond with the expectations we have for them, the same level they have in Europe, for example.” (Interviewee 2.)

This interviewee did apparently not know that the development of female football has started in Ecuador about 30 years later than in Europe, thus the comparison between Ecuador and Europe is not reasonable.

As the head of female football in the Ecuadorian football federation did not deliver the asked information for me, all the information considering female football in Ecuador has been gathered from the official web pages of FEF and FIFA and the interviews conducted in Ecuador in autumn 2009. Interestingly, there are a few differences in the knowledge offered in the internet, which the interviews confirm. First, according to FIFA, FEF has a full-time staff dedicated for women's football. According to one of the interviewees and FEF's own web page, this is not true. It is said in the web page of FEF that the head of female football is responsible for the national teams *including* women's national team. According to one female player:

“Ella también se encarga de las divisiones de los varones las inferiores... y la FEF no tiene una división para nosotras.”

“She is responsible for the youth national teams [U-20 etc.]... and FEF does not have its own division dedicated for us.” (Interviewee 4.)

Another contradiction was found in the number of registered players. According to FIFA, in Ecuador there were 377 registered female players in 2006. In the web page of FEF there is a database of the female players, and after counting each player from every province presented, the total amount of players was 280 (The official web page of FEF). One explanation for this could be that the amount of registered female players has dropped in four years with 97 players. However, in FIFA's statistics the number of registered female players in Ecuador in 2005 was only 7 players (FIFA – Women's Football Today). The information for FIFA's Women's Football Today was gathered through a survey submitted by the FIFA Member Associations, called as a 'FIFA Big Count' (private communication with Mayrilian Cruz Blanco, the Women's Football Development Manager in FIFA, 28.5.2010). This means that FIFA has the statistics but not the information behind it and every member association could give the type of information they feel 'necessary' to give. How this massive growth from 2005 to 2006

can be explained? This was one of the questions that the head of female football in the Ecuadorian football federation did not answer.

The 377 registered female players – whether this figure is accurate or not – is anyway very small. As a point of comparison, the number of registered Finnish female players in 2006 was over 22 000 players. In Finland, the number of female players is steadily increasing year by year. (Private communication with Minttu Paavola, the Grassroots Expert of the Finnish Football Association, 15.12.2010.) According to the Finnish National Sport Survey 2009-2010, football is the most popular sport among the Finnish children. In 2009-2010 there were 104 000 children playing football. Among adults the same number was 140 000. (The Finnish National Sport Survey 2009-2010.) When comparing those numbers with the population of the countries in question, Ecuador and Finland, the small amount of female players in Ecuador seems even more sensational.

In autumn 2009 the Ecuadorian women's national team consisted of 18 players and 5 staff members (all male). None of these girls seemed to have any problems with the male coaches and the atmosphere at the training was very peaceful and the girls laughed a lot even though the pace of the training was fast and the training altogether seemed demanding (Photograph 5). (Observation diary.) The coach of the national team has difficulties in finding appropriate players for the team because of the lack of a national league. Also because of economical reasons some players have to be ruled out. (The newspaper *El Universo*.)



Photograph 5. The Ecuadorian female national team having a meeting (Ruuskanen 2009d)

According to the manager of women's football development in FIFA, Ecuador is participating in FIFA's development programs organized in the country. These programs are educational programs for coaches and referees as well as female players. She says that FEF has requested support from FIFA and CONMEBOL (The South American Football Confederation) to develop women's football which shows the commitment from the association to move forward. (Private communication with Mayrilian Cruz Blanco, the Women's Football Development Manager in FIFA, 22.5.2010.) That is contradictory to what is said by the Ecuadorian female players. According to them, FEF is not paying enough attention to female football with one player saying that Ecuador has a women's national team because FIFA will sanction the associations that do not have one. The manager of women's football development in FIFA denies that by saying, "We encourage and advice our associations to have women's and men's national teams in all age groups – that is one of the primary objectives of the football associations. However, they do not get suspended for not having one of them" (private communication with Mayrilian Cruz Blanco, the Women's Football Development Manager in FIFA, 22.5.2010). FIFA might lack motivation or resources in order to enhance the current state of female football in countries where more help and investment is required compared to that of countries, where the status of women's football is already more established. One of the female players commented quite sarcastically on the motivation of FEF for enhancing the situation of female football in Ecuador:

“Si no hubiera [campeonatos para mujeres], para ellos [la federación] mejor si no hubiera.”

If there were no competitions for women, it would only be better for FEF.”
(Interviewee 4.)

The lack of support by FEF was mentioned by other interviewees as well:

“No se dedica a los semilleros a sacar buenas jugadoras. No hay mayor empuje en el tema. No escucho que [la federación] se fomente, o que se haga una congregación.”

“There’s no devotion in bringing up good female players. There’s no push to the topic. I haven’t heard that [the federation] would promote or make an effort for female football.” (Interviewee 2.)

One peculiar incident happened in November 2009. The women’s national team of Ecuador took part to a South American tournament called “Juegos Bolivarianos” in Bolivia. The team played very well occupying second place in the tournament (Photograph 6). After the team returned to Ecuador, their head coach got fired. It was a surprise for the team and others outside FEF as well: with him the team got results and he was a very liked coach among the girls. One of the players told me that he was one of the few persons inside FEF who really supported women’s football and was fighting for its rights. According to the interview, the impression was given as if he was regarded as a threat inside FEF because he defended the female team and called for more resources for it. The player wondered, if that finally caused his expulsion:

“No hay mucho apoyo [...] yo creo por haber dado un segundo lugar debería de seguir al mando de la selección femenina, pero no... lo botaron.”

“We do not get much support [...] I think that after becoming second, he should have continued with the women’s national team but no... they kicked him out.” (Interviewee 4.)



Photograph 6. The Ecuadorian female national team after winning silver in one South American tournament in 2009 (Private communication, 2.12.2009)

One person close to the team told me that there are a lot of problems inside FEF concerning women's football. This person felt uncomfortable answering my questions, which is why the following answer is rather vague:

La verdad es muy dolorosa de como tratan al fútbol femenino y las personas que solo quieren apantallar o ser protagonistas... ([hay] cuentos, compadrazgos, chismes, falsas historias...) No quiero escribir más porque no quiero meterme en problemas."

"The truth behind women's football and how it is treated is very hurtful and there are persons who only want to be protagonists... ([there are] fairy-tales, corruption, gossiping, stories that are not true...) I don't want to tell you more because I don't want to get any problems." (Private communication 13.7.2010.)

One of the players asked me to keep their names as a secret, because she was afraid that if the head of female football or someone else in the FEF finds out that they have been talking to me, they will be suspended from the national team (private communication 2.12.2009).

The male superiority and machismo can still be seen in the area of football. The slow increase in the number of female players can be regarded as a result of a macho influence on the attitudes of Ecuadorian women on football. One good indicator to show the gender equality in football is the annual budgets of the national teams, both women and men. FEF did not provide me the information, however, the Finnish Football Federation did: the budget of the Finnish men's national team in 2010 was 520 000 euro. The budget of the Finnish women's national team in 2010, on the other hand, was 336 000 euro. Thus the budget of the women's national team is 64 percent of the men's budget. (Private communication with Lennart Wangel, the Head of National Teams of the Finnish Football Association, 20.12.2010.) If there is no equality even in Finland with the amount of the budgets of the national teams of both genders, there certainly is no equality in Ecuador, either. In Ecuador, the favoring of the men is, in a way, taken for granted:

“Le [la federación] dan prioridad a los varones, siempre ha sido así.”

“They [the FEF] give priority to the men, it has always been like that.” (Interviewee 6.)

The priority given to men can be seen for example as better training facilities (Photograph 7). The training surrounding for the women are inferior compared to those of men. The football field in Photograph 7 belongs to FEF but is only used by the women's or youth's national teams. The chickens seen in the photograph belong to the family that lives next to the field.



Photograph 7. Training facilities for women are in a bad shape in Ecuador (Ruuskanen 2009e)

Female football seems to be a game for young girls. 55 per cent of the registered male players are under thirty-years-old whereas the percentage in women is 80 (Eisenberg et al. 2004, 201). In Ecuador, the average age of the women's national team in 2009 was 21 years (private communication 2.12.2009). That is understandable considering the young age of female football in the country.

Maybe in the future when these girls get older, they continue playing regardless of the other duties with the family that can hinder especially the Latin women from exercising:

“Ya con conforme a la edad ya no, porque como que no, no sé, de pronto ya eso pasa a otro plano no, no es digamos el deporte algo primordial, creo yo.”

“As you get older, you stop playing and start having other plans, because sport is not primary, I guess.” (Interviewee 2.)

Other problems that female football faces in Ecuador (after machismo, the manliness of football and the lack of support from FEF) are the lack of marketing and media coverage. Sometimes the media coverage that women's football receives, is for other reasons than the game itself:

“Creo que incluso hay un mundial de fútbol femenino, que es muy poco difundido, entonces tú ves pero es por qué hizo un golazo, o le pego a la no sé quién, vi una el otro día una chica que la agarraban del cabello no sé si viste...”

“I guess there's a World Cup for women as well, but it's not very largely diffused, so you see something but it's because someone made a beautiful goal or someone hit someone else... I saw one female player pulling another woman's hair the other day, I don't know if you saw that...” (Interviewee 1.)

With a greater media coverage female football would attract more audience:

“La prensa en realidad no le hace mucho énfasis. Porque si tal vez la prensa le hiciera mucho más énfasis, uno se empezara ya a interesar también. Pero no la prensa no le da el énfasis que debería.”

“The press really doesn’t give a lot of emphasis for women’s football. Because if it would, you would become interested in it. But the press isn’t giving women’s football the emphasis it should.” (Interviewee 2.)

According to Markovits and Hellerman (2003), women’s football succeeds only where men’s football has not become hegemonic (in Miller 2007, 12). That is another obstacle for the female football in Ecuador. In Latin America, however, there are further obstacles that are uncommon elsewhere, such as inflation and sudden economic crisis, relative lack of disposable income among fans, the lack of legal protection of trademarks and the piracy of merchandise. The quality of business management in South American football clubs has also been poor. (Miller 2007, 27.) A football club is a common tool for some people to use the publicity gained with the help of the club for their private financial, political and personal benefit (Crolley & Duke 2007, 178). These statements could be applied to national federations as well.

5.3 Ecuadorian women’s fandom culture

The data gathered for this study explicitly shows that if not so many Ecuadorian women are playing football themselves, at least some of them can be found at the football stadiums watching the game:

“A muchas mujeres les encanta ver el fútbol pero no están dispuestas a exponerse físicamente al golpe a la pelota.”

“Many women like to watch football but they aren’t ready to expose themselves to be kicked.” (Interviewee 2.)

“Me encantaba el fútbol. Siempre venía a los partidos, aparte tengo muchos amigos que están, que son futbolistas o que trabajaron en el medio. Aparte aquí en el

Ecuador ya es muy común, es muy común en si a todos nosotros nos gusta en cierta proporción, pero siempre me gusto un poco mas.”

“I have always loved football. I always came to see the matches, besides I have many friends who are footballers or work in the field. Moreover, here in Ecuador it’s very common for everybody to like football to some extent, but I have always liked football a bit more.” (Interviewee 5.)

However, there are a few problems that might abstain women from attending a football match. One of the clearest deterrents is the possibility of violence at the match (Aidar and Taylor 2007, 231). There are images of violence that are often associated with football and these images showed constantly in the media have contributed to the decline of football (Crolley and Duke 2007, 179). In Ecuador, as a marketing assistant of a local football club I attended several matches. One of the most passionate matches of the season is the Guayaquilean derby (Barcelona Sporting Club playing against Emelec) where women and children are advised to stay home. In a regular game the number of policemen is 600 but at a derby the number is increased to 1200 (Photograph 8). The matches are mostly played in the evening due to the afternoon heat too hot for the players and the audience. The surroundings of the stadium are not the safest place of the city in the evening either. (Observation diary.)



Photograph 8. Policemen at a football match in Ecuador (Ruuskanen 2009f)

It is also very important to pay attention to the color of your clothes when you attend a football match, so that you will not be wearing the colors of the opposite team. It is very usual that each team has its own fan group, in Spanish called as 'barra brava'. They are always situated at the same part of the audience surrounded by police and it is common to see bottles or eggs thrown at the football field. The barra brava of my team in Ecuador was called Sur Oscura, which means 'the dark south' (Photograph 9). (Observation diary.)



Photograph 9. The fan group called Sur Oscura (Ruuskanen 2009g)

When I attended a match in Ecuador, I was always in the VIP lounge with the managers of the club. I never felt threatened because there were always so many policemen around us. However, if I had to go near to the fan group Sur Oscura, for example, I certainly would have not felt as secure as in the VIP lounge. Therefore I can understand if some women are afraid to attend a football match.

“Sí, me gustaba [el fútbol], pero te cuento en realidad, nunca había asistido a un estadio, porque me daba miedo. Miedo, porque decían que tiraban botellas y todas las cosas en el momento de los partidos.”

“Yes, I liked [football], but I can tell you that actually I had never been at a stadium watching a match because I was afraid. Afraid because I heard that people are throwing bottles and stuff during the matches.” (Interviewee 3.)

Very poor toilet facilities is another constraint why women might not want to come to a stadium. If toilet facilities were improved, that would increase the attendance at matches. (Aidar and Taylor 2007, 233.) Besides being violent and played in unwelcoming stadiums, football is also perceived as being corrupt and poorly managed. As long as people have this kind of an image about football, it will not reach its potential neither commercially nor as a social function. (Crolley and Duke 2007, 180.)

There are various studies done about the football audience. In one particular study made by Taylor, the audience was questioned and the result was that 90 percent of the audience were male. From the remaining 10 percent of the female fans, 54 percent were single, 34 percent married and 39 percent were parents. (Aidar and Taylor 2007, 220.)

The number of female spectators is increasing. A study made by Adams (2003) discovered nearly half of the audience to be female in the North American leagues such as NBA (46%), MLB (47%) or NFL (43%) (Adams in Funk and Ridinger 2006, 156). Funk (2003) made a study about the differences between male and female spectatorship. What this study revealed about female spectatorship was that women get a chance to spend time with their family and/or friends by attending matches. (Funk and Ridinger 2006, 163.) In Ecuador many women came to the matches with their families or friends:

“Una [razón] puede ser porque le gusta, otra puede ser por acompañar a la pareja, los hijos o a lo que sea.”

“One [reason] could be that they like it [football], another that they are keeping company to their boyfriends or husbands, children or whatever.” (Interviewee 1.)

“Por compartir el domingo con su familia y compartir lo que les gusta a sus hijos y a su esposo.”

“To spend the Sunday with her family and share in what her children and husband like.” (Interviewee 2.)

The opposite situation, compared to derbies, applies to the ‘normal’ matches played by day. There are no fixed starting times for the matches: the clubs can decide themselves. If a match is played by day, it is more common to see families with small children and babies in the audience. As shown in Photograph 10, the children are brought up to become football fans from early on. Women and children are taken into account in terms of merchandising, as the jersey in Photograph 10 shows. (Observation diary.)



Photograph 10. A baby girl in the football audience wearing a team jersey (Ruuskanen 2009h)

In addition, the aesthetics of the sport was more important for women than for men. Women were more likely to have a particular player to watch during a match than their male counterparts. (Funk and Ridinger 2006, 163.) In the interviews the women told me they really enjoy watching football not just because of a particular player, but in general because of the talent of the players:

“Para mi es un arte el fútbol.”

“For me, football is art.” (Interviewee 2.)

“Yo creo que muchas mujeres lo consideramos un arte, no aparte de mirar el sexo opuesto, no. Es bonito ver como se desempeñan, juegan y el tema...”

“I think that many women consider football to be art, apart from watching the opposite sex. It’s nice to see how they manage and play and things like that...” (Interviewee 1.)

In general, I was surprised by the number of female participants in the audience. I could estimate that about 30 percent of the audience was female. (Observation diary.) At the World Cup qualifiers in October 2009, the match was played in the afternoon, which can have an influence on the high number of women in the audience due to the smaller chance of violence (Photograph 11).



Photograph 11. An Ecuadorian woman in the audience at the World Cup -qualifiers Ecuador - Uruguay in Quito, October 2009 (Ruuskanen 2009i).

6. WHAT KEEPS THE ECUADORIAN WOMEN OFF THE PITCH?

Observing a young football culture – that is women’s football culture in Ecuador – was rather interesting. At times, however, it was somewhat frustrating as well to see the oppression that women come across still today in a masculine culture like that of Ecuador. It is important to keep in mind that female football has started its diffusion in the country in the early 21st century, hence the development cannot have reached great results yet.

Gender equality has increased in the country constantly even though last year it suffered from a slight recession. If it was occasional, only future and the coming Gender Gap Reports can tell. On the other hand, from a Western point of view, the culture still preserves a ‘high masculinity’ which can be seen in everyday life of the Ecuadorian families. Many women go to work nowadays in Ecuador but women holding leading, well-paid positions are still a massive minority.

It is not too drastic to say that machismo still exists in Ecuador. It can be argued if the phenomenon is culturally-based or class-based. In my opinion it is both. It only manifests differently by different people. It is more common to hear sexist comments about women from a construction worker than from a business man wearing a suit. So called ‘lower class men’ do not hesitate calling a woman names (which can be considered to be compliments but actually are quite disturbing). A business man settles with a long look.

I have the feeling that the oppression of women has been greater in Latin America than it has ever been in Northern Europe, for example. Therefore it is understandable that the shift towards equality takes comparably longer. According to the interviewed women, the younger ones see the Ecuadorian culture more equal than the older ones. Two of the interviewees that agreed with the existing machismo in the country were 43 and 34 years old, the rest were under 30. This confirms the development of gender issues in the country: the younger generation has not witnessed the machismo to the same extent as the older one. However, family and the home remains the number one priority and

responsibility of the Ecuadorian women. Ironically it seems that they willingly hold on to the conventional order of things and are not after a vast change in their ordinary routines. The situation can be compared to the situation with Islamic women and the burka: the use of a veil seems more discriminatory to the Western women than the Islamic women themselves.

People have many stereotypes concerning Latinos. Being familiar with the Ecuadorian culture I can say that many of these stereotypes are actually sociotypes, as we learned earlier. Thus many of the stereotypes are accurate. One characteristic that has not been mentioned concerning machos is their self-confidence. It can be regarded as a negative and a positive macho quality at the same time. In one particular incident I was approached by a macho man who showed how a man's self-confidence can be effusive. A quite compelling response came after I said that I was not single: "Honey, it does not matter, I have a girlfriend as well." Self-confidence in general is a respectful characteristic until a certain limit. Nevertheless, the characteristics of Latinos and the setting behind them are multidisciplinary hence under no circumstances can we generalize them.

Those Ecuadorian women who have the economical resources to do sports, tend to favor 'sexercising'. Many women, who go to work, start their day by going to a gym which is the most popular form of exercise for Ecuadorian women. The gyms are quite expensive and can be considered as a luxury. Even though Ecuador is a collective culture, women tend to do sports alone. Children (boys and girls) play team sports at school, but among adults team sports are popular mostly among men.

As time goes on, the Ecuadorian women are beginning to understand the benefits sport has to their health. However, one of the main motivators behind exercising for them is to look good for the opposite sex. The physical appearance in Latin cultures and in Ecuador is exceptionally important which again can be considered as a gender equality issue: the appearance is extremely important for women whereas it is more acceptable for men to be overweight and neglect their appearance. Luckily for them, sport plays a big role in many men's lives which automatically help them to maintain their physics.

Putting emphasis on feminism in masculine cultures starts at birth: baby girls get their ears pierced as a symbol of feminism (see: photograph 10). From my experience as an observer of Latin cultures, emphasizing the female appearance is unreasonable. When I was as an exchange student in Germany nearly 10 years ago, a Brazilian girl told me that her father forbid her to come back home unless she lose the extra weight she had gained during her exchange. The matter of appearance is controversial with another important aspect of Ecuadorian culture as well: their religion. The majority of Ecuadorians are Catholics. All themes related to sex are still a somewhat taboo. Another occasion from my time in Germany reflects the Ecuadorian contemporary culture in terms of religion: the mother of my good Ecuadorian friend told her that after returning home she should go to the gynecologist to prove her family that she had not had sexual intercourse while away from home, because some people in Ecuador still think that a woman should be a virgin before getting married. Paradoxically the women outdoors can be, for example, dressed very insinuating way and their actions in general can be very contradictory with the supposition how they as catholic, decent women should act.

It is a universal matter of women trying to be appealing to men and vice versa. In Latin cultures, however, everything concerning women's appearance and pleasing men seems somehow overemphasized. Everything women do in terms of sport is aiming to please men. They go to the gym mainly to have a beautiful body which attracts men. If they go to watch a football match, they do that in order to spend time with their husband and/or family, meeting new men or watch men play. It is the woman thinking about the man and seldom vice versa.

Women exposing themselves, like in photograph 1 (the footballer's wife), might reduce the respect towards women as serious athletes. In that sense it is reasonable to say that, to some extent, women are themselves responsible for the lack of appreciation as athletes from their male counterparts. On the other hand, there are more severe problems concerning female sports, particularly female football, which will be discussed and illustrated with the Figure 4.

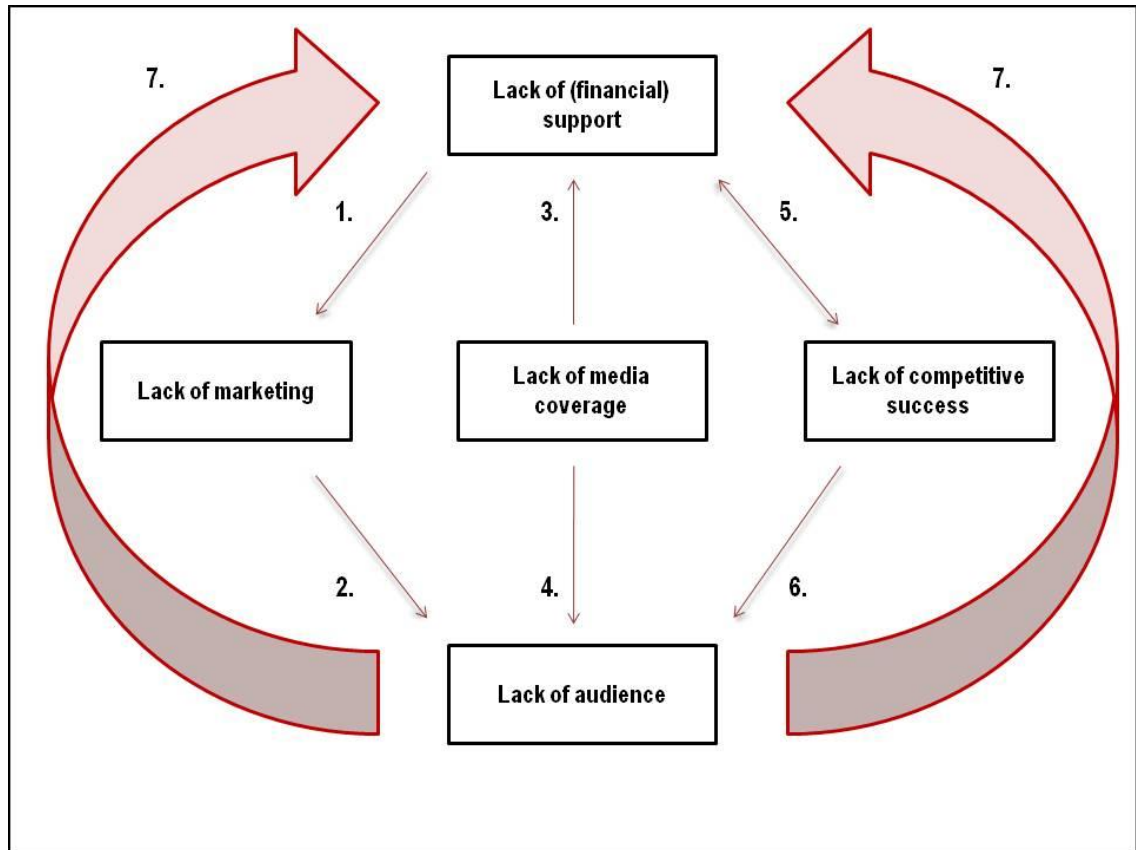


Figure 4. Deficiency compendium of female football (Ruuskanen 2010)

The ‘deficiency compendium of female football’ illustrates the problems that confront women’s football. The chart can be applied in most women’s sports and women’s football globally. Mostly shown are the problems that have been recognized in Ecuador while completing this research about Ecuadorian women and their relationship with football.

Interpreting the chart starts in the top with the lack of (financial) support. The word ‘financial’ is in parenthesis with reason due to the two types of deficiencies in terms of support. Firstly and foremost is the lack of financial support which is one of the main deterrents in the development of female football. Basically, this is interpreted as a lack of sponsorship. Secondly, in some countries, female football is not supported by their national federations. If female football is not appreciated by their own federation, the resources may be divided unequally.

According to the numbers, we move next to **lack of marketing** (arrow 1.). Without the financial support, it is rather difficult to do marketing. If the federation is not supporting female football, then efforts towards marketing may not be met. With the absence of marketing it is difficult to reach the possible audience (arrow 2.: **lack of audience**).

At this point we move to the middle of the chart. **Lack of media coverage** assures that the sponsors will not consider female football as a profitable target in their marketing plans which is vital in terms of targeting both spectators and press consumers. Their ads are targeted both for the audience on the spot and the press consumers. Lack of audience for the sponsors means that their ads will not reach the target audience via press, nor, essentially, to the audience. All in all, a lack of media coverage and a lack of audience can make women's sports a non-beneficial, risky prospect for sponsors' point of view. (Arrows 3. and 4.)

Lack of competitive success can affect in various ways in the development of female football. First of all, without competitive success the sponsors are not interested in supporting the sport. The staff of the federation may feel unmotivated for the same reason. Without (financial) support, the federation is unable to hire enough good coaches or compensate the expense caused by a well managed team. (Arrow 5.)

Self-evidence, lack of competitive success reflects in the number of audience members (arrow 6.). Lack of audience, on the other hand, affects on the financial support of the sponsors and the federation (arrows 7.). These deficiencies together make a so called treadmill or a vicious circle where almost everything affects on everything. In my opinion, the most detrimental of deficiencies from the compendium is the lack of financial support. The support of the federation is fundamental in order to develop female football. Monetary funding is vital. If sponsors are supporting female football/sports, it can be considered more as a social responsibility rather than that of good business practice.

Lack of audience is another vast deficiency which is caused by lack of marketing, lack of media coverage and lack of competitive success. However, the income received from the tickets of admission in many cases is a small percentage of the overall income of a

federation or a club. More important is the presence of the audience, which affects overall sponsorship as well as the overall atmosphere at a sporting event.

The Ecuadorian women have very limited knowledge about female football. Many women find football to be too masculine and violent sport which deters their desire to participate. Ecuadorian women have, nevertheless, found their way to football audience during the last decade. Women come to watch a football match for various reasons. Close observation during five months helped to realize the different reason women may have when coming to a stadium. First, and most commonly, they come with their boyfriends or husbands or with the whole family in order to spend time with them. Secondly, they come with their friends to have fun and socialize. Some women may come to see a football match because of the masculine environment: they might not even follow the match but are there more because of the men. Last, but not least, there are some women who truly enjoy football and come to the stadium because of the game itself without any hidden agenda.

The observation period in Ecuador showed that there are different types of female football fans. The first group of fans are the women who watch the national league for no particular reason. Some of these women follow the foreign leagues as well, especially if there is an Ecuadorian player represented (for example, Antonio Valencia playing in Manchester United). There are also women who say they are football fans but watch only the matches played by the Ecuadorian national team. It can be argued if they are true football fans or if they are simply after the feeling of togetherness. In a collectivistic culture like that of Ecuador, football being the national sport, it is common to gather with a group of friends every time the national team plays and watch the match together accompanied by food and beverages. If Ecuador wins, the party continues in the streets. Fortunately there are also women that venture to play themselves. The number is still small, but steadily increasing. Some proportion of Ecuadorian women are not interested in football at all. It is a shame for them since (male) football is presented in every media extremely frequently.

What could be done to improve the current situation of female football in Ecuador? It is a difficult task if the women themselves are not seeking immediate change. Subsequent

to time and new generations this can be assumed to change over time. In attempts to address the fundamental problems that female football has in Ecuador at the moment, the basic task should be to ensure the support from the national federation. The equal distribution of resources should be guaranteed. With equal distribution is meant that women should be taken better into account from within the federation and offered a fair percentage of the federation's budget. The federation could start that by establishing a separate division for female football. It is my personal opinion that every club should have their own team for women. Like with the federation, a football club should dedicate a certain percentage of its budget and other resources for women. A women's team could even have the same sponsors than a men's team (like the Ecuador's national teams have) and sponsors supporting a football club would automatically support football as a whole without gender separation.

Concerning FIFA and CONMEBOL, a closer eye should be kept on the internal operations of national federations. FIFA has many developmental programs which seem to be actively enhancing the poor status of female football in Latin America without guarantee that their support is equally distributed. In addition all the information FIFA collects from the national federations can be garbled. FIFA expects the national federations to invest in women's football and if a certain national federation for some reasons does not do that, they have the need to embellish the numbers. More resources and transparency are needed both from FIFA and the national federations in terms of female football development.

The way the head of female football of the Ecuadorian Football Federation avoided the interview leads me to believe that FEF may be embellishing the contemporary status of female football in the country. Moreover, according to the data gathered for this research, it seems that she lacks in competency. An incompetent administration is one of the main problems that Ecuadorian football clubs suffer from. However, those decision-making individuals inside the FEF may only have a limited amount of power within their jurisdiction to incorporate real change. Overall, the FEF should put more emphasis into supporting and developing women's football in Ecuador.

In Ecuador, in addition to the deficiencies seen on the Figure 4 and further problems discussed earlier, 'culture' is the underlying problem in female football. Conceptual, and cultural reasons together with other concrete reasons are not facilitating the development of female football in any way. However, according to my research findings, the most compelling reasons behind the contemporary status of female football is due to machismo; hence the title of this research cannot be considered as an overstatement.

7. DISCUSSION

The aim of this study was to investigate the relationship between Ecuadorian women and football and why so few women are playing football themselves. I, as the researcher, had certain previous perceptions of the culture which guided me in formation of the research task and the research methods. The study was conducted as a qualitative field research including a five month observation period and seven interviews with local football players and football club employees. The interviews confirmed the previous and newer perceptions both to be accurate.

Ecuador is a masculine culture, where machismo has been a dominating part of the culture for years. Gender equality has increased during the last decade but there is a long way to go before the trails of machismo are washed away. Women are accustomed to the oppression thus not expecting otherwise. For Latin cultures it is also typical to be more passive and not actively seek out a change.

The family remains to be the priority of the Ecuadorian women. Before it was the natural order of things for women to stay at home with the children; their role as wives and mothers was self-evident. Nowadays the gender equality has increased and many Ecuadorian women go to work. However, for many women their priorities continue to be the same and even though they have increased opportunities in terms of career, for example, they may choose not to take advantage of them from their own will.

Along with the increased gender equality the Ecuadorian women have started to exercise more than before. However, they still do not play much sport. If anything, they go to the gym. Team sports, such as football, are sometimes played at school but on their free time team sports or individual sports are not popular. In addition to the research findings, the uppermost reason behind exercising at a gym is not necessarily health related but rather to attain good appearance.

The Ecuadorian culture has always placed a great amount of emphasis on a woman's beauty which is largely related to gender inequality and the oppression of women. Women are, to some extent, even in post-modern times held as objects in the culture with one of their main functions to please their male counterparts. One obvious way to achieve this is with their physical appearance. Though nowadays gender equality is increasing within the country, there are still several women who, from their own volition, are subjected to maintaining this setting.

Since the physical appearance is the priority of many Ecuadorian women, there are very few women who venture to play football. Football is considered a masculine sport and too rough for feminine women. They are also afraid to become as masculine as the sport itself. Another reason behind the small number of female football players is the lack of knowledge: female football is a new phenomenon in Ecuador and they have many prejudices about it.

The development of female football started in Ecuador in the beginning of the 21st century. During the first decade the results of the efforts made by the national football federation are rather inconsequential. Women have their own national team but they do not have a national league. The number of registered players has remained small throughout the decade. It can be argued whether or not the national federation is putting enough effort on enhancing the recognition of female football in the country. In order to achieve that, more supervision from FIFA is needed.

Even though few women venture to play football themselves, many women follow the sport itself. Football plays an enormous role in the Ecuadorian society and women support football as audience. Ecuadorian women do have various reasons to watch football: maybe the most common reason, according to the research findings, is to accompany their husbands and family. A football match is a social event. The reasons aside, the number of female spectators at a football match is high.

To this day the number of female football fans has not converted into a higher number of female football players. The problems slowing down the development of female football are diverse. There are two type of reasons: conceptual, cultural reasons (such as

gender inequality and the perception of a woman) and more concrete reasons (such as lack of financial support and proper marketing). Enhancing the current state of female football in Ecuador should be started at the ground level: securing the support of the national federation with the supervision of FIFA. When the foundation is in a good state, it is easier to improve the overall situation. The conceptual, cultural related hindrances cannot so easily be influenced on and only the future will tell how the Ecuadorian society develops in terms of gender equality and what kind of effects that will have in terms of sport participation and especially with the development of female football.

Some shortcomings encountered during this research was the lack of willingness to cooperate on behalf of the Ecuadorian Football Federation. Had I been aware of this beforehand I would have approached the individual which heads female football within the federation in a more aggressive manner as to achieve those important objectives being seeked. This unwillingness to help came as a disappointing surprise.

Beyond that, one can always question my Spanish skills. I consider my language skills to be good, but I am still not a native speaker. Therefore there is space for misunderstandings or false interpretations. If I did this study all over again, maybe I would gather a little bit more data by interviewing some women in the football audience.

Further ideas for investigation could be exactly the Latin female football audience and its motives for football fandom. Personally I would be interested in the role of media in representing female athletes and sports and the reasons behind the poor media coverage of them. All in all, there is still a lot of work to be done in terms of gender issues in the field of sport. In Ecuador, as well as in many other Latin American countries, women's football is in a developing stage. Whether the recognition of female football improves and to exactly what extent – only time will tell.

REFERENCES

Books

Agar, Michael H. 1986. *Speaking of ethnography*. qualitative research methods series 2. Beverly Hills, California: Sage.

Aidar, A. & Taylor, R. 2007. *Monkeys and mosquitoes: Research into the fans of Brazilian Club Internacional*. In Rory M. Miller and Liz Crolley (eds.): *Football in the Americas: Fútbol, Futebol, Soccer* (p. 218-237). London: Institute for the study of the Americas 2007.

Archetti, Eduardo P. 1999. *Masculinities. Football, polo and the tango in Argentina*. Oxford: Berg.

Biriotti del Burgo, M. 1995. *Don't stop the carnival: Football in the societies of Latin America*. In Stephen Wagg (ed.): *Giving the game away – Football, politics & culture on five continents* (p. 52-71). London: Leicester University Press, 1995.

Burris, Susan. 2006. *She got game, but she don't got fame*. In Linda K. Fuller (ed.): *Sport, rhetoric, and gender – Historical perspectives and media representations* (p. 85-96). New York: Palgrave MacMillan 2006.

Carmichael Aitchison, C. 2003. *Gender and leisure. Social and cultural perspectives*. London: Routledge.

Connell, R.W. 2005. *Masculinities*. 2nd Edition. Berkeley, California: University of California Press.

Cooky, Cheryl. 2006. *Strong enough to be a man, but made a woman: Discourses on sport and femininity in Sports Illustrated for Women*. In Linda K. Fuller (ed.): *Sport, rhetoric, and gender* (p. 97-106). New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006.

Crolley L. & Duke, V. 2007. La crisis y el fútbol: Economic change and political continuity in Argentine football. In Rory M. Miller and Liz Crolley (eds.): *Football in the Americas: Fútbol, Futebol, Soccer* (p. 174-192). London: Institute for the study of the Americas 2007.

Eisenberg, C. et al. 2004. Women, youth and FIFA. 100 years of football: The FIFA centennial book. London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson.

Eskola, Jari & Suoranta, Juha. 1998. *Johdatus laadulliseen tutkimukseen*. Tampere: Vastapaino.

Guttmann, Matthew C. and Viveros Vigoya, Mara. 2005. Masculinities in Latin America. In Michael M. Kimmel, Jeff Hearn and R.W. Connell (eds.): *Handbook of studies on men & masculinities* (p. 114-128). Thousand Oaks (California): Sage Publications 2005.

Hargreaves, J. 1994. *Sporting females. Critical issues in the history and sociology of women's sports*. London: Routledge.

Hofstede, Geert & Hofstede, Gert Jan. 2005. *Cultures and organizations. Software of the mind. Intercultural cooperation and its importance for survival*. London: McGraw-Hill.

Lewis, Richard D. 2006. *When cultures collide – leading across cultures*. London: Nicholas Brealey Publishing.

Merriam, Sharan B. 2009. *Qualitative research. A guide to design and implementation*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Miller, R. 2007. Introduction: Studying football in the Americas. In Rory M. Miller and Liz Crolley (eds.): *Football in the Americas: Fútbol, Futebol, Soccer*. London: Institute for the study of the Americas 2007.

Pirinen, Riitta 2006. Urheileva nainen lehtiteksteissä. Tampere: Tampereen yliopisto.

Sands, Robert R. 2002. Sport ethnography. Champaign (IL): Human Kinetics.

Triandis, Harry C. 1994. Culture and social behavior. New York: McGraw-Hill.

Vehviläinen, H. & Itkonen, H. 2009. Mimmiliigasta maailmalle. Tutkimus suomalaisen naisjalkapalloilun muutoksesta. Eura: Euraprint.

Warren, Carol A.B. 1988. Gender issues in field research. Qualitative research methods series 9. Newbury Park, California: Sage.

Articles

Beattie, Peter M.

Beyond machismos: Recent examinations of masculinities in Latin America.

Men and Masculinities 2002 4: 303-308. Sage Social Science Collections.

Díaz, Jesse Jr.; Mirandé, Alfredo; Pitones Juan M.

Quién es el más macho? A comparison of day laborers and Chicano men.

Men and Masculinities 2010, 1-26. Sage Social Science Collections.

Funk, Daniel C. and Ridinger, Lynn L. 2006. Looking at gender differences through the lens of sport spectators. Sport Marketing Quarterly 2006, 15, 155-166. West Virginia University.

Viveros Vigoya, Mara

Contemporary Latin American perspectives on masculinity.

Men and Masculinities 2001 3: 237-259. Sage Social Science Collections.

Internet

The CIA World Factbook

<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ec.html>

retrieved 7.7.2010

The map of Ecuador

http://www.sintaxis.net/tours/images/MapOfEcuador_502px.jpg

retrieved 17.10.2010

The Finnish Foreign Ministry

<http://www.formin.fi/Public/default.aspx?nodeid=17682&contentlan=1&culture=fi-FI>

retrieved 20.10.2010

World Economic Forum, Gender Gap Report 2010

<http://www.weforum.org/pdf/gendergap/report2010.pdf> retrieved 26.10.2010

World Economic Forum, Gender Gap Report 2009

<http://www.weforum.org/pdf/gendergap/report2009.pdf> retrieved 10.7.2009

The Ecuadorian Football Federation

<http://www.ecuafutbol.org/institucion/historia.aspx> retrieved 24.11.2010

FIFA

<http://www.fifa.com/worldcup/archive/southafrica2010/preliminaries/southamerica/teat/team=43927/index.html> retrieved 25.12.2010

FIFA. The Women's Football Today - Information and Statistics on Women's Football From the Member Associations of FIFA

<http://www.fifa.com/mm/document/afdeveloping/women/93/77/21/factsheets.pdf>

retrieved 25.11.2010

The Ecuadorian Football Federation. The registered female players.

<http://www.ecuafutbol.org/UI/habilitados.aspx?categserie=9>

retrieved 25.11.2010

Finnish Sports Federation

<http://www.slu.fi/liikuntapolitiikka/liikuntatutkimus2>

retrieved 23.12.2010

Newspapers

El Universo

<http://www.eluniverso.com/2010/11/03/1/1372/fase-final-meta-tri.html?p=1371&m=100> retrieved 3.11.2010

APPENDICES

Appendix 1.

ENTREVISTA / COLLEGAS EN EL CLUB

1. Nombre, edad, ciudad de nacimiento
2. Educación y tu función en el club?
3. Cómo llegaste al club?
4. Antes de trabajar en el club, cuánto interés tenías por el fútbol?
5. Cómo ha cambiado tu interés por el fútbol después de la llegada al club?
6. Juegas al fútbol o haces algún otro deporte?
7. Si es negativo, por qué no?
8. En tu opinión, por qué a muchas mujeres les gusta ver el fútbol pero no lo están jugando?
9. Por qué razones crees que una mujer va a ver un partido de fútbol?
10. Cuéntame tu interés hacia el campeonato nacional, la selección y las ligas extranjeras.
11. Qué sabes del fútbol femenino en tu país? Descríbeme, desde tu punto de vista, cómo es la situación actual del fútbol femenino en Ecuador.
12. Por qué razones la situación está así?
13. Ahora, compara la diferencia o similitud entre fútbol femenino y masculino y cuéntame qué razones podrían explicar las diferencias.
14. Si fútbol femenino fuera mas popular en Ecuador, estarías interesada en ello (como hinchita/jugadora)?
15. En tu opinión, qué cosas podrían hacer el fútbol femenino más popular en tu país?
16. Cómo te sientes trabajando en un ambiente masculino?
17. Tienes experiencia de algún tipo de discriminación en tu trabajo por la parte masculina y si es así, cómo se manifiesta?
18. En tu opinión, cómo es la igualdad entre generos en Ecuador?

INTERVIEW / COLLEAGUES IN THE CLUB

1. Name, age and place of birth
2. Education and your function in the club?
3. How did you end up working in the club?
4. Before working in the club, how much interest did you pay for football?
5. How has your interest changed after starting working in the club?
6. Do you play football or any other sports?
7. If not, why not?
8. In your opinion, why many women like to watch football but do not like playing themselves?
9. Why do you think that a woman goes to watch a football match?
10. Tell me about your interest towards the national league, the national team and the foreign
11. What do you know about female football in your country? Describe me from your point of view the current state of female football in Ecuador.
12. What could be the reasons behind the current situation?
13. Now, please tell me the similarities and differences between female and male football in your country and which factors can explain them?
14. If female football was more popular in your country, would you be interested in it (as a fan / as a player)?
15. Which things could make female football more popular in your country?
16. How do you feel working in a masculine environment?
17. Have you ever experienced any kind of discrimination from your male colleagues and if yes, how does it show?
18. In your opinion, how is the equality of gender in Ecuador?

Appendix 2.

ENTREVISTA / JUGADORAS

1. Nombre, edad, ciudad de nacimiento
2. Cuántos años has jugado al fútbol?
3. Antes de empezar a jugar al fútbol, solías hacer algún otro deporte?
4. Por qué empezaste a jugar al fútbol?
5. Cómo reaccionan tu familia y amigos con tu hobby?
6. Cuéntame tu interés hacia el campeonato nacional, la selección y las ligas extranjeras.
7. Descríbeme, desde tu punto de vista, cómo es la situación actual del fútbol femenino en Ecuador.
8. Por qué razones el estado del fútbol femenino es así?
9. Ahora, compara la diferencia o similitud entre fútbol femenino y masculino y cuéntame qué razones podrían explicar las diferencias.
10. Cómo la federación ecuatoriana de fútbol está apoyando el fútbol femenino?
11. En tu opinión, por qué a muchas mujeres les gusta ver el fútbol pero no lo están jugando?
12. Por qué razones crees que una mujer va a ver un partido de fútbol?
13. En tu opinión, qué cosas podrían hacer al fútbol femenino más popular en tu país?
14. Crees que la situación acerca del fútbol femenino va a mejorar en el futuro y si es así, cómo?
15. Qué esperas de tu propio futuro como jugadora?
16. En tu opinión, cómo es la igualdad entre géneros en Ecuador?

INTERVIEW / PLAYERS

1. Name, age and place of birth
2. How many years have you played football?
3. Before starting to play football, did you do any other sport?
4. Why did you start playing football?
5. How does your family and friends deal with your hobby?
6. Tell me about your interest towards the national league, the national team and the foreign leagues.
7. Describe me from your point of view the current state of female football in Ecuador.
8. What could be the reasons behind the current situation?
9. Now, please tell me the similarities and differences between female and male football in your country and which factors can explain them?
10. What actions has the Ecuadorian football federation done to improve female football in the country?
11. In your opinion, why many women like to watch football but do not like playing themselves?
12. Why do you think that a woman goes to watch a football match?
13. Which things could make female football more popular in your country?
14. Do you think that the state of female football in Ecuador is going to get better and if so, how?
15. What do you expect from your future as a female football player?
16. In your opinion, how is the equality of gender in Ecuador?