



Gender Socialization in Sports:  
The Participation of Female Refugees in  
Football for Development Programs

by  
Jellina Keulen

Master's thesis in Human Security

Department of Culture and Society

Aarhus University, Denmark

Thesis supervisor: Nanna Schneidermann

Student number: 201902518

Characters: 164,158

Date of Submission: 1 June 2021

## Summary

Since the sudden rise in refugees seeking asylum in Europe, many social inclusion programs were established. Well-known European professional football clubs started implementing football-based social inclusion programs, such as the Welcome Through Football program. Sport for Development programs promote and foster human security of refugees and address social inequalities such as racial injustice and gender inequality. However, most of the participants in Football for Development programs are male. Many refugee women and girls are excluded or restricted from participating. This thesis analyzes and discusses the role of gender in the socialization and participation experience of female refugees in Football for Development programs. The research provides an in-depth and critical analysis of gender socialization in sports and how 'sport as a vehicle for change' impacts women and girls differently than men and boys. Qualitative and quantitative data has been collected in collaboration with seven professional European football clubs implementing football-based programming for refugees and one all-female refugee team from Greece.

The research analyzes and discusses three different pillars, socialization to football, socialization in football and socialization through football. The first section, socialization *to* football, addresses challenges and successes in closing the gender gap. Challenges include the refugee demographic, the female 'disinterest' in football, and socio-cultural gender norms. Successful strategies to increase the number of women and girls are; creating an inclusive environment, shifting the focus from competitive to non-competitive, setting up parallel female-only structures and using female coaches and role models. The second section, socialization *in* football, focuses on the impact of gender socialization among children, teenagers and adolescents. In all three age categories, the values ascribed to masculinity and femininity restrict the female participants. The research finds that the mixed-gender sessions increase the acceptance towards women and girls playing football and break down stereotypes at a young age. However, the older participants get, the more gender socialization negatively impacts the participation of women and girls. Furthermore, at an adolescent age, participants do not challenge feminine stereotypes. Instead, women integrate 'feminine' traits into 'masculine' traits that are required to play football. The final section addresses socialization *through* sport and the overall interaction between socio-cultural gender norms and the participation of refugee women and girls. The participation of refugee women and girls in football promotes female empowerment and gender equality through challenging traditional socio-cultural gender norms and stereotypes. The research concludes that gender is

a critical aspect in the participation of female refugees and restricts their participation in each socialization pillar. Therefore, Football for Development programs for refugees must be gender-sensitive and acknowledge the additional challenges that refugee women face in participating in atypical gender sports, aim for a fifty-fifty gender balance, or set up female structures parallel to existing programming.

**Table of Content**

1.	Introduction	5
1.1	Problem Statement	5
1.2	Research question	6
1.3	Aim of the research,	7
1.4	Structure of the research	7
1.5	Human Security Relevance	8
1.6	Keywords	9
1.6.1	‘Refugee’	9
1.6.2	‘Gender’	10
2.	Context and theoretical framework	11
2.1	Background information: Football and gender	11
2.2	Theoretical framework	12
2.2.1	Introduction to gender socialization	13
2.2.2	Gender socialization in football	14
2.2.3	The socialization of women into sport	16
2.2.4	The socialization of refugee women and girls in sport and society	18
3.	Methodology	20
3.1	Ethics	21
3.2	Participants	22
3.2.1	Football Club 1	22
3.2.2.	Football Club 2	23
3.2.3.	Football Club 3	23
3.2.4	Football Club 4	23
3.2.5	Football Club 5	24
3.3	Position of the author	24
3.4	Quantitative data collection - surveys	24
3.5	Qualitative data collection - interviews	25
3.6	Document Analysis	26
3.7	Limitations	26
4.	Socialization to football	27
4.1	The Demographic of Possible Participants	28
4.2	Disinterest in Football	30

4.3	Social Gender Norms and the Cultural Barriers	32
4.4	Creating a Safe Environment	35
4.5	Competition vs. Fun	36
4.6	Girls-only groups	39
4.7	Coaches as role models	40
5.	Socialization in football	42
5.1	Gendered differences among children	43
5.2	Gendered differences among teenagers	47
5.3	Gendered dynamics at play for adolescents	51
6.	Socialization through football	55
6.1	Football as a pathway to female empowerment	55
6.2	Challenging stereotypes and gender norms	58
7.	Conclusion	61
8.	Recommendations	63
9.	Works cited	65
10.	APPENDIX	69

## **1. Introduction**

*“If you give refugees a chance, they can make society better.” - Nadia Nadim.*

In recent years, Europe has seen a substantial influx of refugees fleeing from civil wars and political instability and insecurity in their countries. The sudden rise in refugees seeking asylum in Europe and the growing xenophobic rhetoric in many European countries posed an extensive debate on integration. Many local, regional, and national sport and leisure programs were established “as tools to leverage their positive impacts” and facilitate integration and social inclusion (Mohammadi 2019: 1082). Sport is a popular method for using physical recreation for positive impact. In particular, football is the most popular sport globally, and the most popular sport played among refugees (Sore 2020). Therefore, many NGOs and institutions such as the UNHCR, Amnesty UK, FIFA, and UEFA have set up football programs for refugees. Soon professional football clubs and their foundations followed. Football clubs use the combination of their global brand and their role in local communities as a tool to create social change. Not only do such Football for Development programs bring local communities and refugees together, but research has also shown that programs like these can have been beneficial to fostering the resettlement experience of refugees (e.g., Spaaij 2015; Harwood et al. 2021). Positive aspects of Football for Development programs for refugees include more self-confidence, empowerment, building friendships, (mental) health promotion and disease prevention, ease traumatic stress, and addressing social inequities, such as gender inequality and racial injustice. Therefore, Sport for Development is an excellent tool for social inclusion programs and development and humanitarian programs.

### ***1.1 Problem Statement***

However, Sport for Development can have counterproductive aspects. One crucial negative effect is “the exclusion of girls in sports activities” (Cardenas 2018) and the fact that programs do too little to challenge existing gender roles (Collison 2016) or even reinforce gender roles by integrating girls into patriarchal structures (Zipp 2017; Cardenas 2018). The exclusion of women and girls is evident in Football for Development programs. Football is predominantly considered a rather masculine sport, and the programs are dominated mainly by refugee men and boys. Arguably, “sporting masculinities are becoming more inclusive, gender continues to be a structuring principle of everyday interactions in sporting spaces” (Spaaij 2015: 309). The exclusion of girls is an undesirable result, as the aim of Football for Development programs is

to improve the livelihood situation for its participants. Additionally, conditioned both boys and girls to participate, Sport for Development “has the capacity to reduce gender-based stereotyping and discrimination by challenging gender expectations” (Zipp 2017: 1). Not only can it challenge gender norms, but football and sport in general can “[empower] females to independence and success” by playing together with other women and girls (Zipp 2017: 1).

There exist various opinions about why there is a gender disparity in terms of participation. Some argue that the main reason women and girls are not playing football is their supporting role in the family or are prevented from participating by traditional socio-cultural norms (e.g., Spaaij 2015, Agergaard 2018). Others argue that women are interested in sport; however, less in male-dominated and gender-atypical sports (Jakubowska and Byczkowska-Owczarek 2021). Furthermore, others state that women are interested in football; however, the programs are not tailored to the needs of women (Agergaard 2018; Harwood et al. 2021). Arguably, all the above-listed arguments are rooted in how the concept of gender is constructed in our society. The fact that women are underrepresented in football participation is not necessarily a problem; however, the underrepresentation of women appears to be closely linked to restrictive societal norms and inequity in football. It is problematic that refugee women cannot benefit from Football for Development programs the same way men benefit. The fact that sports programs are not always designed to be inclusive of women and girls might maintain gender disparity. However, simply implementing an ‘add girls and stir’ approach can do more harm than good. As gender norms are not automatically challenged and sometimes even reinforce gender norms (Zipp 2017). According to Harwood et al. (2021), “the gendered nature of sport further complicates[s] [providing] different opportunities for participation in sports between young women and men” (175). Harwood et al.’s “findings suggest the need for a more deliberate reflexive consciousness to inform the practices of educators and policymakers to ensure sport is both inclusive and culturally safe” (175). Thus, how can organizations deliver Football for Development programs to refugees, inclusive of women and girls?

## ***1.2 Research question***

As mentioned, many different factors impact the participation of women and girls in sports. Especially the target group of refugee women and girls face additional challenges. To understand the importance of inclusivity, one needs to understand the challenges specific to women and girls, to what degree the challenges can be attributed to gender norms, and how gender norms can be challenged. Therefore, my research poses the following research question: to what degree does gender play a role in the socialization and participation experiences of

female refugees that participate in Football for Development programs, such as the European Football for Development Network's *Welcome Through Football*? To help me answer the main research question, I have drawn up the following sub-questions: (1) What factors contribute to a skewed gender balance? (2) how are organizations and football clubs reaching girls to participate in their programs, and are they successful in doing so? (3) To what degree do the socialization and participation experiences in Football for Development programs differ between boys and girls? (4) To what degree the traditional gender norms are visible and how does a more healthy gender balance influence breaking down gender norms?

### ***1.3 Aim of the research,***

My research is situated within the foundational assumptions of feminist theory. Feminist theory explores social, economic, political, and cultural factors that contribute to gender inequality. In my research, I will examine how gender is socialized in our society and football-based programming for refugee women and girls and how traditional gender norms impact their participation. Any form of gender inequality should be addressed, as gender inequality is one of the core global issues, as recognized by the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals. By posing the research question, this study hopes to get a clearer picture of the challenges and successes in terms of the participation of refugee women and girls in Football for Development programs. Are women and girls experiencing the programs differently? Are there different challenges in participating? How can the programs be tailored to fit the experience of all genders, a gender-sensitive approach? In what ways are organizations already implementing gender-inclusive programming, and what are some practicalities that make a program successful in being inclusive? Where do organizations need to improve most? What are the benefits of girls-only programs compared to mixed programs in terms of actively challenging gender norms? These are all questions I hope to answer in my research and contribute to providing recommendations to organizations implementing Football for Development programs for refugees that aim to be more gender-sensitive.

### ***1.4 Structure of the research***

Before going into the analysis, I will elaborate on the human security relevance and clarify the main keywords in this research. After the introduction, I will contextualize football within the framework of gender and explain why football was the sport I chose to analyze. In the

theoretical framework, I will discuss relevant literature on gender socialization, socialization into sports, and socialization of refugee women. My third chapter will concern the methodological framework and discuss how the participants for the research were selected and what data collection methods I used. In the following chapters, I will present and analyze my findings. To break it down, I have divided the analysis into three parts, (1) socialization *to* football, (2) socialization *in* football, and (3) socialization *through* football. These three parts mirror the pillars of the Welcome Through Football program. I am using the three pillars to analyze any barriers or successes in the participation of refugee women and girls in football. By examining the challenges and successes in each pillar, I will answer different aspects of my research question and sub questions in each section, as the answers to the questions are interconnected throughout the different pillars of the socialization and participation of refugee women and girls in football. In my conclusion, I will summarize my main points and provide recommendations to improve the participation of refugee women and girls.

### **1.5 Human Security Relevance**

This research is situated within the concept of Sport for Development. Sport for Development, or Sport for Development and Peace, is "the intentional use of sport, physical activity and play to achieve specific development objectives in low- and middle-income countries and disadvantaged communities in high-income areas" (qtd. in Gadais 2018). Sport for Development programs can be categorized under seven themes: disability, education, gender, health, livelihoods, peace, and social cohesion (Richards 2013). Sport-based development programs are participant-based, bring individuals together, and are connected to valuable skills such as discipline, building confidence, and leadership, and helps to improve overall academic performance (Soccer Without Borders 2018). Furthermore, the UN Task Force on Sport for Development and Peace states that "the practice of sport is vital to the holistic development of young people, fostering their physical and emotional health and building valuable social connections" (2003). On top of that, sport can have long-lasting positive effects on communities as sport promotes the concepts of tolerance, cooperation, and respect. It can create dialogue, bridge divides, and work towards reconciliation (Hoglund and Sundberg 2008). Finally, sports require a grassroots approach and therefore are an excellent tool for bottom-up approaches to conflict resolution, peace-building, disarmament, demobilization, (re)integration, and (re)settlement (e.g., Sugden 2006; Dyck 2011; Cardanas 2013). Sport-based programs for Development can improve an individual's personal, community, health, and economic security.

Arguably, Sport for Development is the epitome of Human Security, as it rests on the Human Security framework. Football-based development programs for refugees have a people-centered and holistic approach to economic, personal, community, and health security (UNDP 1994). The programs promote human security by positively impacting social outcomes. For example, improve physical-, mental-, and social well-being, challenge gender norms, empower women, improve overall livelihood, foster social inclusion of refugee communities, and offer reconciliation and peace-building mechanisms in divided communities (e.g., Spaaij 2015; Harwood et al. 2021). However, as highlighted in the problem statement, Sport for Development programs do not always fit refugee women and girls. In most studies reviewing sport for development programs, the experience of women is not the focus. Literature shows a "link between the acquisition of social capital with sport has most commonly been reported for young men. This begs the questions about the experience of school sport for young women from refugee backgrounds." (Harwood et al. 2021: 176). The UN's Sustainable Development Goal 5 regarding Gender Equality reaffirms that women and girls face additional societal challenges, such as destructive social norms and discriminatory laws. Additionally, women are more likely to experience physical or sexual violence and be underrepresented in leadership and decision-making positions. Bridging the gender gap might decrease the exposure of women and girls to insecurity.

## **1.6 Keywords**

Before elaborating on the context of football and gender and the theoretical framework, it is essential to highlight the understanding of the key concepts in this research; the terms 'refugee' and 'gender.' In the following section, I will clarify how I will use the terms in the context of this research:

### **1.6.1 'Refugee'**

In this research, the term refugee will act as an umbrella term. For example, some of the literature or the participants in the study might legally be referred to as asylum seekers or even migrants. However, in my research, I will use the term refugee. The UNHRC defines a refugee as "people who have fled war, violence, conflict or persecution and have crossed an international border to find safety in another country (2021). "Refugees are defined and protected in international law. The 1951 Refugee Convention is a key legal document. It defines a refugee as: 'someone unable or unwilling to return to their country of origin owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a

particular social group, or political opinion” (UNHRC 2014). While refugee is a term used to describe a person who has already been granted protection, an asylum seeker is ‘someone who has applied for protection as a refugee and is awaiting the determination of his or her status’ (UNHRC 2014). Migrants, in contrast to refugees, are considered as people who move voluntarily or those who are not in direct danger of conflict or persecution. Therefore, migrants are not protected under the same international law as refugees. Nonetheless, many people migrate because their homes have become dangerous or difficult to live in. Even though their migration might be considered voluntary, in many cases, they are still fleeing from unrest, famine, drought, or economic collapse. Thus, arguably, the term ‘voluntary’ is contested. For this research, the legal difference between refugees, asylum seekers, and migrants is irrelevant. When settling and integrating into a new (host) country, the experience of refugees and migrants show similarities, such as social exclusion. In Addition, to the definition of ‘migrant’ is contested, I will solemnly refer to refugees, asylum seekers, and migrants as refugees in this research.

### **1.6.2 ‘Gender’**

When examining sport and gender, sport must be categorized according to ‘male’ and ‘female’ binary concepts. In contrast, gender itself is not a binary concept but rather a continuum or spectrum. In recent years, the categorization of sports along the binary sex divide has been questioned due to the policing of women’s bodies, exclusion of transgender people, and exclusion of non-binary and gender non-conforming people. But also since the binary structure can complicate questions of gender equity in sport (Harwood et al. 2021). Arguably, the more a sport is dominated by men and masculinity, the more gender inequity is visible due to historic patriarchal structures that might still be in place. However, most competitive sports are still categorized to the anatomic and physiological attributes ascribed to men and women. Therefore, in my research, I will place the concept of gender within the binary framework. Even though the categorization of sport refers to *sex*, namely the anatomic and physiological attributes someone is born with, I will still refer to *gender* as opposed to *sex*. Gender refers to “an act that is performed” as per the gender performativity of Judith Butler (qtd. in Jeanes 2011: 405). The reason for using the concept of gender instead of sex is that my research will address socially constructed gender norms, how individuals ‘do gender.’ Another argument for working within the binary framework is that gender is that for the vast majority, especially in refugee communities, gender performativity fits within the gender binary.

## **2. Context and theoretical framework**

Before answering the research question, it is essential to highlight why football is the sport of choice for this research. It is vital to elaborate on the significance of gender in football compared to sports in general. With football being the most popular sport globally, it is surprising that gender inequality is still evident. In sports such as tennis, field hockey, volleyball, and swimming, patriarchal structures have been challenged. However, in football, the “most popular and influential sport in the world,” the patriarchal structures are still prominent (Fielding-Lloyd and Meân 2008: 24). In the following section, I will discuss why patriarchal structures have been maintained in football in particular. Second, in the theoretical framework, I will examine and discuss the different theories on socialization, such as the socialization of refugees in football and gender socialization in football, relevant to my research question.

### ***2.1 Background information: Football and gender***

As football is acknowledged as the most popular and influential sport globally, it is no surprise that women have explored playing football. After World War I, women’s football gained a significant amount of popularity. As a reaction to women moving out of the domestic arenas, “men accomplished the reproduction of their privilege through displays of strength and violence [in organized sports] ... By embedding elements of competition and hierarchy among men, it justified their right to social dominance” (qtd. in Adams, Anderson and McCormack 2010: 279). This resulted in the English Football Association banning women from enrolling in clubs in 1921, which essentially stopped competitive and organized women’s football (Meân 2001). One of the arguments that the English Football Association used was that football “is quite unsuitable for females and should not be encouraged” (Meân 2001: 791). Arguments used for excluding women revolved around the fact that women risked “medical harm and physical trauma” when playing football. Despite any evidence, this rhetoric can currently still be observed in some environments (790). Bans on women’s football were lifted in the early 1970s due to the liberal feminist discourse of that time. Since then, the number of women and girls playing football has been increasing steadily, and women’s football is currently the fastest growing sport in the world (e.g., Baxter 2019; Jeanes 2011).

However, exclusion and sexism persist in football. For example, the intellectual legacy

of the exclusion policies “remain a prominent discourse,” which can be identified in practices from football associations worldwide. The exclusion of women “ensured that football skills and knowledge became the property of males, simultaneously constructing and maintaining male hegemony about football” (Meân 2001: 791). For instance, “Governing bodies such as the FA and the [FIFA] remain stubborn in their efforts to keep football (men’s football) and women’s football separate (Caudwell 2011: 335). As a result, women’s football is structurally underfunded, and due to the lack of opportunities, women and girls continue to be excluded. Due to the continued exclusion of women and girls, one can identify two main negative narratives. First, a sexist and misogynistic narrative that is deeply rooted in football and fan cultures, and second, a narrative that football is not compatible with the ideas of femininity. Whether in elite or grassroots structures, women and girls that participate in football are subject to harassment, discrimination, and abuse (Caudwell 2011). Often heard examples are ‘go back to the kitchen,’ ‘women can’t play football,’ ‘a woman’s opinion on football is invalid,’ or the belief that women would not know about the offside rule. “Sexism and misogyny are very sharp and chilling reminders that gendered social relations remain significant influencing forces in society and football contexts” (Caudwell 2011: 331). The second narrative on femininity constitutes that femininity and football do not go together and that women who play football are lesbians. In many socio-cultural contexts, the association with lesbianism has more negative than positive connotations. Therefore, many women do not want to be associated with lesbianism, and thus football (Mustafa et al. 2018). The negative associations with lesbianism and the presence of sexism and misogyny can negatively impact the willingness of women and girls to start playing football, as opposed to sports where sexism and misogyny are less present in the public debate.

## **2.2 Theoretical framework**

In the following section, I will present the theoretical framework at the core of my research. I will address the different ideas of socialization that are presented. Socialization is the social process through which we learn how to behave in society, develop our personalities, and internalize the norms and ideologies of society (Pawlowski et al. 2015; Huang 2018). Many factors determine how people are socialized. For instance, primary socialization, through one’s parents, or through secondary socialization, the process through which children become socialized outside the home and within society at large (qtd. in Huang 2018). Also, gender is an essential factor impacting socialization, as is sports. “According to the process of socialization, with the gender norm, the public has different views and standards regarding

male and female sports participation, which results in the female gender role and the consequent obstacles” (Huang 2018: 2). That gender impacts socialization into sports is in line with the argument of French sociologist Bourdieu. He argues that the socialization process, or cultural capital, impacts one’s participation in sports. “Bourdieu claimed that to explore a social phenomenon, it was insufficient to look at what was said or what happened. It was necessary to examine the social space or field in which interactions, transactions, and practices occurred” (Mohammadi 2019: 1086). Therefore, in this chapter, I will elaborate on how gender impacts socialization and how gender socialization impacts football, as football is “a male sex-typed sport with very strong links to masculinity and male identity” (Meân 2001: 790). Additionally, I will highlight how gender socialization impacts women’s participation in sports and look at the target group of refugee women in particular, as the socialization factors affect refugee women differently. For instance, refugee women are more subject to social exclusion in comparison to women from local communities.

By examining the theories behind different socialization processes, I will be able to see whether my findings are isolated incidents or rather are part of socialization trends described in the literature. For example, it is vital to understand the socialization of women into sports to argue why there is a gender in-balance in some sports and not in others. The socialization of refugee women and girls will provide the necessary context for why refugee women and girls are excluded and which factors impact their exclusion. Finally, the gender socialization theories will help contextualize the differences in experience between boys and girls and men and women that participate in Football for Development programs and will help to answer to what degree traditional gender norms are visible.

### *2.2.1 Introduction to gender socialization*

First and foremost, it is crucial to understand the importance of gender socialization. Gender socialization is the concept behind examining why males and females behave in different ways. As mentioned earlier, where sex refers to the biological anatomy, gender refers to how society determines what constitutes 'feminine' and 'masculine.' Gender socialization rejects the idea that biology, thus sex, determines the "explanations for differences in gender and gendered behavior" (Carter 2014: 242). Instead, sociologists argue that this behavior is constructed through a process that starts as soon as someone is born. "[F]amilies begin to socialize gender roles even in delivery rooms - boys are dressed in blue, while girls are dressed in pink" (Carter 2014: 244). Gender inequality or inequity can be explained and justified by gender socialization theory, as "gender is a psychologically ingrained social construct that actively surfaces in

everyday human interaction" (Pawlowski et al. 2015: 277). Similar to the normal socialization process, agents of gender socialization are parents, school, and other forms of cultural capital. Socialization happens especially through language and actions that shape and reaffirm gender roles. For instance, boys tend to be described by terms that focus on their physical characteristics, such as strength and agility. In contrast, girls are more often defined according to their personalities, such as affectionate, expressive (Carter 2014). This language shapes the treatment of children and thus the children's behavior patterns as well.

Sport is considered a socialization process as well, as participants get to interact by participating in activities. "Through these processes, gender is constantly developed. Boys and girls learn what behavior means and henceforth attach identity expectations to behaviors" (Carter 2014: 257). In short, gender is shaped, maintained, and enforced through actors' roles in society. However, these roles (and tasks) are often gendered as well. For instance, "doing yard work, cooking in the kitchen, caring for children, working on a presentation for one's children ... doing a task associated with a specific gender creates and perpetuates meanings that define who is who and what it means to be a man or woman, or masculine and feminine" (Carter 2014: 254). As a result of gender characteristics that have been socialized, we have the "cultural assumptions that men are competent and valuable and that women are incapable and not to be taken seriously; thus women are placed at a disadvantage." The fact that women are more often associated with caretaking tasks, women are generally treated as "subordinates in many areas of society" (Carter 2014: 254). There is a close connection between which tasks and activities are seen as masculine and seen as feminine and the participation of men and women in sports. For example, rougher sports that include more physical contact are perceived as masculine, whereas girls are the majority in sports that center around aesthetics. In the following section, I will go into more detail on gender socialization in football.

### *2.2.2 Gender socialization in football*

"Organized sport is a 'gendered institution' - an institution constructed by gender relations, as such, its structure and values reflect dominant conceptions of masculinity and femininity" (Eliasson 2011: 821). According to studies by Pawlowski et al. (2015), Jakubowska and Byczkowska-Owczarek (2021), and Eliasson (2011), boys tend to play rougher and girls play is defined by sharing. Sports, play, and especially football are heavily gendered and connected to specific ideas about masculinity and femininity. "The division between 'masculine' and 'feminine' sports is strongly culturally constructed" (Jakubowska and Byczkowska-Owczarek 2021: 13). Therefore, examining how gender socialization is present and the impact of socio-

cultural norms on gender socialization might help us understand why there is a gender disparity in the participation of women and girls in Football for Development programs. As football is worldwide still considered to be a predominantly masculine sport, the male and machismo identities are especially visible. Although both genders have been participating in football, "there are still various stereotypes of who should and should not practice them" (Jakubowska and Byczkowska-Owczarek 2021: 13). For instance, sports are either labeled for 'girls' or for 'boys.' "Typically, 'boys' play' was defined by sports activities that demanded strength and fastness, while 'girls' play was characterized by less physically demanding activities" (Pawlowski et al. 2015: 279). Additionally, boys are more used to being socialized in large groups, while girls are more socialized in smaller and intimate relationships (Haycock and Smith 2014). Jakubowska and Byczkowska-Owczarek argue that what sport is deemed acceptable for boys or girls also depends on the "dichotomy between [the] feminine and masculine body" (2021: 14). Where feminine bodies should be "slim, beautiful and delicate," masculine bodies are expected to be "strong, muscled and resistant to pain" (14). The feminine body ideals do not fit football as a sport, as football is a contact sport that requires players to be strong, fast, and resistant to pain.

In recent years, there has been plenty of positive change since women playing "traditional male-only sports" challenges the "normative ideals about female bodies and 'ideal' femininity" (Scraton et al. 2018). Although football is still predominantly perceived as a masculine sport and the participation of women and girls does not automatically lead to resisting dominant gender norms, the social acceptance of women playing football and women "gaining a greater prominence in football culture" is being more normalized (Jeanes 2011, p. 402). An increase in girl participation has resulted in "the diversification of acceptable girl behavior," however, "restrictive norms surrounding the female body have been maintained" (p. 404). Women that are interested in playing football have to conform to traits that are interpreted as masculine. As a result, for women, "football can become a constant negotiation between the acquisition of typical masculine qualities and the feeling of what it means to be a woman" (Eliasson 2011: 821). Historically, conforming to rather masculine traits has been associated with lesbianism. As a result, women who play football are often associated with non-heterosexuals (Zdunek and Nowak 2018). In a conservative context, this prejudice can be harmful to women playing football or wanting to play football.

Although, there is a difference between girls and women in conforming to masculine traits when playing football. Women tend to participate more often in gender-separated sports spaces than girls. Therefore, women do not necessarily conform to the dominant masculine

values and traits in football. "While women enjoyed the physicality of the sport, they added values closely associated with femininity, such as nearness, sharing with other people and supporting one another" (Eliasson 2011: 821). Since girls tend to play in more mixed-gender settings because of school sports structures, "girls [that play football] are more often found to transgress [gender] borders than boys" and resist gender stereotypes and are less likely to participate in typical girls play (Pawlowski et al. 2015: 286). The girls that participated in football were respected by the boys, as they identified with masculine traits and were skilled. However, even though girls were respected and allowed to participate in boys' play, the girls only reached a certain status of "'with-then-apart' in the boys' world" (Pawlowski et al. 2015: 286). There is a clear hierarchy, as even when girls are allowed to play, their participation is undervalued compared to boys' participation. The hierarchy contributes to the "construction of male superiority" (Eliasson 2011: 827). The hierarchy is partly dependent on how skilled you are as a player; however, it depends significantly on to what degree one conforms to the ideas of masculinity as well. Scandura et al. (2019) argue that there exists a "hegemonic masculinity theory to highlight an intramasculine hierarchical structure that positioned gay men at the bottom" (Scandurra et al. 2019, p. 286). The fact that men are also subject to this hierarchy illustrates that masculinity is highly valued in football and can impact the participation of women and girls.

### *2.2.3 The socialization of women into sport*

According to Eliasson, "the conception of male superiority also seems to be an obstacle for sex-integrated football" (2011: 827). The character of gender socialization is also one of the main barriers to women's inclusion in football in general. "[The barrier] may also be caused by the fact that when it comes to sports participation, the only thing that may be evaluated is the human body and its skills. It is discouraging for kids and teenagers when their changing body is perceived as not feminine or masculine enough to participate in a certain sport." (Jakubowska and Byczkowska-Owczarek 2021: 17). The participation of women in sport has historically been much lower than the participation of men in organized sport. Similar to Eliasson and Jakubowska and Byczkowska-Owczarek, Huang et al. (2018) argues that the causal factor for the gender disparity in sport is the way gender is socialized, as it the traditional norms that restrict women in their participation in sports. "Due to the gender stereotype of sports competence, opportunities for women to join in on sports activities and the capacity demonstrated have been limited. Patriarchal society tends to define males as strong, active, and powerful beings and females as tender, passive, and obedient ones" (2018: 2).

A lot of sports, predominantly, male-dominated sports, have a gender disparity. A study by Makarova & Herzog (2014) showed that in the category of 15-23-year-old first-generation migrant youth in Switzerland, “94.4 percent of male migrant youths took part in sports, of which 64.2 percent were in clubs, while 76.3 percent of the immigrant female youths surveyed reported that they took part in sports, of which only 26.8 were in clubs” (qtd in. Agergaard 2008: 46). According to Jeanes, the “increases in female football participation are occurring in a cultural context in which femininity is being strongly contested as problematic” (2011: 404). In some socio-cultural contexts feminine traits are more restrictive than others. A study by Agergaard (2008) concluded that for a particular social housing area in Denmark, “only 20 percent of migrant girls were members of a sports club compared with 30.5 percent of girls with a descendant background, and 54.5 percent of ethnic Danish girls” (qtd. in Agergaard 2008: 46). The impact of gender socialization seems to weigh heavier for girls with a refugee or migrant background and even though the participation of girls in sport is much more welcomed, in practice it appears that there “remain constraints that hinder [girls’] involvement in various ways” (Jeanes 2011: 403). As gender socialization is one of the main factors that hinders the participation of women and girls in sport, it is important to know which are the driving factors in the socialization process that negatively influence the participation of women in order to tackle hindering factors and promote the engagement of women in male-dominated sports (Huang et al. 2018).

Three main factors that contribute to the socialization process into sports can be identified, agents of socialization, sport socialization situations and opportunities, as well as someone’s character (qtd. in Huang et al. 2018: 2). Agents of socialization include family, friends, and partners, but also schools, the workplace and local communities. The sport socialization situations and opportunities are the accessibility and convenience of sports fields and facilities in the neighborhood. Additionally, mass media affects people's willingness to participate in sport, as they provide information about sports games, athletes, and sports appliances (Huang et al. 2018). As for someone’s character, there is an individual difference among all men or women in whether they might be more interested in participating in organized sports or other leisure activities. According to Huang et al. (2018), “sport socialization situations are the most important key factor for the sports participation of women” (p. 8). The accessibility of the sports facility is a main factor, as well as the “availability of financial resources and transportation” (Haycock and Smith 2014: 299). Especially financial resources and transportation can impact women and girls from a refugee background. According to Huang et al. (2018), friends as agents of socialization are the second most important factor in

terms of socialization of women into sport and family as agents of socialization as a third most important factor.

Arguably, the role of parents as agents of socialization is even more important, if not the most important, for refugee girls. Haycock and Smith (2014) also argued that the socialization of children into sports is heavily dependent on the "extent of parental encouragement" and whether their parents themselves had participated in sports. Additionally, "previous studies revealed that parents have different attitudes towards girls and boys. The boys are much more frequently encouraged into active behaviors and sports, while activities which do not require physical effort are proposed to the girls" (Jakubowska and Byczkowska-Owczarek 2021: 15). Parents have a significant role in the socialization of their children into sports, as "little girls may accompany mothers to gatherings with other women; little boys may go to sporting events with their fathers" (Carter 2014: 252). Through this behavior, children are influenced already by the labels masculine or feminine. Carter states that a father (and mother) "teaches a son to be aggressive and encourage playing sports and doing activities that involve negotiation interchanges with others". As a result, "the son will likely learn that appropriate behavior is to interact with a wide range of people in heterogeneous groups". Therefore, boys are from an early age socialized in groups that resemble a sporting environment. Whereas daughters are encouraged "to interact intimately with others and encourage[d] more one on one playing". As a result, "the daughter will likely internalize messages and cues that promote likewise behavior later in life" (Carter 2014: 245). Therefore, for girls, a sports environment might be the first time girls are socialized to interact intimately with others in a heterogeneous group, besides the school environment. Of course, this does not mean that girls necessarily have a harder time participating in sport, but it might impact their first step towards sports participation.

#### *2.2.4 The socialization of refugee women and girls in sport and society*

As Huang et al. (2018) stated, sport socialization situations and opportunities are the most important factor that restricts women from playing sports. According to Spaaij (2015), the sport socialization situations and opportunities also impact refugee women. As there are plenty of young women from a refugee background looking to participate in sports just like their male relatives, however, there are far fewer opportunities to do so in a club context. The gender disparity can thus partly be explained by the fact there are fewer (financial) opportunities for women to participate in sports. Arguably, the fact that there are fewer opportunities for women is rooted in restrictive socio-cultural norms. Refugee women and girls are at a higher chance

to experience difficulty socializing into sports, especially if they are a traditionally male-dominated sport, such as football. According to Harwood et al. (2021), the gendered nature of sport significantly impacts young women from a refugee background and affects their socialization possibilities into sports. "When young women from refugee backgrounds play sport, they engage in the same resistant space as other women playing sport ... and can be at odds with the expectations of their families and communities as they negotiate their entry into adult life" (Harwood et al. 2021: 177). But also for older women, participation in football can be restricted, as a significant number of refugee women are mothers or even single mothers (Kosc-Ryczko 2021). Arguably, motherhood is an "important aspect of self-determination" for women everywhere. However, refugee women are in a unique position, as many are having to navigate new host countries "without the support of close relatives." One of the primary tasks of refugee women is taking care of the family, reinforcing gender roles (Kosc-Ryczko 2021: 1). The role of the main caretaker can impact their leisure time opportunity in a rather practical way.

Spaaij's study (2015) confirmed that some of the women in refugee communities in Australia "indicated that they are not interested in organized competitive sport because they consider it to be incompatible with hegemonic notions of femininity that exist within [their] community (p. 309-10). The hegemonic notions of femininity that exist can differ from community to community, whether based on socio-cultural or religious principles such as dress code. For instance, Sawrikar and Muir (2010) concluded that the cultural and behavioral expectations of women, such as carrying out domestic duties, as well as the lack of support from the elderly, shunned South Asian [migrant] women from participating in sport (Sawrikar & Muir 2010). Similar studies (e.g., Okumdi and Asiazobor 2010; Spaaij 2015) on refugee and migrant women from the African continent showed that "pervasive gender stereotyping and societal role expectations hampered women's leisure [activities, such as sport]" (qtd. in. Hurly 2011: 3). A participant in Harwood et al.'s study (2021) stated: "[b]eing a young girl from a Somali background, it was hard for me to play any sport. The stereotype in Somalia and many other countries is that, if you're a girl, you're meant to stay at home and do the housework until you get married" (p. 181). On top of socio-cultural norms, religious symbols, such as religious dress, can also impact the participation of women. For instance, "[participants] must find a way to be proper young Somali women, to occupy the same space as young men, and to remain a proud young Muslim woman who wears her hijab publicly" (Harwood et al. 2021: 182). For instance, wearing a hijab or full-length sports clothing can sometimes clash with the regulations at sports organizations and leagues (Spaaij 2015). This can exclude Muslim women from

playing. As a result, there is a significant underrepresentation of Muslim girls in football (Agergaard 2008). "As for many [young women from refugee backgrounds], sport challenges [their] family's habitus and [their] participation causes tensions with her family" (Harwood et al. 2021: 183).

Not only do socio-cultural and religious norms impact femininity, but the socio-cultural norms surrounding masculinity can also restrict women. For refugee men, "sport is a powerful gender regime. Sport allows [young men with refugee backgrounds] to seek attachment to others in a rule-bound structure and to prove and affirm their masculinity through bodily performances" (Spaaij 2015: 309). Because of how a refugee status affects their masculinity, arguably, refugee men are more likely to affirm their masculinity and through sport. The flight experience threatens the role of men as providers or protectors, as they had to leave behind their whole livelihoods. Often in their host countries, refugees are not allowed to work. "This inability to work - along with a variety of other factors associated with forced migration - arguably challenges one's manhood. The very nature of fleeing danger is seen as weakness" (Kosc-Ryczko 2021: 1). As a result, "forced migration and resettlement influence masculine gender role stress, specifically the added struggle of male refugees to manifest traditional notions of masculinity, thereby contributing to unhealthy coping and socialization patterns" (Kosc-Ryczko 2021: 1). As the refugee status can enhance and reinforce traditional gender roles, it can impact women looking to play football. Spaaij's study (2015) shows that many male participants were not supportive of their wives or daughters playing football. "A soccer team for girls; that's very hard for us because it's against Islamic values in a way. It's not something I would promote". Another said that women's participation in "football was 'unfeminine' by stating: 'If I'd let my daughter play, no one would marry her'" (qtd. in Spaaij 2015: 310). When there is support for women playing football, it is often conditional. For instance, women playing sport should conform to the religious and cultural ways, thus in a gender-segregated environment and, in some cases, a closed environment where men would not see the women play.

### **3. Methodology**

In the following chapter, I will discuss the multiple ways I have collected data, selected the participants for the study, and analyzed the data. Furthermore, the chapter will discuss the position of the author concerning the data and the limitations of the research. This research draws on three different data collection methods. First and foremost, a qualitative method, in

the form of semi-structured interviews, Second, a document analysis in which I analyze the results from monitoring and evaluation documents from football clubs. Third, a quantitative method in the form of an online survey. The research will focus on different Football for Development programs designed for refugees in different European countries, specifically, Football for Development programs implemented by the Corporate Social Responsibility departments of professional football clubs. As mentioned in the introduction, after the influx of refugees in Europe from 2015 onwards, many professional football clubs implemented - or expanded their existing - football programming for refugees. In particular, the research will be looking at the clubs that are participating in the EU and UEFA-funded *Welcome Through Football* program. The Welcome Through Football program uses a football-based methodology to focus on social inclusion, integration and acceptance of refugees in their host countries. As mentioned, The Welcome Through Football program has three pillars, socialization *to* football, socialization *in* football, and socialization *through* football pillars. In this research, I will be mirroring the three-step approach of the Welcome Through Football program. I will be analyzing the role that gender plays in each of the different stages of Football for Development programs. By examining the role gender plays in the different stages in the program, this research hopes to point out what measures can be taken by clubs to improve a gender-sensitive approach in each pillar. The European Football for Development Network will use the results from this research to design a new program specifically targeting refugee women and girls.

### **3.1 Ethics**

As the results of this study will be used in the design of a Football for Development program, there are extra ethical considerations to keep in mind, such as the anonymization of the data. The clubs participating in my study are well-known clubs in Europe. Therefore, I wish not to impact their image as my research is not an external evaluation of their programming, rather a study to review the role that gender plays in their programs. Therefore, the names of the clubs will be anonymized. For the names of the participants I will use pseudonyms. Another ethical consideration is the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). Before the start of each interview, I informed the participants of their rights regarding my data collection. Before the interview, the participants gave their oral consent. They agreed that the data collected in the interviews could be used in my research, given the interviewee's identity is protected or unless the interviewee asked me not to. Additional ethical considerations are the handling of the data

and the Do No Harm principle. The processed data is handled with confidentiality and stored in an encrypted environment, and in order to avoid harming any of the participants, their contributions are anonymized. Another critical consideration to keep in mind is that the target group of refugee women is a group that is subject to double marginalization. Therefore, this research must not further stigmatize the group of female refugees looking to participate in football or society as a whole. Therefore, in order not to impose a Eurocentric feminist lens, I will not be referring to the countries of origins of the participants, as this might lead to the generalization of gender equality concerns. Even though there might be a trend visible, my research is not substantial enough to make assumptions and claims to attribute socio-cultural norms to specific countries. Not referring to the specific countries of origin will also minimize the risk that my data will be misused to underpin women's position in parts of the world.

### **3.2 *Participants***

As mentioned, I will be working with data from football clubs participating in the Welcome Through Football program, as well as one other club outside the Welcome Through Football program and a women's refugee football team. In order to protect and anonymize the data, I will refer to the clubs as Football Club 1, Football Club 2, Football Club 3, Football Club 4 and Football Club 5. For the qualitative data, I interviewed five program managers from the five different clubs, two coaches of two clubs, and two participants from one club. In the following sections, I will provide context to programs implemented at the clubs and why the following club has been selected for this research. In order to get multiple perspectives, a mix of program managers, coaches and participants were selected. Program managers have access to monitoring and evaluation data surrounding the program; coaches have an 'observant' perspective towards the gendered behavior of participants, and participants contribute by sharing their own experiences.

#### **3.2.1 *Football Club 1***

Football Club 1 is a well-known football club from Western Europe. The club has been implementing football-based programming for refugees in their city for close to ten years. The program manager has been involved in the program for about five years and has previously conducted academic research on the topic of social inclusion of refugees through football-based programming. Football Club 1 reaches its participants through a partner organization

specialized in mental health counseling for refugees. Over the years, Football Club 1 delivered the program to women and girls but struggled to set up stand-alone structures for refugee women. From Football Club 1, the program manager of the refugee program participated in the research and will be referred to as *Lucas* from hereon. Football Club 1 has been selected for the study as they have experience delivering football-based programming for refugees.

### 3.2.2. *Football Club 2*

Football Club 2 is a well-established club from Southern Europe. The club only started implementing programming for refugees recently. However, the foundation of the club has much experience delivering social inclusion programs. Before participating in the research, the club indicated that they want to include more women and girls but struggle to do so. Due to their geographical location, most refugees that arrive in this Southern European country are male unaccompanied minors. From Football Club 2, both the program manager, from here on referred to as *Miguel*, and the coach, from here on referred to *Afonso*, participated in the study.

### 3.2.3. *Football Club 3*

Football Club 3 is a club from a smaller country in Western Europe. The club has been implementing a social inclusion program for marginalized communities in one of their city's neighborhoods. Football Club 3 is the only club that delivers sport-based programming rather than just football-based programming. Among the sports are football, dance, boxing, and creative leisure activities. From Football Club 3, the program manager, from here on referred to as *Peter*, participated in the study. Of the participants in the program, about one-third are girls.

### 3.2.4 *Football Club 4*

Football Club 4 is a famous football club from Southern Europe. Other than Clubs 1,2, and 3, Football Club 4 is not a participant in the Welcome Through Football program. The club has been implementing programming for refugees in Spain, Italy, Greece and Lebanon and has a significant amount of data available on the participation of refugee women and girls. Therefore, Football Club 4 is used as a 'good practice' example in this research. From the club, the program manager, from here on referred to as *Maria*, as well as one of their coaches in the Greece program, from here on referred to as *David*, participated in the study. In the club's programming in Lebanon and Greece, the club has direct access to nearby refugee camps.

### 3.2.5 *Football Club 5*

The context of Football Club 5 is different from the other clubs. Football Club 5 is a refugee women's football team from a large city in Greece and is not funded through a foundation from an established football club like the other clubs in the research. The reason for engaging the women's refugee football team in research is to speak to a club where the participation of female refugees is the main focus. Of Football Club 5, the founder and program manager, from here on referred to as *Sophia*, and two participants, from here on referred to as *Aisha* and *Farahnaz*, participated in the study.

### 3.3 *Position of the author*

Before going into more detail about why the following research methods were chosen, it is essential to note my position in this research. The Welcome Through Football program is coordinated by the European Football for Development Network. I did my internship with the European Football for Development Network and am currently employed part-time for the organization. The program manager of the Welcome Through Football program expressed their wish to include more girls in the program and invited me to conduct my research with their partners. Furthermore, as a woman growing up playing football, I have experienced the challenges of socializing yourself in a male-dominated environment. For example, being made fun of, not being respected until you have proven yourself worthy of respect, and struggling with confidence in male-dominated football settings. My personal experience playing football in both a male-dominated space and a female-dominated space and my practical work experience with the European Football for Development Network helped me develop the methodology and questions further.

### 3.4 *Quantitative data collection - surveys*

As mentioned, I am using a mixed-methods approach in my research. Using a quantitative method allows me to quantify 'the problem' and contextualize why the gender balance in football is skewed. In order to quantify or measure whether there are recurring conceptions, a quantitative method is best suited (Hoglung and Oberg 2011). I used an online survey tool to collect data. I set up one survey for the program managers and coaches. I developed the survey by asking the participants to confirm my perceptions about the challenges for women playing football, such as whether they agree with the statement that the existing gender (in)balance and

a non-inclusive environment are the main reasons women and girls stay away from playing football. But also to poll whether the participants agree or disagree with some of the common perceptions about women and football, such as women are just not interested in playing football, or women prefer to play other sports. Additionally, the survey allowed me to also get an overview of the gender balance among the clubs participating and provide me with an overview of ways clubs reach participants. The survey allowed me to see if there are any abnormalities or normalities and whether abnormalities are incidental or a trend. As the participants' pool for the survey was limited, I will analyze the data from the survey in a qualitative framework. As qualitative research methods "seek to maximize their ability to generalize" from a sample target group (Hoglund and Oberg 2011, p. 165), it is crucial to contextualize the data, especially in the context of gender.

### **3.5 *Qualitative data collection - interviews***

Whereas the quantitative research can confirm whether there is a skewed gender balance, the survey will not provide the necessary context to indicate the factors behind a gender imbalance. Qualitative data collection methods lend themselves better for capturing "the complexities of human feelings, intentions, experiences, and context" (O'Dwyer & Bernauer 2016: 5). Therefore, I conducted online semi-structured interviews with both coaches and participants. Some of the questions are predetermined, but additional questions are formulated during the interview (Mikkelsen 2005). Beforehand, I prepared an interview guide (see appendix A). Each participant delivered the program in a slightly different context and was an expert in another topic. Therefore, semi-structured interviews were selected, as they allow for flexibility, and I was able to quickly anticipate and ask follow-up questions on the data that I received. Conducting semi-structured interviews allowed me to realize that "the experience of every participant is different" (O'Dwyer & Bernauer 2016) and provided me with much more nuanced reasons why increasing the participation of refugee women and girls is challenging. For instance, by conducting the semi-structured interviews, I was able to answer my sub-questions and my main research question. I conducted my interviews via video conferencing platforms such as Zoom, as we are currently still in a pandemic, and my interview partners were located all over Europe. In total, I conducted interviews with nine people, five men and four women. One advantage of doing interviews over Zoom or similar online platforms is that I can pick up on nonverbal cues and facial expressions instead of interviewing via the phone.

Picking up on nonverbal cues allows for building trust and promotes a natural and relaxed conversation (Archibald et al. 2019).

### **3.6 Document Analysis**

As a final data collection method, I will use document analysis. The documents will consist of analyzing monitoring and evaluation reports and other available reporting surrounding the participation of refugee women and girls in Football for Development programs. The document analysis is included to see if what happens on the football field is also transferred to what is written in reports. It will allow me a better insight into the available data for the pillar ‘socialization through sports’. It will most likely also tell me more about how gender-sensitive a football club might be. For example, whether clubs are paying particular attention to highlighting results on gender equality and the participation of women and girls. I will use the document analysis method to support my findings from the quantitative and qualitative methods where there is data available.

### **3.7 Limitations**

COVID-19 has caused a significant limitation for the data collection process. The main limitation has been the limited access to participants of the Football for Development programs. Due to the pandemic, most of the programs were still on hold; therefore, clubs did not have access to their participants. However, it should be noted that despite the pandemic, access to participants would have been difficult in the period, as most of the clubs are located over Europe and conducting individual interviews with participants would have been more time-consuming than in real life. Additionally, language is a barrier, as many of the participants in the programs do not speak sufficient English. One interviewee did not speak sufficient English; however, the language barrier was mitigated as one of the other participants translated. Finally, by choosing to work with clubs that are implementing football, this research only has access to participating participants or have participated in football programs. For the scope of the research, I chose not to include the target group of women and girls that do not end up in football structures but in other leisure programs, for instance. For future research, it might be interesting to include this target group to examine further the role of gender as a barrier in the socialization of women into sports. For now, I depend on secondary data through the program managers and coaches from the clubs.

#### **4. Socialization to football**

In the following three chapters, the findings from the research will be discussed and analyzed. As mentioned, the analysis will be divided into three parts, socialization to football, socialization in football, and socialization through football. In this chapter, the findings concerning the challenges for girls to get into football and the successful inclusion methods for women and girls will be discussed and analyzed. Before going into the different factors that lead to a skewed gender balance and aspects that complicate the participation of refugee women and girls in football, it is vital to confirm that there is a skewed gender balance in Football for Development programs for refugees. As mentioned, football clubs from the Welcome Through Football program participated in the research. None of the eight clubs in the Welcome Through Football program reported a fifty-fifty gender balance in their programming for refugees. Out of the eight clubs, two of them reported to have no girls at all in the programming, four reported to have a gender balance that is between 5-20 percent girls and 80-95 percent boys, and two clubs reported to have a gender balance where more than one-third are girls in some of their programs. These statistics are in line with the results and conclusions of other studies that have researched the participation of refugee women and girls in football (e.g., Makarova & Herzog 2014; Agergaard 2008). Depending on the context of the program, the reasons for the gender imbalance can vary. However, one constant factor appears to be restrictive socio-cultural gender norms that constrain the participation of refugee women in sports (e.g., Spaaij 2013; Harwood et al. 2021). All the eight Welcome Through Football clubs agree that socio-cultural norms and gender discrimination impact refugee women playing football. For instance, women often have caretaking responsibilities that severely limit their opportunities or opt for more feminine 'appropriate' sports. Moreover, in some cases, women were not aware of any opportunities because there were no other women in their environment that played football; this was also the case for Farahnaz, one of the participants of Football Club 5:

"It was not like I said I wanted to play football and then searched for places where I could play football, you know? For me it was my friend who told me about it. She had played football before in our home country. Then when I found a team, I went and it was all men. They said it was no problem, it's for men and women, but there were no women there. I was the first woman to join the team and go play."

As mentioned, there are many reasons why the participation of women in football is lower than men's participation. Football is a male-dominated sport; there might not be opportunities for women to go and play or refugee women might not have the resources to use available opportunities, or football facilities might not be accessible or women-friendly. In addition, three of the most common challenges that football clubs reported will be discussed in the following three sections.

#### ***4.1 The Demographic of Possible Participants***

Before making assumptions about the gender balance in a program, it is essential to consider the gender balance of the demographic of the possible participants' pool. Not all Football for Development programs for refugees are conducted in a similar context. For instance, some programs are delivered in and near refugee camps, and others are delivered to local communities where refugees might have been relocated. Some programs are delivered to primarily unaccompanied minors, and other programs are delivered to refugee contexts of families. Furthermore, it is also essential to consider the partner organizations clubs and organizations are working with, as often, they have a crucial role in reaching possible participants.

First, the context in which a program is delivered is vital in examining the possible reasons for a gender gap. Based on the data from the survey and the interviews, there are significantly more girls participating in programs delivered in or near a refugee camp. When a program is delivered near or in a refugee camp, recruiting participants is less challenging than, for instance, in local communities. For instance, Football Club 4 is working in and near a refugee camp. According to them:

“It is very easy to recruit, it's often more a case of having to reduce the numbers or turn people away. Recruitment is done in various ways, Football Club 4 works together with the local implementation team on different strategies, such as going door-to-door. Sometimes it's just having the program well-known in the camp and community, getting existing participants to bring their siblings. If we want to have more girls, we try and get [the children] to bring their sisters or cousins.”

The situation of refugees in the refugee camps is often different from those living in local communities. The possibilities for daytime activities are often more limited and restricted to

those living in a refugee camp compared to those relocated to local communities. Refugee youth in local communities are more exposed to a wider variety of leisure activities, as there are often different sports clubs and other leisure activities available. For instance, besides football, Football Club 3 offers circus classes, boxing classes, dancing classes, and creative classes. Moreover, besides Football Club 3, other NGOs working in the neighborhood provide leisure opportunities as well.

Second, another critical contextual, demographic factor is the target group of the program. Some of the programs I examined are delivered to unaccompanied minors, and others are delivered to a refugee context that includes more families. For instance, the program of the Football Club 2 is delivered to a demographic that are unaccompanied minors from African countries that are almost exclusively male. Two of Football Club 4's programs are delivered in Italy and Spain. Of the participants, 99% are male. One reason for this is the refugee demographic in those locations. The vast majority consists of unaccompanied male minors from North and West African countries. Whereas, for the programs delivered in Greece and Lebanon, the demographic of refugees consists of families from the Levant and Asia (e.g. Syria, Iraq and Afghanistan). These groups usually include more families and thus women and girls. A logical consequence of such demographics is that a limited number of girls and women could potentially participate in the Football for Development programs. Additionally, other challenges for the female refugee demographic do not impact the male demographic on the same scale. For instance, Lucas, the program manager at Football Club 1, stated:

“In the city are about 100 unaccompanied refugee girls. At the end of last year, more than one-third [of the girls] were pregnant, so the target group of female unaccompanied minors is very small. It's basically not enough for a target group, as of the 60 girls that are left, 20 might be in the program and the other 40 are not interested in doing sports. You need a bigger target group to implement a better sport structure.”

Finally, the partner organizations have an essential role in determining the demographic of the participants. Four out of five clubs that participate in the research have indicated that they find most of their participants through partner organizations. Therefore, a lot depends on the target group the partner organization works with. Some clubs have a direct partnership with national institutions responsible for the integration of refugees; therefore, they might have better access to the complete demographic. Other clubs work with specialized organizations, such as treatment centers for traumas and psychological problems or educational institutes. Those clubs

have indirect access to possible (female) participants. The indirect access to participants complicates the recruitment process in settings where the social and community norms regarding gender might be a constraining factor. It is more challenging to contact the families and discuss the possibilities for women and girls to participate. Therefore, it can be stated that restrictive socio-cultural and religious norms have an impact on the size of the participants' pool in certain demographics. However, external factors such as the location of the program and the overall demographic of refugees are the most significant factors impacting the participation of women and girls.

#### ***4.2 Disinterest in Football***

A second challenge that the study participants have highlighted is the seeming disinterest of women and girls in playing football. From all the participants, about half of the clubs reported that overall, girls seemed to be less interested in football. It was not that women and girls were not interested in playing sports; however, they preferred to play other sports. Therefore, the participant pool decreased even more, as opposed to the possible participant pool among boys. From the data from the interviews, it was clear that multiple clubs reported that girls were interested in playing sports, but not football. For instance, Afonso, coach at Football Club 2, stated that:

“It’s easy to engage boys when it comes to football, with girls it is more difficult. In my opinion this has to do with football. However, it is possible to get girls involved in football, as in other projects we try really hard to get girls involved and we achieve good numbers. [As for the refugee program], the number of girls [that could potentially participate] is just very low.”

As mentioned in the earlier section, at Football Club 1, many potential participants indicated not to be interested in football. On the interest in women’s football, Lucas, the program manager, says the following:

“There is a big interest in the city for women’s football and many football teams have set up women’s teams. We do notice that those teams also include refugee girls sometimes. [However, in our programming], girls seem to go into different sports, such as circus, dancing, or are in a program that offers a variety of sports. But football is something else. It seems to be difficult to get girls interested in it.”

This similar sentiment is echoed as well by Peter, the program manager at Football Club 3:

“We have quite a lot of female participants, around one-third are girls. [As for the activities, however], football is mostly played by the boys. And girls participate a lot in the creative sessions, as well in sports such as baseball and boxing, and in other leisure activities, such as playing tag and hide-and-seek. But the activities they attend really vary, it’s hard to say what activity girls seem to enjoy most.”

As highlighted in the historical and theoretical context about gender and football, there is an existing culture surrounding football in which football is still considered a masculine and male-dominated sport (e.g., Scandura 2019; Meân 2001). Therefore, there exists a lot of stigma and prejudice surrounding women playing football. Added that there are not many women playing football to challenge stigmas and prejudice, it affects the choice of women and girls in deciding to play a sport. Many do not even consider football to be an option; therefore, they often do not know about the possibilities of playing football. This reflects the experience of Aisha, one of the players of Football Club 5, an all-female refugee team in Greece:

“I couldn’t believe that I played football, as it was a challenge for me in the beginning. But then I saw the photo of Farahnaz playing football with Football Club 5. As soon as I saw women playing football, I was interested. I asked if I could join, and since then, I’ve been coming to every practice. I had never played football before, I didn’t even like football, but then when I came to practice for the first time, and was close up, I changed as a person and started liking it.”

Socialization of women and girls to football seems to be constrained by the perception that exists about football, that it might only be for boys. The findings from the survey and interviews are in line with other research that has been done on gender socialization in sport. For instance, Yi-Hsiu and Chen-Yueh (2013) concluded in their study on the effects of peer attitudes in participating in masculine or feminine sports that “our society maintains gender stereotypes associated with participation in certain sports, which exert impact on the willingness of individuals to participate in certain sports. Due to gender stereotypes, individuals may be filtered out from participating in certain sports” (p. 18). According to Yi-Hsiu and Chen-Yueh, gender stereotypes cause “fear of negative evaluation,” which impacts the willingness of

women and girls to participate in masculine or atypical gender sports. In conclusion, it appears that restrictive gender norms indirectly and subconsciously impact the interest of women and girls in playing football. As it is mostly an indirect and subconscious process, clubs must be gender-sensitive. The gender disparity cannot be dismissed as ‘men and women are different, and women are just not interested in football’; there is a more complex process of gender socialization according to patriarchal structures in place.

### **4.3 *Social Gender Norms and the Cultural Barriers***

“However, it is not like girls are not interested in football programs,” says Maria, program manager at Football Club 4, “it’s just that the girls see football and think it is not for them.” Data from the survey showed that all football clubs are aware that socio-cultural and religious norms make it more challenging for women and girls to participate in football. Most of the girls participating in the programs are not on the same skill level as the boys and men. The skills gap can cause hesitation in playing football. Similar to the disinterest of women and girls, the underlying gender socialization structures explain why there exists a skill gap between boys and girls. For example, all of the clubs report that the vast majority of the girls and women who have joined their programs have not played football before in their home countries; this contrasts with the male participants, where the vast majority of the boys have played football before. The fact that women and girls have not played before is a barrier, states Lucas, program manager at Football Club 1. “Overall, we see less women than men. In my opinion, it is because the boundaries to enter sports are too high for the target group of female refugees. Because, as soon as we see women participating in sports, they stay in the sports system.”

The disinterest in football, the skill gap and the higher boundaries to enter the sport can all be traced back to restrictive socio-cultural and religious beliefs (e.g. Spaaij 2013; Jakubowska and Byczkowska-Owczarek 2021; Harwood et al. 2021). As stated, many girls are coming from countries where participating in sports is discouraged or even prohibited. The Football for Development programs is often the first and only chance that girls can participate in sports and games. Maria, program manager at Football Club 4, confirmed that the inexperience in playing football for many girls and women impacted the program:

“When we started the program three years ago, we started with a very low number of girls. Over time, we discovered that it’s not necessarily because girls are not interested, it’s just that the girls were coming from countries where sport is not available to them, or are side-lined from

these opportunities. Thus, we found that we needed to re-design the projects with a girl-centered approach that addresses their specific realities and contexts.”

Other clubs also acknowledge that the participation of women and girls is affected if they are brought up in more constraining socio-cultural contexts. In many cases, the parents are important as agents of socialization. Parents bring up their boys and girls in different ways according to societal gender norms ascribed to masculinity and femininity. “Therefore, in socialization into sports, the family role is crucial. Parents can both reproduce and challenge gender stereotypes in sport” (Jakubowska and Byczkowska-Owczarek 2021: 16). Arguably, in more conservative environments, where gender norms are more visible than in progressive environments, parents are more likely to reproduce gender stereotypes than challenge them. Peter, program manager at Football Club 3, recalls:

“For some families there is a conservative cultural barrier that impacts their children playing sport. I remember a situation where we went to visit a family in order to get their daughter more involved in the project. But the dad was only talking about his son and how good his son was at playing football. I believe it’s our role as a club to showcase to the parents that their daughter is also very capable of playing sports. For instance, the family was questioning why she needed to play sports, her future role would be as a housewife, so it’s better for her to help out with the tasks in the house. So we highlighted that there’s also other roles for women. For example, she might want to be a middle school teacher, or a kindergarten teacher”.

Not only do coaches and program managers report that parents reproduce certain socio-cultural gender norms, but women themselves are also aware that restrictive norms impact them. For instance, women do not feel comfortable in spaces where men are the majority. According to Farahnaz, a player at Football Club 5:

“Some of the women do not participate in football because of shame. The men, they are muscle, you know? They are stronger than us, they can run faster than us. And for some of the women, they feel ashamed to be in front of them and play with them. But for me, it was okay. I was like, okay, even if they make fun of me, it is not a problem, for me the most important thing was to enjoy the time, enjoy this life. I just like to play, I don’t care what the men think. I’m not a professional, but I like to play. But for some of the girls and women, it’s not the same. They feel ashamed to play football with men in the same place.”

Football Club 4 acknowledges that if there are challenges when it comes to socio-cultural norms, most of the time, the concerns are from the parents and not from participants themselves. According to David:

“In Lesbos we have two fields. The parents did not like that the girls were playing while the boys were playing at the same time. So this is a challenge sometimes, but it is an easy fix to reschedule the practice. This feedback mostly comes from the parents, the participants actually do not have problems with playing at the same times as boys. Maybe some girls might not feel too comfortable, but we make sure that if there is a situation in which participants are uncomfortable, they feel safe enough to tell us.”

Even though there are challenges that come with conservative attitudes from parents to atypical sports participation, none of the clubs reported that they had to modify their programming in a way that would impact gender equality negatively. Football Club 3 reported that if the program had to be adjusted, it was mostly on religious grounds and not socio-cultural. For instance, some parents stated that the music used in the dance academy of Football Club 3 was *haram*. They allowed their children to come still; however, they were not allowed to participate in the official showcases of the dance academy. Other clubs reported cases in which conservative views from families have restricted girls from playing mixed-gender settings. As Lucas from Football Club 1 acknowledges, it takes time to set such structures, as “we get 4 or 6 girls that participate in the program, but this is not enough to set up a girls-only structure. And if you mix the participants, this might be challenging for some of the families, because they are more conservative”.

Furthermore, certain socio-cultural norms cause little representation of women playing sports. In terms of women’s participation in football or society as a whole, representation and socio-cultural norms are closely connected. Both concepts operate in a vicious circle, wherein the particular representation of women playing football can either confirm or challenge socio-cultural norms. The connection between representation and challenging socio-cultural norms is evident in Football for Development programs. For instance, Maria, program manager of Football Club 4, recalls that there was often a misconception about who the program was for when they first started with the program. Many people thought that as the football program is connected to this big and well-known football club, it must be an academy. Moreover, since it is football, it is probably for boys. Thus, the overall representation of women’s football in the world plays into the stigma that football is for boys only on a competitive level. However, “the

whole aim is about being inclusive, regardless of ability, gender, race, or legal status, so trying to convey that is something that is really important to [Football Club 4] and something that we are working on constantly” according to the program manager.

#### ***4.4 Creating a Safe Environment***

The final challenge that clubs report is that there is no safe environment for women and girls to participate. This can be because there are not yet enough girls to set up girls-only structures, or gender stereotypes are still very present. Whereas creating a safe environment is a challenge, it can also be highlighted as a success. For example, Football Club 4 managed to create a safe environment and increase the participation of women and girls. Since participants often are dealing with extensive emotional baggage. The creation of a safe space is often one of the main objectives, as well for Football Club 4, says Maria, the program manager; “the objective is to promote emotional and physical well-being and create safe spaces, as many of the kids that come to our program are not in structured educational systems, have had traumatic experiences and are dealing with emotional stress and aggression.” As mentioned, however, creating a safe space is also one of the main challenges. From Football Club 1, Lucas acknowledges precisely that; “[s]ometimes the participants show that they have special needs that a psychologist should take care of. Moreover, in some cases, coaches are reminded of their own flight experience, which impacts the delivery of the program.

Additionally, it is also essential to provide a safe environment for the female participants. An environment where they can express themselves freely without being mocked by boys because their football skills are a few years behind. Miguel, the program manager at Football Club 2, states that a lot of female participants might not experience a safe and comfortable environment in playing with boys:

“If the numbers of girls participating were higher, we think we could make a girls-only group where the girls would feel more comfortable. But if there are only one or two girls, even if they are really interested in playing football, if they see that they will be playing with 20 guys, that is a ‘no’ for them, because they are less comfortable with that.”

Therefore, one of the most critical tasks in maintaining good numbers of girls participating is addressing the culture on the field and making sure that each participant can express themselves. According to Lucas (Football Club 1), this is not an easy process and a more considerable challenge. “It should be a safe surrounding where they feel the trust in the group

and see the group as a family as it were. It would take us a long time to create a situation where both [girls and boys] feel comfortable, because of their cultural background, or because of puberty, etc.” Creating a safe space for girls can also consist of practical adjustments outside of the practice. For instance, having suitable accommodations where there is enough space for women and girls to have their separate dressing rooms, having the training hours at times in the early evening, so that it is not dark when the female participants have to go home. For groups with older girls or women playing, it can mean having options for child care or making sure that the participants know what is a valid reason not to come to the activities because of their period. And creating such a space where participants are not ashamed to let their coach know that this is why they might miss practice.

It is essential to create a safe space for the participants and build trust between the club, the participants, and their parents. All clubs have indicated that gaining the trust of the community and the partner organizations is essential and indispensable in order to deliver a successful program. Both Football Club 4 and Football Club 3 report that if the parents trust the program, they can more comfortably discuss the daughters’ participation with the parents. As described earlier, with the parents’ trust, Football Club 3 was able to convince a family to let their daughter participate in the project. Both Football Club 3 and Football Club 4 report that they pay special attention to the role of the parents. Beforehand the parents are very well informed on the program and what the participation in the program entails for their children. Clubs might maintain contact with the parents as a target group and organize activities for them. Moreover, most importantly, if the parents are engaged with the program and see girls or their daughters playing, they are more likely to challenge gender roles than reinforce them. The longer gender stereotypes are maintained, the more it negatively impacts women’s opportunities to participate in football, or sport in general (Eliasson 2011).

#### **4.5 Competition vs. Fun**

After discussing the challenges regarding the participation of female refugees in football in development programs, it is essential to highlight the successful strategies that clubs have implemented. As with the challenges, it should be highlighted that the clubs work in many different contexts and with different target groups. Therefore, there is no guarantee that one successful strategy from one club will lead to success in another club. However, the data from the survey and interviews have shown that there are similarities in the successful strategies in engaging more women and girls. Three of those successful strategies will be discussed in the

following sections, starting with changing the competitive focus of practice to a non-competitive approach.

The two football clubs that have indicated that socializing women and girls are no longer one of their main challenges emphasize the non-competitive element in their programming. For instance, football practices are not necessarily focused on improving football skills but rather on exploring life skills and having fun. Peter of Football Club 3 highlights the following:

"We have a different project, focused on football, which attracted a lot of girls. If you do not put the focus on the competitive aspect in sport, but rather on the aspect of having fun together, the girls are more likely to stay in the program. Sure, competition is important, but being together and playing together is more important. And if you create this culture right, as an organization, but also as a coach, then we do not consider girl participation as a problem. This is something we notice in different projects as well, setting the culture of on the training ground. If you have players that are not excelling in the technical aspect of football and frustrations emerge, coaches have an important job to address this and to set a positive culture and motivational 'vibe' on the training ground for everyone."

The underlying reason for shifting the focus from competitive to non-competitive is not because girls are not as good at playing football as boys - as many boys and grown men on the internet might argue - but that many girls have never played before or have been socialized into football at a much later age than boys. Consequently, girls' skill level might not be on the same level (yet) as boys of their age. Of course, generalization should be avoided, as a difference in skill level can also be found among boys and girls themselves. However, in the context of the participation of refugees, girls that are already socialized into football are an exception to the rule. Therefore, in order not to 'lose' the girls after a few sessions, inclusivity and collaboration are the focus of the practices. David, the coach at Football Club 4, highlights the following:

"Competitiveness can sometimes be a challenge, therefore, we give them examples of inclusivity and collaboration. We emphasize that everyone has the right to play. We ask the participants to encourage each other and to accept everyone, and most importantly to have fun together and not necessarily compete. So it is a change of mindset that we are constantly working on."

Additionally, both Football Club 3 and Football Club 4 offer other sports next to football as well. As a result, both clubs are stating that they have no problems getting the girls to stay in their program. The methodology of the programs that the clubs implement is not necessarily focused on football. It can be used with different sports and basketball or volleyball, as long as the program's overall goal is to be collaborative, inclusive, and promote dialogue. When playing in a competitive environment, differences in gender socialization appear. In the context of promoting gender equality, the apparent differences between the genders can negatively impact mixed-gender settings and promote stereotypes (Eliasson 2011; Pawlowski et al. 2015). One of the reasons clubs might integrate different sports is to honor it is low threshold approach. For example, Football Club 3 offers four main activities, such as creative sessions, boxing, football and circus, and just playing games. According to them, it is vital that the children can pick and choose multiple projects. Football Club 4 has a slightly different approach. They do not offer multiple sports where participants can pick, but sometimes do exercises from different sports:

"In the seminar for the coaches we discuss the needs of the coaches, but also the needs of the participants. One of the goals is to challenge biases in the practices. For instance, showing pictures and asking, 'who is the doctor and who is the teacher'. It is important to discuss stereotypes that might exist and occur during practice. For example, boys might be used to playing football and girls might not be, so then we show them examples of good female athletes. We also teach the coaches on how to 'relax' the boys and to let them give opportunities to the girls to develop as well, to show the boys that they can do things as well. That is why we use different sports, such as basketball and volleyball, as well. As the boys might not be used to playing those sports either. This can create a more equal playing field."

This way, boys might be better able to understand that experience influences skill level, and therefore, they might be more willing to give the female participants in the program the space to develop themselves. Thus, a lot comes down to how clubs are structuring the practices. Besides the non-competitive element, clubs emphasize the need for dialogue. Clubs follow a specific structure that allows for dialogue before the practice, during the practice and after the practice. During the opportunity for dialogue, participants speak about what they want to learn and life skills they want to work on and discuss any problems that might occur in practice. In conclusion, it is not just a 'add girls and stir' approach that automatically guarantees a constant number of girls, and clubs need to implement an inclusive and girl-centred approach.

#### 4.6 *Girls-only groups*

Another strategy that the clubs use, is starting with girls-only groups instead of mixing the girls immediately with boys. As mentioned in a previous section, Lucas from Football Club 1 highlighted that mixed sessions might give trouble with conservative beliefs from the parents. However, Football Club 2, for example, noticed that they were missing out on girls because they did not want to be the only girls playing with twenty boys. These statements mirror what Fielding-Lloyd and Meân (2008) have argued. They argue that “females have reported strong preferences for single-sex settings in contrast with performance pressure in the presence of men”. Women-only groups allow a safe space to improve their athletic abilities and “experience female solidarity in a sporting environment in a manner that men have historically experienced” (p. 26). Eliasson (2011) echoes that girls might have a more challenging time playing with boys than playing in a gender-separated environment. Especially if the girls have low self-confidence, the “conception of male superiority” can be an obstacle as the boys already start with preconceived notions that they are better at football than the girls (p. 828). In addition, “girls [have] to negotiate the paradox that girls’ football is considered nicer and contains less foul play ... but that in practice girls nevertheless often hear that they are too nice and must be tougher and harder” (Eliasson 2011: 828).

Because girls need to navigate added challenges, Football Club 4 has set up girls-only structures to make it easier for girls to be socialized into football. “Lots of girls are coming from Syria, Afghanistan or Iraq and many have not played football before. We have got some really good footballers from Afghanistan, but most are coming from environments where it is not socially acceptable or culturally acceptable to play football,” says Maria, the program manager at Football Club 4. Especially in program settings where there are a lot of potential women and girls that want to participate in the program, clubs have set up both structures:

“It depends on the context whether the groups are girls-only or mixed. For example, in Lebanon, there are a few venues that are very open and where the community has no problem with boys and girls playing together and there are a few venues that have more conservative religious beliefs. Therefore, the coordinators have set up specific girls sessions. For the girls over 15 we already have girls only sessions.”

By creating mixed settings and girls-only structures, participants can decide in which setting they feel most comfortable. Miguel from Football Club 2 highlights that both sessions are essential to improve the social aspects of the participants. “You cannot just make two separate

sessions, you need all three, girls, boys and mixed.” In some cases, Football Club 4 decides that the girls-only groups are well enough socialized in football and then have them play with boys too:

“For instance in Kara Tepe, one of the camps in Lesbos, the participants are now 50 percent girls and 50 percent boys, but it has taken us some time to get to that point. We have had to normalize girls in public spaces playing games, which has taken some time. It has also taken time getting the parents involved and kind of dispelling some of the myths surrounding physical activity for girls especially.”

David, coach at Football Club 4, adds that “despite culture, religion or the opinion of the parents, it is also good to have single gender groups, just to create a space that is only for them. They value the space that just girls are together and not have boys be present.” It should be noted that girls do not hate playing in mixed settings, as the participants quickly notice that it is all about enjoyment and well-being and that it is also fun to play with boys. However, data from the survey shows a consensus among the program managers and coaches that the overall preference of girls is to play in girls-only groups and feel more comfortable speaking up in girls-only groups. This conclusion is in line with the results of the study of Pawlowski et al. (2015). They argued that girls and boys played together, and in some cases, “girls resisted gendered play and forced boys and girls to play together by throwing themselves into games and spaces dominated by boys”. However, “some girls expressed frustration when they participated in activities with boys. They expressed that they were bodily disadvantaged and could not physically match the more skilled, faster, and stronger boys” (p. 283). In addition, in a female space, girls had the opportunity to make more friends with girls “and add feminine values to the football environment” (Eliasson 2011: 829). Although, sex segregation of children in football can also reinforce stereotypes, as it is “difficult for the girls to show their ability in football relative to boys when their activities are segregated. Further it is difficult for girls to make their voices heard and people in their surroundings can continue to make comments that boys are better than girls in football” (Eliasson 2011: 829).

#### **4.7 Coaches as role models**

The last strategy that I will highlight to increase the participation of refugee women and girls in Football for Development programs is the use of coaches as role models. A report from the Football Club 4 states that “[a]cross all program sites, having more female coaches contributed

to a change in perceptions that the program was only for boys. Not only did the number of girls participating in the program increase, but also the attitude among boys towards girls improved” (Football Club 4 2019). All of the clubs acknowledge that they try to engage both men and women in being coaches, as “it is good for the kids to see role models that are both men and women”, says Miguel, the program manager at Football Club 2. Not only is it important to have role models that are both women and men, but also role models that come from a refugee background themselves. In particular, Football Club 1 and 4 highlight that having a coach from a refugee background is essential to their program. Of course, there can be difficulty with getting women with a refugee background into coaching, as many are not socialized into football. Lucas notes that they had a female coach at Football Club 1, but the coach was socialized in basketball and not football; thus, this complicated things sometimes. However, in terms of increasing girl participation, having female coaches is a priority. In the survey, clubs responded that using role models and ambassadors is a successful strategy in reaching participants, next to mouth-to-mouth advertising. According to Maria, program manager at Football Club 4;

“A really good strategy that has worked in the last years, I wouldn’t call it a quota, but rather emphasizing having higher numbers of women as coaches. For example, in Lebanon, in the first year we had maybe less than 10 percent women as coaches, and today we have more than 50 percent. These women are paid as coaches to deliver sessions with boys, girls and mixed. They are very vocal, very active, very visible and this was not the case three years ago. Now the demand for girls in the program is massive. In many venues where we work it is now fifty-fifty and before it was more like zero, or five, or ten percent. Overall, we have about thirty to forty percent girls participating.”

Having female coaches coach both boys and girls can change perceptions about gender equality. Also, having male coaches coach women can lead to changed perspectives. This is acknowledged by Sophia, founder of Football Club 5;

“[We have two coaches, a woman and a man]. Of course, I wanted a female coach, but I also wanted a male coach. In the beginning, the women were hesitant because there was a man, but out of forty participants, we only lost one. All the others went from hesitant in the beginning to very accepting. Nowadays the women call him “our brother”, so we are changing their perspectives too.”

Female coaches are essential for representation and changing attitudes; however, the coaches have essential roles in the project in general. Coaches are responsible for setting the culture in the group where everyone feels accepted. For instance, if participants do not play in mixed-gender groups, “it depends on the coaches to address certain gender equality issues and fair relationships between boys and girls”, according to Maria, program manager at Football Club 4. Coaches need to address and neutralize tensions and “create a positive culture and motivate everyone” (Peter, program manager Football Club 3). It is vital to train coaches in gender sensitivity, as coaches can also reinforce gender roles. “For example, coaches’ strong emphasis on performance meant that they were more likely to promote a competitive idea and less likely to recognize the children’s social logic, that is their needs and interest in making friends in their teams” (Eliasson 2011: 824). As highlighted in previous sections, a competitive environment can cause conflict between boys and girls and reinforce gender roles.

## **5. Socialization in football**

After discussing the main challenges and success for the socialization of refugee women and girls to football, this section will discuss and analyze the role of gender in socialization in football. Multiple clubs reported that getting girls to participate in football is the biggest challenge and that as soon as they are getting girls to participate in their programming, they stay in the programming. However, as highlighted in the previous section, especially by Football Club 4, a ‘add girls and stir’ approach is not enough; clubs need an active girl-centered approach. A girl-centered approach focuses on challenging stereotypes, adjusting the focus from competitive to non-competitive and setting up girls-only structures. The mere fact that a ‘add girls and stir’ approach is insufficient suggests that gender socialization impacts girls and boys playing football. In this section, the research will elaborate on to what extent the gendered differences that appear can be attributed to how gender is constructed within playing football. I will analyze how gendered differences change and not change in different age groups and how prevalent the socio-cultural norms are in the socialization process. Although the competitive nature of sport and cultural differences are visible in every age group, the data that has been collected showed that there are different trends in terms of female participation in mixed-gender settings for children, teenagers and adolescents.

### **5.1 Gendered differences among children**

I will start by analyzing and discussing the gendered differences and similarities that are visible among children. Arguably, children are less impacted by societal pressure that adheres to the concepts of masculinity and femininity. However, gender socialization starts at a very early age in the home and schools. All of the interviewed clubs reported that children care the least about playing in mixed groups and that playing together became significantly more difficult as the participants got older. In some cases, the boys commented that girls cannot play football, but this sentiment seems to disappear as soon as they play together. For instance, Lucas, program manager at Football Club 1, reported:

“The younger the age, the easier it is. We had one group of 7 to 11 year-olds, including two girls in the group. In the beginning [the boys] were joking a little bit, but after 10 minutes it was gone, because they could see that [the girls] were able to do sports. The girls were fit, they were funny, their gender did not matter.”

A similar experience is reported by Football Club 2 and Football Club 4. Afonso, coach at Football Club 2, highlighted that they had an initial shyness that the participants needed to get over. However, Afonso did not necessarily attribute it to the gender of the participants directly, but rather to the fact that in some cases, you put participants together that have not yet been socialized together. He stated: “we had the same problem with boys, as some boys were 7 or 13 year-olds and the session was also with 18 year-olds. So naturally they were a bit shy in the beginning of the practice. But as soon as the shyness faded, then it’s okay”. As Pawlowski et al. (2015) also note, football has a clear hierarchy, with the most skillful players at the top of the hierarchy. Skillful girls are respected; however, girls that are less skillful and more passive in playing get a higher risk of being mocked. This hierarchy also exists within the boys, where the less skillful players are not at the top of the hierarchy, but they are less likely to be mocked, as they are boys. As soon as boys notice that girls are skillful, they treat them with respect. A similar observation is shared by David, coach at Football Club 4:

“My personal memory from the program that stuck with me is that initially some of the boys reacted with anger because the girls came to join the program. But after a month, they had a completely different attitude towards the girls. They were welcoming and gentle and they understood that the girls were also part of the program and they could have fun while playing together.”

As per the observations of Football Club 1, Football Club 2 and Football Club 4, the boys have certain assumptions about the girls that fit the traditional gender roles before having played with girls. Some of the assumptions are of sexist and misogynistic character. However, after playing together, these sentiments seem to dissolve to a certain degree. The experience of the clubs mirrors findings from the literature on the subject of gender socialization in football. For example, Pawlowski et al. (2015) concluded in their study on gendered play in school recess settings that boys dominated the schoolyard by playing football and that girls were only allowed to join on a few occasions. However, in most cases, over time, boys became increasingly more accepting and encouraging of girls joining the football play. Arguably, stereotypes are challenged on a superficial level. The more boys are exposed to girls playing football and girls being good at football, the more the underlying assumptions and stereotypes are challenged.

Despite the limited number of refugee women and girls in their programming, in other programs, Football Club 2 states that they notice an increase in girls interested in playing football, especially in the younger ages. Miguel, program manager at Football Club 2, states: "in my opinion it is because of the schools. In the younger age categories, the sports activities in schools are mixed. This is also what Peter, program manager at Football Club 3 reports; "in the program participants mix. However, as always, there are certain groups." The groups might be selected based on very practical reasons, "it is because they are friends in school, or live on the same street". Clubs do report that the older the participants get, the older it is to engage them. According to Miguel of Football Club 2, this is due to the fact that the older the students get, the more sports activities become a choice and there is more of a commitment, then it's harder to get girls involved." As for how boys and girls interact with each other, Miguel states:

"From our experience, we do not see that much of a struggle between boys and girls. They join the programs in a school setting. Rather they make a family out of it, they belong to the Foundation family. They see themselves as a group and not necessarily as boys and girls, it's a very positive aspect. There are of course cases in which it can be an issue, but that's more due to the nature of society, and sometimes we have to make an effort in some areas."

As shown by the data from the survey, building friendships and social interaction with peers is an aspect that is most valuable for both girls and boys. However, even in building these friendships on the football pitch, there are gendered dynamics at play. As Eliasson (2011) argues, in making friendships on the pitch, girls and boys had different values on what made a

teammate a more suitable friend. "Boys emphasized sports performance as the most important thing, and being nice is second to this. For many girls, it was more important for teammates to be nice, and it was fine if they were also good at football" (p. 825). Arguably, the gendered differences are a direct result of how gender is socialized in society. However, gender socialization is not listed as the leading cause of friction between boys and girls; instead, the skill gap is listed as the leading cause of conflict by the program managers. In order to create a gender-sensitive program, clubs need to acknowledge that the skill gap can be attributed to gender socialization. On average, girls start playing football at a later age than boys. In most cases, this is not due to girls' decisions but instead can be attributed to how the girls were affected by the gender socialization process from their parents. For instance, at a young age, most of the girls have no problem being socialized into groups with boys; however, their parents might have different opinions based on their socio-cultural or religious norms and values:

"In Lesbos, there are two fields. The parents did not like the girls playing on one of the fields while the boys were playing at the same time on the other field. So this can be challenging, but on the other hand, it is an easy fix to reschedule the training times. But this feedback [on the socialization of girls into mixed gender groups] comes from the parents mostly. The participants themselves actually do not have many problems with it. Of course, there might be some girls who might not feel *too* comfortable, but we always make sure that we create an environment in which the participants feel safe enough to tell us that they are not comfortable with playing with boys" (David, coach at Football Club 4).

Since girls are socialized into football at a later age, or not at all, it can play into the stereotype about girls not being able to play football. Therefore, Football Club 2 has set up a girls-only competition. The girls still participate in a mixed setting in the schools, but for tournaments, they decided to set up a competition:

"The density of the girls was so big that we set up a girls-only competition in order to improve their experience in the tournament. The results showed that it was a good approach. In tournaments, between cities, even though there is a separation between the genders at the tournaments, there is a solidarity between the boys' and girls' teams from the same cities as they compete against teams from other cities."

On the reasoning behind the decision to create a girls competition, Miguel, program manager at Football Club 2, states:

“It’s best for them to reach their full potential. Instead of being some kind of secondary member in the boys team, they have more chances to be selected or scouted in tournaments. They realize it is a good opportunity for them. Even though in the project they have the opportunity to compete against boys, now they can separate themselves and have a better possibility to shine than when playing with boys.”

In some cases, similar to Football Club 2, Football Club 4 created separate groups for girls. The main advantage of creating a separate group of girls is that “it creates a very good relationship among them, a sort of sisterhood bond”, says David, coach at Football Club 4. Additionally, it is easier to adapt the curriculum to their specific needs if there are separate groups. David recalls: “if they do not want to play in a competition, for example, and rather just want to have fun and play, it’s easier to adapt the program just for them, as compared to mixed gender groups, as boys often like to compete. Most of the boys will not agree to not playing a match.”

Additionally, “in some cases we also find that girls like to talk a bit more, so then we give more time to discuss in the girls group” (David, Football Club 4). As highlighted by the program manager of Football Club 2, due to their gender and the stereotypes about girls playing football, girls are at a higher risk of being seen as the ‘secondary members’ of the team. This is in line with the argument made by Pawloski et al. (2015). They argue that the girls who play football, dubbed the ‘soccer girls’, never reach the same status as their male peers in the football hierarchy. The competitive element of the tournament might reinforce gender roles. For instance, girls might be frustrated that boys will not play the ball to them, while in a practice session when the stakes are less high, they would have played the ball. Boys might be frustrated that the skill level of some of their female peers is not yet on the same level as some of the boys who have been playing football for a longer time. David, coach at Football Club 4, notes that “as boys have been used to playing football, they sometimes complain that girls are not participating and the girls complain that the boys do not play the ball to them. So this can create conflict sometimes”. Whether the girls participated in a mixed setting or a girls-only setting, all clubs reported an increased tolerance of girls participating in sports, especially among boys who participated in mixed sessions, concluded Football Club 4 in its final report. Not only did they report an increased tolerance of girls playing sports, but they also increased tolerance of

women in a coaching position. “In places where mixing boys and girls was common practice, children tend to express a more gender-sensitive approach, meanwhile, where gender-mixed activities were not commonly instituted, children expressions tended to be more stereotyped” (Football Club 4 2019). Additionally, empowerment was one of the biggest successes for the girls that did participate in the program. “Most of them indicated that by participating in the project they feel more empowered and they made a lot of new friends, friends that are boys as well. Many did not have friends that were boys before. Now they play together in the camp as well”, said David, coach at Football Club 4.

Overall, after playing together, boys show an increased acceptance towards playing with girls at a younger age. Stereotypes and assumptions about women playing football are challenged. However, girls always have to prove themselves first, and even after having proved that they are skillful, they are regarded as secondary members of the team. Therefore, it can be said that even though on the superficial level it appears that girls and boys play together without too much trouble, gender socialization still has a significant impact. As highlighted by Eliasson (2011), “women tend to be more valued for how they are rather than for what they do. These results may be interpreted as supporting a notion that the children’s expectations reflected a traditional view of male and female gender relations” (p. 825).

## **5.2 Gendered differences among teenagers**

The reason for looking at the gendered differences and similarities among different age groups is that some clubs report a shift in gender dynamics as soon as participants reach puberty. As highlighted in the previous section, while there is some friction between boys and girls, most participants do not mind playing together and playing in mixed settings, resulting in an increased tolerance for girls playing football. The gendered dynamics change as soon as the participants get older can both be attributed to socio-cultural norms, such as how gender is socialized in society and partly to anatomical and physiological differences between boys and girls. For example, the anatomical and physiological differences between the different genders start to become more visible. Lucas, program manager at Football Club 1, states:

“Puberty is an explosive period. Of course, I should note that this is a generalization as well, however, we notice that if participants just start out and they’re trying to find their own position in the group, there is a lot of stress in comparison to when [boys and girls] have been playing together for a long time. Therefore, in mixed settings, it takes some time to create a common

mindset where participants address problems together. Coaches work on creating an environment where everyone feels safe and secure, but this takes time. So it really makes a difference for when girls enter the program, whether it's at the beginning of this group socialization process, or whether it's after 6 months, or even later.”

When it takes girls a long time to find their place or feel safe in a mixed environment, it is harder to keep them socialized into football. As mentioned in the previous section, in many cases, it is the first time that the girls are playing football. If they do not immediately feel comfortable in the sports environment, they might decide to try another sport. Lucas notes: “sometimes after some time, the motivation goes down for girls and they drop-out of our programming. It should be noted that in some cases the girls move into official sport structures instead”. However, Lucas adds, “if you look at the target group of female refugees, the main problem is that the boundaries to enter the sport are too high. When they are participating in sports, they stay inside the sport. Perhaps not in Football for Development programming, but rather in a club structure”. Because the clubs are aware of the positive effect mixed groups can have on challenging stereotypes and gender norms, clubs might be hesitant to separate boys and girls into different groups. Lucas recalls:

“The older they get, the more they focus on the [dynamic between boys and girls]. If we have girls in the groups with older ages, such as 12 to 15, it is much more problematic. In some cases we had to find a different solution, as tensions might be problematic for both sides. On the one hand, we do not want to enhance a situation where there's a negative focus on the girls inside the group. On the other hand, if they come into our program with some background of trauma, we do not want to add more oil to the fire. It should be a safe surrounding where they feel the trust in the group and see the group as a family. It would take us a long time to create an environment where both girls and boys feel comfortable, both because of cultural values, but also because of puberty”.

As for Football Club 3, where they offer multiple sports to children, most boys tend to play football, and girls instead do sports associated with more ‘feminine’ traits. Especially at puberty, their gendered difference becomes more apparent, the difference in gender socialization in sport is also affected. Not only are boys and girls more likely to participate in a typical gender sport (Jakubowska and Byczkowska-Owczarek 2021), when participating in an atypical gender sport, gender socialization is visible. For example, girls playing football are considered “weak and cautious, while boys are tough, hard, strong and better than the girls”

(Eliasson 2011: 826). To address these stereotypes, clubs actively promote the engagement of their participants in atypical gender sports. For example, Football Club 3 encourages girls to play football and boys to participate in their dance academy:

“The program partnered with a dance school and we asked ourselves if we should do it exclusively for girls, but we decided against it. We made the conscious choice to not have a session be exclusive to one gender. If a problem arises, we can work with separate offers. Now there’s also boys in the dance academy. When they are young they do not care, but as soon as they get older, the traditional gender roles become more visible, so you notice they adhere more to what is deemed ‘masculine’ and to what is ‘feminine’. But we have never received criticism on the fact that there are boys in the dance academy.”

There are multiple reasons why gender dynamics become more complex around the age of puberty or early adolescence. Even though the process of gender socialization starts as soon as children are born, “early adolescence is a critical point of intensification in personal gender attitudes as puberty reshapes male and female self-perception, as well as social expectations from others (e.g. family members, peers)” (Kågesten 2016: 3). There is increasing pressure on what constitutes ‘feminine’ and ‘masculine’ and adhering to those expectations, especially girls from a refugee context. They are expected to contribute more to household chores, “marry and/or stay away from boys due to the adult concerns about their developing bodies and emerging sexuality” (Kågesten 2016: 3). Whereas girls experience restrictions to their freedom, boys, on the other hand, gain greater independence.

In addition to the further affirmation of the traditional gender roles divide that results in different realities for boys and girls, puberty or early adolescence is also the age that “romantic and sexual feelings begin to emerge and gender roles play out as young people begin to negotiate intimate relations” (Kågesten 2016: 3). Therefore, the participation in Football for Development can clash with the pressure that is on young refugee women to adhere to traditional gender roles, as “football, along with other non-traditional activities, appeared to allow girls the opportunity to perform alternative feminine scripts (Jeanes 2011: 411). To some degree, girls “offered some resistance to a masculine norm in football by criticizing and taking exception to what they conceive as the boys’ way of playing football (Eliasson 2011: 827). Therefore, the clashing of expectations can also help reduce the bi-cultural stress of young refugee women. The football field has the potential to be a “social space separated from the ongoing tensions [young refugee women] experience in the school field”, as well as in the

habitus of the home (Harwood et al. 2021: 185). As Harwood et al. (2021) states, “[the sports space requires young refugee women] to negotiate their habitus and exercise agency to work within their culture’s toxic constraints. For example, some of the young women took off their hijabs in an all-girls setting, and this is a social practice that may not have been undertaken in their communities” (185). In short, leisure activities, such as participation in Football for Development programs, can provide a safe space for women and challenge expectations surrounding femininity (Jeanes 2011).

Furthermore, in a non-refugee context, puberty is often the age where gender separation in sports starts since most sports are gender separate from the age of 18. In and around puberty, physiological differences might already become more visible; for example, boys might get faster and stronger, and this can increase the skills gap that in many cases exists between girls and boys playing football. Depending on how visible the physical differences are, gender separation might occur. Suppose the physiological differences are already more apparent and girls have not played before. In that case, they are more hesitant to join at a later age than when they would have been younger children. That there is a link between skill and participation level is also acknowledged by Jeanes (2011). “Only a small minority of girls were able to participate regularly in male football sessions, and this was heavily dependent on displaying a high skill level and adopting traits more associated with a masculine identity (403). In addition, in many cases, girls “were aware that their behavior was not appreciated or valued as highly as that of the boys, even if their behavior and football performance were quite similar in many ways according to the observations” (Eliasson 2011: 827).

Next to the physiological aspect, reaching puberty can increase cultural tension for female refugee youth as well. “The sub-field of school sport was a place for some young women from refugee backgrounds to develop a sense of belonging, reduce bi-cultural tension and explore other parts of their identity. Despite these benefits of sport, it also caused cultural conflict and this is acknowledged” (Harwood et al. 2021: 184). For example, in some countries, puberty is also when girls might start wearing a hijab if they have not already. Even though none of the interviewed clubs indicated that these cases where religious dress impacted the opportunities for young refugee women to play football, it is essential to acknowledge that this could potentially be a factor that makes it more difficult for women to participate in sports. In their research, Harwood et al. (2021) describe a situation in which refugee girls were playing volleyball in a girls-only situation and had taken their hijabs off:

“Towards the end of the lesson, [boys] arrived unexpectedly in the hall. Immediately the young women leave the court and put on their hijabs. Upon returning to the volleyball court, their levels of participation in the game decline noticeably. They no longer actively communicate to one another and their movements are slower. They look uncomfortable while they are being observed by young men. They remain on the court, but they play with noticeably less enthusiasm. The social practices that they adopt while being in an all-female space now conflict with their culture’s habitus regarding female behaviour in the presence of men.” (184).

Even though clubs might not have reported incidents where the wearing of a hijab or other religious dress or modest sports clothing, it is vital to acknowledge still that this is a factor that impacts young women, as there is already an underrepresentation of Muslim women in sports and it would be undesirable to have programming where they would feel excluded. As gender expectations are often not registered as conscious actions, participants might not always be aware of the exact factors that impact their opportunities to participate in Football for Development programs. Noted should also be that gender socialization analysis is a meta-analysis from a (western) feminist perspective, including this research. However, the pressure of gender expectations and norms does translate into rather practical reasons why it can be more difficult to engage young refugee women. Practical reasons can include, as mentioned, a more prevalent role in the home as a caretaker, other priorities, such as educational or extracurricular activities and in some cases, pregnancy. As highlighted by Lucas of Football Club 1, their pool of potential female refugees in the city significantly decreases, as one-third of the participants were pregnant. Also, David, coach at Football Club 4, highlighted that some young refugee women are pregnant or have a baby. If participants have a baby, Football Club 4 encourages the women to bring their children and perhaps bring their parents to babysit the kids. Other factors that can impact their willingness to participate in the program can also be their mental health. “Lots of unaccompanied minors of the age of 13-18 deal with a lot of stress and tension and it is very challenging for them to participate in the program”, according to David, coach at Football Club 4.

### ***5.3 Gendered dynamics at play for adolescents***

After having discussed the gendered dynamics among children and teenagers, or young adolescents, this section will focus on analyzing adolescents. The age group of adolescents is different from the previous analyses, as adolescents, for the vast majority, already play in a gender-segregated environment. In a football club environment, national federations or leagues

have regulations that state that women cannot play on a men's team and vice versa. Therefore, this section will not focus on the gendered differences among adolescents but rather analyze the experience and the gender dynamics at play for refugee women playing football. However, there is one interesting noticeable difference between the women-only and men-only group. Sophia, the founder of the female refugee team, Football Club 5, said that the differences between the men's teams and the women's teams are not about outcomes or conflict between gender, but rather about conflict within the groups:

“One of the major differences that I have noticed between the men's and the women's programming - and I've had exactly the same problems I had with the men's in the children's programming - has to do with the fact that many of the participants come from different nationalities and religions. Two men were even fighting each other. The Syrians were complaining to me, ‘why did you bring us the Africans?’. The Africans said to me, ‘why did you bring the Syrians and Iraqis?’. And Iraqis and Syrians complain together, ‘why did you bring the black people?’. The Africans were saying the same, ‘why did you bring the Middle Easterns and the Asian ones?’. Other times it was, ‘why did you bring the Muslims?’, and vice versa with the Christians. And we're talking about real fighting, not only complaining, but actually throwing punches. The same thing happened with the children. It was [crazy]. I was struggling with seeing children physically fight each other because of different religion, skin color, nationality, or whatever. So I was ready for the same thing to happen with the women and face similar challenges, for the African women to tell me ‘why did you bring this Asians’, or ‘why did you bring a Christian, when all of us are Muslim,’ or ‘she's wearing a hijab, I'm not wearing one’. But, nothing. From day one, they all became [really close]. It was unbelievable. So this is the major difference I've seen between the two different gender programs.”

According to Sophia, there was no conflict among the women regarding different cultures, nationalities or skin color. All the women seemed to accept each other. One factor that could explain this significant difference can be attributed to how men and women are socialized in society. In society, men are used to a position of power and/or dominance. As explained earlier, in a refugee setting, this position of power is challenged, as men are no longer in the position of the ‘provider’. Additionally, fleeing from danger can also be seen as a ‘weakness’ (Kosc-Ryczko 2021). Thus, the position as a ‘refugee’ challenges their masculinity. Through the Football for Development programs, men are able to reaffirm their masculinity by establishing their territory or dominance (Spaaij 2015). In general, women are not necessarily socialized in

a position where they need to affirm a position of dominance. Both interviewed refugee women indicated that they very much enjoyed playing with all the women and that it was a very safe environment for them. Both participants express that they enjoy coming together with women from different nationalities as they have never interacted with people from a different country before.

As stated, the situation for women is different from girls since women almost exclusively play in a separate environment instead of a mixed environment. In a mixed environment, there is more pressure on the acquisition of typical masculine qualities, whereas, in a female-only space, women have more room to “incorporate their own feminine meanings into their enjoyment of the game of football” (Eliasson 2011: 821). Thus, without the added performance pressure of men, football can also be a feminine space. Women still adopt values that are considered masculine, such as enjoying the physicality of the sport. However, “they added values closely associated with femininity, such as nearness, sharing with other people and supporting one another” (Eliasson 2011: 821). Farahnaz, one of the players of Football Club 5, occasionally plays with men. She likes playing football a lot and sometimes plays with other teams than her own, just for fun. She states that “I like to run with [the men]. To know that I am doing what they are doing gives me a very good feeling. It does not matter that they are better”. However, she stated that in some cases, the reactions to her playing are not always positive:

“They look at me and they make fun of me sometimes. They say ‘oh, you are not good, run more’. Later on they start to be more polite and they stop making fun of me. But I can say, when I compare European guys with men from Afghanistan and Syria, because I play with both of them, they are a bit more polite. They do not want to make fun of you. As it is more accepted in their societies to see a woman play, but in our country it is not ... Recently, I had a very big problem, when I played with a different team on the weekend. One of the men, he always wants to bring down my confidence. He tells me that I’m not good. He wants to make fun of me and give me a very bad feeling. There is always one person who does not like what you are doing and that you are there. So I told him: ‘we’re not in our home country anymore, [I can play football]. But even there, you have to respect me and respect what I am doing. You do not have a right to make fun of me for what I’m doing.’”

According to Sophia, founder of Football Club 5, Farahnaz is an exception. She states that most women would not participate in a mixed-team, “they’re hesitating even now.” On whether

teams should be mixed gender, Sophia argues that it be counterproductive. She states that she instead tries to achieve gender equality in a different way, rather than having women play on a football team with men:

“Many foundations and donors are asking about mixed teams. And I will reply this: do we ourselves have mixed teams? Are our leagues mixed? Are children in sports academies mixed? No, so why should we mix refugees? It’s not a symbol of culture, it’s a matter of physical capacity [and of the way sport is structured]. If I would go play football myself, it is also with only women. So to me it makes no sense to have refugee women play in mixed gender environments ... Of course, I support gender equality and having sport events where boys and girls are playing together. But if you don’t have women playing because of a mixed-environment, you cannot have a program. We cannot force people that are traumatized, and grew up with a different culture than ours to play with men ... We can promote gender equality in a different way, meaning, I will have a similar quantity of programs for men and for women, for boys and for girls. Have both genders in administrative positions, or in whatever position. There’s many ways to achieve gender equality, we can organize events and initiatives, etc.”

In short, even when playing in mostly a gender-separated environment, women still are subject to gender socialization when playing football. They are subject to sexist and misogynistic remarks since they adopt values that are considered masculine to play football. Arguably, women face more sexist abuse and stereotypes as they integrate more feminine values into the game. Furthermore, sexist abuse and stereotypes are less likely to be challenged as men are less exposed to women playing football, unlike in the younger age groups, where mixed sessions actively challenge stereotypes. Overall, for the socialization in sports pillar, the lower participation level of women and girls can be attributed to gender and how gender is socialized. First and foremost, to the skills gap, as on average girls are socialized into football at a later age than boys. Second, the anatomical differences impact the ability of men and women to play together. Third, because of socio-cultural gender norms, women tend to feel less comfortable playing in a mixed-gender setting as opposed to a female-only setting. Finally, the traditional role of womanhood and motherhood leaves less time for women’s leisure activities compared to men.

## **6. Socialization through football**

In this last chapter, the socialization *through* football pillar will be analyzed and discussed. The ‘socialization through football’ pillar focuses on the skills participants have acquired by participating in the Football for Development program and the external outcomes of the program, such as improved social inclusion, more welcoming local communities and the promotion of gender equality. In the context of this research, the socialization through football will address to what degree the participation of women in football-based programs challenges existing gender roles and improves gender equality. The first section of this chapter will analyze the research outcomes concerning female empowerment and challenging gender roles and to what degree the programs improve gender equality. The second section of the chapter will discuss what aspects in all three pillars - socialization *to* sports, socialization *in* sports, and socialization *through* sport - are actively challenging gender roles and which aspects can be counterproductive.

### ***6.1 Football as a pathway to female empowerment***

Data from the survey shows that both boys and girls and women and men value similar outputs of the program. They equally value building friendships, gaining self-confidence, personal development, integration in the local community, social interaction with peers, relieving stress, learning about respect, tolerance and equality, improving football skills and setting new personal goals. There is little to no difference in how both genders value the different outputs, says Sophia, founder of Football Club 5, as well:

“Most of the outcomes are similar for men and women, because it has to do with the values that we get taught through sports. People get empowered no matter which gender we’re talking about. They develop skills, formal, hard ones, soft ones, or practical, which can help them to [in terms of] employability, or help them to discover talents within themselves to decide what they want to do in the future.”

However, there are a couple of interesting findings regarding gender in the monitoring and evaluation data from the Football Club 4 (2019). In terms of the “acquisition of life skills”, such as “critical thinking, empathy and communion”, “67.1% of participant children improved their socialization skills compared with the first day in the program”, as well as “62.9 % of participant refugee children improve their emotional wellbeing compared with the first day in the program”. Whereas, “girls on average improved +3.14% more than boys in the

competences and skill index compared with the first day in the program” and “refugee girls on average improved +5.43% more than local girls in relation to boys improvement in the competencies and skills index compared with the first day in the program”. Football Club 4 monitors data in terms of the inclusion of girls closely. Their final report reads:

“In the terms of inclusion of girls, the evaluation highlighted the significant impact that the program had on girls. Girls scored lower than or equal to boys in all the aspects analyzed in the beginning of the program, but they consistently improved in all aspects of personal and social skills, on average, more than boys. Furthermore, there was an increased tolerance of girls participating in sports in venues that ran permanent mixed sessions. In general, there was an increased tolerance towards girls practicing (and women coaching) sports, although it was positively correlated with mixed sessions with both boys and girls. In places where mixing boys and girls was common practice, children tended to express a more gender-sensitive approach, meanwhile where gender-mixed activities were not commonly instituted, children expressions tended to be more stereotyped”.

More specifically, 94% of children who attended permanent mixed-gender sessions expressed that it was good to mix girls and boys to play [in Football for Development sessions]. In comparison, 63% of children who did not attend mixed-gender sessions expressed that it was good to mix girls and boys to play [together]. Even though the number is much higher among those who participated in a mixed session, the vast majority of all participants agreed that mixed gender sessions are a good idea. The main reason behind the preference for mixed-gender sessions is that participants become more gender-sensitive. According to the monitoring and evaluation data from Football Club 4 (2019), the vast majority of all participants “improved their gender-sensitivity”. Especially for those attending the mixed sessions, 69% of the children drastically improved their gender sensitivity. For example, “participants realized that they were equal on the field, they also understood that they were the same despite their differences of gender, origin, religion, playing ability, etc. Therefore, participants not only coexist and collaborate better, but also establish deeper and more respectful relationships between themselves.” These outputs mirror what Aisha, one of the players from Football Club 5, said she valued the most in playing with the team. She stated that she got so much energy from playing with the team and being involved with the team. Aisha forgot everything and just enjoyed her time. In addition, “I learned to be between women from all kinds of different nationalities and not be racist and accept all humans,” she said.

Participants of the Football for Development programs coexisted better than before, and the programs also facilitated an increase in female empowerment. Football Club 4 reports a 10% difference between girls improving their competencies significantly and boys improving significantly. The data shows that 28.4% of the girls improve significantly, whereas ‘only’ 18.5% of boys improve significantly. The data implies that girls might have been less confident or less used to being socialized in large groups and in playing sports, but that when they are exposed to participating in sports, they adjust quickly and develop themselves quickly. One qualitative example is given in the report; “there is a girl who had difficulty talking, now she is expressing herself much more openly as she gained confidence” (Football Club 4 2019). A similar sentiment was expressed by Aisha, one of the players of Football Club 5. She stated that she gained a lot of confidence through being around the other women in the team and playing football as an atypical sport for women to play:

“It was very hard for me coming from my home country, especially being a woman without a man and having children and then coming to a new society. When I came here, I was afraid of society and the men around me. The women around me all seemed stronger. That is why I used to hide myself a lot of the time. I didn’t go to places where there were too many men or women around, because I didn’t feel comfortable and felt that people would think of me as a bad person because I was without a man. After coming to the football practices, I gained more confidence and told myself that it is okay, I don’t need a man and it is okay to be without one. I felt more equal to men and I am no longer afraid of going places with lots of men, because I don’t care what they think of me. I just pass them and that’s it”.

Her teammate at Football Club 5, Farahnaz, confirms that football empowered her. Seeing people from different nationalities come together in one team, speaking together, communicating with each other is very important for her. “Knowing that you are a team, and that you work for a purpose, this is the most important for me”. She states that “Of course, I got more confident, but I always say, my heart gave me this confidence. Coming from my background, and traveling to Europe, I just had to tell myself to keep going”. Therefore, clubs need to realize that their female participants start the program from a lower starting point. It can take time for the participants to adjust themselves, feel confident, and benefit from participating in the programs like their male counterparts. Sophia, the founder of Football Club 5, confirms that many of the players of the team already have the skills and confidence in them. However, football gives them the necessary space and opportunities to express themselves and

develop their skills further. “It was always about giving them the necessary space to express themselves enough without us having to raise their voices for them.”

“One of the biggest achievements for me is to see the actual change in their lives - and in our lives as well, as they empower me every day. You can really see the change in their lives. When they first came to the program, for instance Aisha, they were really afraid, they showed hopelessness, they dealt with severe psychological trauma, they did not know anyone here in [the city], they felt alone. They had no motivation to do anything, attend a language course or search for a job. Seeing their transformation by participating in the program and the workshops, it’s like blooming flowers. They were opening up to us and showed us and the world who they really are and the treasures that they have inside them. So this is the greatest success of the program, them expressing how much better they feel. They are now better able to focus on learning a new language, find a job, or attend whatever kind of seminars.”

## **6.2 *Challenging stereotypes and gender norms***

The increase in girl and women empowerment is seen as one of the most important outcomes of the participation of refugee women and girls in Football for Development programs. Arguably, the second most crucial factor is challenging existing stereotypes, perceptions about women playing football and challenging traditional gender roles in society. Football Club 4 (2019) reported that participants improved their gender sensitivity and were more welcoming towards women and girls playing and coaching. However, little is known about how the football methodology is contributing to actively challenging gender norms. In the previous chapters, it has been highlighted that girls, young women, and women are dealing with stereotypical behavior from other participants and other agents of socialization, such as family and friends. Especially in a refugee context, the family is a vital factor and agent for socialization for refugee girls. Farahnaz, one of the participants of Football Club 5, acknowledged that family is important:

“My very close environment like my family, they are so proud of me. From the start, they always ask me to send photos of what I’m doing, [so I send them a photo of me playing football]. My family, especially my mother, are so proud of me and tell me to keep going. Even though I am not professional, it was important that I, as a woman, enjoy my time. But there were also some people in my old environment and they told me, ‘what are you going? It’s not good. You just waste your time’. But I just said to them, I don’t hear you, I just keep going and don’t care what they say.”

Aisha, the other participant of Football Club 5, also confirmed that she faced many stereotypes when she started playing football. She said that people told her that football is not a game for her since she is a woman. It was not only men who told her that, but also women. “I think it is because of society, a lot of women have never seen other women play football, or have never seen football in general. They do not know what it is. So they do not don’t come to football. They have to see it with their own eyes”, according to Aisha.

However, not only the perceptions of boys, girls and women changed towards women playing football; the football-based programs have also impacted men. For Sophia, founder of Football Club 5, the increased acceptance of men towards their wives and daughters playing is one of the program’s biggest successes. “In the effort of gender equality, in sports and in general, the biggest support that we can have are actually the men that are next to us. The men who are supportive towards the participation of women and girls in sports”. Especially men from a refugee background, she states, “of course, it is important if we as women raise our voices for ourselves and our boys and girls, but how important is it if a man raises his voice? Especially men from [a more conservative] culture? That’s something I find really important and interesting”. She highlights one of the examples where men have been supportive of their wives playing football:

“In a few cases we had some dropouts, because some husbands or fathers didn’t agree. But it was just maybe one or two cases. In most of the cases, many of the men show some hesitation towards their wives or daughters participation. However, as soon as they saw the change in their daughters and wives lives, they embraced it and kept on pushing them and empowering them. One of the greatest moments I’ve experienced is when our team competed and won an international tournament in Copenhagen. When we returned to Greece, we played a friendly match. Some of the women arrived accompanied by their husbands. They brought us flowers and sweets [and were so supportive and proud]. Then while their wives were playing the friendly match, the men were babysitting the children, so that their wives could play. And to see refugee men babysitting, while the women were playing football, it was amazing. You can see the smile on my face even now.”

Farahnaz, one of the players at Football Club 5, already highlighted that family is one of the crucial agents of socialization; however, she states that society also plays a significant role in the opportunities for women to participate in an atypical gender sport such as football:

“It’s all about your family first. Your family gives you your wings to fly to your dreams. And then there is society which tells you that it is okay to make use of opportunities. If society does not provide you with opportunities, that is a challenge. Sometimes, in my home country, going to school is hard for girls and families might not accept their girls going to school. So your surroundings are very important. For us it is easier to play football in a European society. Maybe it is because families in my home country are more protective of their daughters? For example, for women it can be dangerous when it is late at night. My mother always wants to know where I am now that I’m no longer at home. It’s not that she doesn’t trust me, but she does not trust the men around me, I think ... because families see bad examples of how women are treated in my home country. In some of the neighboring countries it might be a bit better, but still not the best. It is better here, women are allowed to express themselves and raise their voice”.

Not only Aisha and Farahnaz experienced challenges from either their family or from society, but their experience appeared to be a shared experience. Many women on their team had similar stories. The act of women participating in Football for Development programs is an act of challenging stereotypes on its own. Often, the women themselves have constructed certain perceptions about football and that football and femininity do not go together. As Aisha and Farahnaz acknowledge, they are only playing because they see one of their friends playing and having a positive experience, or their friend is actively asking them to come to a practice to see if they would enjoy it. In short, women who decide are both actively challenging societal stereotypes and their own internalized stereotypes.

Despite challenging stereotypes, to what degree does the participation of women in either mixed or gender-separated settings impact traditional gender norms. According to Jeanes (2011), “existing studies examining female football participation suggest that it is overly simplistic to assume that increased participation has automatically created a shift in dominant values that shape femininity” (403). Jeanes (2011) argues that women who participate in sports are not actually challenging the traditional assumptions surrounding the idea of femininity and instead play football in a congruent way with their femininity. However, because there is a significant increase in women and girls playing football, femininity is relatively diversified. For example, close contact in the sport, such as tackling and using your physical strength, is no longer necessarily seen as unfeminine or masculine within the context of football. “Despite shifts in what is accepted as appropriate feminine behavior, restrictive norms surrounding the female body have been maintained” (Jeanes 2011: 404). This phenomenon is also visible in the

case of refugee women. Based on the qualitative evidence, it is apparent that what constitutes 'feminine' is being broadened for women and girls who participate in football. Among the age group of refugee girls, girls actively defy gender stereotypes by participating in mixed-gender sessions. As for women, by participating in an atypical gender sport, they normalize that one can play football as a leisure activity while simultaneously performing a caregiver role. Additionally, there was an increase in acceptance of refugee women and girls playing football. However, traditional gender roles are still in place where girls are expected to carry out household tasks as soon as they reach puberty. Jeanes (2011) argues that "the negotiation of playing football into a feminine identity was less of a resistant act than it first may have seemed" (414). However, arguably, the participation of refugee women and girls is undoubtedly an act of resistance. As mentioned, refugee women and girls have limited opportunities to participate in sport, let alone an atypical gender sport such as football. If refugee women play football, they are actively challenging stereotypes and thus resisting socio-cultural ideas about femininity.

## **7. Conclusion**

In conclusion, gender plays a significant and decisive role in refugees' socialization and participation experiences that participate in Football for Development programs. Arguably, gender is the most crucial factor impacting the participation of refugee women and girls, whether directly or indirectly. As a limiting factor, gender disproportionately affects girls and women in football compared to boys and men and similarly impacts boys and men participating in an atypical gender sport. The impact of gender on the opportunity for women and girls to participate in Football for Development programs is apparent in the gender balance of the programs. As shown in this research, the gender balance is skewed. Although most programs engage girls in their programming, only one club reported having a fifty-fifty gender balance in one of the locations where they delivered the program. Many factors are contributing to the gender imbalance. All of the factors can be directed to gender, in particular the socio-cultural norms surrounding gender. Some of the factors are out of the control of the clubs, while other factors can be addressed within the clubs. For example, the refugee demographic in the city is a factor that is out of the hands of clubs. In some cases, the refugee demographic consist mostly of male unaccompanied minors or males waiting for family reunification. However, other factors, such as the disinterest in football or social and cultural norms, can be addressed by the clubs. For example, clubs can adjust their recruitment strategies and implement gender-

sensitive programming or create a safe and inclusive environment for girls.

However, not all gender-related challenges are solved when girls are participating in the programs. In many cases, girls, young women and women have to face sexist abuse and fight against stereotypes. Not all women are interested in playing in an unwelcoming environment. Therefore, at a young age, clubs create joint sessions for girls and boys to expose boys to girls playing football and socialize girls in a mixed environment. As a result, there was an increased acceptance towards girls playing football. Then when participants reach puberty, there is added pressure on gender socialization, as gender identity becomes more important and physiological differences become more apparent than at a younger age. This can increase tensions between boys and girls in the sessions. As for adolescent refugee women, most of them have not played football before. Therefore, many refugee women are hesitant to play with men, either because of physiological differences or the skills gap, or they are just not comfortable with men due to socio-cultural norms. Even though there are slight differences for girls, young women and women, it is apparent that the socialization process is different from the socialization process that boys and men experience when participating in football. Refugee women and girls, no matter their age, the socio-cultural and religious norms impact the socialization process. However, by the mere act of participating in football programs, women and girls are actively resisting societal and cultural norms regarding femininity. This act of resistance can impact refugee women personally and their surroundings, such as their families and partners. A change of attitude towards atypical gender sports can empower refugee women, and it can diversify what constitutes as feminine for refugee women. However, an increased tolerance towards women and girls playing football does not necessarily mean that patriarchal structures are challenged. Arguably, it is not the place of Football for Development programs to challenge patriarchal structures; it aims to empower women and girls to challenge the patriarchal structures themselves.

It matters that refugee women and girls are included in football programming, as women playing football - no matter which culture – are subject to sexism and misogyny. Stereotypes that facilitate sexism and misogyny are harmful and impact the participation of refugee women in sport, especially atypical gender sports such as football. Challenging harmful stereotypes can increase the representation of refugee women participating in sport. An increased representation of refugee women and girls challenges stereotypes and gender norms beyond the superficial level. Additionally, the participation of refugee women and girls in Football for Development programs can increase the overall human security of those participating in Football for Development programs. Human security can be improved on a

personal, community, health, and economic level, as empowerment is one of the main outcomes of the program.

Overall, this research aims to make Sport for Development programs more inclusive towards refugee women and girls. The exclusion of refugee women and girls cannot be dismissed as ‘girls interested in football are simply not there’. This narrative is incorrect and un-nuanced. A similar narrative is often used as a common explanation for gender inequality. This narrative disregards the fact that women and men are subject to different socialization processes and that women face added difficulties and challenges. In order to get a more complete overview of the added difficulties and challenges for refugee women and girls, further or additional research should be done from a participant perspective. Due to COVID-19, the programs were on hold and therefore, the access to participants was limited or non-existent. As a result, this research has primarily focused on program managers and coaches. This research hopes to offer a starting point for other clubs and organizations to review their programming to indicate where their challenges are and where they can improve to foster gender equality and create a more safe and inclusive football environment for refugee women and girls. The goal is to work towards more inclusive programming for refugee women and girls. Maybe one day, as a result, the clubs will bring forth the next Nadia Nadim. From a refugee playing football for the first time to becoming the football star of the Danish national team.

## **8. Recommendations**

This research presents the following recommendations to work towards more inclusive programming and to the participation of refugee women and girls:

- **Implement a gender-sensitive recruitment strategy.** As football is an atypical gender sport, many women and girls have never considered playing football; therefore, they do not recognize themselves in calls for participants in football programs. Actively use female players and coaches in the recruitment strategy. Representation is key. The visibility of female role models will make women and girls more aware that the programming is also meant for them. If the demographic is the problem, try and expand the demographic to include marginalized women from other communities, such as ethnic minorities.
- **Actively address stereotypes.** It is vital to address stereotypes both in the recruitment strategy as well as in the programs themselves. Explain to male participants why a skills gap exists and educate them on the process of gender socialization. It is crucial for men to

understand that women and girls might have fewer opportunities to develop themselves. Having female coaches as role models is a critical aspect of addressing stereotypes.

- **Set up parallel girls-only structures.** In some cases, girls can feel less comfortable participating in mixed-gender environments. Therefore, to create a more inclusive and welcoming environment, setting up parallel girls-only structures can empower girls and give them a better platform to develop themselves. However, it is also important to have boys and girls play in a mixed-gender environment to challenge stereotypes actively. Therefore, up until the age of 15, mixed-gender sessions are encouraged.
- **Shift focus from competitive to fun or low-threshold approach.** A competitive approach is more likely to reinforce ‘masculine’ stereotypes on participants. Reinforcing gender stereotypes can confirm male superiority in football. This effect is undesirable for female participants, as they are most likely to be seen as ‘secondary’ team members if they do not adhere to masculine norms.
- **Review practical measures to improve accessibility for women.** Listen to women and girls who are already participating in the program or not yet participating in the program on what practical measures some of the practical challenges they face in participation in the program. For example, the club can provide child care, transportation or adjust the location or time of the practice to make the practice more accessible to women.

## **9. Works cited**

- Agergaard, S. (2018). *Rethinking Sports and Integration: Developing a Transnational Perspective on Migrants and Descendants in Sports*. Routledge.
- Adams, A., Anderson, E., McCormack, M. (2010). “Establishing and Challenging Masculinity: The Influence of Gendered Discourses in Organized Sport.” *Journal of Language and Social Psychology* 29(3): 278-300.
- Archibald, M.M., Ambagtsheer, R.C., Casey, M.G., and Lawless, M. (2019). “Using Zoom Videoconferencing for Qualitative Data Collection: Perceptions and Experiences of Researchers and Participants. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 18.
- Baxter, K. (2019). “Staggering Growth of Women’s Soccer Bodes Well for World Cup in France”. *Los Angeles Times* June 4, 2019. Web. Accessed on May 27, 2020.
- Cardenas, A. (2013). “Peace Building Through Sport? An Introduction to Sport for Development and Peace.” *Journal of Conflictology* 4(1): 24-33. Print.
- Cardenas, A. (2018). “Expert Group Meeting and Interagency Dialogue on ‘Strengthening the Global Framework for Leveraging Sport for Development and Peace’”. Report. *United Nations*. June 2018. [Online PDF](#).
- Carter, M. J. (2014). “Gender socialization and identity theory”. *Social Sciences*, 3(2): 242-263.
- Caudwell, J. (2011). “Gender, feminism and football studies”. *Soccer & Society*, 12(3): 330–344.
- Collison, H. (2016). *Youth and Sport for Development: The Seduction of Football in Liberia*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Dyck, C.B. (2011). “Football and Post-War Reintegration: Exploring the Role of Sport in DDR Processes in Sierra Leone. *Third World Quarterly* 32(2): 395-415.
- Fielding-Lloyd, B. and Meân, L.J. (2008). “Standards and Separatism: The Discursive Construction of Gender in English Soccer Coach Education.” *Sex Roles* 58: 24-39.
- Football Club 4 (2018). Refugee Programme Final Report 2017/2018.
- Football Club 4 (2019). SNF Programme 2018-2019 Evaluation: Summary of Findings.
- Gadais, T. (2019). Sport for Development and Peace: Current Perspectives of Research. *Sports Science and Human Health-Different Approaches*.
- Harwood, G., Sendall, M.C., Heesch, K.C., and Brough, M. (2021). “A Bourdieusian Analysis Exploring the Meaning of Sport For Young Women From Refugee

- Backgrounds in a Australian High School”. *Sport, Education and Society*, 26(2): 175-187.
- Haycock, D., and Smith, A. (2014). “A family affair? Exploring the influence of childhood sport socialisation on young adults’ leisure-sport careers in north-west England.” *Leisure studies*, 33(3): 285-304.
- Hoglund, K., & Oberg, M. (Eds.). (2011). *Understanding peace research: methods and challenges*. Taylor & Francis.
- Höglund, K. and Sundberg, R. (2008). “Reconciliation Through Sports? The Case of South Africa.” *Third World Quarterly*, 29(4): 805-818.
- Huang, H., Liu, L., Chang, C., Hsieh, H., & Lu, H. (2019). “The Effects of Locus of Control, Agents of Socialization and Sport Socialization Situations on the Sports Participation of Women in Taiwan”. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 16(10): 1841.
- Hurley, J. (2019). “‘I feel something is still missing’: Leisure Meanings of African Refugee Women in Canada.” *Leisure Studies*, 38(1): 1-14.
- Jakubowska, H., and Byczkowska-Owczarek, D. (2018). “Girls in Football, Boys in Dance. Stereotypization Processes in Socialization of Young Sportsmen and Sportswomen.” *Qualitative Sociology Review*, 14(2): 12-28.
- Jeanes, R. (2011). “I’m Into High Heels and Make-up But I Still Love Football: Exploring Gender Identity and Football Participation With Preadolescent Girls.” *Soccer & Society*, 12(3): 402-420.
- Kågesten, A., Gibbs, S., Blum, R. W., Moreau, C., Chandra-Mouli, V., Herbert, A., & Amin, A. (2016). “Understanding factors that shape gender attitudes in early adolescence globally: A mixed-methods systematic review”. *PloS one*, 11(6).
- KoŚĆ-RyŻko, K. (2021). “Single Motherhood of Refugees in Poland and the Challenges of Socialization in the Face of Cultural Alienation”. *Journal of Refugee Studies*, 36.
- Meân, L. (2001). “Identity and Discursive Practice: Doing Gender on the Football Pitch.” *Discourse & Society*, 12(6): 789-815.
- Mohammadi, S. (2019). “Social Inclusion of Newly Arrived Female Asylum Seekers and Refugees Through a Community Sport Initiative: The Case of Bike Bridge”. *Sport in Society*, 22(6): 1082-1099.
- Mustafa, Y.S., Turan, E.B, Ermiş, S.A., Uğurlu, A. (2018). “Lesbianism Perception of Women Football Players: a Case for Turkey”. In: *New Horizons in Social Sciences*.

- O'Dwyer, L. and Bernauer, J. (2016). *Quantitative research for the qualitative researcher*. SAGE.
- Pawlowski, C.S., Ergler, C., Tjørnhøj-Thomsen, T., Schipperijn, J., and Troelsen, J. (2015). "Like a Soccer Camp For Boys': A Qualitative Exploration of Gendered Activity Patterns in Children's Self-organized Play During School Recess." *European Physical Education Review*, 21(3): 275-291.
- Richards, J., Kaufman, Z., Schulenkorf, N., Wolff, E., Gannett, K., Siefken, K., & Rodriguez, G. (2013). "Advancing the evidence base of sport for development: A new open-access, peer-reviewed journal". *Journal of sport for development*, 1(1): 1-3.
- Rookwood, J. and C. Palmer (2011). "Invasion Games in War-Torn Nations: Can Football Help to Build Peace?" *Soccer & Society* 12(2): 184-200.
- Sawrikar, P., & Muir, K. (2010). "The myth of a 'fair go': Barriers to sport and recreational participation among Indian and other ethnic minority women in Australia". *Sport Management Review*, 13(4): 355-367.
- Scandurra, C., O. Braucci, V. Bochicchio, P. Valerio and A.L. Amodeo (2019). "Soccer Is a Matter of Real Men?' Sexist and Homophobic Attitudes in Three Italian Soccer Team Differentiated by Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity." *International Journal of Sport and Exercise Psychology*, 17(3): 285-301.
- Scraton, S., K. Fasting, G. Pfister and A. Bunuel. (2018). "It's Still a Man's Game? The Experiences of Top-Level European Women Footballers". In: *Female Football Players and Fans. Football Research in an Enlarged Europe*, eds. Pfister G., Pope S. London: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Soccer Without Borders (2018). Annual Report. Online PDF.  
<https://www.soccerwithoutborders.org/organizational-documents>
- Sore, N. [FARE Network]. (2020, October 23). *Refugees and Football - #FootballPeople Festival*. [Video]. YouTube.  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mY1nGoo0IF4&t=1s>
- Spaaij, R. (2015). "Refugee youth, belonging and community sport". *Leisure Studies*, 34(3): 303-318.
- Sugden, J. (2006). "Teaching and Playing Sport for Conflict Resolution and Coexistence in Israel." *International Review for the Sociology of Sport* 41(2): 221-240.
- UNDP (1994). Human Development Report. New York: Oxford University Press. Pp. 22-40.
- UNHRC (2014). "Handbook on Protection of Stateless Persons: Under the 1954 Convention Relating to the Status of Stateless Persons". Geneva. Report. Web.

[https://www.unhcr.org/dach/wp-content/uploads/sites/27/2017/04/CH-UNHCR\\_Handbook-on-Protection-of-Stateless-Persons.pdf](https://www.unhcr.org/dach/wp-content/uploads/sites/27/2017/04/CH-UNHCR_Handbook-on-Protection-of-Stateless-Persons.pdf)

UNHRC (2021). “What is a refugee?”. Webpage.

<https://www.unhcr.org/what-is-a-refugee.html>

Yi-Hsiu, L. & Chen-Yueh, C. (2013). “Masculine versus Feminine Sports: The Effects of Peer Attitudes and Fear of Negative Evaluation on Sports Participation among Taiwanese College Students”. *Revue internationale de psychologie sociale*, 4(4): 5-23.

Zdunek, B. and M.A. Nowak. (2018). “The Conditions of Practicing Association Football by Women”. *Central European Journal of Sport Sciences and Medicine* 22(2), 39–50.

Zipp, S. (2017). “Sport for Development With ‘At Risk’ Girls in St. Lucia”. *Sport in Society* 20.12: 1917–1931.

## **10. APPENDIX**

### **A. Semi-structured interview guide**

#### **Introduction**

- Thank you for taking the time to speak with me
- Working with EFDN and writing a master thesis on the participation of refugee women and girls.
- This interview will be part of my qualitative data collection.
- Can I record the session?
- Ask for consent in order to publish data from the interview. The data will be anonymized.

#### **Questions interviews**

##### On the context of the interviewee and the program

- Could you tell me about your role in the Welcome Through Football program?
- How did the refugee program/Welcome Through Football come to be at your club?
- How is the program set up? How often do participants train? Are they combined with workshops?
- With what kind of stakeholders do you work? What is their role and added value?

##### On reaching participants

- How do you reach participants?
- What strategies are successful? What are the biggest challenges?
- How do you reach women? Is it more difficult? Do you put an extra effort in finding female participants?
- Who are the participants? Unaccompanied minors, families, second generation?

##### Gender

- How is the gender balance in your program?
- How many girls are in the program?
- If not, what are some of the reasons it's hard to get participants?
- Do you have female coaches? If not, what are some of the reasons it's hard to get female coaches?
- Is getting more girls to participate a priority?
- Do you have mixed-sessions or girls-only programs for refugee girls? (If there are no refugee girls participating, ask about other programs that include girls)
- In the case of a mixed-gender program, how do boys and girls respond to each other? Are there noticeable differences?

- Can you tell me about a time where gender was important in the programming?
- In your opinion what could be contributing factors to the gender balance?

### Role of the coach

- Do you apply a gender sensitive lens to programming?
- How do you recruit coaches and what kind of training do they receive? Do they have a refugee background?

### Outcomes of the program

- Can you tell me about one of the biggest successes of the program? Has gender equality been one of the successes?
- What do you consider as one of the main challenges?
- How do you mitigate those challenges
- Has football posed at any point something counterproductive to the development of the participants?
- How do you monitor & evaluate the program? What kind of questions do you focus on? Is gender a focus in M&E?

### End

- This is the end of the interview, do you have any recommendations on organizations or people I can reach out to? Or have any final report or other M&E documents that you can share in terms of gender equality?
- Do you have any questions or final remarks?