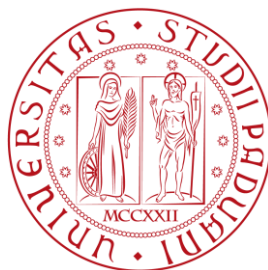


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**Master's degree in
European and Global Studies**



MONITORING WOMEN'S FOOTBALL IN ITALY
AND ITS COVERAGE IN RAI NEWS PROGRAMS

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Introduction

Women's sport, especially football, has grown exponentially in recent years; as a matter of fact, in 2022 world records for attendance in women's football have been broken, iconic stadiums, for instance like Fc Barcelona's Camp Nou and England's Wembley Stadium have been sold out for women's football matches, and with the UEFA women's European championship just concluded, it might be argued that the new media coverage standards have been set.

In Italy, however, men's sport, particularly football, the most popular and by some considered as the national sport par excellence, seems to preserve the monopoly of media coverage.

In fact, gender issues and inequalities are not alien to the world of sport, and they are reproduced in the media. Media, sport and gender are interconnected universes, and it is for this reason that the aim of this research is trying to highlight how the gender dimension in sport assumes relevance when it comes to media representation, in the Italian context. In fact, media play a relevant role in reproducing gender stereotypes and marginalizing women's sport, especially in this country.

Therefore, this work is structured in three chapters; in the first one, after an introduction in which fundamental terms are defined, such as gender, the concept of representation, in particular in the media, the relationship between them (and with sport) will be explained.

In the second chapter, some examples of instruments used at the global and national level to monitor gender representation in the media will be presented. At the global level, one of the most important monitoring tools is the Global Media Monitoring Project, which is carried out periodically in a 5-years cycles since 1995, and relies on the voluntary efforts of hundreds of individuals and organizations, including grassroots communication groups, media professionals and university researchers. As regards the national level, the available monitoring instruments are conducted annually but only on RAI (*Radiotelevisione Italiana*), the Italian public broadcasting company. These monitoring instruments pursue both a quantitative and a qualitative analysis, aimed at verifying the respect of some gender criteria in

order to evaluate and frame Rai's contribution in gender representation in the media.

As a matter of fact, Rai adopted in 2018, the Service Contract 2018-2022, in which important measures which aims at improving gender equality and representation, intended in both quantitative and qualitative terms are set. This Contract establishes a set of objectives, operational guidelines, quality parameters, and types of programs, which implementation is entrusted to the broadcasting company.

It is for this reason, therefore, that in this work the aim is to frame whether or not Rai is actually pursuing these objectives when it comes to women's sport representation in its main channels, in particular women's football.

Then, in the third chapter of this thesis, it will be explained how the research conducted on Rai's news programs has been carried out; the research methodology adopted to analyze the coverage of women's football in the Italian public television news programs, it is both quantitative and qualitative in nature. In fact, based on a study conducted in the United States by Cooky et al., "Women play sports, but not on TV: A longitudinal study of televised news media", it will be analyzed how women's football is represented on the main public television channels, Rai 1, Rai 2, Rai3, and in particular, on Tg1, Tg2, Tg3, and Tg Sport news programs broadcasted during the two main time slots, i.e., 11:00-14:00 and 18:00-21:00.

The research is carried out in a two-weeks period, from 1st October to 16th October 2022. This is due to the fact that during this time period, in both the women's and men's major football leagues (Serie A, and Serie A *femminile*) at least two games were played.

The quantitative data collected during the research were elaborated and analysed, using multiple tables created to simplify their interpretation; then, the results are discussed and a conclusion is drawn.

In Italy, as it will be argued in depth, women's sport, and especially women's football, is still extremely marginalized in the media. On the other hand, men's football detains the media hegemony in the public media sector, despite the urge recognized not only by Rai, but also by European institutions, to improve gender representation in the media and women's sport media coverage.

It might be argued that Rai has shown little interest in acquiring the broadcasting rights of the Italian women's football league, which are held by a private company. Moreover, even though the public company does hold the broadcasting rights of the women's football national team, and despite the fact that the women's football national team was set to play a match during the monitoring period, the data collected confirmed the lack of media coverage. In fact, Rai covered the event very briefly, and if it is true that it broadcasted the game live, none of the news programs monitored, reported the final results. Overall, it might seem that there is a trend in news about women's sport and women's football: these are newsworthy when there is a scandal involved. This aspect, is evident when the content analysis is carried out, which in this case was considered as part of the qualitative analysis, based on other criteria, such as production elements, and language used, which were analysed and presented in the last part of the concluding chapter.

CHAPTER 1 – GENDER, MEDIA AND SPORT

1.1 Why gender and media matter

In today's world, mass media is persistently present in our daily lives. It is in our streets, in public spaces such as bars, pubs, and we invite it into our homes through TV, internet, radio. We keep it in our pockets, and we can access it at any time, almost anywhere. The term *mass media*, or simplified *media*, refers to the channels used to transmit communication such as newspapers, magazines, radio, television, movies, books and recordings. Therefore, the media represent and reproduce what happens in our societies. Thus, as stated by Carter "Media texts never simply mirror or reflect 'reality', but instead construct hegemonic definitions of what should be accepted as 'reality'".¹

However, if that is true, who is in control of the media narrative? What is newsworthy? And who decides that? Who is visible, and who remains invisible in the media?

All these questions are relevant in understanding the complex relationship between media and gender issues, such as gender representation. It might be argued that media visibility guarantees a sort of public representation. This means having access to a public platform, where one's voice can be heard.

Historically, for this reason, mass media has been considered as a fundamental tool for the feminist movements. In fact, since the very early days of the first wave of feminism, in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, suffragists were nearly unanimous in calling for the establishment of their own newspapers, which were crucial in the fight for the revindication of political rights.

However, during the first half of the nineteenth century, women's representation in the media was heavily stereotyped, and it was not until Betty Friedman's *The Feminine Mystique* (1963) that it was "emphasized the impact of popular women's magazines, whose articles, fiction and advertising celebrated a very particular form

¹ Carter C. and Steiner L. (2003), *Critical Readings: Media and Gender*, Open University Press, p.2.

of domestic, sub-urban femininity, one that operated in a sphere almost completely separated from that of men”.²

It was not until the so-called second wave of the feminist movement in the 1960s that the systematic research into media images of women flourished. Almost immediately, feminist scholars and activists began to examine how women were being portrayed in the different type of media forms such as movies, prime-time television drama, advertisement, newspaper, and so on.

It might be argued that on one hand, media are important because of their power to represent and construct a certain perception of reality; and on the other hand, mass media are instrumental in the construction of what is considered “socially acceptable” as well as to allocate, public recognition.³

News media in particular are instrumental in influencing and shaping the public opinion about a specific social issue, making it meaningful and worth of public attention, or vice versa, keeping it invisible to the public eyes. Not every event or issue is covered in the news, in fact, media institutions and their actors decide what is newsworthy. However, when setting the agenda, news media not only tries to grab audience’s attentions on specific issues, but it also transmits a perspective and an understanding of it to the audience. This means that the way in which news are covered is crucial, especially news regarding gender issues. News media, as other forms of media, can reinforce stereotypes, which are detrimental to gender representation.

Stereotypes are considered to be a characteristic, or set of characteristics, associated with a particular category or a group, formulated on the basis of limited and inadequate information or knowledge. They are fixed and shared ideas or images accepted by social convention of a particular type of person, group or community, which is often not true in reality and may cause hurt and offence since they are a priori synthetic judgments, or prejudices, and are conceived as an instrument to simplifying and summarize reality. Moreover, they contribute in damaging the construction of the single and collective imagination with respect to specificity. Stereotypes are not inherently created by the individual, but they are acquired in a

² *Ivi*, p.1.

³ *Ibidem*

specific environment and are deemed to be the result of the common-sense component of the knowledge. In short, stereotypes are generalizations, and for this reason they are problematic. In fact, the discomfort that the stereotype generates depends on the fact that the people affected by them feel as the object of a generalization, instead of feeling considered as individuals. Moreover, creating and using stereotypes as a tool of categorization reflects a cultural power of one group over another.

That is the reason why feminist scholars had been concerned with the power that media has in representing and reinforcing stereotypes, especially since the second wave of the feminist movement. The main focus of these studies had been the media texts and their audiences, and particular attention has been paid to pornography, as a media and cultural phenomenon that heavily affect gender representation.

However, what is gender and why gender representation in the media is relevant? In the following paragraphs, it will be first defined the concept of gender, and its dichotomous relations with the concept of sex; then, some views on gender representation in the media will be presented.

1.1.1 Definition of Gender

The concept of gender has been defined by many scholars as the socially constructed meanings of one's physical sex. This means that, if sex is to be considered as one's biological characteristics, i.e., reproductive organs and hormones, on the basis of these characteristics, gender is socially attributed. Therefore, the terms *female* and *male* are used when referring to one's sex; on the other hand, the terms *woman* and *man* are commonly used to describe one's gender. It is important to note that the traditional approaches to the dichotomous relationship between sex and gender, perceived sex and gender as binary variables. For instance, according to the "biological determinism" approach, sex is the foundation of human beings' lives⁴, and people are biologically determined to fill a certain role; as a consequence, in a (patriarchal) society, the biological differences

⁴ Jagger A. (1988), *Feminist Politics And Human Nature*, Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, pp.106-109.

are used to justify social, economic and financial inequality between men and women.

The dichotomous and binary view of sex and gender has been deconstructed by several women's and queer studies scholars. For instance, Allison Jaggar suggests that since social practices affect biology, then it is not possible to distinguish what is a thing or the other.

This implies that sex as a biological feature could change, since different and alternative epistemologies could influence the way we know about biology, how we learn about it, and what we know about it. Biology and sex are not static features, and its changing would have consequences in society as well.

An interesting perspective in how sex and gender relation affect our knowledge of biology, and vice versa, is provided by Anne Fausto-Sterling. In her book *Sex/Gender. Biology in a social world* (2012), Fausto-Sterling explains in a very systematic way, how biological sex develops in a fetus, the different sexes, as she called them. Given the fact that “physical sex is viewed as consisting of chromosomal, anatomical and hormonal features of which any kind of mix is possible”⁵, there are some cases in which these characteristics are not entirely defined in an individual, and one's sex might be a continuum between female and male features. For instance, many women have some facial hair, and low-pitched voices; on the other hand, some men have high-pitched voices.

Fausto-Sterling does agree with the feminist view that define gender as a social construction of norms, or in other words a normative and instructive system imposed on people. It is society itself, what surrounds us determines who we are, according to our biological characteristics.

And media, as an instrumental tool for the representation of society, reproduce this construction. Therefore, it might be argued that a sort of “gender socialization” exists, i.e., a process of learning social expectations and attitudes associated with one's sex, and then individuals act to fit those expectations and gender standards.

This view is shared by Judith Butler, a philosopher and gender theorist, which claims that individuals perform a certain gender. In particular, Butler distinguishes

⁵ Krijnen T. and Van Bauwel S. (2015), *Gender and Media: Representing, Producing, Consuming*, Routledge, p. 3.

when a gender is performed and when it is performative. she believes that “to say gender is performative is to say that nobody really is a gender from the start” and therefore gender is culturally formed.⁶

All these understandings of sex and gender dichotomies lead us to the final assumption that “both sex and gender are not dichotomies per se, and both can be viewed as continuums”.⁷ It might be argued that, since societies are dynamic in nature and could change, the meanings of gender and sex could also possibly change.

1.1.2 The concept of Representation

Representation in the media, of men and women, and of masculinity and femininity, as stated before, it has been an important topic of feminist and academic research since the 1960s, given the fact that media were considered to be one of the sources in which meanings of gender were constructed and reproduced.

According to Krijnen and Van Bauwel, the concept of media representations has important consequences for social, cultural, and political meanings of gender and it has a twofold meaning:

“On the one hand, representation refers to the re-presentation of men and women in the media, referring to questions that stress the disparity in the number of men and women present in media and the roles they fulfil”⁸, and “on the other hand, representation refers to the portrayal and imagining of gender, questioning how women and men are portrayed in media and the meanings attached to these portrayals”.⁹

⁶ Butler J. (1988), *Performative Acts And Gender Constitution: An Essay In Phenomenology And Feminist Theory*, 40 Theatre Journal, pp.519-531. See also “Judith Butler: Your Behavior Creates Your Gender” (YouTube, 2017) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Bo7o2LYATDc>

⁷ Krijnen T. and Van Bauwel S. (2015), *Gender and Media: Representing, Producing, Consuming*, Routledge, p. 3.

⁸ Krijnen T. and Van Bauwel S. (2015), *Gender and Media: Representing, Producing, Consuming*, Routledge, p. 20.

⁹ *Ibidem*

This means that representation could be analyzed in both quantitative and qualitative terms. Stuart Hall¹⁰ in trying to explain how representation works, distinguishes three different approaches: the reflective, the intentional, and the constructionist approach.

According to the reflective approach, the numbers of women and men present in the media should mirror those in a given society. On the contrary, the intentional approach promotes a perspective that favours what the producer of the representation wanted to convey. Lastly, “scholars that endorse a constructionist approach see representations as negotiations of meaning. From this point of view the meaning of representation is not fixed in the representation itself but is co-created by its audience. Meanings are therefore dynamic”.¹¹

Therefore, the research on media representation has spread in different field of studies and disciplines, such as psycho-analysis, semiotics, social psychology and discourse. For what concerns the psycho-analysis field, this has its roots in film analysis. In fact, authors such as Jacques Lacan and most notably Laura Mulvey, which in her essay *Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema* (1975)¹² formulated the most important theoretical insights on gender and media: the gaze theory.

In fact, cinema is a form of art that, more than any other, is based on the pleasure of watching (and of being watched), a form of voyeuristic pleasure which constructs a subject/object relation between the image and the spectator.

In fact, Mulvey herself in her essay argues “how a movie evokes the pleasure of looking at another person as an erotic object – called scopophilia”.¹³

Mulvey observes that movies construct characters as objects of pleasure, and allowing a particular way of “looking at” these characters by exercising the gaze. Then, this gaze exercises a psychologically influence on the subject which consequently loses some sense of autonomy, and becomes a visible object. In most cases, in movies male characters are those that bear the gaze, while female

¹⁰ Hall S., Evans J. and Nixon S. (2013), *Representation*, London/Thousand Oaks/New Delhi, Sage, p.24.

¹¹ Krijnen T. and Van Bauwel S. (2015), *Gender and Media: Representing, Producing, Consuming*, Routledge, p. 20.

¹² Mulvey L. (1975), *Visual pleasure and narrative cinema*, Oxford University Press, Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1093/screen/16.3.6> (Accessed: November 4, 2022), p.10.

¹³ Krijnen T. and Van Bauwel S. (2015), *Gender and Media: Representing, Producing, Consuming*, Routledge, p. 21.

characters are more often subjected to it, and objectified by it. This view was previously supported by another visual art scholar, John Berger, in his series and then book, *Ways of Seeing* (1972). According to Berger “men act, and women appear. Men look at women. Women watch themselves being looked at. [...] The surveyor of women in herself is male: the surveyed female. This she turns herself into an object – and most particularly an object of vision: a sight”.¹⁴

Therefore, in short, the way women are seen in the media is as an object of the male gaze. Thus, this theory could be applied to any visual and pictorial art, such as cinema, advertising, photography, graphics, but also in literature, poetry and music. The male gaze might be considered as a consequence of the social construction of gender meanings.

The relationship between the gaze and the image occupies a central position in the debate conducted by feminists and media scholars in recent years. In fact, it might be argued that, the gaze theory plays a fundamental role in the understanding and studying gender representation in the media, since the gaze determines how gender representation is (re)produce.

In the following paragraphs it will be explained how gender meanings influence sport representation in the media. However, before tackling this issue, a quick overview on the relations between gender and sport might be useful.

¹⁴ Berger J. (2008), *Ways of seeing*, London, Penguin Classics, p.47.

1.2 Gender Relations and Sport

Gender could be considered as an organizing principle, reproduced and disseminated, publicly and privately, in all social contexts; it pervades the cultural sphere, and Sport, is not excluded. In fact, sport is a gendered institution, and as playing sports is a gender performance, since one's always presenting oneself as a woman or a man, that is 'doing gender'.¹⁵

Therefore, feminist interest in sports gained ground in the 1970s, especially in North America, and by the 1980s there were an several number of publications about women's sports, giving birth to the so-called *Sports feminism*, which has spread across western Europe, Australia and New Zealand.¹⁶

Even though, in these countries it could be observed an increase of gender integration in many fields, in competitive sport it is still present a relatively strict gender segregation system which negatively limits athletes, and overall, hold back gender equality.

In fact, gender segregation in sport is a complex issue that mainly concerns the dichotomy between masculinity and femininity, and the stereotypes that are constructed according to these concepts and how these affect participations in different disciplines.

Firstly, it is important to highlight that masculinity and femininity are relative concepts which are socially and historically constructed, as it is gender.

The majority of sports were invented and ruled by men's standards, creating a social system in which, through the exaltation of the male body, a sense of hegemonic masculinity was constructed, and therefore women were excluded from participating in certain sport, considered to be exclusively male activities.

In fact, nowadays, some sports, such as baseball and American football in the United States, are still played mainly by men, because for instance, power, speed and strength are usually considered to be characteristics that showcase the masculinity stereotypically associated to men.

¹⁵ Giulianotti R. (2015), *Routledge Handbook of the sociology of sport*, Routledge, p.223.

¹⁶ Hargreaves J. (2003), *Sporting females: Critical issues in the history and Sociology of Women's Sports*. Routledge, p.25.

When women finally had the opportunity to play these sports, they had to follow patriarchal rules, as it happened with the All-American Girls Professional Baseball League (AAGPBL), created in 1943 in the United States, which will be discussed later.

Men are also affected by gender segregation, since they are also typically excluded from some sports, such as rhythmic gymnastics and synchronized swimming, which both reward and emphasize traditional femininity standards, such as slim body and graceful movements.¹⁷

In these sports, body presentation is deemed to be fundamental, which often is translated into the sexualization of the female body. These sports are considered as stereotypically ‘feminine-appropriate’, since:

“they affirm a popular image of femininity and demonstrate their essential difference from popular images of sporting masculinity. Not surprisingly, these are the sports which have been most visibly and systematically sexualized: the performers conform to the female norm of heterosexuality; the routines contain ‘ultra-feminine’ postures and gestures, sensuous symbolism, sexually suggestive movements, and even sometimes provocative poses bordering on the erotic”.¹⁸

However, fortunately things are changing and for instance in Italy, male synchronized swimmers can now compete in all discipline’s categories; at the international level they can compete in pairs, and from 2020, individually; but they still cannot participate in the Olympics games.

Therefore, sports participation has been historically highly influenced by how a sport has been perceived in gender terms.

According to a study conducted on young pupils in the UK by Barbara Humberstone (1986), outdoor activities in mixed-sex groups can present a challenge to traditional notions of gender differences. Her research shows that when

¹⁷ Giulianotti R. (2015), *Routledge Handbook of the sociology of sport*, Routledge, p.224.

¹⁸ Hargreaves J. (2003), *Sporting females: Critical issues in the history and Sociology of Women's Sports*. Routledge, p.25.

girls and boys are exposed to risk together, gender boundaries are weakened, and an unusually co-operative atmosphere develops between pupils of different sexes.¹⁹ Gender segregation, despite the greater changes in recent decades, still persist in the sports' world.

Nowadays, it is not uncommon that women participate in activities once thought to be male domains, such as marathon running, football, rugby, water polo, boxing, weight-lifting and basketball. However, men are still more likely than women to engage in sports that require aggressive bodily contact and sports such as gymnastics, aerobics and dance continue to attract far more females than males.²⁰

In order to promote women's participation in sport, and fight stereotypes, ideological and physical barriers, over the past 25 years, the IOC (the International Olympic Committee) has been encouraging National Olympic Committees (NOCs) and International Federations (IFs) to take positive actions. Among the key factors in increasing female participation at the Olympic Games were the opening up of eligibility in the various sports involved and the increase of the number of medal events for female athletes. As a result, the share of female competitors at the Games has increased from 10% in 1928 and 20% in 1960 to 48.8% at Tokyo 2020.²¹

At the European Union level, the European Commission has been working with all EU Member States and national sport organizations, to raise awareness about the importance of gender equality in sport. Gender equality is considered one of the founding principles of good governance in European sport organizations, and is also a central principle determining the eligibility of individuals, projects and organizations for funding under the Erasmus+ programme, the main EU funding instrument for sport projects.²² However, the 2022 Eurobarometer²³ highlights that:

¹⁹ Ivi, p.154.

²⁰ Giulianotti R. (2015), *Routledge Handbook of the sociology of sport*, Routledge, p.229.

²¹ European Commission (2022, March), *Illustrative Projects*, Retrieved October 30, 2022, from https://sport.ec.europa.eu/sites/default/files/2022-07/Illustrative%20projects_v1.pdf

²² European Commission (2022), *Gender equality*. Sport, Retrieved November 4, 2022, from <https://sport.ec.europa.eu/policies/sport-and-society/gender-equality>

²³ European Commission, Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture, (2022), *Sport and physical activity: full report*, Publications Office of the European Union. <https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2766/356346>

- Men are more likely than women to exercise or play sport with some regularity: 40% of them say they “never” exercise or play sport, compared with 49% of women;
- women (35%) tend to be more likely than men (28%) to never engage in other physical activity such as cycling from one place to another, dancing, gardening, etc;
- and men (29%) are less likely than women (38%) to say they had never done any vigorous physical activity during the previous seven days.

In order to tackle the issue of gender equality in sport, the European Commission is committed to follow the recommendations of the High Level Group on Gender Equality, published in March 2022, which proposed an action plan in 6 thematic areas:

1. participation
2. coaching and officiating
3. leadership
4. social and economic aspects of sport
5. media coverage
6. gender-based violence

Media coverage of women’s sport is therefore a crucial area to promote and increase gender equality in sports as it will discuss in the following paragraph.

1.3 Gender, Media and Sport

Some sociologists consider Sport as a very prominent social institution in almost every society, since it combines characteristics that could be found in any institution with that unique appeal that can only be compared in some cases by religion.

Sport is undoubtedly an arena of patterned behaviors, rules, social structures, and interinstitutional relationships that holds unique opportunities to study and understand the complexities of social life.²⁴ Therefore, sport and society are interconnected, and consequently, gender related issues are not marginal in the world of sport. As stated before, *sex* is considered as a culturally constructed biological characteristic and *gender* as an ongoing cultural process that constructs differences between women and men.

Moreover, sport is also a media phenomenon, it generates great economic outputs and as a consequence, investors of the media industry have great interest in covering the best marketable sport product.

As a matter of fact, women's sport has historically played a marginal role, in both society (up until a certain moment, as it will be discussed later) and in the media. In fact, as discussed above, women in sports have been considered as the *other*, they have been marginalized and excluded from some disciplines considered to be exclusively for men. And in some cases, when women eventually were able to play these sports, their femininity (or their womanhood) was questioned and/or controlled.

An interesting example of how women were able to play a sport, but still had to follow patriarchal rules, is represented by the All-American Girls Professional Baseball League (AAGPBL), created in 1943 by a group of US entrepreneurs. In the early 1940s, during World War II, in the United States several baseball clubs were dismantled due to the recruitment of men to face the conflict. To avoid the complete failure of the major league and to keep the popular interest over the sport

²⁴ Frey J. H., & Eitzen D. S. (1991), *Sport and Society*, Annual Review of Sociology, 17, 503–522. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2083352>, p. 503.

alive, various owners and businessmen decided to create a brand-new women's league.

Women all over the United States were recruited and tryouts were organized and in 1943 the All-American Girls Professional Baseball League (AAGPBL) was founded. The league lasted until 1954 and despite the initial skepticism by the public opinion, it was heavily covered in the press.

The league attracted media attention for several reason; in the United States, baseball was (and still is) the most popular sport, it represents the quintessential of the American culture, and most importantly, it attracted many investors, which were keen to promote the league and earn from their investments.

GIRL BASEBALL TEAMS MEET AT STADIUM TONIGHT

'Big Leaguers' Play Opener At 8 o'Clock

Two teams of the All American Girls' Baseball league will meet here tonight at 8 o'clock in the Municipal Stadium to begin a two-game series.

The Rockford Peaches and the Grand Rapids Chicks will go out on the diamond and slug it out.

The teams are being brought here under the sponsorship of the Augusta Junior Chamber of Commerce in co-operation with the Augusta Chronicle and Radio Station WBBQ.

The Rockford team, under the managership of Eddie Ainsmith, is expected to start Kamenshek, first base; Ferguson or Wegman, second base; Harrell, shortstop; Doyle, third base; Meyer, leftfield; Luna, centerfield; Gocloch, rightfield; Green or Romatowski, catcher, and Deegan, Starck, Florreich, Holgerson or Messner, pitcher.

Starting line-up for the Grand Rapids Chicks will probably be Voyce, first base; Ziegler, second base; Petras, shortstop; Tetzlaff, third base; Shiveley, leftfield; Wingrove, centerfield; Francisca, rightfield; Richards or Lesang, catcher, and Wisniewski, Haylett, Earp or Haine, pitcher.

The two teams are expected to give local baseball fans some real thrills tonight when they start their first game. The girls play real "he-man" baseball, with 70-foot basepaths, 43-foot pitching distance, 11-inch ball, base stealing and baseball rules.

The All-American Girls league



Here is the squad of Rockford, Ill., Peaches who will open a two-game series here tonight with the Grand Rapids Chicks.

Figure 1 - Page Six of the Augusta Chronicle 13th May 1947, Augusta, Georgia

However, because of the great media coverage that the league was having, the players had to observe precise rules to join the teams: they had to be considered as socially acceptable by the public opinion; they had to behave, dress and act like "real ladies". Wearing pants in public was prohibited and sanctioned, as it was keeping your hair too short or being too masculine (or not very feminine). This code

of conduct had to be observed both on and off the pitch, and it was the only way these women could live their dream and play professional baseball²⁵.

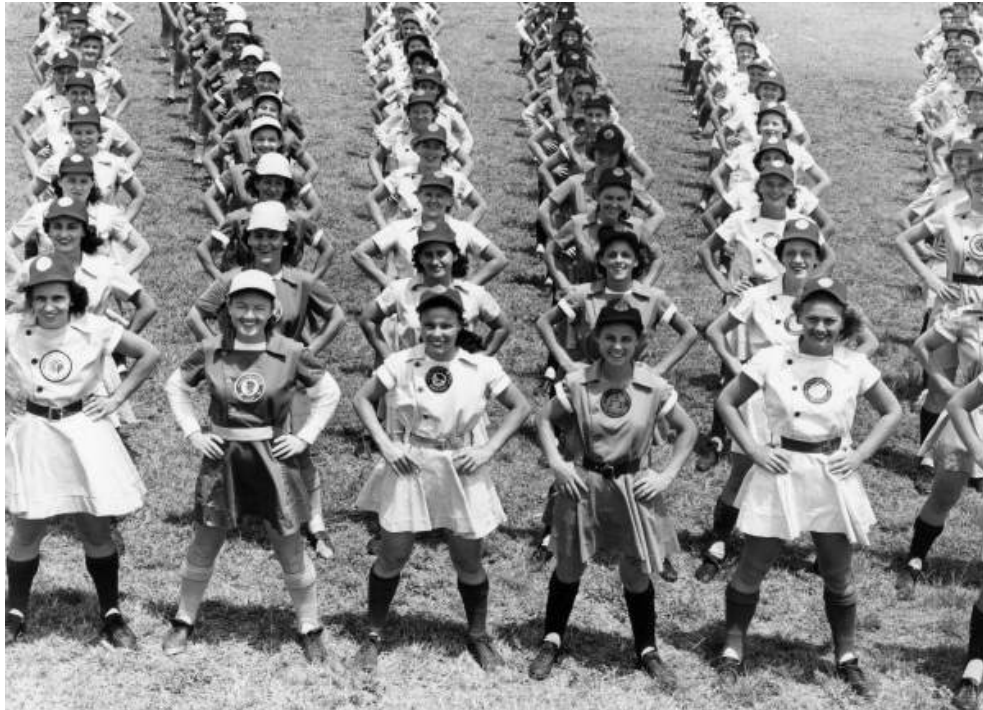


Figure 2 - Members of the All-American Girls Baseball League do calisthenics in Opa-locka, Florida, 22nd April 1948 (State Archives of Florida, 2022)

The history of the AAGPBL demonstrate that women's sport was therefore acceptable only if, and as long as, it complies to standards set by men. In sport as well as in society, and in the media, the rules of the game (pun intended) are set by men.

On the other side of the pond, in the European context, only recently an increase of media attention towards women's sport, and particularly women's football, has occurred. In fact, since the FIFA World Cup in 2019, organized in France, an increase of media coverage occurred which brought to the attention of national federations their women's football team. It was apparent the different treatment that women's footballer had, compared to their male counterpart, causing a domino

²⁵ AAGPBL league history. AAGPBL League History. (2014). Retrieved September 9, 2022, from <https://www.aagpbl.org/history/league-history>, accessed on 2 October 2022.

effect which invested all women's sport. This led to the implementation of national legislations and regulations to professionalize women's sport.

It is important to note that the role of the European institutions has been crucial to favor the development of gender equality in sport. In fact, in 1985 the "Charter of Women's Rights in Sports" was proposed by UISP (the Italian Union Popular Sport), which was adopted by the European Parliament in 1987.

The Charter (updated in 2011) was the first step that officially acknowledged the claim of equal opportunities for women and men in sport within the context of the European Union.

It highlighted the very high inequality between women and men in the field of sport and stressed the importance of overcoming the numerous cultural barriers that prevent women's involvement.

The Charter recognized that:

"Mass media has an enormous impact on the development of culture in the EU and must be the first to embrace the principles and values of gender mainstreaming, not least the priorities and recommendations established by this Charter. Female athletes must have the same opportunities as men to be represented in mass media. Media coverage should respect the dignity of the individual. Women should be equally represented in media-related positions, such as journalists, photographers or editors."²⁶

Moreover, in 2014 the European Commission proposed a strategic action plan that encourages sport governing bodies to develop and implement national and international strategies on gender equality in sport for the period 2014 – 2020. The proposal called for a series of action to fight negative gender stereotypes in sport, highlighting the role of the media. The EC defined a series of objectives, one in particular regarding media coverage of women's sport and of women in sport, which was supposed to increase to 30%, with the long-term objective of reaching 40%.

²⁶ UISP (2019), *European chart of women's right in sports* Retrieved November 4, 2022, from https://www.uisp.it/nazionale/aree/politichegenere/files/CHART_ENGLISH.pdf, p.6.

In 2022, a new action plan, *Towards More Gender Equality in Sport*, from the High Level of Gender Equality in Sport, was published by the European Commission. According to the proposal, the six thematic areas that requires interventions are: participation, coaching and officiating, leadership, social and economic aspects of sport, media coverage, and gender-based violence.

In particular, in regards to media coverage, the recommendation made is to encourage the development of strategies, incentives and regulations to ensure that the different stakeholders (public and private sector media, sport organizations) increase media coverage of women's sport. And public sector media should be seen as key actors in this.²⁷ Therefore, some concrete actions are suggested and are addressed in particular to the European Commission, sport organizations and Member States.

The actions proposed to the EC are:

- Promote possibilities for gender-based analysis of sport media coverage in order to provide diachronic quantitative and qualitative open data.
- Facilitate discussion with all stakeholders (e.g., private/public sector media, sport organisations, athletes, researchers, schools of journalism) in order to set objectives, analyse improvements, exchange good practices, define a common code of ethics on gender equality, etc.
- Use the European Week of Sport to promote women role models, especially in traditionally male-dominated sports.
- Publish and promote a toolkit on gender-equal media coverage.

Member States are called to:

- Impose/encourage gender-balanced coverage in all public sector media. Scheduling of sports events (at prime-time) should also be balanced.

²⁷ European Commission, Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture, (2022), *Towards more gender equality in sport : recommendations and action plan from the High Level Group on Gender Equality in sport (2022)*, Publications Office of the European Union, <https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2766/10036>

- Offer incentives for private sector media to provide gender balanced coverage (e.g., tax reductions, specific funding).
- Promote the inclusion of a gender equality module in journalism curricula.
- Support the adoption of a common code of ethics on gender equality in the media.
- Develop measures to increase the number of women in sports media and eliminate harassment of women journalists.
- Create a national observatory of sports journalism or a national platform to provide quantitative and qualitative diachronic open data on media coverage.

Finally, sport organizations should aim to:

- Ensure gender-balanced coverage in external and internal communication, including on social networks.
- Use scheduling to influence coverage of sports competitions.
- Educate communication staff on the relevant issues.
- Inform women athletes about their rights in relation to media coverage.
- Work with media organisations to increase coverage of women's sport and improve portrayal of women.
- Provide guidelines, training and tools for grassroots entities.
- Create packages that include women's events when selling broadcasting rights. Include gender-equality and fair portrayal conditions in media-rights agreements.
- Perform market studies on potential audiences to target the best media partners.
- Create awards to promote media that provide gender-balanced coverage.

It is important to note that the very first action suggested to member states, consists in improving women's sport media coverage in public media sector. This is supported by the fact that, according to the 2022 Eurobarometer, the 57% of

Europeans respondents say that they evenly like to follow female sport in the media (online, written, tv) as they do for male sport.²⁸

As a clear example of the change that is occurring in women's sport, in particular in women's football, is the latest UEFA Women's EURO 2022 which was a true ground-breaking event in terms of media coverage in Europe.

The event registered world record breaking data regarding in terms of media coverage. In fact, according to UEFA, the event not only was shown worldwide via more than 60 broadcast partners, but also:

“Viewing figures on television and online reached unprecedented heights: the tournament became the most watched Women's EURO ever, with a projected global cumulative live viewership of 365 million across TV, out-of-home viewing and streaming; this means there were more than double the number of live viewers compared to the 2017 edition (178 million) and 214% more live viewers than in 2013 (116 million). The final between England and Germany is projected to have attained a cumulative live viewership of 50 million worldwide, over three times more than for the 2017 final, when 15 million viewers tuned in; In both the UK and Germany, the final had the largest Women's EURO audiences ever and the largest audiences since UEFA EURO 2020”.²⁹

The event was a complete success also in terms of attendance figures, and again, records were broken:

- Record **crowd**: 87,192 (England 2-1 Germany, Wembley). Not only did the attendance figure for the final set a new record for a women's international in Europe (beating the 80,203 who watched the 2012 Olympic final, also at Wembley), it broke new ground for a women's *and* men's EURO final

²⁸ European Commission, Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture, (2022), *Sport and physical activity: full report*, Publications Office of the European Union. <https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2766/356346>

²⁹ UEFA.com. (2022). Women's euro watched by over 365 million people globally: Inside UEFA. UEFA.com. Retrieved October 2, 2022, from <https://www.uefa.com/insideuefa/news/0278-15ff73f066e1-c729b5099cbb-1000--365-million-people-watch-women-s-euro-2022/>

tournament game, which was 79,115 people, established in 1964, between Spain and the Soviet Union at Madrid's Santiago Bernabéu.

- Record **aggregate attendance**: 574,875. The previous record of 240,055, set in the Netherlands five years ago, was more than doubled.
- Record **average attendance**: 18,544.

Therefore, it might seem that women's football in Europe is experiencing a real revolution, a golden era in which the media industry is playing a key role.

The growing data regarding sport participation results in more interest by the public opinion and by investors. This means an increase of sponsorships and partnerships, which will lead to a further increase of revenue by both the sport associations and institutions, and by those investors. This will lead to better infrastructure and facilities, more popularity, and consequently more media coverage. An example of this sort of domino effect is represented by what is happening with the Spanish women's football movement.

Following the afterwards of the FIFA 2019 World Cup, national media attention in Spain towards women's football increased, motivated by great sport achievements of some clubs, and a very promising national team, with lots of young talents. For instance, the greatest women's football player at the moment is Alexia Putellas, the 2021 and 2022 Balon d'Or winner, and the captain of Spanish national team and FC Barcelona, the winner of the 2021 UEFA Women Champions League.

The marketability of Spanish women's football has led media investors such as DAZN, one of leading global sports streaming platform, to acquire the rights to the Spanish Women's First Division for the next five seasons (from the 2022-23 to the 2026-2027 season).

The League will be broadcasted worldwide, in some countries via the YouTube channel of the platform, entirely for free, with a total 240 matches per season over the next five seasons. The DAZN Group, who already own the broadcast rights to the UEFA Women's Champions League (until the 2024-2025 season) have further strengthened their position in the women's game, in particular, by showing its commitment to drive the global growth of the Spanish league, and in general fostering the growth of women's football and its media coverage around the world.

The success of DAZN coverage of the UEFA Women's Champions League in 2021-2022, is demonstrated by the data published by the platform:

“the UWCL final between FC Barcelona and Olympique de Lyon had a live audience of 3.6 million people around the world, including broadcasts on DAZN main channels, on the DAZN dedicated UWCL YouTube channel, and on the 11 free channels in Europe. This represented an increase in audience of 56% compared to the end of the 2020/21 season, with Spain being the country that contributed the most, with a total of 1.6 million views.”³⁰

The example of Spanish women's football highlights the increasing media attention that women's football is gaining in Europe. However, media coverage in the case of women's football is mainly operated by private investors, such as DAZN or other OTT³¹ platforms. Except DAZN, these platforms seldom broadcast women's football games freely, and this means that only a limited audience is able to access and follow this sport, as it is the case of the Italian women's Serie A, which will be discussed in the following paragraph.

³⁰ Losilla N. (2022, September 5), *DAZN adquiere Los Derechos Globales de La Liga profesional de fútbol femenino reforzando su compromiso con El Deporte Femenino*, DAZN News España, DAZN, Retrieved November 4, 2022, from <https://www.dazn.com/es-ES/news/primer-división-femenina/dazn-adquiere-derechos-globales-liga-profesional-futbol-femenino/166viph4xqufy1wnust3hzwh8o>

³¹ OTT stands for “Over The Top” and refers to any streaming service that delivers content over the internet.

1.4 The Italian case

Arguably, in Italy gender relations had a greater influence than in the USA, especially in sport. As a matter of fact, some women's sports in Italy, especially those who are considered to be more masculine, such as football or basketball, are highly stigmatized. Other sports, such as volleyball which count an extremely high amount of players, both female and male, it is however, in the case of women's volleyball, sexualized. In other cases, in Italy the sport itself is exclusively for one gender or the other; for instance, baseball is played only by men, while women play softball. These two disciplines are very similar, only some minor differences exist between the two, but while in the United States, for example, both men and women can play baseball and softball, in Italy this does not occur: women can play only softball.

Up until recently, women's sport was not considered professional at any level, and only since 2021, the process of professionalization, which is competence of the single federations, has started only in women's football.

In Italy, it is Law 91/1981 which regulates professional and non-professional sport activities in the country. The National Council of CONI (the Italian Olympic Committee), in defining the *Fundamental principles of the statutes of the National Sports Federations and associated sports disciplines*, in paragraph 13 specifies how: "the establishment of the professional sector by a National Sports Federation is possible [...] in the presence of a *considerable economic importance* of the phenomenon"³².

This criterion has been, for many years, an obstacle for the professionalization of women's sport since it was not considered as an activity of relevant economic interest. This meant that female athletes were considered as amateur, and a grey area in regards to the protection of their fundamental rights existed, putting their careers (and lives) in a very unstable position.

³² CONI (2018). *Principi fondamentali degli Statuti delle Federazioni Sportive ...*, Retrieved September 9, 2022, from https://www.coni.it/images/1-Primo-Piano-2018/Principi_Fondamentali_Statuti_FSN_4-9-2018_approvati.pdf

As stated before, thanks to the increasing interest towards women's football, during the aftermaths of the 2019 FIFA women's world cup the FIGC (the Italian Football Federation) launched a project for the gradual professionalization of women's football, which will find its realization starting from the 2022/2023 season. The change will affect the contractual relationships between athletes and clubs, which must be governed by specific standardized and federal contractual schemes³³. This could therefore have a domino effect on the media dimension of women's football in Italy.

In fact, the growth and development of a sport inevitably passes through its media exposure, which consequently will increase its popularity.

In Italy, women's football media rights are licensed by the Italian Football Federation, and not by football clubs. There are, however, as it will be explained later, some rights that still remain with the Clubs. The model can be defined as hybrid, as it does not grant exclusivity to the broadcaster.

The women's national team's broadcasting rights are held by RAI (Radiotelevisione Italiana), and the women's Serie A, the Italian Cup and the Super Cup are licensed to the OTT platform TIMVISION (owned by TIM) and to the private media communication company, Cairo Communication Group, for the 2021-22 and the 2022-2023 seasons.

Before this agreement with the Cairo Group, for the 2020/21 season, the broadcasting rights were held by Sky Italia and TIMVISION. By virtue of this agreements, no games could be broadcasted in clear on TV, on streaming platforms, on social media, or on the web or on the app. This means that the league was accessible only via pay-per-view broadcasting services. Moreover, the clubs had the right to stream their women's team games only on their OTT platforms, and not for free. For what concerns the rights to broadcast highlights of all matches on the social channels, this was possible only starting from 00.01 on the day following the match.

³³ Andaloro D. (2022), *Quali Sport Femminili sono considerati "Professionistici" in Italia?*, GiuridicaMente, Retrieved September 9, 2022, from <https://www.giuridicamente.com/quali-sport-femminili-sono-considerati-professionistici-in-italia/>

This agreement had many critical aspects: first of all, women's football was not easily accessible to the public, but only to subscribers of OTT services. Clubs had limited control over their media content, especially given the importance that sharing highlights on social media platforms could have on increasing visibility. And finally, the public media sector, was completely left out. It is not clear if this was for a lack of interest by the broadcaster. However, it was a clear missed opportunity to improve women's sport representation and coverage in the public media broadcaster. Now thanks to the new agreement with Cairo Group, each weekend at least one match will be broadcasted in clear by La7, thus giving the movement the possibility to reach more audience throughout the Italian territory, and dedicated programs with highlights and insights will be produced.³⁴

³⁴ Fige (2021, July 22), *Tutto il campionato di Serie A in Diretta Su TIMVISION, la7 Trasmetterà in chiaro una gara per ogni giornata*, Federazione Italiana Giuoco Calcio, Retrieved November 4, 2022, from <https://www.figc.it/it/femminile/news/tutto-il-campionato-di-serie-a-in-diretta-su-timvision-la7-trasmetter%C3%A0-in-chiaro-una-gara-per-ogni-giornata>

CHAPTER 2 - MONITORING GENDER REPRESENTATION IN THE MEDIA

Media monitoring is a quantitative approach to study media representation, which consists of trying to count where, and in which roles different individuals appear in the media. Therefore, media monitoring is a tool consistently used to quantify gender representation in the media. In this regard, the most important monitoring tool at the global level, is the Global Media Monitoring Project.

Started in 1995, as an outcome of the Beijing Conference, and promoted by the WACC (World association for Christian Communication), the Global Media Monitoring Project is the largest and longest longitudinal study on gender representation in the media. Moreover, it is also the largest advocacy initiative in the world on changing the representation of women in the media. It is unique in involving participants ranging from grassroots community organisations, to university students and researchers, to media practitioners, all of whom participate on a voluntary basis.

Every five years since 1995, the GMMP takes a snapshot of the news in countries all over the world, analyzing selected indicators, focused on studying women's presence in relation to men, gender bias and stereotyping in news media content. The sixth research was conducted in 2020 by hundreds of volunteers in 116 countries around the world. The GMMP is important not only because it allows to compare how different countries are performing in terms of gender representation in the media, but also because follow-up actions are suggested.

Overall, the process seeks to build skills in critical media literacy of the broad base of volunteers, increasing knowledge on how to apply a gender lens to read, understand and analyze media content.³⁵

The GMMP 2020 media monitoring findings are comprehensively documented in the report *Who makes the news? The global media monitoring project*, which will

³⁵ Macharia S. (2013, November 16), *Return to Bangkok: Two decades of interventions on gender and Media*, WACC, Retrieved November 5, 2022, from <https://waccglobal.org/return-to-bangkok-two-decades-of-interventions-on-gender-and-media/>

be presented in the following paragraph. Then, the Italian report will be shortly discussed.

2.1 Who makes the news? - GMMP 2020 Report

In 2020, the GMMP's global monitoring day was initially set to take place in April, however due to the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic, it was postponed and re-scheduled later that year.

The monitoring process consisted in an initial phase during which each team was provided with a spreadsheet version of the coding, to allow for electronic recording of the observations. In the period leading up to the monitoring day, regional and national training sessions were organised to build a uniform understanding of the teams on the methodology and approach. The teams received training on media selection, and article selection, and the number of medias to code.³⁶

For this edition, each team could choose from two possible types of monitoring: a *full monitoring*, which results would provide a more comprehensive picture on the status of gender equality in news media; or a *short monitoring*, which consists in a shorter version focused only on the key GMMP indicators.

In order to ensure accuracy in the coding process, each radio and television bulletin was recorded, and copies of digital and print media pieces were collected. Moreover, each research team could choose to introduce three optional special questions with the purpose to analyse specific issues of national interest.

As the guidelines provided specified, in selecting the information sources, teams should consider:

- Reputability of the source;
- Ease of access and completeness, which means that easily accessible and verifiable sources should be selected;

³⁶ More detailed information regarding the methodology of the monitoring research is available at Macharia, S. *et al.* (eds) (2020), *Global Media Monitoring Project - whomakesthenews.org*, Wacc, Available at: https://whomakesthenews.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/GMMP2020.ENG_FINAL.pdf , p.69-70.

- and Timeliness, which means that the data sources selected should have been updated at least once since 2015 in order to ensure the number of outlets monitored are an accurate representation of each country's media density.

As a result, in the 2020 GMMP research, more than thirty thousand stories were analysed in total. The number of news items monitored has doubled over the past 25 years and risen by over 8,000 since the 2015 edition. As the table below shows, the majority of stories covered by the research are from the traditional mediums, i.e., print, radio and television (19,858), on the other hand, the amount of digital news covered was 10,314.

Table 1 - Stories monitored in the 2020 GMMP report (GMMP, 2020)

	Print	Radio	Television	News websites	News media Twitter feeds	TOTAL
Africa	1354	782	794	414	343	3687
Asia	1442	519	1248	1209	533	4951
Caribbean	248	311	261	290	223	1333
Europe	2387	2094	2284	2279	1654	10698
Latin America	889	1371	1603	873	1163	5899
Middle East	403	318	405	565	120	1811
North America	230	128	145	104	79	686
Pacific Islands	246	134	253	183	163	979
Transnational			9	87	32	128
TOTAL	7199	5657	7002	6004	4310	30172

* People's Republic of China Global Television Network (CGTN) Africa, Aljazeera, BBC News -World, CNN World, France 24, Reuters, RT News, TeleSur, @mytimes

The following table (table 2) shows the aggregate data collected during the research at the global level, and it highlights the increase (or decrease) of women in the news. In particular, the table shows a steady (but slow) improvement in regards to the presence of women in almost all mediums throughout the years. Compared to 1995, women's presence in the news has increased by 8% in traditional media, and 1% in websites and news media tweets. However, compared to 2015, the increase is represented by only 1% in both cases.

Table 2 - Key Findings GMMP 1995-2020 (GMMP,2020)

	1995		2000		2005		2010		2015		2020		%Change (Δ)	
	%F	%M	%F	%M	%F	%M	%F	%M	%F	%M	%F	%M	%F	%M
A. People in the news														
by Medium														
Newspaper, Television, Radio (NRT)														
Newspapers	17	83	18	82	21	79	24	76	24	76	25	75	Δ25 yrs (%F)	
Television	16	84	17	83	21	79	24	76	26	74	26	74	+8	
Radio	21	79	22	78	22	78	24	76	24	76	26	74	+10	
	15	85	13	87	17	83	22	78	21	79	23	77	+5	
													+8	
News websites and news media tweets														
News websites							23	77	25	75	28	72	Δ5 yrs (%F)	
News tweets							(n/a)	(n/a)	26	74	27	73	+1	
									28	72	26	74	+3	
													(-2)	
by Scope of Story. NRT														
Local	22	78	23	77	27	73	26	74	27	73	29	71	Δ25 yrs (%F)	
National	14	86	17	83	19	81	23	77	23	77	25	75	+7	
National/other	17	83	15	85	18	82	20	80					+11	
Sub-regional/regional (1)									24	76	24	76		
International / Foreign	17	83	14	86	20	80	26	74	24	76	21	79	+4	
By Major topic. NRT														
Science & Health	27	73	21	79	22	78	32	68	35	65	30	70	+3	
Social & Legal	19	81	21	79	28	72	30	70	28	72	32	68	+13	
Crime & Violence	21	79	18	82	22	78	24	76	28	72	24	76	+3	
Celebrity, Arts & Sport	24	76	23	77	28	72	26	74	23	77	25	75	+1	
Economy	10	90	18	82	20	80	20	80	21	79	24	76	+14	
Politics & Government	7	93	12	88	14	86	19	81	16	84	20	80	+13	
by Function in Story. NRT														
Personal Experience					31	69	36	64	38	62	42	58	Δ15 yrs (%F)	
Popular Opinion					34	66	44	56	37	63	38	62	+4	
Eye Witness					30	70	29	71	30	70	30	70	0	
Subject					23	77	23	77	26	74	24	76	+1	
Spokesperson					14	86	19	81	20	80	22	78	+8	
Expert					17	83	20	80	19	81	24	76	+7	
by Occupation. NRT														
Homemaker, parent (no other occupation is given)			81	19	75	25	72	28	67	33	68	32	Δ15 yrs (%F)	
Health worker, social worker, childcare worker			n/a		n/a		n/a		47	53	47	53	(-7)	
Office or service worker, non-management worker			35	65	40	60	45	55	35	65	42	58	+2	
Unemployed no other occupation given			33	67	19	81	35	65	34	66	42	58	+23	
Activist or worker in civil society org., NGO, trade union			24	76	23	77	34	66	33	67	35	65	+12	
Doctor, dentist, health specialist			n/a		n/a		n/a		30	70	29	71		
Academic expert, lecturer, teacher			n/a		n/a		n/a		23	77	29	71		
Lawyer, judge, magistrate, legal advocate, etc.			n/a		18	82	17	83	22	78	25	75	+7	
Media professional, journalist, film-maker, etc.			n/a		36	64	29	71	21	79	29	71	(-7)	
Tradesperson, artisan, labourer, truck driver, etc.			15	85	23	77	22	78	21	79	21	79	(-2)	
Government employee, public servant, etc.			12	88	17	83	17	83	20	80	22	78	+5	
Government, politician, minister, spokesperson...			10	90	12	88	17	83	18	82	18	82	+6	
Business person, exec, manager, stock broker...					12	88	14	86	16	84	20	80	+8	
Agriculture, mining, fishing, forestry			15	85	13	87	13	87	14	86	24	76	+11	
Science/ technology professional, engineer, etc.			12	88	10	90	10	90	10	90	20	80	+10	
Police, military, para-military, militia, fire officer			4	96	5	95	7	93	8	92	12	88	+7	
Sportsperson, athlete, player, coach, referee			9	91	16	84	11	89	7	93	14	86	(-2)	

	1995		2000		2005		2010		2015		2020		%Change (Δ)	
	%F	%M	%F	%M	%F	%M	%F	%M	%F	%M	%F	%M	%F	%M
														Δ20 yrs
% Portrayed as Victim. NRT	29	10	19	7	19	8	18	8	16	8	14	15	(-5)	+8
% Portrayed as Survivor. NRT					4	8	6	3	8	3	6	7		
% Identified by Family Status. NRT			21	4	17	5	18	5	19	5	14	5	(-7)	+1
% In Newspaper Photographs			25	11	23	16	26	17	30	23	27	24	+2	+13
% Quoted. NRT			33	35	50	50	52	50	61	61	57	55	+24	+20
B. Reporting and Presenting the News													Δ20 yrs	
														%F
% Stories presented	51	49	49	51	53	47	49	51	49	51	51	49		+2
Television			56	44	57	43	52	48	57	43	55	45		-1
Radio			41	59	49	51	45	55	41	59	46	54		+5
% Stories reported	28	72	31	69	37	63	37	63	37	63	40	60		+9
Television			36	64	42	58	44	56	38	62	45	55		+9
Radio			28	72	45	55	37	63	41	59	37	63		+9
Newspapers			26	74	29	71	33	67	35	65	37	63		+11
% Stories reported in digital news											42	58		
News websites											42	58		
News media Twitter feeds											43	57		
% Stories reported, by scope, by sex of reporter. NRT													Δ25 yrs (%F)	
Local	33	67	34	66	44	56	40	60	38	62	40	60		+7
National	24	76	30	70	34	66	38	62	38	62	41	59		+17
National/other	28	72	33	67	32	68	32	68						
Sub-regional/regional									37	63	40	60		
Foreign / International	28	72	29	71	36	64	37	63	35	65	38	62		+10
% Stories Reported By Major Topic. NRT													Δ20 yrs (%F)	
Celebrity, Arts & Sport			27	73	35	65	38	62	33	67	40	60		+13
Social & Legal			39	61	40	60	43	57	39	61	44	56		+5
Crime & Violence			29	71	33	67	35	65	33	67	33	67		+4
Science & Health			46	54	38	62	44	56	50	50	49	51		+3
Economy			35	65	43	57	40	60	39	61	41	59		+6
Politics & Government			26	74	32	68	33	67	31	69	35	65		+9
% Female news subjects and sources, by sex of reporter. NRT			24	18	25	20	28	22	29	26	31	24		+7
C. News Content													Δ20 yrs	
% Stories with Women as a Central Focus. NRT*														
Celebrity, Arts & Sport			10		10		13		10		9			(-1)
Social & Legal			16		17		16		14		13			(-3)
Crime & Violence			19		17		17		8		12			(-7)
Politics & Government			10		16		16		17		14			+4
Science & Health			7		8		13		7		7			0
Economy			11		6		11		14		4			(-7)
			4		3		4		5		4			0
% Stories that Challenge Gender Stereotypes. NRT													Δ15 yrs	
% Stories that Highlight Gender (In)Equality. News websites and tweets					3		6		4		3			0
% Stories that Highlight Gender (In)Equality. NRT					4		6		9		7			+3
% Stories that Highlight Gender (In)Equality. News websites											8			
% Stories that mention gender equality policies or human/women's rights instruments. NRT													Δ10 yrs	
							10		9		7			(-3)

COVID-19 News (All mediums)

All subjects and sources	28	72
Experts	26	74
Doctors, health specialists	27	73
Reporters	48	52
Stories that clearly challenge gender stereotypes	2	
Stories that highlight gender inequality issues	5	

Notes

*Sub-regional/regional' category replaced 'national and other' in 2015

Empty cells mean data collected for the respective indicator

* Correction: A data capture error resulted in under-counting the 'yes' responses for the indicator "% of stories in which women are central" in the earlier published report. This version shows the corrected finding.

An increase of women in the news can also be observed in regards to the scope of the story (local, national, sub-regional, international), and in regards to the function in the story. In fact, according to the data collected for the 2020 survey, the woman is approached as an expert in 24% of cases as the main subject or as an expert.

Furthermore, the news are categorized into thematic areas: Science and Health; Social and Legal; Crime and Violence; Celebrity, Arts and Sport; Economy; Politics and Government.

As for the presence of women in the news divided by thematic areas, the greatest increase concerns news dealing with issues related to the Economy (14%) and Politics (13%); while an almost insignificant increase is observed in the news regarding the thematic area Celebrity, Arts and Sport (1%). Finally, it is important to note that women are represented in the news as an athlete, coach, player or referee only in 14% of the stories covered by the research, and in only 13% of cases they are at the center of the story.

The table below shows the overall presence of women in the traditional media; compared to the data collected in 1995, there is a general increase of the presence of women in all thematic areas; however, if the data collected in 2015 are considered, there is a decrease in the news regarding Science and Health, and Crime and Violence. The presence of women in news regarding Celebrity, Arts and Sports, compared to 2015, has increase only by 2%.

Table 3 - Overall presence of women in print, radio and television news, by major topic, by GMMP year. 1995-2020 (GMMP, 2020)

	1995	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020	Δ 25 years
Politics and Government	7%	12%	14%	19%	16%	20%	+13%
Economy	10%	18%	20%	20%	21%	24%	+14%
Science and Health	27%	21%	22%	32%	35%	30%	+3%
Social and Legal	19%	21%	28%	30%	28%	31%	+12%
Crime and Violence	21%	18%	22%	24%	28%	24%	+3%
Gender & Related						47%*	
Celebrity, Arts and Media, Sports	24%	23%	28%	26%	23%	25%	+1%

*Gender & related N=739, 1% of total sample

Finally, the following table highlights the percentage of women subjects and sources in traditional media, by major topic and by region.

For what concerns the Celebrity, Arts and Sport news, Europe has the highest percentage (30%) of women in the news. Even though, this might be considered as a positive input, it should be kept in consideration that this thematic area is extremely heterogeneous, and therefore data could be misleading.

Table 4 - Women subjects and sources in print, radio and television, by major topic, by region. 2020 (GMMP,2020)

	Africa	Asia	Caribbean	Europe	Latin America	Middle East	North America	Pacific	OVERALL
Politics and Government	18%	15%	21%	22%	20%	12%	26%	32%	20%
Economy	19%	21%	23%	29%	24%	12%	36%	27%	24%
Science and Health	30%	25%	28%	35%	28%	15%	36%	33%	30%
Social and Legal	23%	24%	42%	34%	34%	23%	45%	40%	31%
Crime and Violence	24%	22%	26%	26%	24%	19%	29%	30%	24%
Gender & Related	66%	31%	67%	58%	51%	75%	50%	58%	*47%
Celebrity, Arts and Media, Sports	17%	25%	20%	30%	21%	24%	26%	21%	25%
OVERALL	22%	21%	27%	28%	26%	17%	33%	31%	25%

**1% of total sample

In conclusion, the GMMP 2020 demonstrates a generalized increase in the presence of women in the media; however, the increase in some areas is insufficient, and above all women are still relegated to secondary roles in the news, and only in 24% of cases are consulted as experts. In the next paragraph, the Italian 2020 report will be presented, elaborated by a working group coordinated by Claudia Padovani, professor at the University of Padua.

2.1.1 The Italian report 2020/21

Italy has participated to the GMMP from the very beginning, in 1995, since it was an opportunity to be part of a global network of activists in the ongoing struggle to promote gender equality in (and through) the media. This resulted over the years in local and national collaborations, within and beyond academic, including partnership with women professional associations like Gi.U.Li.A. Giornaliste (a network of women professional journalists).

In Italy, thanks to the GMMP data, discussion about the importance of gender representation in the media, and consequently mobilization of the public opinion has occurred.

In fact, some remarks highlighted in the previous report published in 2015, and some gender equality provisions were translated and adopted in the Contract of Service of the national public broadcaster RAI.

However, the situation in Italy has changed very little since the last GMMP in 2015: women have grown in terms of overall visibility, arguably more thanks to their greater presence and participation in institutions and businesses, than as the result of greater news media commitment towards equality.

For the 2020 Italian report, the data was collected on 29 September 2020, and a distinction is made between legacy media (print, radio, TV), and digital media (Internet, Twitter). In particular, the research group has observed 8 newspapers, 6 radio and 8 television channels, 8 internet news sites, and 8 media houses' Twitter feeds.

Consistently with GMMP project guidelines, two general criteria have been adopted in the selection of the mainstream media to be monitored:

- daily newspapers/radio and TV channels' relevance in terms of geographic diffusion and audience reach; and
- balanced representation of the different orientations in daily newspapers/radio and TV channels in the country.

Internet-based news have been selected following GMMP instructions: only country-specific news sources were selected, and only major news websites (no gossip, advertising, or quiz sites; no blogs nor aggregation sites).³⁷

The overall presence of women as news subjects and sources across five news media is 26% out of a total of 980 people in the news (24% in legacy media out of a total of 526 people, and in digital media 28% in out of a total of 454 people).

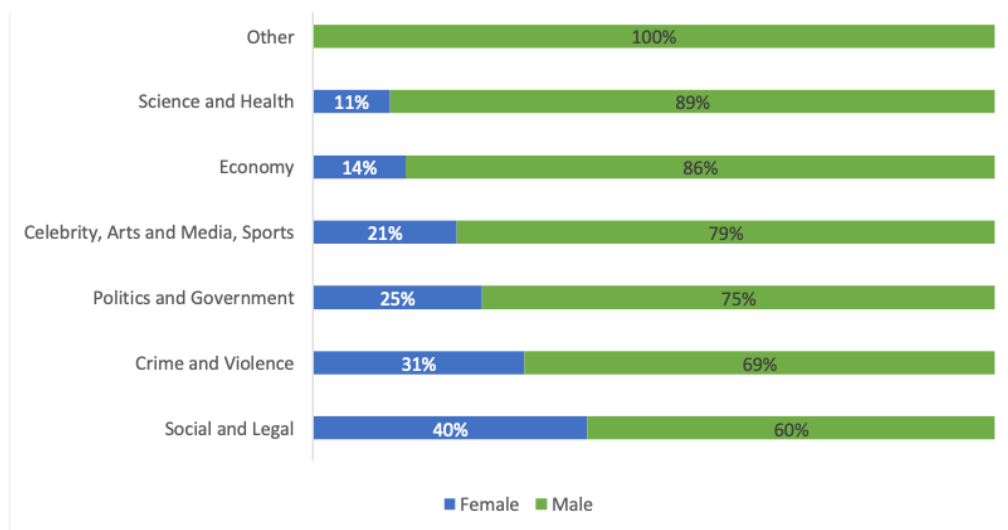
For what concerns legacy media, which have been monitored since 1995, a progressive growth of the female presence, albeit an extremely slow one, is apparent.

³⁷ Azzalini M. and Padovani C. (2021), *Who makes the news? Global Media Monitoring Project 2020. Italy*, Wacc. Available at: <https://whomakesthenews.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/Italy-Report-GMMPrev2.pdf>

Over the last 5 years, radio appears as the legacy media where most progress has been made: from 21% of women subjects in 2015, to 32% in 2020. On the other hand, television shows a minimal increase by only 1% (from 20 to 21%), and print media by 2% (from 22 to 24%).

The table below shows the percentage of women in each news thematic area. In the legacy media, in the news regarding Celebrity, Arts and Media, women are 21% of the total.

Table 5 - Legacy media. News subjects and sources by sex and news major topic (GMMP Italy report, 2021)*



*Total N: Science and Health 71; Economy 96; Celebrity, Arts and Media, Sports 57; Politics and Government 105; Crime and Violence 113; Social and Legal 82; Other 2.

Moreover, as shown below, female athletes, players coach or referee are represented only in the 9% of cases in the news on legacy media.

Table 6 - Legacy media. News subjects and sources by sex and occupation/position (GMMP Italy report, 2021)

OCCUPATION/ POSITION	% Women	% Men	Total N
Homemaker, parent	100%	0%	3
Not stated	63%	37%	52
Royalty, monarch, deposed monarch, etc.	50%	50%	2
Office or service worker, non-management worker	50%	50%	2
Child, young person no other occupation given	50%	50%	4
Other	50%	50%	2
Criminal, suspect no other occupation given	43%	57%	7
Celebrity, artist, actor, writer, singer, TV personality	38%	62%	13
Agriculture, mining, fishing, forestry	33%	67%	3
Lawyer, judge, magistrate, legal advocate, etc.	29%	71%	14
Activist or worker in civil society org., NGO, trade union	29%	71%	7
Media professional, journalist, film-maker, etc.	25%	75%	4
Politician/ member of parliament, ...	22%	78%	207
Government employee, public servant, spokesperson, etc.	21%	79%	28
Academic expert, lecturer, teacher	21%	79%	24
Business person, exec, manager, stock broker...	17%	83%	47
Science/ technology professional, engineer, etc.	14%	86%	7
Sportsperson, athlete, player, coach, referee	9%	91%	22
Doctor, dentist, health specialist	7%	93%	30
Police, military, para-military, militia, fire officer	0%	100%	16
Health worker, social worker, childcare worker	0%	100%	2
Tradesperson, artisan, labourer, truck driver, etc.	0%	100%	3
Religious figure, priest, monk, rabbi, mullah, nun	0%	100%	13
Sex worker	0%	100%	0
Student, pupil, schoolchild	0%	100%	9
Villager or resident no other occupation given	0%	100%	3

In this 2020 GMMP edition, a set of (three) “special questions” have been introduced in the monitoring framework, which could be elaborated by each national team to reflect specific concerns of the national context. In the Italian case it was decided to focus on the use of gender (un)fair language, so as to assess the extent to which in speaking about female and male subjects equal recognition, respect and authority are attributed by the media. In this case the findings show that:

- women are introduced by both first name and surname less than men (76% vs. 82%) with some differences amongst different media;
- Women are less often than men presented with a professional or institutional title (54% vs. 72%), with significant differences depending on the type of media;

- The grammatical gender of the title or job name appear as gender-consistent in 79% of the cases, with some differences between the type of media.

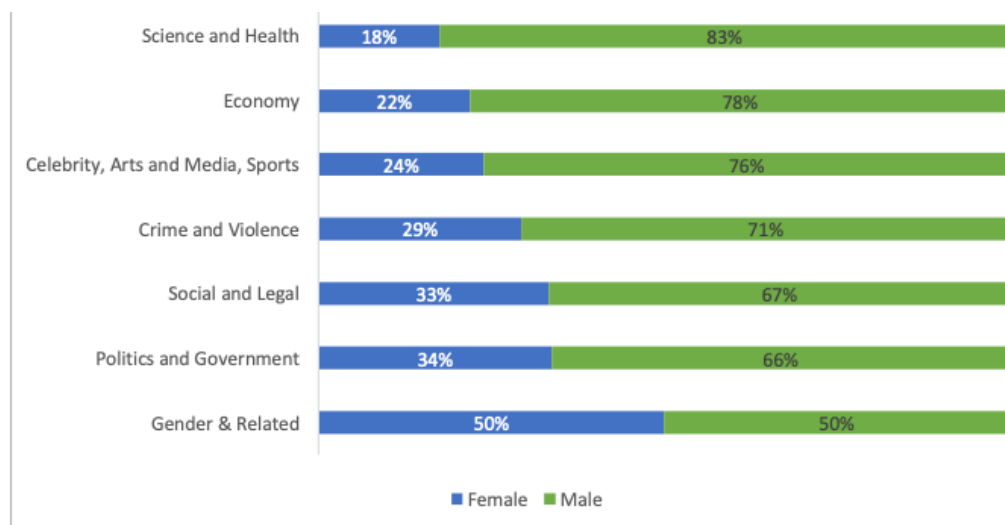
Differently from the findings of 2015, male journalists, proportionally, select female sources slightly more than female journalists (52% versus 48%), who, conversely, choose male sources slightly more than men.

When it comes to the special questions, compared to legacy media, in the Internet women are identified by their family status twice as much as men (34% vs. 15%). More specifically, women subjects are presented with the first and last name in 80% out of cases (vs. 70% of men); and as far as reference to professional role or job title, digital media show an overall gender equal approach, by recording the same percentage for women and for men, 45%.

It is important to note that in almost half of the cases (49%) the online news does not provide enough information to identify the gender of media professionals that produced the news.

The table below shows the percentage of women in each news thematic area, which in the digital media, in the news regarding Celebrity, Arts and Media, women consists 24% of the total.

Table 7 - Digital media. News subjects and sources by sex and news major topic (GMMP Italy report, 2021)*



*Total N: Science and Health 40; Economy 41; Celebrity, Arts and Media, Sports 88; Crime and Violence 160; Politics and Government 83; Social and Legal 42.

As far as the function in the news of women in digital media, findings show little difference compared to traditional media. In general, women represent 28% as subject, 31% as spokesperson, and they are again well under-represented as experts (14%). In regards to their occupation in the news, the table below shows that in digital media female athletes, players, coaches or referees, are never represented in the news.

Table 8 - Digital media. News subjects and sources by sex and occupation/position (GMMP Italy report, 2021)

OCCUPATION/ POSITION	% Women	% Men	Total N
Homemaker, parent	75%	25%	8
Celebrity, artist, actor, writer, singer, TV personality	71%	29%	21
Other only as last resort & explain	50%	50%	2
Not stated	46%	54%	61
Academic expert, lecturer, teacher	44%	56%	9
Activist or worker in civil society org., NGO, trade union	40%	60%	5
Politician/ member of parliament, ...	35%	65%	107
Office or service worker, non-management worker	33%	67%	3
Media professional, journalist, film-maker, etc.	30%	70%	10
Lawyer, judge, magistrate, legal advocate, etc.	28%	72%	29
Science/ technology professional, engineer, etc.	25%	75%	8
Criminal, suspect	24%	76%	42
Doctor, dentist, health specialist	20%	80%	10
Student, pupil, schoolchild	15%	85%	13
Business person, exec, manager, stock broker...	11%	89%	28
Police, military, para-military, militia, fire officer	10%	90%	10
Child, young person no other occupation given	8%	92%	12
Government employee, public servant, spokesperson, etc.	8%	92%	26
Royalty, monarch, deposed monarch, etc.	0%	100%	2
Tradesperson, artisan, laborer, truck driver, etc.	0%	100%	1
Agriculture, mining, fishing, forestry	0%	100%	1
Religious figure, priest, monk, rabbi, mullah, nun	0%	100%	4
Sportsperson, athlete, player, coach, referee	0%	100%	39
Villager or resident no other occupation given	0%	100%	3

In conclusion, the Italian GMMP report highlights that, even though women today compose 51,7% of the Italian population, they are only 26% of the people seen or heard about in the news.

In the last 5 years their visibility has grown, however, this increase is very minor and not consistent across media types; in fact, if it might be argued that in some sectors, historically dominated by men, such as politics and economics, and science, women's representation has increased due to the fact that major institutional roles

are nowadays covered by them. This improvement (in comparison to the 2015 edition of GMMP) occurred in both legacy and digital media especially for what concerns women subjects in political news (respectively 22% and 34%), and women that appear in the news as spokespersons (30% in traditional media and 31% on Internet and Twitter).

On the other hand, in other sectors, such as Arts and sport, women remain segregated and under-represented.

Finally, the Italian monitoring group has focused its research on three special question regarding the use of the language in the news. The results underline that in online news, professional titles are used for both women and men, and their grammatical articulation is gender-sensitive in almost all cases. On the contrary, legacy media perform worse than newer media in terms of the language, since a wide gap persist in the ways women and men are introduced as subjects (by both name and surname, making explicit reference to their title, professional affiliation, etc..).

The report concludes with some recommendations addressed across media companies and to Italian institutions, which should promote and improve their consistent and sustainable commitment to gender equality in (and through) the media, with the adoption of adequate codes of conducts, gender equality policies and focused strategies. It might be argued that the Rai's 2018-2022 Service Contract is a first step by the public broadcasting service in recognizing the importance of improving gender equality and representation in its programs. Consequently, as it will be discussed in the following paragraph, Rai has adopted a monitoring process, carried out by different agencies throughout the years, to monitor gender representation.

2.2 Monitoring gender media representation in Italian public television

As stated before, the monitoring process of gender representation in Rai programming is carried out in compliance with the provisions of the 2018-2022 Service Contract which obliges the Company to ensure:

“[...] within the overall offer, disseminated on any platform and with any transmission system, the most complete and plural representation of the roles that women play in society, as well as the creation of content aimed at preventing and combating violence against women”.³⁸

Moreover, the Service Contract also requires to verify both “the non-stereotyped representation of the role of women and of the female figure in the various areas of society” and to “[promote] the value of the principles of non-discrimination and equality between men and women”.³⁹

The Contract establishes a set of objectives, operational guidelines, quality parameters, types of programs whose implementation is entrusted to the independent editorial capacity of the company in compliance with the relevant principles and regulations.

Rai has therefore equipped itself with a monitoring system involving an articulated research methodology, which consists a continuous qualitative and quantitative research, based on the analysis of the contents, on a sample representative of the programming of the three generalist TV networks, carried out by specialized researchers with experience in audiovisual media, able to also return a timely report of any possible critical cases to allow immediate editorial intervention by Rai.

Moreover, Rai’s developed a qualitative and quantitative survey, aimed at sensing the experience and expectations of the population with respect to the issues gender representation, social pluralism and cohesion.

And finally, Rai has implemented specific focuses, the Qualitel and Corporate Reputation surveys; the former in particular consists in a quantitative research conducted on the public who are asked to express an evaluation, with a vote on a scale of 1 to 10, on gender representation within each program, subject of the analysis.

³⁸ Art. 9 “Gender equality”, paragraph 1, *Contratto di Servizio 2018-2022 - Rai Radiotelevisione Italiana* (2018), Rai Radiotelevisione Italiana.
Available at: https://www.rai.it/dl/doc/1607970429668_Contratto%20di%20servizio%202018-2022.pdf (Accessed: November 6, 2022)

³⁹ *Ivi*, Article 25 “Specific Obligations”, paragraph 1.

Therefore, in the following paragraphs, it will be discussed in detail the last three monitoring reports, starting from the 2019 report, to the last one published on June 2022.

These monitoring reports are both a quantitative and a qualitative research, aimed at verifying Rai's role and contribution in improving gender representation within the national context.

Throughout the years, two different bodies have contributed to carried out the monitoring research; for the year 2018 and for the year 2019 the monitoring was assigned to CARES s.c.r.l, Osservatorio di Pavia, while for the following year, and 2021, to the group of companies composed of ISIMM Ricerche (group leader), IZI, and InfoJuice.

2.2.1 Rai Monitoring Gender Representation Report 2019

In 2019 the monitoring was assigned to CARES s.c.r., Osservatorio di Pavia, and the report was written and edited by Monia Azzalini.⁴⁰ The main objectives of the research were to analyse the complete and plural representation of women, in particular, focusing on the prevention and contrast of gender-based violence, on the protection of the image and dignity of women, as well as on the overcoming of gender related stereotypes.

The sample monitored regarded 1,100 programs broadcasted on Rai's main channels (Rai 1, Rai 2 and Rai 3) in 2019 from 06:00 to 02:00 and selected on the basis of representation criteria of the different TV genres, from the three general networks, from different hours, audience and thematic relevance. Therefore, the sample was subjected to qualitative-quantitative content analysis, using a structured closed-entry form.

As a result, the data collected on the visibility of women and men, shows an imbalance in favor of men, who make up 63.7% of the 18,688 people registered, against 36.3% of women.

⁴⁰ Azzalini M. (2020), *Monitoraggio sulla rappresentazione della figura femminile nella programmazione Rai*, Osservatorio di Pavia.
Available at: <https://www.osservatorio.it/monitoraggio-sulla-rappresentazione-della-figura-femminile-nella-programmazione-rai-anno-2019/> (Accessed: November 6, 2022).

However, the degree of female inclusion varies according to genders and TV roles. In fact, the so-called *factual programs* are particularly inclusive (53.5%) although they are not very popular.

In fiction series there is almost a gender balance (women 44.5%, men 55.5%). And the same could be observed for other programs, regarding for instance *Culture, Science and Environment*. On the other hand, news programs in 2019 were populated in 2 out of 3 cases by men, and in the case of *sports columns* women were 16.2%.

As far as the different roles are concerned, it might be observed that there is a proximity to gender balance, with a wide inclusion of women:

- in the 49.6% of cases, women were conducting the programs (co-conductors: 51.8%);
- in the 43.6%, they were journalists;
- in Fiction series, they were the main protagonists 42.2% of cases; co-stars 48.7%; and extras 41.6%;
- among ordinary people (44.6%).

On the contrary, there were high imbalances that indicate a marginalization of women in other roles such as:

- among politicians (women were 18.1%);
- among the spokespersons of associations, companies, organizations, institutions, parties (22%);
- among experts (women were 24.8%);
- and, among the celebrities guested on the programs (33.1%).

Finally, the correlation between genres and the topics of programs highlights significant and traditional asymmetries: women are scarcely consulted on the “top-topics” of the TV agenda, except for issues relating to art, culture, entertainment, medical and health issues. Instead, they remain largely marginal in sports news (16.9%) and in politics news (19.6%).

In conclusion, the 2019 monitoring report highlights the persistence of gender unbalanced representation that in the Italian context has its roots in the history of TV.

Women are well-under-represented, and the reconstruction of the socio-demographic profile of people and characters represented in Rai programming, reflects the traditional, stereotyped, image of the typical heterosexual, upper-middle class, Western (and white), Catholic and normally able man.

Compared to this dominant profile, women are usually:

- younger than men, especially if they are presenters, co-hosts or journalists;
- less often than men they are represented in the world of sport, politics, media, entrepreneurship and law enforcement;
- more frequently they are portrayed as mothers, housewives, or students;
- and, compared to men, they less represent the upper-middle class.

2.2.2 Rai Monitoring Gender Representation Report 2020

In 2020, the monitoring study was conducted by a group of companies composed of ISIMM Ricerche (parent company), IZI, InfoJuice, and as working group director, Francesca Dragotto.⁴¹

It is necessary to underline that 2020 is a peculiar year due to the impact that the Covid-19 pandemic had in all aspects of social and personal life, and among them, it has also changed the way media is consumed. The first lockdown, completely altered the consumption of live entertainment (cinema and theater) in favor of streaming views that could take place on domestic technological devices; among these, in particular television devices, which thanks to the high definition and the large screens dimensions, makes the viewing experience more enjoyable.

⁴¹ Dragotto F. and Menduni E. (2021), *Monitoraggio rappresentazione della figura femminile, del pluralismo di temi, soggetti e linguaggi e del contributo alla creazione di coesione sociale nella programmazione Rai 2020 [Rapporto tecnico]*, Rai.

Available at: https://www.rai.it/dl/doc/1623168190198_Monitoraggio_Figura_femminile_Pluralismo_sociale_e_Coesione_sociale_Rai_2020_Analisi_dei_contenuti.pdf, (Accessed: November 6, 2022)

Therefore, consumption of television and OTT services grew rapidly, interrupting the slow decline that was in place until January 2020. From March to May, this increased by 11.4% on the average day and by 9.5% in prime time (with a particular increase in young people aged 20 to 24, regarding also the consumption of news). Rai represented the main channel for institutional and emergency information, indirectly assuming the fundamental role in contrasting fake news, and on the other hand, in supporting cohesion and social inclusion, in the spirit of the above-mentioned 2018-2022 Service Contract.

In 2020, the sample analyzed included 1600 programs of various formats and genres, broadcasted mainly on Rai 1, Rai 2 and Rai 3 (99.38% of the sample), which was expanded to include some broadcasts that have stirred up the public debate on social media.

With respect to the genre of the programs covered, the sample is composed as follows according to macro-genres distinction: *national and regional news* (12.16% of the sample); *news programs* (11.29%); *sports columns* (3.43%); *in-depth information programs* (29.63%); *cultural programs* (13.10%); *entertainment programs* (20.09%); *RAI production fiction* (10.29%); and social advertisements and campaigns (for instance, “Rai per il Sociale”).

In agreement with Rai, the research group decided to exclude from the monitoring period, the months of June, July and August, characterized mainly by repetition of previously aired programs. The result is an analysis that includes the weeks from 1st January to 31th May, and from 31th August to 31th December. In addition, a greater number of *in-depth focus programs* are analyzed since the pandemic has determined a greater production of them, with the aim to inform and reassure the audience in a very difficult period.

In this monitoring the approach to the analysis of gender representation is more specific than previous monitoring; the objectives of the 2020 monitoring study are to evaluate:

- the presence of women in the programs of generalist television, and their socio-demographic characteristics;

- the respect of the dignity of people and gender identities, for a non-stereotyped representation of the role of women in the areas of society in which they operate;
- the ability of Rai's programs to effectively describe the condition of women in the country (and in the world) truthfully;
- the company's contribution to the prevention and contrast of any discrimination or violence;
- and finally, the ability to increase the awareness of these issues in opinion public, by increasing the level of attention.

Rai's ability to achieve these objectives is synthesized in an index composed of 5 points, in which the various values are assigned to a synthetic indicator with a progressive evaluation, ranging from 1 to 10, which expresses the ability to represent the reference values.

Therefore, there were five indicators according to which the ability of the Rai network to achieve these objectives is monitored; these are:

- the completeness of the discussion of the female figure in all its aspects;
- respect for the dignity of the person and gender identity;
- the prevention and contrast of gender-based violence;
- the non-stereotyped representation of the role of women;
- the promotion of the principles of non-discrimination and gender equality.

Table 9 - Index of accuracy of gender representation 2020 (Rai report, 2021)



The overall index, *Index of accuracy of gender representation (Indice di correttezza della rappresentazione della figura femminile)*, highlighted in dark blue at the top of the table above, is made up of the average weighted of the other five, determined by expert monitors. According to the overall index, Rai's programs have a positive impact in providing its audience with comprehensive and complete information on gender related issues.

As regards the presence of women in programs, the so-called "rule of the third" persists overall (one woman for every two men), with a percentage of women similar to the previous monitored year (37% women against 63% men). The men present in transmission are not only more, but also on average older. This gap in terms of generations and gender clearly highlights a difference in criteria in the choice of people and characters to be included in the programs, in relation to gender. In all types of programs, the men are the majority, but with significant variations between the different genre. The highest female presence is found in fictional characters (41.9%) and in entertainment (41.1%); 36.3% in the news; 35.3% in detailed information. The percentage in cultural programs is lower (31.8%), and finally only 19.9% in sports columns.

In regards to the role, the majority of Rai's central narrative roles are covered by men, (women are 42.2%). In fiction, women are protagonists in 37.6% of cases and

co-stars in 42.7%. On the other hand, women employed in important roles in non-fiction broadcasts, such as presenters (45.1%) and correspondents (44.8%), even though only 22.3% were experts. Overall, the women are represented is mainly in relation to their family role (68.3%), and less than 20% as politicians, ministers (19.4%), government officials and diplomats (19.7%), or part of the law enforcement and military (17.3%). In regards to sport news and programs, women are just 25.7% of athletes represented.

In conclusion, as it was highlighted in the previous report, the programs covered see a large prevalence of male subjects in all hard news: women deal with domestic politics only in 30.9% of cases, and of foreign policy in 33.1%, of economics in 32.6%, science and health in 34.6%. The areas in which women speak the most are justice (39.8%), social issues (41.9%) and education (43.1%).

2.2.3 Rai Monitoring Gender Representation Report 2021

In 2021 the monitoring research has been carried out, as the previous year, by ISIMM Ricerche (parent company), IZI, InfoJuice.⁴² However, the survey was conducted on a sample of 1,750 programs (+150 compared to 2020), broadcasted on the three generalist networks, Rai 1, Rai 2, Rai 3 from 06:00 to 02:00, during the same period monitored in 2020, from 1st January to 31th May, and from 31th August to 31th December.

In this report, the *Index of accuracy of gender representation*, which is a synthesized index, composed of five indicators valued through a progressive evaluation, ranging from 1 to 10, are compared with the year 2020, as the table below shows.

⁴² Dragotto F. and Menduni E. (2022), *Monitoraggio sulla rappresentazione della figura femminile, sulla capacità di garantire il pluralismo di temi, soggetti e linguaggi e contribuire alla creazione di coesione sociale nella programmazione Rai trasmessa nell'anno solare 2021*, Rai, Available at: https://www.rai.it/dl/doc/2022/06/28/1656409866777_Monitoraggio%20Figura%20femminile%20Pluralismo%20sociale%20e%20Coesione%20sociale%20Rai%202021_Analisi%20dei%20contenuti.pdf, (Accessed: November 6, 2022).

Table 10 - Index of accuracy of gender representation 2021 (Rai report, 2022)

INDICATORI TEMATICI E INDICE SINTETICO COMPLESSIVO DELLA CAPACITÀ DI RAPPRESENTAZIONE DELLA FIGURA FEMMINILE	2021	2020
INDICE SINTETICO COMPLESSIVO	8,54	8,23
Fornire una informazione esauriente e completa sui temi e le questioni di genere	8,46	8,33
Fornire una rappresentazione delle donne pienamente rispettosa della dignità della persona e dell'identità di genere	8,79	8,25
Fornire una rappresentazione delle donne non stereotipata	8,75	8,45
Promuovere i principi di non discriminazione e di parità di genere	8,44	8,05
Favorire la prevenzione e il contrasto a ogni forma di violenza contro le donne	8,34	8,29

The table shows a positive increase of the *Index of accuracy of gender representation*, confirms RAI programs' ability to provide its audience with exhaustive and complete information on gender issues, a respectful and non-stereotyped representation of women, and to promote the principles of gender equality and the fight against all forms of violence against women.

The data collected in regards to the presence of women in the 1,750 monitored programs, shows 11,424 women out of 31,020 people (19,512 men, 27 transgender and 57 non-classifiable stage subjects, categorized as "Other").⁴³ It is important to note that for the first time, this categorization include subjects that identifies as transgender, which made the research more inclusive than ever. In fact, it might be argued that, the 2021 report is so far the most sensitive in this matter, compared to previous editions. Not only transgender people are included in the sample, but an in-depth study on the representation of sexual orientation and gender identity is conducted. Interestingly, the report highlights the "issue" of non-binary people and their sexual orientation.⁴⁴ Women's presence across all six time-bands examined is lower compared to men's, as the table below shows.

⁴³ This is 36.8% of women vs 62.9% of men: the figure is slightly lower (-0.1%) than that recorded in 2020 (36.9%) but still higher than that of 2019 (36.3%). First of all, the voiceovers were included in the latter category, but also the people present on the scene but with the face not recognizable because it was obscured or because of the back (this is the case, for example, of witnesses of trials or of respondents, for example). Or, again, those mixed groups that have exhausted their passage on stage with the performance, not interacting with the conductor or with other subjects.

⁴⁴ For more information, page 29 of the report deals with this matter in-depth.

Table 11 - Subjects and characters on screen by sex and time slot (Rai report, 2022)

Genere personaggi	Fascia oraria						Totale
	06:00-12:00	12:00-15:00	15:00-18:00	18:00-21:00	21:00-23:00	23:00-02:00	
M	61,0%	60,8%	55,8%	64,0%	64,7%	66,3%	62,9%
F	38,8%	39,0%	44,1%	35,9%	35,0%	33,4%	36,8%
Transgender	0,1%	0,1%	0,0%	0,0%	0,1%	0,2%	0,1%
Altro	0,1%	0,2%	0,2%	0,1%	0,3%	0,2%	0,2%
Totale	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%

There is an increase from the early hours of the morning to the first afternoon, peaking in the 15.00-18.00 range; here the percentage of women represented reached 44.1% (vs 40.7% in 2020). Then, it begins to decrease with the access primetime programs (18.00-21.00). Here women were in fact 35.9% (and compared to 2020, 37.2% of women), almost a percentage point more than they were in the primetime band (21.00-23.00).

The decrease continues in the late evening programs, which is the time slot with the lowest rate of women in 2021, with 33.4% (66.3% of men). A value that can still be seen as a sign of improvement if compared to that of 2020, when it was 31.6%. Women's presence varies in relation to the type of programs: on one hand, in fictions produced by Rai, entertainment programs and commercials, women are over 40%; on the other hand, sports columns registers only 15.8% (see table below). Moreover, in sports programs, women usually are either athletes and or journalists. It should also be noted that the suspension of monitoring in the summer months coincides with a busy calendar of sporting events, in particular the Olympic games, with disciplines such as athletics which are very popular among women. This might be considered as a critical aspect of this report since monitoring this period would probably result in more realistic data on women's presences in sports programs.

Table 12 - Subjects and characters on screen by sex and programs (Rai report, 2022)

Genere Personaggi	Tipologia di programma								Totale
	Telegiornali	Rubriche dei telegiornali	Approfondimento informativo	Cultura	Intrattenimento	Rubriche sportive	Fiction di produzione Rai	Spot e campagne socio-istituzionali	
M	62,3%	61,3%	63,2%	67,3%	59,2%	84,2%	57,9%	47,3%	62,9%
F	37,7%	38,5%	36,5%	32,4%	40,2%	15,8%	41,9%	47,3%	36,8%
Transgender	0,0%	0,0%	0,2%	0,0%	0,1%	0,0%	0,1%	0,0%	0,1%
Altro	0,0%	0,1%	0,1%	0,2%	0,5%	0,0%	0,1%	5,3%	0,2%
Totale	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%

In regards to the role occupied in the different non-fiction programs, in 2021 the majority of Rai's central narrative roles are still covered by men; however, women are 41.9%, which is a value higher than the average. Women are employed in important roles in non-fiction programs, such as presenters, in 53.3% of cases, and as correspondents 44.7%. On the other hand, women are present on Rai's programs as experts only 22.8%.

In 2021, Women are still portrayed in the majority of cases as the main figure that takes care of the house or other people (85.2%), and in family roles (65.0%). This data confirms the persistence of traditional stereotypes in gender representation.

In fact, women are represented less than men in professions related to law (27.4%), the health sector (25.2%), IT (20.4%), institutional roles (19.5%), law enforcement the military (17.8%), and finally, as sports figures only 17.6%.

In conclusion, not only the men present in Rai's programs in 2021 are more numerous, but they are also older. This data might have a twofold interpretation: on one hand, men still cover the news that are considered more "relevant", the "hard news", in which they usually are questioned as experts, probably because traditionally, their professions marginalized women. Therefore, on the other hand, women in Rai's programs are younger because they had challenged the glass ceiling in those professions, and maybe, it is a matter of time that the age gap will be ...

This might be an optimistic perspective, nonetheless, it is justified by the positive trend in regards to gender representation, highlighted by the monitoring report on Rai's program. In fact, not only the research is improving in methodology year by year, but also data collected are showing a steady (but slow) increase of gender presence and representation.

However, one of the critical aspects identified in these reports, is the representation of women's in sport, and of women's sport.

CHAPTER 3 – CASE STUDY: WOMEN’S FOOTBALL COVERAGE IN RAI’S NEWS PROGRAMS

Starting from the hypothesis that since the Italian public media sector has recently implemented a monitoring tool to track and analyse gender representation in its programs, thus it has an interested in covering women’s sport, and women’s football, the research question formulated is *How is women’s football covered in Italian public television news program?*

Given the fact that one of the long-standing trends in research on gender in sports media is the lack of serious and respectful coverage of women’s sport, usually in media studies, researches have been focused on questions such as *do the mass media create, reflect or possibly refract cultural attitudes about female athletes? Or what role do the media play in stereotyping female athletes?* Therefore, some studies showed that audiences perceive women’s sports as inferior and less exciting. Others has shown that because of the gendered context of this norm, women playing as well as men are perceived as aberrant and women playing differently than men as inferior.

However, the focus of this research is not on how women’s sport and football are perceived, but rather how and how much it is covered in the public television, in particular women’s football in public television programs. Based on the research conducted in the American context by Cheryl Cooky, Michael A. Messner & Robin Hextrum published in 2013, and titled “Women play sports, but not on TV: A longitudinal study of televised news media”⁴⁵, the aim is to construct a quantitative and qualitative monitoring tool to analyze how women’s football is represented in Rai’s news programs.

In their article, Cooky et al., critically interrogate the assumption that the media simply provide fans with what they “want to see” (i.e., men’s sports).⁴⁶ In particular, they use quantitative and qualitative analysis, and examine six weeks of

⁴⁵ Cooky, C., Messner, M. A., & Hextrum, R. H. (2013), *Women play sport, but not on TV*, *Communication & Sport*, 1(3), 203–230, <https://doi.org/10.1177/2167479513476947>

⁴⁶ Cooky, C., Messner, M. A., & Hextrum, R. H. (2013), *Women play sport, but not on TV*, *Communication & Sport*, 1(3), 203–230, <https://doi.org/10.1177/2167479513476947>, p.1.

the televised news media coverage, at both the local level in the Los Angeles area, and on a national level, focusing their research on broadcasted sports news and highlight show, ESPN's SportsCenter.

The findings of their research demonstrated that the coverage of women's sport is the lowest ever, and they argue that the lack of coverage of women's sports and the quality of that coverage is due to the fact that media is build (produce) for men's sport, and marginalized women's sport. This means, in other words, that the way sports media is produced contributes to a particular reception of sports, one that builds and favours audience's interest (and thus "demand") for men's sports, while on the other hand, exclude audience interested for women's sports. In fact, despite the increased participation of girls and women in sport at every level, the lack of media coverage suggests to the audience that sport continues to be by, for, and about men.⁴⁷

This is why, in their research Cooky et al, paid great attention to the qualitative aspects of the coverage, including production values and commentary, which illustrates how sport is constructed as an entertaining product. Thus, news media play a fundamental role in shaping audience interest for sports⁴⁸, since they can either reproduce or challenge the hegemonic ideology that women's sports are less exciting.

In the case of the analysis conducted on Rai, two major issues needed to be addressed: first of all, it has to be proven that women's sport (and women's football) is well underrepresented across public television (RAI, Radiotelevisione Italiana) in Italy; the second one is that when female athletes are represented they are consistently trivialized and marginalized in the Italian public television, with the use of derogatory or sexist terms.

The choice to focus on public television, and not on other private platforms, broadcasters or OTTs (Over-the-top media services), is due to the fact that in Italy, the public television is a sort of national institution, financed by public funds, and this affects the production of media contents. The RAI main channels are broadcasted throughout the national territory and therefore should be freely

⁴⁷ *Ibidem*

⁴⁸ *Ivi*, p.2.

accessible for all users. And, as discussed in the previous chapters, Rai with its Service Contract 2018-2022 set objectives and policies to improve gender equality and gender representation in its programs.

It is important to clarify that in this research with “media coverage” is intended as if and how women’s football is covered in news programs, sport programs, and so on. Therefore, in the following paragraphs, it will be presented how the research has been designed, starting from the quantitative approach and methodology, then the qualitative criteria considered; then, it will be explained how the data collection was carried out in practice, and how data analysis was conducted.

The quanti-qualitative research has been structured in four phases. First, the data collection, conducted on a two-weeks period, from October 1st to October 16th.⁴⁹ During this first phase, data have been collected regarding the covering women’s sport and women’s football on Rai 1, Rai 2, Rai 3 channels, during news programs of the main time slots, i.e. 11:00-14:00 and 18:00-21:00.

It is important to note that on Rai 2 are aired news program dedicated exclusively to sport, at 11:00 (usually the program lasts 15 minutes) and at 18:15-30 (which lasts typically 30-45 minutes).

Another important aspect to note is that initially the researcher chose to monitor quantitatively and qualitatively news regarding women’s sport in general, and not exclusively focusing on news regarding women’s football, because the second initial hypothesis of the researcher was that there might had been the possibility that women’s football was not covered at all.

Moreover, all sports news and highlights segments of these programs have been recorded, and when relevant, transcripts were produced.

Subsequently, in the second phase of the research, the codification of the data has taken place. Then, in the third phase, all recordings have been reviewed and qualitatively analyzed. A key aspect analyzed in this stage has been the type of

⁴⁹ This 2-weeks period has been chosen due to the fact matches of both the men’s and women’s Serie A league are scheduled. In fact, it is important to note that, the 2022/2023 season is a peculiar one, since the men’s FIFA World Cup, starting in November, will be played in the middle of the traditional regular season. Therefore, men’s Serie A started earlier than the women’s league, and it was challenging finding a period during which at least two games in each league have been scheduled.

3.1.1 Quantitative data analysis and results

The elaboration of the data was facilitated by the fact that for each day, a quantitative summary was created, and the researcher was able to use RaiPlay, the online platform and mobile application provided by Rai, to review every program aired.

Then, a summary table with the number of monitored news programs was created to organize the data collected in order to simplify the subsequently transformation into percentage data, and therefore, the data analysis and comparison.

Table 16 - Summary table. Quantitative data (October, 2022)

QUANTITATIVE DATA				
DATE	N.Programs	Football	Women's sport	Women's football
01/10/22	8	3	3	1
02/10/22	8	5	2	0
03/10/22	8	3	2	0
04/10/22	8	4	2	1
05/10/22	8	4	3	0
06/10/22	8	3	2	0
07/10/22	8	2	1	0
08/10/22	8	2	3	0
09/10/22	7	1	1	1
10/10/22	7	3	1	1
11/10/22	7	1	1	0
12/10/22	8	4	3	0
13/10/22	8	5	3	0
14/10/22	8	3	3	0
15/10/22	8	2	3	1
16/10/22	8	4	6	0
TOTAL	125	49	39	5

Subsequently, another table was created in order to compare the total number of news programs covered and monitored, which is 125, with the number of news programs that covered with a least one news, football, women's sport and women's football. As table 17 shows, 49 programs out of 125 (39%) covered news about football (men's and women's); 39 programs (31%) covered news about women's

sport, and finally, news about women’s football were present in only 5 news programs (4%).

Table 17 - News programs (1)

NEWS PROGRAMS - TOTAL		
N.PROGRAMS	125	100%
FOOTBALL	49	39%
WOMEN'S SPORT	39	31%
WOMEN'S FOOTBALL	5	4%

As it could be observed from the data recorded, it might be argued that football enjoys great media coverage, especially when it is considered that the quantitative research is focused on the number of news programs, and not on the number of news; in fact, if it would be considered the latter case as the sample of the research, the figure about football would probably be even higher. The value “football” comprises both men’s and women’s, however, as it might be clear from the previous tables, the majority of those 49 news programs, deals with men’s football. Especially, programs such as Tg Sport, except in few cases in which the programs dedicated its space to news regarding women’s volleyball or men’s basketball (usually one news each during programs), generally speaking the programs are almost entirely dedicated to news concerning men’s football, which could be considered as having the media monopoly in sports news programs. This is the case in news about sport on generalist channels, such as for instance, Rai 2.

In fact, another aspect highlighted by the quantitative research is that the generalist channels, Rai 1, Rai 2 and Rai 3, demonstrate a clear difference in attitude with respect to sports news. In particular, Rai 1’s news programs, Tg1, rarely (in only two programs, 1.6% of the sample) covered sport news: in the first case, during the program of October 2nd, the news was about the first female referee in the Italian major men’s football league, Serie A; and in the second case, the news concerned the victory of the bronze medal by the women’s volleyball national team.

As regards news programs broadcasted on Rai 2, Tg2 covered various sports news throughout the period monitored, mainly about men’s football, and again the women’s volleyball national team.

Rai 3's Tg3 proved to be the program (along with Tg Sport), which covers the majority of the news regarding women's football. In fact, during two Tg3's programs, women's football was covered with two very different news.

Even though the qualitative analysis will be presented in the following paragraph, it is important to emphasize that the content of this news was not related to either the women's national team or to the women's Serie A or other competitions.

In the first case, the news was about a local amateur club in the Campania region; in the second case, the news regarded the Yates report, which reveals the abuses suffered by professional women's football player in the NWSL, the United States professional soccer league.

Finally, Tg Sport's programs, aired on Rai 2, covered news concerning women's football on two occasions; nevertheless, as previously pointed out, the program is monopolized by news about men's football.

Then, subsequently, the data collected about news programs that covered women's football was compared with those about news programs covering football news in general (both men's and women's football). In this case, out of the 49 monitored programs dealing with football news, only 10% covered women's football, as it can be noticed by the table below.

Table 18 - News Programs (2)

NEWS PROGRAMS - FOOTBALL		
FOOTBALL	49	100%
WOMEN'S FOOTBALL	5	10%

This data demonstrates the substantial difference in media coverage enjoyed by women's football compared to men's football.

This difference is probably motivated by the aspect linked to broadcasting rights; in fact, it might be argued that there is a lack of interest by Rai to invest and acquire these rights that will allow the public company to actually produce media content about women's football, especially for instance highlights broadcasting rights, as it happens in the case of men's football. As a matter of fact, Rai's news programs cover news about Serie A, UEFA men's champions league, and other competitions

at both European and international level, showing the highlights of matches and interviews. The company does not own the rights to broadcast matches, but this does not mean that men's football is not covered in Rai's programs, as it was demonstrated. Therefore, broadcasting rights are a key aspect to improve media coverage of a sport, and in the case of women's football, as noted above, the federation handles and assigns them, according to the offers it has received.

In chapter 1, it was highlighted that the Italian rights allocation model could be defined as hybrid, as it does not grant exclusivity to the broadcaster, and that the women's national team's broadcasting rights are held by RAI, and the women's Serie A, the Italian Cup and the Super Cup are licensed to the OTT platform TIMVISION (owned by TIM) and to the private media communication company, Cairo Communication Group, for the 2021-22 and the 2022-2023 seasons.

However, it is not clear if this agreement grants exclusivity in regards to highlights. Therefore, to improve media coverage, it might be argued that it is necessary to demonstrate real interest and commitment from both parties, from the Federation and the public media sector, involved in the process of negotiating broadcasting rights. So far, these quantitative results presented cannot be considered as positive, and should not be justified by the national context, or by the period monitored. Especially, if it is considered that women's sport was actually present in the news programs examined (39 programs out of 125 covered news about women's sport, 31%); it is women's football that is almost absent. Additionally, it is remarkable that several women's football events and results took place in this period; for instance, both the women's teams of Juventus and Roma managed to qualify for the group stage of the UEFA Women's Champions League, for the first time in history that two Italian teams have achieved such result. In addition, in the same period, the women's national football team played a prestigious friendly against Brazil.

The news was covered only twice by a single news program, on the day of the previous match, and on the day of the match. No following news about the final result of the match, neither on the channel in which the game was broadcasted (Rai 2), nor in the other news programs of the following day. This once again underlines the fact that the possibility for the company to cover women's news of sporting relevance (and not just scandals, as will be discussed later), does exist.

Paradoxically, in Rai news programs there has been a great coverage on the first female referee to direct a match in the men's Serie A. Every Rai's news programs, both on the date of the match and the following day, covered the news.

Finally, the last step of the data analysis of the quantitative results, consisted in comparing the number of programs that covered news about to women's sport, with those about to women's football, which resulted to be the 13% of those programs which covered women's sport in general.

Table 19 - News Programs (3)

NEWS PROGRAMS - WOMEN'S FOOTBALL		
WOMEN'S SPORT	39	100%
WOMEN'S FOOTBALL	5	13%

As previously mentioned, in most cases, the monitored programs dealt with news regarding the women's volleyball national team, which was playing the world championship, and won the bronze medal. However, it might be argued that this great coverage was not only justified by the importance of the event in which the national team was involved, but also by the relevance of volleyball in the Italian sport and cultural panorama. In fact, given the high number of successes, both in men's and women's volley, the great number registered in respect to participation, and the popularity of the sport, volleyball might challenge football as the Italian "national" sport. To clarify, volleyball has the potential to become as popular in the media as football, because of its legacy. On the other hand, an improvement of other women's sports media coverage is desirable, such as basketball (totally absent during the monitored period), rugby (covered by only one program), and of course, women's football.

In conclusion, the results of the quantitative analysis, respect to the media coverage of women's football, could be considered as anything but promising. Only five news programs broadcasted covered (five) news about women's football.

On this five news, the qualitative analysis was carried out, considering especially criteria and aspects related to the production of the content, such as the use of highlights, music, interviews, and the language and terminology used.

The methodology adopted will be explained in detail in the following paragraph, and then the results will be discussed.

3.2 Qualitative methodology

The qualitative analysis was mainly conducted on the five women's football news covered in four distinctive news programs, and was primarily focused on production elements, and on the use of language.

In particular, the production elements considered were:

- the length of the segment of coverage, reported in total minutes/seconds;
- the use of music;
- the use of graphics or tables;
- interviews to athletes, coaches, or other relevant figures;
- use of game highlights.

Arguably, the absence/presence of these elements could influence the quality of the content produced. To each element a yes/no (yes=1, no=0) value was attributed, and in regards to the length of the segment, the exact time was noted.

Then, in regards to the language and terminology used in the news analysed, it was considered how women's athletes (and coaches, or other relevant figure) were portrayed, if for instance, the commentary was derogatory or sexist, or if they were mentioned by their first name or last name.

The qualitative analysis was conducted after the quantitative analysis, by reviewing the recorded news, and when it was possible, by using the RaiPlay platform, which allow to reproduce past media content such as news programs, series, movies, and so on. In this case, the five news about women's football recorded, differed in many aspects; first of all, for the content of the news, the length of the segment covered within the program, and above all, for the channel in which they were broadcasted. With respect to the latter, it might be said that the news about women's football analyzed in this research, could be categorized as either news related to the mere sporting aspect, which are those broadcasted on Tg Sport; or as news related to a social or scandal aspect, broadcasted on Tg 3.

3.2.1 Qualitative analysis – Tg Sport

First of all, starting with the three women’s football news analyzed about sporting events, these were broadcasted on the Tg Sport news programs on October 9th, October 10th, and October 15th; except for the October 10th, when the news was covered during the shorter edition of the program, the morning edition that is aired at 11:00, the other two were broadcasted during the evening edition, at 18:30, which typically lasts about 30-40 minutes.

Therefore, the news on October 9th, was about the women’s national football team friendly game scheduled for the following day, and the qualitative parameters highlighted have been summarized through the creation of a table, as shown below.

Table 20 - Qualitative analysis October 9th, 2022

QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS	
October 9th	
<input type="checkbox"/> the length of the segment of coverage, reported in total minutes/seconds	1min30sec
<input type="checkbox"/> the use of music	no
<input type="checkbox"/> the use of graphics or tables	no
<input type="checkbox"/> interviews to athletes, coaches, or other relevant figures	yes, Bertolini (CT) and Rosucci (P)
<input type="checkbox"/> use of game highlights	yes

As can be seen from the summary table, the segment of the news lasted 1 minute and a half, within a program, as stated before, usually lasting between 30 and 45 minutes. Therefore, a rather short time, especially considering that the news was broadcasted in the final part of the program, underlining the marginal role to which women’s football is relegated. The news, as mentioned, concerned the national football team, and the coach Milena Bertolini, and the Italian player Martina Rosucci were interviewed. Highlights of previous games were used, as well as

images from the training session. However, probably due to the limited time available to cover the news, no graphics or music were included, which are useful for instance to visually highlight the date, place and time of the match, and which would have probably attracted more attention of the spectator.

As for the use of language, no derogatory or sexist terms were noticed, and both people interviewed were presented using both first and last names, highlighting the professionalism of the journalist responsible for the interviews.

The following day, Tg Sport covered the news about women’s football again, on October 10th, the day of the match between Italy and Brazil. However, in this case, the news was aired during the 11:00 edition, which usually lasts 15 minutes. The qualitative analysis highlighted the following aspects:

Table 21 - Qualitative analysis October 10th, 2022

QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS	
October 10th	
<input type="checkbox"/> the length of the segment of coverage, reported in total minutes/seconds	45sec
<input type="checkbox"/> the use of music	no
<input type="checkbox"/> the use of graphics or tables	no
<input type="checkbox"/> interviews to athletes, coaches, or other relevant figures	no
<input type="checkbox"/> use of game highlights	yes

In this case, the news analyzed show a clear lack of production elements, which lead to the assumption that this might not be considerate positively in qualitative terms. In fact, not only the segment of the news is just 45 seconds long, but also the voices of the protagonists are not included. The narrating journalist simply remembers verbally (without once again the use of graphics) the time and place of the event, using the images of the previous day’s training session.

Once again, the news is relegated to the final minutes of the program, and in regards to the language used it was not offensive, stereotyped or derogatory, by any means. Nonetheless, no mention of the players was made, only the coach was again mentioned by her full name. Again, the news broadcasted by Tg Sport, which is important to not forget that is a program dedicated exclusively to sports news, cannot be considered qualitatively positive. Especially considering that in the programs of the following day (the evening edition did not air as it coincided with the match of the women's national team), no mention was made of the final result of the match.

It could therefore be argued that, Rai in this case limited itself to covering the news as little as necessary, without really taking care of its content and without dedicating enough time and space on the news program.

If on the one hand it is true that it was a friendly match, and therefore not a major sporting event, as it might be the European championship or the World Cup, the media treatment reserved for the women's national team cannot be considered justifiable, only for the nature of the event. Especially, given the fact that the women's national football team, unlike the men's team, has qualified in September for the World Cup, which will be played in the Summer 2023, in New Zealand and Australia. Therefore, this pre-World Cup period could (and should) be considered as an opportunity to invest, increase and improve media attention and coverage of women's football.

However, as pointed out by coach Bertolini during an interview with Rai, it might seem that in Italy, compared to other European countries, such as Spain and England, there has been a step back in the media aspect of women's football.

A segment of this interview was aired during the news about women's football, on October 15th. Before delving into it, the production elements analyzed during the qualitative analysis of the news covered on October 15th are summarized below on table 22. This could be considered as the most qualitatively positive news out of the three covered by Tg Sport. In fact, the news segment is the longest recorded not only with respect to the news produced by Tg sport, but with respect to all the news monitored concerning women's football. In addition, it is important to underline

that in the case of October 15th Tg Sport’s program, the evening edition, lasting about 45 minutes, was mainly focused on news related to women’s sport.

An extensive interview was dedicated to the guest, Rosella Sensi, former president and manager of AS Roma, and former women’s football manager. In fact, Rosella Sensi is considered as an important figure not only in men’s football, for her past role as president of one of the biggest clubs in Italy, but also for her role in the development of women’s football, especially before the 2019 FIFA women’s world cup. Rosella Sensi, in her interview highlighted the importance of having women’s in decision-making roles in football, not only in men’s or women’s football, but generally speaking at the federal level. The same perspective is shared by Milena Bertolini, which as said before, was interviewed as well, and was part of the news aired that day.

Table 22 - Qualitative analysis October 15th, 2022

QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS	
October 15th	
<input type="checkbox"/> the length of the segment of coverage, reported in total minutes/seconds	5min
<input type="checkbox"/> the use of music	yes
<input type="checkbox"/> the use of graphics or tables	no
<input type="checkbox"/> interviews to athletes, coaches, or other relevant figures	yes
<input type="checkbox"/> use of game highlights	yes

In regards to this news on women’s football, as shown in table 22, during the long 5-minute segment, space was given to the interview with Milena Bertolini, and highlights of the matches were constantly used, as well as music; all these elements not only highlight a high grade of attention given to the quality of the content, but also can be decisive elements to attract more audience attention. Bertolini’s

interview (released in September⁵¹), was quite interesting for several reasons, which are highlighted by some passages; Bertolini, in fact, affirms that:

“We just qualified for the world cup (...) and I hardly saw any news, only few articles the following day, then we no longer talked about this qualification, which instead is something important. Important because it can make us grow as a movement”.

The interviewer asked her if after the defeat suffered at the EURO's this year, there has been a step backward, and reluctantly Milena confirms, but continues by stating:

“(..) you can't always win and you can't think that the growth of a movement depends exclusively on results; the growth of a movement depends on a future vision, on investments (...) Right now, on the media level, we have taken a step back, especially considering media attention.”

As stated before, a sport become relevant depending on results, which if on one hand could be considered as a fair point, on the other hand, sport results should be weighted equally. And the women's football team is the clear example, that this does not happen in the Italian media (public) sector.

The interviewer continues by asking Bertolini if in women's football, there are fewer women's covering staff or coaching position, which Bertolini confirms being the case, and add that in her opinion this is a major critical issue. She recognizes that in the women's movement, before professionalism there were more women who coached, who were on the technical staff. Now with professional teams, there are less women occupy staff position.

⁵¹ Scarnati, D. (2022) *Milena Bertolini: Poco entusiasmo per l'Italia Femminile, sempre meno donne negli staff*, RaiNews. RaiNews. Available at: <https://www.rainews.it/video/2022/09/calcio-italia-femminile-nazionale-milena-bertolini-intervista-video-d423b442-a2d8-47ea-8d0a-f3a8c9425a9a.html> (Accessed: November 4, 2022).

The interview however goes back to the topic about women's manager in football, and Bertolini, gives a response which might be considered as controversial, especially coming from the national team's coach.

She states that:

“(...) women's football is becoming attractive even for coaches who may not be able to enter the men's team, or perhaps because it is still thought that women may not have evolved tactically”

This declaration, might imply that women's football is the second option for those coaches that fails on men's teams, and that it requires less expertise and training than men's football.

It should be noted that the interview broadcasted during Tg Sport news program on October 15th, was edited as to give relevance to the words of the coach pronounced with respect to the managerial aspect in football, in order to create a thematic continuum given the presence in the studio of Rosella Sensi.

However, the words of the Italian coach are important for two reasons: firstly, the coach clearly underlines the step back taken in the media in women's football. The second reason is that the coach with her declaration, seems to have internalized a sort of sexist and discourse, which describes women's football as basically a “Plan B” for those coaches who have not been successful in men's football. This perspective could be harmful given the importance that has the presence of qualified personnel in order to train in women's sport. In fact, in recent years, many studies have been dedicated to the peculiarity that requires the preparation of both athletic, physical and technical training in women's sport. Therefore, contrary to what one might think, in women's sport a greater technical preparation of coaches is preferable.

In conclusion, if on the one hand, Tg Sport covered the largest number of news regarding women's football, compared to other programs monitored, excluding the latter news just presented, which highlighted the sporting results, but gave great space to other aspects related to sport, generally speaking, the quality of women's football media coverage could be considered as discrete. The biggest issue in the

case of Tg Sport, found in this analysis, is that the length of the segment and the collocation of the news within the program, still marginalized women's football. The first two news items presented, in fact, shown that Tg Sport limits itself to the minimum effort to cover the news regarding women's football. The minimum commitment is also clear in other aspects related to the production of media content, such as the use of graphics to summarize future schedules in the case of the women's national team. Better coverage of upcoming events is desirable, given the fact that the next major sporting event, the World Cup, is set to be played in Australia and New Zealand, in Summer 2023.

In the following paragraph, the news produced and broadcasted on Tg3 news programs will be analyzed; in particular, as will be pointed out, these are two very heterogeneous news, however, both have in common the social aspect linked to women's football.

3.2.2 Qualitative analysis – Tg3

Tg3 news program covered news regarding women's football twice, one on October 1st, and the other on October 4th, both during the programs aired at 19:00. It is important to keep in mind that Tg3 is one of the national generalist news programs, but is the one which last less than the other (Tg1 and Tg2), given that regional news programs are broadcasted on the same Rai3 channel, usually following Tg3 itself. Therefore, in the first case, the news of October 1st on women's football⁵², it has a clear social character. In fact, in a segment lasting more than 1 minute and 30 seconds, the story of Grumese Calcio is narrated; an amateur sports association of women's football, which has a strong inclusive nature. In fact, the peculiarity of this club is that it was created in memory of Rosa Alfieri, a young woman killed at the age of 23, the last February in the north of Naples, when she was trying to escape from an attempted rape. The local community decided to establish this association with the objective to raise awareness on gender-based violence, fight against any

⁵² Pappaianni, C. and De Angelis, R. (2022), *Una squadra nel nome di rosa*, RaiNews, Available at: <https://www.rainews.it/tgr/campania/video/2022/10/pappaianni-calcio-femminile-femminicidio-4153fc80-1d19-4eb8-a3d5-d6dc67b3f974.html> (Accessed: November 4, 2022).

sort of discrimination, and create a safe space for women, regardless of their background, their religion or their sexual orientation. It is therefore an opportunity to promote inclusion through sport.

Table 23 - Qualitative analysis October 1st,2022

QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS	
October 1st	
<input type="checkbox"/> the length of the segment of coverage, reported in total minutes/seconds	1min30sec
<input type="checkbox"/> the use of music	no
<input type="checkbox"/> the use of graphics or tables	no
<input type="checkbox"/> interviews to athletes, coaches, or other relevant figures	yes
<input type="checkbox"/> use of game highlights	yes

During the news, which lasted 1 minute and 30 seconds, and was placed in the final part of the program, no graphics or music were used. However, it should be noted that, within general news programs, sports news are typically placed at the end of the program, since priority is given other news. Therefore, this should not be considered as a marginalization of women’s football news, since is commonly applied to almost every sports news.

If, on the one hand, there is a lack of production elements such as music and graphics, which perhaps in this specific case would not necessarily help to improve the qualitative aspect of the news, various subjects are interviewed: first of all, the father of the victim; then, Luigi Eucalipto, president of Grumese Calcio, and finally, the team captain, Flavia Spagnuolo, who emphasizes in particular how:

“This is a team that fights a lot for women's rights, for the defense of both gender and personal freedom”.

The news therefore seems to emphasize the social relevance of sport, and women's sport as an instrument of emancipation and affirmation of the individual within a difficult and marginalizing socio-cultural context.

The news about women's football, broadcasted on Tg3 program, on October 4th, concerned the publication on the previous day, of the Yates report.⁵³ This report denounces the systemic abuses suffered by the players of the American professional league, the NWSL, causing a real media scandal. In particular, the report highlighted how the abuse and misconduct were pervasive and systemic at the highest tiers of women's professional soccer, and the sport's governing bodies and team executives repeatedly failed to heed warnings or punish coaches who abused players. As reported by the Washington Post⁵⁴, the year-long investigation conducted by Sally Q. Yates, former acting attorney general, found that some of the game's top coaches were reported for sexual misconduct, and were responsible for manipulation of power, and retaliation against those who attempted to come forward. The report states that players described a pattern of sexually charged comments, unwanted sexual advances and sexual touching, and coercive sexual intercourse.

In the Italian public media broadcaster, the news was reported and created by Maria Grazia Fiorani, and it used highlights from both the US championship and the national team, underlining their prestige and popularity, at both the national and international level.

⁵³ Yates, S.Q. (2022) *Independent investigation concerning allegations of abusive behavior and sexual misconduct in women's Professional Soccer Report*, King & Spalding. Available at: <https://www.kslaw.com/news-and-insights/independent-investigation-concerning-allegations-of-abusive-behavior-and-sexual-misconduct-in-womens-professional-soccer-report> (Accessed: November 11, 2022), report available at: https://www.kslaw.com/attachments/000/009/931/original/King_Spalding_-_Full_Report_to_USSF.pdf?1664809048

⁵⁴ Maese, R. (2022), *U.S. Soccer 'failed' women's players, report finds, as new abuse claims emerge*, *The Washington Post*, WP Company. Available at: <https://www.washingtonpost.com/sports/2022/10/03/nwsl-abuse-report-sally-yates/> (Accessed: November 11, 2022).

Table 24 - Qualitative analysis October 4th

QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS	
October 4th	
<input type="checkbox"/> the length of the segment of coverage, reported in total minutes/seconds	1min30sec
<input type="checkbox"/> the use of music	no
<input type="checkbox"/> the use of graphics or tables	no
<input type="checkbox"/> interviews to athletes, coaches, or other relevant figures	no
<input type="checkbox"/> use of game highlights	yes

The narrator of the news underlines the scandalous nature of the news, which could become

“(...) one of the worst sports scandals in the United States. A real culture of abuse that has remained so far covered by a climate of total silence. Over two hundred testimonies with gory details, about both physical and verbal abuse, unwanted advances comments, and impose unwanted contacts, up to sexual intercourse.”

Despite the gravity of the situation, and the importance to cover such stories to raise awareness over an unfortunately common issue in women’s sport, where physical and verbal abuse which is often systemic, as in the cases reported on the news monitored; however, it might be noted that Women’s football, and Women’s sport in general, makes headlines primarily when scandals are detected. In fact, there is a sort of common pattern, and this risks to limit women’s sport media coverage to certain kind of stories.

In Italy, a recent example of this trend, is represented by the scandal that broke out at the beginning of November 2022, on the abuses suffered by the athletes of Italian rhythmic gymnastics (including in the national team) and which is having a considerable media impact, on Rai’s news programs and on in-depth information programs. The horrible details emerging at the moment are describe the mistreatment and abuse suffered by several national team’s athletes, by their

coaches, a systemic generalized problem at different levels. What is absolutely disturbing, is that apparently in this case, as in the NWSL case, the federation was aware of what was happening and failed to protect the athletes.

In particular, as reported by Rai's program *La vita in diretta*:

"(...) The hearings with the federal prosecutor's office of Nina Corradini and Anna Basta, the two former gymnasts who were the first to break the silence on the alleged psychological violence by the national team staff, have begun. New and disturbing revelations emerge as athletes begin denouncing the abuse suffered"

On an article published by La Repubblica⁵⁵, the former champion Davide Donati described that while male athletes could for instance eat bread, women could not do it, so they often hid it inside the hood of the sweatshirt so they could pass it to the female athletes who were hungry. Donati continues his story by revealing that during each meal the female athletes were divided according to their weight: there were two tables one for the thin ones, and the other for the "fat", as they were defined by the staff members. This separation was for them a daily humiliation. A former athlete, interviewed by the program, explained how she was obsessed by her weight, and how the pressures and abuses suffered caused her food problems that led her to retire, and not to eat anymore. She was hospitalized for the first time in Summer 2018 and in the space of a year, she went from 46 kg to 33 kg:

"because I had to lose weight, because I had been told many times that I was fat, I was ugly, that I was a trunk (...) Food became an obsession, you thought that everything you would ingest, water, food, whatever, would affect the weight that the coach would see later."

⁵⁵ Caponetti R. (2022), *Magre e Grasse in Tavole separate, Lo Scandalo della Ritmica Si Allarga all'aerobica*, La Repubblica. Available at: https://roma.repubblica.it/cronaca/2022/11/08/news/magre_e_grasse_in_tavole_separate_lo_scandalo_della_ritmica_si_allarga_allaerobica-373469432/ (Accessed: November 11, 2022).

Disturbing testimonies that once again highlight how the female body, especially in female athletes is being objectified, controlled, and harmful standards are imposed that endanger the health and life of female athletes.

Covering these cases, and the media attention they are having, might actually have a positive and changing impact on the system that allows and reproduces these kinds of systemic abuse.

In conclusion, therefore, if on the one hand, the importance of scandal news on sports should be recognized, such as the aforementioned examples of the Yates report and the Italian case of rhythmic gymnastics; on the other hand, the media coverage of women's sport should not be limited only to this news.

The qualitative analysis has shown that in news strictly related to the sporting dimension, the news is mainly covered by sports news programs; nonetheless, not enough time is devoted to the news, usually is placed at the end of the program, and not enough attention is paid to the production elements that would make such news qualitatively more captivating and interesting for the audience.

As regards women's football news related to non-sporting and social aspects, it could be said that the space that is reserved within the program, is on average greater, especially considering the fact that these news, in the monitored period, were covered by Tg3, a generalist news program.

The quantitative and qualitative analysis conducted in this period has given the opportunity to highlight some critical points of women's sport, and women's football, media coverage on Rai programs.

In fact, the data collected and analyzed confirm the under-representation of women's sport, especially of women's football. However, the qualitative analysis of the language was able to highlight how female athletes are not stereotyped, described in a sexist or derogatory way in the Rai news programs monitored.

Conclusions

In Italy women's football, and women's sport in general, is still marginalized in the media, especially in the public media sector. In fact, the research conducted from 1st to 16th October, focused on women's football media presence in Rai's main news programs, showed that there is a lack of media coverage that should be addressed, as soon as possible, given the fact that in summer 2023, the next women's football FIFA World Cup will be played.

As it has been previously pointed out, sport not only is a gendered institution, but it is also a media phenomenon; it generates great economic outputs, and as a consequence, media industry investors have great interest in covering the best marketable sport product. As a matter of fact, women's sport has historically played a marginal role, in both society and in the media. Therefore, in the European context, for the first in 1985 the "Charter of Women's Rights in Sports" officially acknowledged the claim of equal opportunities for women and men in sport and recognized the impact that mass media has on the development of culture in the EU, and that female athletes must have the same opportunities as men to be represented in the media. This led the European institutions to adopt several action plans to improve women's sport representation in the media. In fact, in 2022, a new action plan, Towards More Gender Equality in Sport, from the High Level of Gender Equality in Sport, was published by the European Commission, which considers media coverage as a thematic area that requires interventions. In particular, in regards to media coverage, the recommendation addressed to Member States is to encourage the development of strategies, incentives and regulations to ensure that the different stakeholders, in particular, public and private sector media, as well as sport organizations, increase media coverage of women's sport. Then, the role of the public sector media should be seen as fundamental in achieving this objective. However, the results of the research carried out on the coverage of women's football in Rai's news programs highlights the necessity to improve negotiation between these actors, especially in regards to broadcasting rights. In fact, there are numerous examples in the women's football European context, in which better negotiation has led to a tangible improvement in media coverage.

Moreover, despite the fact that Rai has adopted the Service Contract 2018-2022, which establishes a set of objectives, operational guidelines, quality parameters, and has implemented a monitoring system on gender representation in the media, it might be advisable, as it was pointed out in the 2022 action plan published by the EC, improving the scheduling of sports events, and create a national observatory of sports journalism, and a national platform to provide quantitative and qualitative data on media coverage.

The monitoring quantitative and qualitative research carried out and presented in this work, was inspired by this latter point, and is based on a study conducted in the US context by Cooky et al.

Firstly, the quanti-qualitative research was designed, outlining the sample, and the period. Therefore, 125 news programs were monitored, and only 4% of them covered at least one news related to women's football. Interesting enough, if it is considered that on the same sample, 39% of news programs covered news about football (both men's and women's). During the data collection phase, data relating to women's sport were monitored as well. Then, they were compared to those relating to women's football. As a result, not only women's football covered in news programs happened to be marginalized when compared to football in general, but also when it is compared to women's sport.

Subsequently, the qualitative research was conducted on the five news about women's football broadcasted on the news programs monitored, according to criteria mainly focused on elements of production, and on the use of language.

The qualitative research highlighted two important critical aspects: on the one hand, when the news is about sport facts, these are covered by Tg Sport programs; however, the segment of news usually does not last very long and is relegated to the end of the program, despite the fact that it is an exclusively sport news program. On the other hand, when the news is covered by a generalist news program, as it is the case of Tg3, the news does not concern sport facts, but has a more social character, or is about a scandal.

This trend seems to be quite common in Rai's news programs: women's sport is newsworthy mainly when it involves a scandal, as it was observed recently, with

the unleashed scandal, at the beginning of November, involving the Italian rhythmic gymnastics.

Moreover, the analysis of the production elements considered as part of the qualitative research, highlighted how Rai's programs, especially those produced by Tg Sport which are focused on sports fact, limited the use of these elements to the bare minimum, omitting for example those elements that would make the news more interesting and captivating for the spectator, such as using graphics to show upcoming events. On the other hand, as far as the use of language is concerned, the analysis found positively that women's athletes, coaches, or any other relevant figures, in the monitored news were not subject to sexist, derogatory or stereotyped language or terms.

In conclusion, In Italy the public media sector should improve women's sport, and especially women's football media coverage, considering the fact that as stated before, in Summer 2023 the next women's football FIFA World Cup will be played. As stated by the women's national team coach, Milena Bertolini, this could be a watershed moment for the Italian women's football movement, however, this could only happen as long as there is a shared future vision, in which media coverage play a fundamental role. This vision should be supported and facilitate by public institutions that with positive actions should insist in encouraging gender-balanced coverage in all public sector media, develop measures to increase the number of women in sports media and eliminate harassment of women journalists, and finally, as stated before, create a national observatory of sports journalism and/or a national platform to monitor quantitatively and qualitatively women's sport media coverage.

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