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**Women’s football in the grip of gender relations. The case of female football players in Poland**

In Poland team sports are considered a men’s area only both in terms of popularity and the governance of sports. As result, the situation of female football players in Poland is still complex and different from their counterparts from Western Europe.

The main goal of our research is to analyse the gender relation in Polish women’s football and describe how the current gender order impacts the entering and professionalization of careers of female players. Presentation draws on data from empirical project on female football players in Poland. We conducted in-depth interviews with female football players (n=20) as well as with male (=9) and female (=7) coaches working with women’s teams.

The findings showed that despite being the main actors, female players are inferior to roles and impact that men have. The insufficient financing of their activities is considered the main barrier in their development. For this reason, most players study and/or work simultaneously, which limits their development opportunities as football players. Moreover, lower level of development of women's football clubs as compared to men's, cases of lower involvement of coaches in the work with female players and cases of underestimation of players by club authorities make their situation even more complex. Despite the increasing opportunities to enter the world so far "reserved" for men, the development of women’s careers is still determined by assumptions about stereotypically perceived femininity and traditionally understood gender relations.