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# **Women in Sport Organizations: Historiographical and Epistemological Challenges**

Florys Castan-Vicente, Claire Nicolas and Georgia Cervin

## **Introduction**

In 2016, we attended a conference with the theme of biographies of leaders in sport. Of the papers presented there, only two of 17 had a woman as the subject. Similarly, only three of the presenters were women. Reflecting on this organic situation, the conference theme in 2017 was to explore biographies of women in sport. Our colleagues too, were concerned about the lack of scholarship on women at our 2016 meeting, and responded to this challenge with enthusiasm. However, as the conference deadline approached, there was growing hesitation about the practicality of meeting this challenge. How would we find women in sports institutions? They are little spoken of in the archives, but what other sources can we use? How do we interpret these subjects? Where do they fit within broader sport history? And importantly, how does one who is neither a woman nor a feminist answer these questions? Reflecting on this experience, along with our combined work on sport and gender, we set out to answer these questions. Theorizing women's work in sport, and offering methodological solutions, this chapter aims to remove the invisible social, cultural and institutional barriers that have seen women neglected in sport history.

Notwithstanding the tireless work of a number of exceptional female-identifying scholars, and the fact that some of us can argue that "it is now virtually unthinkable to ignore

women when analysing sport”,<sup>1</sup> sport history – its practitioners and its products – remains strikingly patriarchal. However, even though some notable works have been tackling this field since the 1990s,<sup>2</sup> we may argue with Osborne and Skillen that women in sport remains a “peculiarly neglected area.”<sup>3</sup> In part we attribute this to the idea of “Great Historical Figures,” omnipresent in history and even more in the history of sport organizations, which has led to a historiography where the focus remains on the leaders at the top, thereby silencing other voices. Therefore, we argue that shifting our gaze off-centre will lead to a more diverse and better understanding of sport history, and create room for broader understandings of leadership. Such an approach will allow historians of sport to see more women in the sporting past, and provides analytical frameworks for doing so.

First, we begin by exploring the ways women entered the sub-discipline of sport history as subjects, drawing on interdisciplinary influences to create the concept of “herstory.” Using a feminist analysis to consider the ways women have been presented in sport history, we identify areas where representation is almost entirely lacking. However, utilizing techniques from neighbouring fields including social history, colonial history and gender studies, we begin to offer methodological solutions to this problem.

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<sup>1</sup> Holly Thorpe and Rebecca Olive, “Introduction,” *Journal of Sport History* 39, no. 3 (2012): 373.

<sup>2</sup> On the “frailty myth”, one may notably read: Roberta Park, “Physiology and Anatomy are Destiny!?: Brains, Bodies and Exercise in Nineteenth Century American Thought,” *Journal of Sport History* 18, no. 1 (1991): 31–63; Patricia Vertinsky, *Eternally Wounded Women: Women, Doctors and Exercise in the Late Nineteenth Century* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1994).

<sup>3</sup> Carol A. Osborne and Fiona Skillen, “The State of Play: Women in British Sport History,” *Sport in History* 30, no. 2 (2010): 190.

Second, we address the question of sources, exploring a variety of methods that might be used to mitigate the lack of women in the archives, as the historian's first port of call. From oral histories and visual sources to numerical data, ethnography and questioning the empty space in the archives themselves, we demonstrate a number of ways of dealing with the problem of sources in doing women's sport history.

Third, we explore specific interpretative and analytical tools for including women in sport history, based on intersectional feminism. In the search for new characters in the sporting past, we advocate reconsidering gendered roles, spaces and labour through understudied characters, including non-Europeans and non-elites. In a sporting context, we advocate applying this view to considering non-athletes. From here, we explore how biographical research might aid the historian in this pursuit. We show how challenging the idea of exceptionality brings new perspectives into our work, and how a relational or network approach can allow a cumulative narrative to emerge from the micro-stories.

Finally, we introduce the idea of sporting careers as social resistance. The historical position of women in sport creates this possibility, with women potentially having engaged in sport as an act of demonstrating their non-subordinate way of living. It also raises questions of performance and perceived identities, and how gendered sporting practices have created spaces for these potential dichotomies to play out.

Throughout this chapter we argue that reframing analysis and expanding the historian's range of tools provides a way through the challenges of including more women in sport history, and ultimately creates better historians able to tell more inclusive, richer, and deeper histories.

## Taking Stock of Women in Sport History: from *Herstory* to Gender History

### *Exploring a new field: herstory*

From the 1960s onwards, sport became an increasingly useful field of research for historians, and over the following 20 to 30 years, it evolved into a sub-discipline in its own right.<sup>4</sup> The interest of sport historians in women's participation in the field has been at least a decade behind, focusing mostly on female athletes and sportswomen. Historians and sociologists working broadly outside sport first took up the task of writing "herstory," separating women's history from general sport history. These early works remain crucial in their identification of the need for a feminist analysis of sport.<sup>5</sup> However, the disciplinary focus on female athletes, in a so-called "herstory" approach was soon to be considered problematic by subsequent scholars. It reified the differences between genders: men were, by default, the main characters in sport history while women's sport history was an entirely "other" category. Scholars considered sportswomen and women's sport "with the view that the female athlete was indeed different and her experiences in sport were different as well."<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Richard Holt in Carol A. Osborne and Fiona Skillen, "Forum: Women in Sport," *Women's History Review* 24, no. 5 (2015): 655.

<sup>5</sup> See for instance: Carole Oglesby (ed.), *Women and Sport: From Myth to Reality*, (Philadelphia: Lea & Febiger, 1978); Reet Howell (ed.), *Her Story in Sport: A Historical Anthology of Women in Sports* (New York: Leisure Press, 1982); Mary A. Boutilier and Lucinda San Giovanni, *The Sporting Woman* (Champaign: Human Kinetics Publishers, 1983).

<sup>6</sup> Susan J. Bandy, Gigliola Gori and Dong Jinxiac, "From Women and Sport to Gender and Sport: Transnational, Transdisciplinary, and Intersectional Perspectives," *The International Journal of the History of Sport* 29, no. 5 (2012): 668.

Hence, Susann Birrell<sup>7</sup> considered Margaret Ann Hall's monograph, *Gender and Sport: A Feminist Perspective on the Sociology of Sport*<sup>8</sup> the first feminist study about women's sport. Hall defined feminism as a perspective which gives priority to women's points of view and experiences, and in doing so, highlights the androcentricity of sports social sciences. She took the first step of feminist studies in sports social sciences.<sup>9</sup>

### ***Gender studies approach***

However, from the 1980s onwards, Hall and others were calling for a more complex analysis to reveal the gendered nature of modern sport. This was part of a rising interest in topics such as globalization, colonialism, and sexuality,<sup>10</sup> as well as the increasing legitimacy of gender studies as an academic pursuit which could be applied to other socio-cultural constructs,<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Susan J. Birrell, "Discourses on the Gender/Sport Relationship: From Women in Sport to Gender Relations," *Exercise and Sport Sciences Reviews* 16, no. 1 (1988): 459.

<sup>8</sup> M. Ann Hall, *Sport and Gender: A Feminist Perspective on the Sociology of Sport* (Ottawa: Canadian Association for Health Physical Education and Recreation, 1978).

<sup>9</sup> Laberge, Suzanne. "Les rapports sociaux de sexe dans le domaine du sport : perspectives féministes marquantes des trois dernières décennies." *Recherches féministes* 17, no. 1 (2004): 9.

<sup>10</sup> Michel Foucault, *Histoire de la sexualité*, 3 volumes (Paris: Gallimard, 1976–84); Thomas Laqueur, *Making Sex : Body and Gender from the Greeks to Freud* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1990); Sidonie Smith and Julia Watson (eds), *Decolonizing the Subject: Politics of Gender in Women's Autobiography* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1992); Arjun Appadurai, *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996).

<sup>11</sup> Joan W. Scott, "Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis," *The American Historical Review* 91, no. 5 (1986): 1053-75.

like the body.<sup>12</sup> Hall argued that gender was an important way to deconstruct modern sport as “sporting practices are historically produced, socially constructed, and culturally defined to serve the interests and needs of powerful groups in society.”<sup>13</sup>

Moreover, Nancy Struna and Catriona Parratt criticized the gendered bias of sport history and its paradigms, and its exclusive focus upon men and men’s sports.<sup>14</sup> They advocated for an approach acknowledging that sport has been socially constructed to mean “male, modern and athletic.”<sup>15</sup> Hence, scholars such as Jennifer Hargreaves would come to question the institutionalization of the domination and subordination of women within sports. As she pointed out: “Sports are *loci* for freedom and for constraint: they produce new opportunities and meanings for women and they reproduce prejudice and oppression.”<sup>16</sup> That is to say, the rules, practice, consumption and governance of sport have produced a sporting culture hierarchy, which imposes power and control on women, while also providing opportunities for women to push the challenge and go beyond these constraints.

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<sup>12</sup> Delphine Gardey and Ilana Löwy (eds), *L’Invention du naturel: les sciences et la fabrication du féminin et du masculin* (Paris: Éditions des Archives contemporaines, 2000).

<sup>13</sup> M. Ann Hall, “From Pre- to Post-feminism,” in Pirko Markula (ed.), *Feminist Sport Studies. Sharing Experiences of Joy and Pain* (New York: State University of New York Press, 2005), 50.

<sup>14</sup> Nancy L. Struna, “Gender and Sporting Practice in Early America, 1750–1810,” *Journal of Sport History* 18, no. 1 (1991): 10-30; Catriona Parratt, “From the History of Women in Sport,” in Margaret Costa and Sharon R. Guthrie (eds), *Women and Sport: Interdisciplinary Perspectives*, (Champaign: Human Kinetics Publishers, 1994): 5-14.

<sup>15</sup> Nancy L. Struna, “Beyond Mapping Experience: The Need for Understanding in the History of American Sporting Women,” *Journal of Sport History* 11, no. 1 (1984): 131.

<sup>16</sup> Jennifer Hargreaves, *Sporting Females: Critical Issues in the History and Sociology of Women’s Sport* (London, New York: Routledge, 1994).

More recently, scholars such as Hargreaves and Judith Lorber<sup>17</sup> have used the concept of “intersectionality”<sup>18</sup> following Kimberlé Crenshaw’s<sup>19</sup> theorization of the relationship between “race” (established as socially constructed) and gender, based on the Black Feminist movement. The concept of intersectionality was forged to point out the different dominations endured by a women depending on her race or class, and was then used by social science scholars to outline how different power structures and in consequence, different types of discrimination, interact.<sup>20</sup> This framework sees the experience of discrimination as the result of the intersection of gender, sexuality, race, class, ability, and a variety of other social constructs. Intersectionality was used to pinpoint other discriminations by queer theory and disability studies scholars and has resulted in a better understanding of minority identities,

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<sup>17</sup> Jennifer Hargreaves, *Heroines of Sport: The Politics of Difference and Identity* (London, New York: Routledge, 2001); Judith Lorber, *Breaking the Bowls: Degendering and Feminist Change* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2005).

<sup>18</sup> Jennifer C Nash, “Re-Thinking Intersectionality,” *Feminist Review* 89, no. 1 (2008): 1-15.

<sup>19</sup> Kimberlé Crenshaw, “Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics,” *University of Chicago Legal Forum* no 1, article 8 (1989).

<sup>20</sup> There are countless examples of social science scholars adopting intersectional approaches. See for instance Urmila Goel’s and Mara Viveros Vigoya’s papers in *Raison Politiques*’s special issue edited by Éric Fassin. Éric Fassin (ed.), *Les langues de l’intersectionnalité* (Paris: Presses de Sciences Po, 2015); Katrina McDonald’s special issue in *Societies: Intersectionality: Disentangling the Complexity of Inequality* (2015); Kim Vaz-Deville, “Intersectionality Theory in Historical Research: Telling Different American Stories,” *Reviews in American History* 43, no. 2 (2015): 223–30.



criticizing and deconstructing dominant norms.<sup>21</sup> Lorber explained this fundamental application of intersectionality as follows: two genders are not at all homogenous categories since they are intersected by other major social statuses – racial ethnic group, social class, national identity, religious affiliation – and by individual variations such as age, sexual orientation, relational and parental statuses, and physical status.<sup>22</sup>

Therefore, an intersectional perspective allows an understanding of sport as historically situated within mutually constructed multiple system of oppressions. As international sporting institutions are predominantly based in Europe, authors<sup>23</sup> have shown that their leadership has relied on what we may term as an “old boys’ club” of elite males with conservative values.<sup>24</sup> Hence, a woman trying to become a board member will face challenges in establishing her credibility and ability that a man might not. However, given the co-opted nature of these boards, this challenge is even greater if the woman is not European or if she comes from a low-status socio-economic background. Thus, even in our collection of women’s biographies, white heterosexual women from a wealthy background are predominant, as they are *de facto* more numerous in leading positions.

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<sup>21</sup> Teresa de Lauretis (ed.), *Queer Theory: Lesbian and Gay Sexualities* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991); Rachel Adams, Benjamin Reiss and David Serlin (eds), *Keywords for Disability Studies* (New York: New York University Press, 2015).

<sup>22</sup> Lorber, *Breaking the Bowls*.

<sup>23</sup> Emmanuel Bayle and Patrick Clastres (eds), *Global Sport Leaders – A Biographical Analysis of International Sport Management* (London: Palgrave MacMillan, 2018).

<sup>24</sup> For a summary of the historiography of the concept of “elite”, one may read: Frédérique Leferme-Flaguières and Vanessa Van Renterghem, “Le concept d’élites. Approches historiographiques et méthodologiques,” *Hypothèses* 1, no. 4 (2001): 55–67.

## The Question of Sources

### *Reading against the grain, finding new seeds*

With the shift from history to herstory, and the incorporation of intersectional feminism having awakened sport historians to inclusivity in their work, the problem remains that this intention may not be met if the archives do not lead us there. How does one consider women in sport history when our archives frequently remain silent on the issue? In this case, is it any wonder men have become the main characters in sport history by default? Here we aim to critically analyse the archive and how it is used by historians of sport, as well as suggest a broader array of sources for sport historians to draw on in order to be more inclusive in our work.

*“Phantoms of the archives?”<sup>25</sup>*

The problem, position, and power of the archive was pointed out when Martin Johnes argued that archives “should be acknowledged as metaphors for power, places where evidence, wittingly or not, is distorted by the working of that power and a focus on the present rather than the past.”<sup>26</sup> Thus, as many of us have experienced in our research, the archive can only tell us so much about women (notwithstanding that *some* archives might prove more fruitful than others). As Johnes explained, the archive is by no means neutral. If the archive has been constructed by certain people of a similar broad network and background, and they saw fit to

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<sup>25</sup> Jean Allman, “Phantoms of the Archive: Kwame Nkrumah, a Nazi Pilot Named Hanna, and the Contingencies of Postcolonial History-Writing,” *The American Historical Review* 118, no. 1 (2013): 104-29.

<sup>26</sup> Martin Johnes, “Archives and Historians of Sport,” *The International Journal of the History of Sport* 32, no. 15 (2015): 1791.

create the archive in their image, prioritizing certain achievements and types of work over that which has been accomplished by women, then the information it can give us about women can be limited.

From here, we might reconsider the gaps of the sporting archives and what they can tell us about our sporting past. When women are absent from the archives it might tell us their work may have been regarded as unimportant, if not unappreciated; their pursuits and achievements deemed unworthy of record. But this silence itself begs further interrogation, and may prove valuable to historians. What does this say about the priorities of that sport, instruction and actors at the time? What does this say about the spaces created and occupied along gendered lines, and the value given to each? If we know different genders were present in the sporting past – because they must have been, given the spectrum of human experience – then we can refer to the archives and evaluate not only their content, but the stories, priorities and significances they were designed to tell – for whom, and about whom, in line with contemporary notions of importance.

The question of women's presence – or lack thereof – in historians' source material can call into question the assumptions underlying the sources themselves. The marginalization, obscuring and neglect of women in sources has been shown in history in general and in women's sport history in particular. The lack of documentation is a challenge felt even more keenly in the archives of sports institutions and press coverage of sport, where texts have tended to focus on records, achievements and leaders by nature of the characteristics valued in sport itself. Johnes observed:

The material within archives is created for the benefit and use of its producer and not for later retrieval by historians; it is thus shot through with the assumptions and interests of that body or individual, which is partially what makes it useful to historians.<sup>27</sup>

Institutions of sport have thus prioritized certain information and certain narratives in the creation of their sources, and the value of positions afforded to women sports administrators is reflected in the paucity of source material. By virtue of the kind of records deemed important; new records and results created by athletes, and documentation of the work at the top of these organization, stories of women have been ignored by the archival policies of these organizations. However, this absence in itself offers scope for analysis. Here, we may use the toolbox offered by historians of the colonial worlds when addressing colonial state archives deemed to be hegemonic. They suggest reading archives “against the grain” or “along the grain<sup>28</sup>” in order “to resist the unilateralism of sources, by deciphering their discourses to identify what they do not say, or by detecting gaps and inconsistencies.”<sup>29</sup> That is to say, we should read between the lines, consider the blank space on documents and even the absence of documents. In this way, the work of postcolonial historians offers new

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<sup>27</sup> Martin Johnes, “Archives and Historians,” 1791.

<sup>28</sup> “*Against the grain*” readings were first developed by subaltern studies in order to give voice to the subalterns. Later on, Ann Stoler developed a reading “*along the grain*,” in order to showcase the lacks of the colonial administration. See: Ranajit Guha, *Elementary Aspects of Peasant Insurgency in Colonial India* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1983); Ann Laura Stoler, *Along the Archival Grain: Epistemic Anxieties and Colonial Common Sense* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009).

<sup>29</sup> Isabelle Surun, “Une souveraineté à l'encre sympathique? Souveraineté autochtone et appropriations territoriales dans les traités franco-africains au XIXe siècle,” *Annales. Histories, Sciences sociales* 69, no. 2 (2014): 315.

pathways for incorporating women, as phantoms of the archives, into our histories of sport.

Within sport archives, these very inconsistencies in record-keeping tell of the gendered views, organization and behaviours of our subjects. As highlighted by June Purvis, when looking at official sources (such as the ones produced by sporting institutions), one must “be aware of the main features of the dominant [...] culture within which texts were produced.”<sup>30</sup> For instance, women’s presence might be subsumed within masculine nouns (“workingmen”, “he”, “boyhood” and so on) or authors of reports and minutes might have biased analyses of women’s lives. They offer insight into what was deemed significant and insignificant by the people and organizations historians study. We argue that historians of sport can utilize the absence of women from the record to extrapolate broader implications. Hence, studying gender in sport organization history allows us to re-imagine our historical data: re-examining the twisted trail of mislabelled and unlisted archives related to women within the organization’s paperwork, and tracing back archives in different (transnational) and unexpected locations<sup>31</sup>.

### *Reinventing sources*

In the meantime, this lack of women in source material can be compensated for by diversifying the kind of sources sought, by the use of alternative sources, and by a more creative use of these sources. In particular oral history offers a rich and viable supplement or indeed, alternative, to the textual tradition. For example, contributors to this collection have drawn on a connection that was developed in the 1980s between women’s history and oral

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<sup>30</sup> June Purvis, “Using Primary Sources When Researching Women’s History from a Feminist Perspective,” *Women's History Review* 1, no. 2 (1992): 278.

<sup>31</sup> Jean Allman, “The Disappearing of Hannah Kudjoe: Nationalism, Feminism, and the Tyrannies of History,” *Journal of Women’s History* 21, no. 3 (2009): 13–35.

history. Hence, for instance, in the field of African History, in the 1980s, an African women's oral historiography was developed "around the idea that voices captured in interviews could most closely report or represent women's experience."<sup>32</sup> This helped researchers to focus on the subjects themselves.<sup>33</sup> Within the call for greater reflexivity and self-critical work in the 1980s, the idea of "giving the voice to" became vivid in the field of gender history, especially within archives where the masculine form takes precedence.<sup>34</sup> In sport history in particular, with its lack of documentary sources on non-white women, oral testimony is essential.<sup>35</sup> Listening to these voices can lead us to reconsider our conception of the sporting past. For example, Claire Langhamer's work using oral interviews has challenged traditional definitions of sport, and building on the work of Hargreaves and Vertinsky, scholars have reframed sport to include physical activity and active bodies as new ways of finding more diverse groups in sport history.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> Luise White, Stephan Miescher, and David William Cohen (eds), *African Words, African Voices: Critical Practices in Oral History* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2001), 4.

<sup>33</sup> Stephan Miescher, *Making Men in Ghana* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2005).

<sup>34</sup> Geneviève Dermenjian and Françoise Thébaud (eds), *Quand les femmes témoignent. Histoire orale. Histoire des femmes. Mémoire des femmes* (Paris: Publisud, 2009), 13.

<sup>35</sup> Fiona Skillen and Carol Osborne, "It's Good to Talk: Oral History, Sports History and Heritage," *The International Journal of the History of Sport* 32, no. 15 (2015): 1883–98. As an example of the use of oral interview due to the lack of documentation on African-Caribbean sport history, they quote on page 1892: Paul Ian Campbell, "A Historical and Sociological Study of an African-Caribbean Football Club in the East Midlands, c.1970–2010" (PhD diss., University of De Montfort, 2012).

<sup>36</sup> Claire Langhamer, *Women's Leisure in England, 1920–1960* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000), 6–7. See also: Jennifer Hargreaves and Patricia Vertinsky (eds), *Physical*

Despite the utility of oral histories, the act of collecting oral testimonies has been and will continue to be challenged, in order not to recreate the domination relationship with the subject-informant.<sup>37</sup> That is to say, the position of the researcher may reinforce existing power dominations, such as an elite taking (oral history) from a lower socio-economic group, a white researcher taking (oral history and the subject's story) from a person of a marginalized "race." In the context of reflexivity, focusing on the interview itself reconstituted the experience as "between a powerful and reflexive scholar and an unreflective, powerless, and colonized woman."<sup>38</sup> Scholars have criticized such encounters as "nothing less than the colonization or recolonization of the subject-informant."<sup>39</sup> Hence, White, Miescher and Cohen are cautious about "the politics of the collection of oral testimony, focussed on the scholar-informant relationship, assuming precedence over the critical practices of analysis and interpretation of texts."<sup>40</sup>

For others, the use of photographs and videos has proven useful in the study of gender performance, and in particular, the question of whether high level sportswomen adopted or transgressed gender norms. Hence, analysing the 1926 Stockholm Women's Games photographs showed that, in the historical context of the emergence of the first international women champions in sport, these athletes incorporated and embodied high performance by

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*Culture, Power, and the Body* (London: Routledge, 2007); Skillen and Osborne, "It's Good to Talk": 1890.

<sup>37</sup> Smith and Watson, *Decolonizing the Subject*.

<sup>38</sup> White, Miescher, and Cohen, *African Words, African Voices*, 4.

<sup>39</sup> Smith and Watson, *Decolonizing the Subject*; Kirke Hoppe, "Whose Life Is It Anyway? Issues of Representation in Life Narrative Texts of African Women", *International Journal of African Historical Studies* 26, no. 3 (1993): 626–36.

<sup>40</sup> White, Miescher and Cohen, *African Words, African Voices*, 4.

adopting corporal technologies, facial expressions, and body language and ethos, previously only used by men.<sup>41</sup> Using visual analysis, Barker-Ruchti, Grahn and Annerstedt were able to argue that “As the sporting woman adopted traditional masculine characteristics, gender differences became blurred ... [They] adopted and lived performance-based movement characteristics commonly associated with traditional notions of masculinity [and] pushed the boundaries of what was considered ideal and possible in track and field.”<sup>42</sup>

In the case of rare, seldom-documented subjects or persons, new technological tools can also help us broaden the range of our research. The digitization of archives in particular has been useful for unusual or scattered subjects. For example, Phillips, Osmond and Townsend observed that “the [US] Library of Congress, the British Library, and the National Library of Australia, have diverse and growing digital collections”<sup>43</sup> and we further point to the examples of Gallica (the digital holdings of the French National Library) and the wider European digital library, which both possess sport collections.<sup>44</sup> It is easier now to benefit from the entire digitization and ocerization (Optical Character Recognition, the conversion of image based text into searchable, encoded text) of diverse newspapers. For example, *The Times* or *The New York Times*, both have a digitized, searchable archive, the latter being part

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<sup>41</sup>Natalie Barker-Ruchti, Karin Grahn and Claes Annerstedt, “Moving towards Inclusion: An Analysis of Photographs from the 1926 Women’s Games in Gothenburg,” *The International Journal of the History of Sport* 30, no. 8 (2013): 871-91

<sup>42</sup> Barker-Ruchti, Grahn and Annerstedt, “Moving towards Inclusion”: 886–7.

<sup>43</sup> Murray G. Phillips, Gary Osmond and Stephen Townsend, “A Bird’s-Eye View of the Past: Digital History, Distant Reading and Sport History,” *The International Journal of the History of Sport* 32, no. 15 (2015): 1726.

<sup>44</sup> Accessible at: [gallica.bnf.fr](http://gallica.bnf.fr) and [europeana.eu/portal/en/collections/sport](http://europeana.eu/portal/en/collections/sport).



of the large commercial database ProQuest.<sup>45</sup> Many national libraries have also undertaken projects of digitizing and ocerizing regional and domestic newspapers. These digital newspapers can be part of important commercial database (like the *19th Century US Newspapers* database, and the *17th and 18th Century Burney Collections* of the private company *Gale*<sup>46</sup>) or non-commercial projects (like *Chronicling America*, New Zealand's *Paper's Past* and Australia's *Trove*).<sup>47</sup> One might also access the digitized pictures of the smaller, but free, INSEP website (the French National Institute for Sports and Physical Education), which specializes in sport images.<sup>48</sup> Alongside, a growing number of occidental Universities have been digitizing their archives.<sup>49</sup> However, digitized archives are selected and mediated with the same bias as traditional archives. Their images “tend to be those that speak to present day issues or centres of power and influence, while the archives of the marginalized might be in danger of not only not being digitized but also being unused.”<sup>50</sup>

While outside the archive, the sport historian might also adopt ephemeral and artefact-based research, as outlined by Mike Huggins below:

Increasingly, the boundaries of visual data are being redefined to include an ever wider range of artefacts, visual media, and digital technologies. Whilst two-dimensional images have been regularly drawn on in research, formerly neglected three-dimensional types of

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<sup>45</sup> Accessible at: [proquest.com/products-services/pq-hist-news.html](http://proquest.com/products-services/pq-hist-news.html)

<sup>46</sup> Accessible at: [gale.com/uk/c/19th-century-us-newspapers](http://gale.com/uk/c/19th-century-us-newspapers)

<sup>47</sup> Phillips, Osmond and Townsend, “A Bird’s-Eye View of the Past,” 1728.

<sup>48</sup> Accessible at: [iconotheque.insep.fr/](http://iconotheque.insep.fr/)

<sup>49</sup> For instance, Springfield College, famously known as the home of YMCA, preserves numerous and valuable archives related to college sports, accessible at: [springfield.edu/archives](http://springfield.edu/archives)

<sup>50</sup> Johnesm “Archives and Historians,” 1790.

visual representation such as statues, memorials, cemeteries, and public spaces have attracted interest, and so affected visual inquiry.<sup>51</sup>

Huggins' interpretation of visual sources extends beyond images, to include imagery, sites and celebrations. Consideration of both photographic and ephemeral sources thus offers a wealth of new data to support historians' exploration of the past beyond the archive. However, such sources beg the question of how these displays were received by audiences, and thus may require documentary evidence to gain a more complete understanding of the context in which they were produced. Hence, Huggins urges the historian using visual sources to consider the "social conditioning of images and especially questions of access and power such as class, race, gender, or sexuality and their effects."<sup>52</sup> Therefore, he is arguing for the use of the tools of the intersectional feminist approach in order to analyse visual data appropriately.

The use of photographic and video sources has been adopted by our colleagues working in other fields of history, where their work has produced interesting analyses.<sup>53</sup> In the field of sport history, broadening the use of visual sources may help to overcome its heavy reliance on text and its resulting focus on men, and the gendered separation of sporting spheres.

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<sup>51</sup> Mike Huggins, "The Visual in Sport History: Approaches, Methodologies and Sources," *The International Journal of the History of Sport* 32, no. 15 (2015): 1817.

<sup>52</sup> Huggins, "The Visual in Sport History:," 1826.

<sup>53</sup> For a broader look at visual methods in the social sciences, one may read the special issue of *L'Homme: De l'anthropologie visuelle*, no. 198–9, led by Jean-Paul Colleyn. For an example of visual source use, see: Julian M. Simpson, "Reframing NHS history: visual sources in a study of UK-based migrant doctors," *Oral History* 42, no. 2 (2014): 56–68.

As an example, footage of crowds attending football games in 1950s Abidjan (Ivory Coast) allows one to reconsider the idea of soccer fans being young ruthless men as well as the idea of single-gendered sporting spheres. The footage testifies for the presence of young women dressed in fancy outfits, both African and European. Whites and Blacks are separated based on wealth (colonial officers and local African elites in the shaded seating section while the crowd is standing around the stadium). However, there are numerous young women alongside the men, both in the seated section and standing. Some of these women appear to be selling drinks and sweets while others are staring and cheering enthusiastically at the game, while being ignored by (and ignoring) the colonial archives.<sup>54</sup>

Combing interviews and non-textual sources, ethnography may offer an enticing solution to the barriers of archival and news-media-based sources. Research on places and *mnemonics* of remembrance, or historians tackling the challenges of living history practices, brings new ideas for sport historians.<sup>55</sup> Who and what is remembered? Who considers himself or herself (or is considered) to be the worthy depository of the memory? Which practice is valued or forgotten? Moreover, this may need to include a self-ethnography of the historical research practice itself,<sup>56</sup> in order to question the conditions of knowledge production and our potential gender bias from the designing to the writing of historical research.

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<sup>54</sup> Jean Rouch, *Moi un noir* (Les Films de la Pléiade, 1958), 70 minutes.

<sup>55</sup> Daniel Fabre (ed.), *Domestiquer l'histoire. Ethnologie des monuments historiques* (Paris: Éditions de la Maison des sciences de l'homme, 2000).

<sup>56</sup> As outlined by Ophélie Rillon, in "Ces femmes que je ne saurais voir. Les dimensions sexuées de l'enquête de terrain," *Hypothèses* 15, no. 1 (2012): 45–51. Regarding the historiography of self-ethnography and ego-history among French historians, one may read: Christophe Prochasson, "Les jeux du 'je': aperçus sur la subjectivité de l'historien," *Sociétés & Représentations* 1, no. 13 (2002): 207–26.

But the question arises: how we can undertake ethnographic methods to observe the past, when we are in the present? A small number of scholars have blended ethnographic and auto-ethnographic work with their study of the past. Natalie Barker-Ruchti explored memories of her time as a former elite gymnast, with contemporary observation of a group of gymnasts in training, combined with historical research on gymnastics' past in order to make sense of the sport's development.<sup>57</sup> Meanwhile Dario Nardini has used ethnography on the basis that "accustoming the body to a set of actions also implies the transmission of a system of dispositions that can often transcend the time/space parameters of the practice." Combining his practice and study of wrestling, he found that "traditional wrestling" could be more than a physical activity; it could express, define and transmit a particular sporting culture, as well as a localized cultural identity.<sup>58</sup> Therefore, it might be said that ethnographic methods assist in interpreting, analysing and abstracting our work on the sporting past, and may enable the historian to garner more from their sources. Moreover, combined with digitized visual sources, including historical footage, ethnographic methods may be applied to the past.

In addition, we suggest that (auto)ethnography might also form a reflexive technique in the sport historian's method (as highlighted through Bohuon's afterword). For example, we refer to the experience described in the opening paragraph of this chapter. At a previous sport history conference, the authors noticed a lack of women both as subjects and participants. Discussing with the group, there was enthusiasm to ameliorate this problem with a direct call to make women's biographies the theme for the following year. But as the deadline

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<sup>57</sup> Natalie Barker-Ruchti, *Women's Artistic Gymnastics: An (auto-)ethnographic journey* (Basel: Edition Gesowip, 2011).

<sup>58</sup> Dario Nardini, "Gouren: the Breton Way to Wrestle," *STADION International Journal of the History of Sport* 42, no. 13 (2016): 13–30.

approached, we observed growing reservations from a number of peers. It was not that they did not want to or intend to re-focus their work on women, it was that they did not know how. They faced the problems of sources described above. They said they did not know enough about feminism to interpret the sources they have: they did not realize that, despite the call for diverse sources and feminist analyses here, the main requirement to write about women in history is the desire to seek out women subjects and reframe inquiry so as to shift focus to them. It was this experience that caused a number of scholars in this volume to rethink how they were doing history, how they would get around the challenges of incorporating women into sport history, and equipped them with techniques to do so. Therefore, our experiences in practicing history and observations of other historians have revealed the historical and historiographical issues described in this chapter. In these ways, ethnography offers a number of avenues for sport historians to increase their capabilities.

### *Finding new seeds*

It has proven inadequate to insist on searching for women where there were none, or very few,<sup>59</sup> and historians have had to accept that they must study the women who were actually there. These women might not have been exactly centre stage, but nonetheless, they were actors in the play. Some of us may have never studied the wives and secretaries of our subjects (or at least considered them in sub-paragraphs or endnotes) were it not for this particular challenge, simply because we are used to focusing on directors and presidents. In other words, we had to stop looking for women where they never were, and begin to search for them where they really are.

This led us to consider (or reconsider) other forms of work, and other functions in international organizations, or even other departments (notably, specifically dedicated to the

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<sup>59</sup>See Schoch and Clausen's chapter in this volume.

promotion of women in sports organizations, as shown by Scholl in chapter 11). The gendered division of labour is the same in international sports organizations as it is elsewhere, in terms of women's duties being primarily social functions, preparation and serving of food and drink, emotional care, and assistance work. Women's history has shown that women have always worked, even if their labour was not considered as "work."<sup>60</sup> Since the 1970's, feminist epistemology (and especially materialist feminist) has questioned the concept of work, and taken part in its redefinition, broadening the concept to include such labour as domestic work,<sup>61</sup> sexual and reproductive work.<sup>62</sup> These scholars have demonstrated that our own definition of what counts as work is not neutral, but defined by social and gendered relations of power, and especially the public/private division. Women undertake a massive amount of unpaid work for others, "in the name of nature, love, a

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<sup>60</sup> Sylvie Schweitzer, "Les enjeux du travail des femmes," *Vingtième Siècle. Revue d'histoire* 3, no. 75 (2002): 21–33.

<sup>61</sup> Christine Delphy, "Travail ménager ou travail domestique?" in Christine Delphy, *Les femmes dans la société marchande* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1978), 39–54.

<sup>62</sup> There are countless studies of the gendered division of labour. See for example Mary Beth Mills, "Gendered Divisions of Labor," in Lisa Disch and Mary Hawkesworth (eds), *The Oxford Handbook of Feminist Theory* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016); Bahira Sherif-Trask, *Women, Work, and Globalization : Challenges and Opportunities* (New York and London: Routledge, 2014); M. Mackintosh, "Gender and Economics: the Sexual Division of Labour and the Subordination of Women," in Kate Young, Carol Wolkowitz, and Roslyn McCullagh (eds), *Of Marriage and the Market: Women's Subordination Internationally and its Lessons*, 2nd ed., (New York and London, Routledge, 1984), 3–17; Gail Pheterson, *The Prostitution Prism* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 1996); Paola Tabet, *La grande beffa. Sessualità delle donne e scambio* (Soveria Mannelli : Rubbetino, 2004).

maternal duty”.<sup>63</sup> As such, the boundaries between work and “not work” are shaped by hierarchies of gender, race, class, age or sexuality.<sup>64</sup> This epistemological questioning paved the way for “ground breaking studies of domestic and caregiving work, and entertainment workers, [which] have been essential in pushing back the parameters of the history of labour and work”.<sup>65</sup>

For example, Natalie Zemon Davis showed the invisible and unpaid work of wives of famous French historians of the *Annales School*, who never acknowledged or quoted their spouses. First, the famous women’s historian thought that the *Annales* were an “all-male French fraternity,” before she discovered that both Simone Vidal Bloch and Suzanne Dognon Febvre served as secretaries, assistants and proof-readers, and that the latter welcomed a group of famous intellectuals and academics from Paris every week. To unveil this heretofore unseen work, Zemon Davis had to use oral testimonies and the personal documents of Marc Bloch, showing numerous handwritten notes by his wife.<sup>66</sup> By contrast, the long history of so-called female-appropriate sports such as sports gymnastics, or physical education (as

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<sup>63</sup> Danièle Kergoat, “Division sexuelle du travail et rapports sociaux de sexe,” in Helena Hirata, Françoise Laborie, Hélène Le Doaré and Danièle Senotier (eds), *Dictionnaire critique du féminisme* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 2007), 37.

<sup>64</sup> Anaïs Albert, Clyde Plumauzille and Sylvain Ville, “Déplacer les frontières du travail,” *Tracés. Revue de Sciences humaines*, 32 (2017): 12.

<sup>65</sup> Matthew Taylor, “Parallel Fields: Labour History and Sports History,” *The International Journal of the History of Sport* 32, no. 15 (2015): 1769–74, referring to: Dirk Hoerder, Elise Van Nederveen Meerkerk and Silke Neunsinger (eds), *Towards a Global History of Domestic and Caregiving Workers* (Leyden: Brill, 2015).

<sup>66</sup> Natalie Zemon Davis, “Women and the World of the *Annales*,” *History Workshop* 33 (1992): 121–37.

highlighted in Roberta Park's ground breaking work<sup>67</sup>), or federations for sports traditionally considered the domain of men, like shooting (see chapter 8 of this volume), might be of particular interest in order to challenge our understanding of leadership and patriarchal institutions. In such spaces, women were charged with supervising the development of their own version of the sport, but this begs the question of how much progress women could make towards shattering the glass ceiling, when they were in fact operating in an entirely differently gendered sphere. Indeed, Jalalzai examined this question in terms of political leadership, and argued that "women achieve executive posts *because* gender hastens political advantages ... women gain power because they exhibit "feminine" traits such as dependence."<sup>68</sup>

Much like the world outside sport, women's work is often forgotten, or not considered as actual work. As Tonnerre, Vonnard and Sbeti discuss in chapter 5, such "invisible" work of secretaries and wives is often centred around social networking and the labour that supports this – from organizing social functions and serving refreshments, to playing hostess, acting as translator, or as aesthetic decoration. The delegation of women to tasks of social care is all the more important when we take account of the small network of aristocrats and business people involved in international sport, who have shared sporting power amongst themselves since Coubertin. The work of women has been crucial to sustaining this mode of

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<sup>67</sup> Roberta Park and Joan S. Hultm "Women as Leaders in Physical Education and School-Based Sports, 1865 to the 1930s," *Journal of Physical Education, Recreation & Dance* 64, no. 3 (1993): 35-40; Roberta Park, "Women as Leaders: What Women Have Attained in and Through the Field of Physical Education," *The International Journal of the History of Sport* 27, no. 7 (2010): 1250-76.

<sup>68</sup> Farida Jalalzai, *Shattered, Cracked, or Firmly Intact? Women and the Executive Glass Ceiling* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 20.



diplomacy, and this book aims to illuminate how women's work has been intricately tied to the sustenance of modern international sport. In turn, this point of view challenges us to think about what models shape our understanding of "great historical persons."<sup>69</sup> This challenge is even worse in an intersectional perspective, and it's even harder to find working-class women and/or women of colour in these elitist organizations, so this epistemological approach requires a proactive attitude towards our subject, and a serious will to go and search for new characters where they are, including if it leads us to reconsider the very definition of what forms the centre and the margins of our study, and to question our main categories of thinking. When we have found a new character, we still have to find the sources to document their trajectory. Of course the opposite can happen: the will to develop an intersectional approach can also mean using the characters we have accidentally found in our sources, rather than "letting it lie upon the table,"<sup>70</sup> even if doing so does not fit with the definition of what we thought would or should be our subject. As our own definitions of "work" and "sports" are shaped by a patriarchal context, it is sometimes necessary to question them in order to include women and minorities in our corpus.

Having only fragments of lives should not discourage us from pursuing the stories of women and minorities. In fact, we should see it as an opportunity to use collective biography, as a way to link the fragments of different lives and compare them; or to avoid the classic chronological format of storytelling in order to focus on problematizing instead. Hence, Gertrud Pfister acknowledged that the biography of Alice Profé was still incomplete after her research, and argued that it was the opportunity to write about an "inspirationalist who could

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<sup>69</sup> A. Lloyd Moote, "Introduction: New Bottles and New Wine: The Current State of Early Modernist Biographical Writing," *French Historical Studies* 19, no. 4 (1996): 919.

<sup>70</sup> Alexander Ziggi, "Let it lie Upon the Table: The Status of Black Women's Biography in the UK," *Gender & History* 2, no. 1 (1990): 29.

still provide a model for girls and women in sport.”<sup>71</sup> Meanwhile, others have heeded the call of Samantha-Jayne Oldfield who argued for the use of collective biography or prosopographical methods as follows:

By exploring individuals at a micro-social level through the construction of biographical dossiers, individual themes can be presented, but by analysing them as a collective group through standardized questioning, using a prosopographical approach, commonalities and differences can be more clearly identified and knowledge of the topic increased.<sup>72</sup>

Thus, scholars like Anne Lykke Poulson have used collective biography as a “snapshot” of female physical education teachers in 1933 Copenhagen, arguing that similar patterns emerged amongst these biographies, and in Poulson’s study, demonstrating that many physical education teachers were also key figures in club sport and gymnastics.<sup>73</sup>

## **Interpretive Frameworks**

### ***Beyond exceptionality***

Since its beginning, feminist history has made important use of biographies, which have been considered a beneficial way to compensate for the androcentricity of the social sciences. Even in sports studies, biographies have been considered essential, with scholars like Fan Hong

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<sup>71</sup> Gertrud Pfister, “Breaking Bounds: Alice Profé, Radical and Emancipationist,” *The International Journal of the History of Sport* 18, no. 1 (2001): 99.

<sup>72</sup> Samantha-Jayne Oldfield, “Narrative Methods in Sport History Research: Biography, Collective Biography, and Prosopography,” *The International Journal of the History of Sport* 32, no. 15 (2015): 1855–82.

<sup>73</sup> Anne Lykke Poulsen, “Female Physical Education Teachers in Copenhagen, 1900–1940: A Collective Biography,” *The International Journal of the History of Sport* 21, no. 1 (2014): 16–33.

making “a plea for individual stories because the history of individual women and of their ambition has been, and is, in too short supply.” This call has been especially loud for histories concerning “female icons,” because as Hong argues, “without individual effort, evolution would never occur.”<sup>74</sup>

But this use of biographies in feminist and gender history should not be seen as a return to the narrative. On the contrary, the goal is to initiate “new approaches” to biographies, “articulating the voices of oppressed groups and combating the dominant culture in a particular society.”<sup>75</sup> This particularly applies to women in sports organizations, whose contributions and voices have largely been forgotten to date, despite their struggle with gender norms in a patriarchal environment. Indeed, working in the especially “masculine domain of sport,” the experiences of women operating in such patriarchal institutions, within a realm constructed for the promotion of masculinity, begs for particular attention.<sup>76</sup>

### ***Between exceptional and common***

Female leaders and managers have long been a social category absent from gender history as well as business history, especially in French historiography.<sup>77</sup> However, as Benquet and

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<sup>74</sup> Fan Hong, “Prologue - Freeing Bodies: Heroines in History,” *The International Journal of the History of Sport* 18, no.1 (2001): 5.

<sup>75</sup> Lucy Bland and Angela V. John, “Editorial,” *Gender & History* 2, no. 1. (1990): 1-2.

<sup>76</sup> Daryl Adair, “Australia,” in S. W. Pope and John Nauright (eds), *Routledge Companion to Sports History* (New York and London: Routledge, 2011), 335; Amanda M. Scweinbenz, “Canada”, in Pope and Nauright (eds), *Routledge Companion to Sports History*, 369.

<sup>77</sup> Laura Lee Downs and Jacqueline Laufer, “Les Patronnes,” *Travail genre et sociétés* 1, no. 13, (2005): 27–30; Mary A. Yeager (ed.), *Women in Business*, 3 volumes (Cheltenham: Edward Elgar Publishing, 1999).

Laufer observed in 2016, beyond the “anecdotal interest in the fate and trajectory of a few ‘privileged’ and ‘exceptional’ women, their access to the spheres of power proves that female leaders are now a legitimate research object.”<sup>78</sup> Without falling into the easy temptation of categorizing such subjects as “exceptional women,” to the detriment of more “common” figures, studying the trajectories of female leaders may be of use for broader histories of work, gender and elites.

Clearly, this use of biographies comes with some issues. Feminist biographers face a complex relationship with their subject, and must fight the urge to downplay their unsavoury sides in the desire to paint a heroic portrait.<sup>79</sup> Biography tends to focus on great and more radical figures, and particularly, in the man’s world of sports, women leaders have been, and remain, especially uncommon. For instance, there are numerous works on the life and work of International Olympic Committee President Avery Brundage, however the Executive Director of the organization, Monique Berlioux – whose work spanned three different Olympic Presidents and whose signature is much more visible in the archives – remains unexamined by anglophone sport historians. Indeed, despite an obituary celebrating her as

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<sup>78</sup> Marlène Benquet and Jacqueline Laufer, “Femmes dirigeantes,” *Travail, genre et sociétés* 1, no. 35 (2016): 20.

<sup>79</sup> Dea Birkett and Julie Wheelwright, “‘How Could She?’ Unpalatable Facts and Feminists’ Heroines,” *Gender & History* 2, no. 1 (1990): 49-57; Hilda Kean, “Some Problems of Constructing and Reconstructing a Suffragette’s Life: Mary Richardson, Suffragette, Socialist and Fascist,” *Women’s History Review* 7, no. 4 (1990): 475–93.

“once the most powerful woman in the Olympic Movement,<sup>80</sup>” her one-line Wikipedia page is a stub, mentioning only her former athletic career.<sup>81</sup>

However biographic portraits may help historians to consider what is typical/exceptional about the subjects’ individual experiences, and urge us to explore exceptional women through the framework of “ordinary” women’s experience.<sup>82</sup> Hence, according to Helen Lenskyj,<sup>83</sup> we should focus not only on the exceptional efforts of the characters, but also their social context and effects, thanks to feminist epistemology. Thus, the careers of sportswomen as athletes then managers and/or coaches, may be looked at through the lens of their embodiment within intersectional affiliations to several overlapping social statuses. Hence, chapter 9 of this volume by Nicolas allow us to understand women’s careers in sport as neither common nor exceptional.

Moreover, feminist epistemology might be a way to ask what has allowed some women to have these “exceptional and uncommon” careers or not, and how they broke the glass ceiling, or not. How have women lived their lives in creative ways using the alternatives offered by the context?<sup>84</sup> Who made a change and how? Do those who “break the mould” do

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<sup>80</sup>“Updated – IOC Members Remember Monique Berlioux, Former IOC Director General,” *Around the Rings*, accessed April 21, 2018, [aroundtherings.com/site/A\\_\\_52930/Title\\_\\_Updated---IOC-Members-Remember-Monique-Berlioux-Former-IOC-Director-General/292/Articles](http://aroundtherings.com/site/A__52930/Title__Updated---IOC-Members-Remember-Monique-Berlioux-Former-IOC-Director-General/292/Articles).

<sup>81</sup>“Monique Berlioux,” *Wikipedia*, accessed April 21, 2018, [en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Monique\\_Berlioux](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Monique_Berlioux)

<sup>82</sup> Sandra Stanley Holton, “The Suffragist and the ‘Average Woman’,” *Women’s History Review* 1, no. 1 (1992): 9-24.

<sup>83</sup> Helen Lenskyj, *Women, Sport, and Physical Activity: Research and Bibliography* (Ottawa: Canadian Government Pub Centre, 1988).

<sup>84</sup> Jo Burr Margadant, *The New Biography: Performing Femininity in Nineteenth-century France* (Berkeley, University of California Press, 2000), 24.

it using the “cracks,”<sup>85</sup> the special moments when and where the opportunities to make a change open,<sup>86</sup> or do they do it exploiting contradictions in patriarchy, as highlighted by Day in chapter 3? Education, social origins, family and work socializations and experiences, access to networks, “working careers” versus “family careers” and so on may help to refine our understanding of female leaders, as emphasized by Marlène Benquet and Jacqueline Laufer.<sup>87</sup> Moreover, the concept of the “work of gender”<sup>88</sup> that women may have to (eventually) accomplish in order to fit to the criteria of leadership (“behaving like a man”... or not) might also be useful to analyse women moving around male bastions such as sports organizations.<sup>89</sup>

To question furthermore the common/exceptional bias and “remove the ‘exceptional’ framework from the study of women’s lives,”<sup>90</sup> one may also rely on prosopography, quantitative approaches and collective and relational biographies. Indeed, biography is not the only way to address life narratives, and the lack of information can lead us to use prosopography, as Day as well as Aragon-Perez and Elias do in their respective chapters (chapters 3 and 7). The stories of the many might also reveal more conclusions than biographies of the few can, allowing the historian to draw links and parallels between

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<sup>85</sup> Burr Margadant, *The New Biography*, 4.

<sup>86</sup> Scott, “Gender: A Useful Category.”

<sup>87</sup> Benquet and Laufer, “Femmes dirigeantes,” 19–23.

<sup>88</sup> Jacqueline Laufer, Catherine Marry and Margaret Maruani, *Le travail du genre. Les sciences sociales du travail à l’épreuve des différences de sexe* (Paris: La Découverte, 2003).

<sup>89</sup> For a view of the historical androcentricity of sports organization across the world, one may read: Barbara Keys, *Globalizing Sports* (London: Harvard, 2006).

<sup>90</sup> Barbara Caine, “Feminist Biography and Feminist History,” *Women’s History Review* 3, no. 2 (1994): 252.

characters of the past. Indeed, collective biography has been a privileged way of studying the lives of forgotten women in feminist history,<sup>91</sup> as Samantha-Jayne Oldfield describes:

Group biography, being “subjective” and “close focused,” uses individual life stories to explain motives and experiences of a limited group. Conversely, prosopography is much more “objective,” exploring the details about individuals in aggregate and analysing the characteristics that provide a broader understanding of society, not the specifics that make their lives unique.<sup>92</sup>

Although the so called “objectivity” of prosopography is to be questioned, as much as the general objectivity of researchers, this tool may be used with little information from each of the studied individuals. On the other hand, collective biography “enables the individual’s experiences to receive prominence instead of being subsumed within the historical context.”<sup>93</sup> This way, Oldfield makes a plea for “mixed-methods” of at least two of these approaches, ideally combining the three (biography, collective biography, and prosopography). Furthermore, beyond single or quantitative biographies, innovative blended approaches such as “relational” biographies<sup>94</sup> (biographies of siblings, friends, students from the same promotion and so on) have recently arisen among scholars, in order to further understand the individualized dimension of gender relations. Indeed, the research in this volume demonstrates how masculine scaffolding has played a significant role in the patriarchal structure of sports organizations.

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<sup>91</sup> Oldfield, “Narrative Methods,” 1867.

<sup>92</sup> Oldfield, “Narrative Methods,” 1865.

<sup>93</sup> Oldfield, “Narrative Methods,” 1869.

<sup>94</sup> Jill Roe, “Biography Today: A Commentary,” *Australian Historical Studies* 43, no. 1 (2012):

While we have some trails to trace back to women in sports organizations and diverse options for exploring their histories, another inspiring way to deal with their absence/presence could be to question further the social implications of these women's sporting careers, notably in terms of gender identities at large.

### *Sport careers as social resistance?*

Why and how do women get involved in sports? Nancy Struna, asked this of American athletes, which we can also apply to women who chose to work in sports organizations:

Was their competition, instead, perhaps a form of social resistance, an effort to establish a non-subordinate mode of living? Did they envision competition as a personal quest for power and a unique identity?<sup>95</sup>

It is not only about how and why they get involved but also about illuminating the context and meaning of their involvement, through the study of interrelations between their public and private experiences. For example, biographies of suffragists showed that their public, politic activism was not disconnected from their private, day-to-day lives.<sup>96</sup> In sport studies, the early life and primary socialization of sportswomen often shows a pattern of “*garçon manquant*” (“missing boy”),<sup>97</sup> meaning the lack, or early loss of a son in a family, resulting in daughters assuming the social role of the elder son. The famous tennis player Suzanne Lenglen is but one example.<sup>98</sup> Roberta J. Park studied the exceptionally well-documented

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<sup>95</sup> Struna, “Beyond Mapping Experience,” 130.

<sup>96</sup> Bland and John, “Editorial.”

<sup>97</sup> Emilie Sablik and Christine Mennesson, “Carrières sexuelles et pratiques sportives,” *Sciences sociales et sport* 1, no. 1 (2008): 79–113.

<sup>98</sup> Florys Castan-Vicente, “Suzanne Lenglen et la définition du professionnalisme dans le tennis de l'entre-deux-guerres,” *Le Mouvement Social* 1, no. 254 (2016): 87–101.



case of Elizabeth Cady Stanton, a famous suffragist who also advocated for girls' physical education. Stanton's autobiography testifies that she specifically tried to console her father after the death of her brother, trying to be "all [her] brother was."<sup>99</sup> Later on, we learn that when she married, she "had had the word obey omitted from the ceremony [because she] refused to obey one with whom [she] supposed [she] was entering into an equal partnership." Such views into Stanton's personal life contribute significant insights into understanding her life as a feminist.<sup>100</sup> Likewise, in chapter 6, Deschamps questions the role of French communist women sport leaders during World War 2. This precision cannot be achieved without autobiographical material, which is often lacking in women's studies, women not having been encouraged to write about themselves.<sup>101</sup>

In chapter 4, Castan-Vicente's analysis discusses further this line between public and private among exceptional and famous sportswomen. Indeed, as Struna pointed out, private life and sport practice / management can be means of social resistance. Even more, the interplay between private and public selves allows practitioners and managers to both reify and redraw gender boundaries, as shown by Froidevaux in chapter 8.

Feminist and gender epistemology about biographies also encourage us to question identities and understand them as numerous, moving, contested, and influenced by the context. With the individual being seen as a construction, different "performed selves" are continually in creation. These performances are partially shaped by the historical context: different models of womanhood are possible for the same context. So how did the gendering of society form and shape the possibilities women had to perform their "public selves" as

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<sup>99</sup> Roberta J. Park, "'All the Freedom of the Boy': Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Nineteenth-Century Architect of Women's Rights," *The International Journal of the History of Sport* 18, no.1, (2001): 9.

<sup>100</sup> Park, "'All the Freedom of the Boy'," 12.

<sup>101</sup> Smith and Watson, *Decolonizing the Subject*.

international sports organization leaders under the public eye?<sup>102</sup> In this perspective, the biographer does not seek to find what people really were, but how they presented themselves. The building of a “public self” is here seen as a necessity to respond to the opposition to women’s presence in traditionally masculine spaces.<sup>103</sup>

## **Conclusion**

To conclude, we posit that the number of techniques discussed in this chapter provide possible solutions to the challenges of including more women, and other minorities, in sport history. A rigorous historical gaze is of particular importance here, in order not to reproduce the hegemonic masculine gaze, but to decipher these intricate logics of domination. Underpinned by the framework of intersectionality, we argue that in order to diversify our histories of the sporting past, we may need to look in other places to find the information we need: historians need to shift their gaze off-centre. The archive, as the historian’s primary resource, its content and lack thereof should thus be critically examined alongside broader non-textual sources, including visual, ephemeral and oral sources. Moreover, we suggest that expanding the analytical frameworks we bring to our work will assist the historian in interpreting the new evidence required for studying women and minorities in sport history: from ethnography and concepts of labour, elites and gender to various forms of biography.

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<sup>102</sup> Burr Margadant, *The New Biography*, 24.

<sup>103</sup> Burr Margadant, *The New Biography*, 2.

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