

Henry Barutciski

40049834

Soci 310 assignment 1: Development of a research question

As a varsity athlete here at Concordia University (soccer) and someone who has been participating/competing in sports all my life, I wanted this paper and my research to revolve around athletics. Sociology and sports are undoubtedly tied together, and there are many different questions to be answered as well as phenomena to be observed when studying the two. Sociology of Sport can be described as “an area of study concerned with various socio-cultural structures, patterns, and organizations or groups involved with sport” (wikipedia). What we will be looking at more specifically here is coed (males and female) sports, where things get deeper than athletics and delve into questions surrounding gender.

In their article “**Gender Egalitarianism in Coed Sport**, a case study of American soccer”, Jacques M. Henry and Howard P. Comeaux (University of Southwestern Louisiana) use an ethnographic (qualitative) and case study approach to observe different characteristics of egalitarianism between the sexes in an American coed soccer league. They introduce us to adjustments made by the league (ex: must have 5 females on the field at all times, goals by females count as double), by players (ex: male players opting mostly to pass to other males) and even look at the way male and female players view the league/game.

The authors illustrate many interesting aspects of this coed league that touch on egalitarianism. We learn that women are still not as well represented numerically, that the average age of males is higher than that of females (meaning that the first trend could be changing), that women spend less time on the ball and that there is less violence and injuries in comparison to men's only (among other things). One very interesting study in the article showed that women value the intellectual part of the game much more than men, believing that soccer is less about size and speed but more about brains and tactics.

With this being said, my research question is: **why do men change, mostly subconsciously, the way they play when women are on the field?** This question relates very clearly with the article, and is of great interest for me given my soccer background and the fact I also play in a coed recreational league (so I know first hand the difference between coed and non coed).

The key terms for my research are egalitarianism, gender-relations, soccer and sociology.