

Women's Football in Senegal: Aigles, Gazelles and Lions

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Women in Senegal are often perceived as reliable fans of local football teams, who would feed the team, wash the player's shirts, dance and sing in the stadium and assist in gathering financial support. If it comes to sport, they are rather considered as good athletes and/or basketball players, not as football players. Nonetheless, a considerable number of women's football teams exist in Senegal on all levels. Moreover, the first women's football teams have been created already in the early 1970s. This paper explores women's football in Senegal. First, it examines the history of women's football in Senegal, providing different examples of local neighborhood teams, (semi-)professional teams and the national football squad. Second, it presents different itineraries of women's football players. Third, the paper analyses different gender conceptions which are displayed, negotiated, and/or contested in and around the football arena. The paper is based on Senegalese newspaper cuttings, personal observation and interviews which have been conducted within a broader research into the history of football in Senegal.