A.1 Semi-structured interviews

A.1.1 Content of documents used to recruit interview respondents

A.1.1.1 Opening e-mail to potential interview participants

Dear ……………..

My name is Edoardo Rosso and I am Higher Research Degree (PhD) student in the School of Geography, Population and Environmental Management at Flinders University in South Australia. I am currently researching the role of social networks as a factor in the development of elite women’s soccer players in South Australia and would appreciate it if you could assist me by agreeing to be interviewed as part of this project.

Please find attached four documents:

a Letter of Introduction from my Supervisor;
an information sheet outlining the project and the interview process;
a summary of the topics of the semi-structured interviews;
a consent form for the interview.

On the day of the interview, you will receive a hard copy of the above documents and you will be asked to sign the consent form upon your agreement on the basis of the relevant information.

To indicate your willingness to participate in an interview, please reply to this email address edoardo.rosso@flinders.edu.au. I will then contact you and arrange a suitable time for the interview. The interviews will be approximately half an hour to one hour long and will take place at SAWSA, SASI, or your soccer club.

You are reminded that email is not a secure medium and if you have concerns about the lack of security you can contact me at edoardo.rosso@flinders.edu.au and request a hard copy of the documentation.

If you have any questions please contact me at the email address above.

Yours sincerely

Edoardo Rosso
PhD candidate
School of Geography, Population and Environmental Management
Flinders University
A.1.1.2 Letter of introduction from supervisor to potential interview participants

Dear ............... 

This letter is to introduce Edoardo Rosso who is a Research Higher Degree (PhD) candidate in the School of Geography, Population and Environmental Management at Flinders University. He will produce his student card, which carries a photograph, as proof of identity.

Edoardo is undertaking research leading to the production of a thesis on the subject of the role of social networks in the development of women’s soccer in South Australia. The thesis title will be ‘The role of social capital in the development of elite women’s soccer players in South Australia’. The project aims to become an important example of investigation into non-technical factors contributing to the development of elite women’s soccer players in South Australia. It also aims to inform South Australian women’s soccer institutions on matters arising from the current impact of social networks in the development of players.

He would be most grateful if you would volunteer to spare the time to assist in this project, by granting an interview, which touches upon certain aspects of this topic. No more than one hour and a half on one occasion would be required.

Be assured that any information provided will be treated in the strictest confidence and none of the participants will be individually identifiable in the resulting thesis, report or other publications, unless explicitly indicating the contrary. You are, of course, entirely free to discontinue your participation at any time or to decline to answer particular questions.

Since Edoardo intends to make a tape recording of the interview, he will seek your consent, on the attached form, to record the interview, to use the recording or a transcription in preparing the thesis and to make the recording available to other researchers on the same conditions expressed in the consent form. It may be necessary to make the recording available to secretarial assistants for transcription, in which case you may be assured that such persons will be advised of the requirement that the confidentiality of the material is respected and maintained in accordance to the consent form. You are able to obtain a copy of the taped interview from the researcher and to advise the researcher on how the information may be used or if the information has to be omitted.

Any enquiries you may have concerning this project should be directed to me at the address given above or by telephone on (08) 8201 2308, fax (08) 8201 3521 or e-mail clive.forster@flinders.edu.au

Thank you for your attention and assistance.

Yours sincerely,

A/Prof C. Forster
Director of Studies for Master in Environmental Management
School of Geography, Population and Environmental Management
Flinders University
A.1.1.3 Information sheet for potential interview participants

The project aims to explore the relationship between social capital and the development of elite women’s soccer players in South Australia. Social capital is defined as the ability of individuals and groups to gain resources by means of membership in social networks. The key research questions are:

What role does social capital play in the development of elite women’s soccer players in South Australia?
Does it facilitate or undermine the State’s output of elite players?

The research objectives are:

the appreciation of dynamics related to social networks that facilitate or inhibit the development of elite women’s soccer players;
the exploration of social networks within the SA women’s soccer system and the discussion of their role in the production of elite players.

Methods include semi-structured interviews, correspondence with key figures of the South Australian women’s soccer system, and a questionnaire survey. The outcome of the study will reveal non-technical aspects of the process of production of elite women’s soccer players in South Australia and will be of interest to sports administrators at club and State levels.

The information sought by interviewing is fundamental as the data available through the South Australian Women’s Soccer Association (SAWSA) yearbooks and archives offers limited value in relation to the appreciation of the networks that characterise the local women’s soccer system. It does not include qualitative information on factors that may influence the development of players. Information obtained through interviews will be instrumental in providing insights and personal views on the importance of social networks within the South Australian women’s soccer system for the development of elite players. The interviews will also contribute to shape the second phase (Phase 2) of the project, which will rely on questionnaires.

Attached is a simple document presenting an array of topics that will be investigated by means of interviews, designed to gather basic information about your experience in local women’s soccer.

If you have further questions concerning the interview and/or how the data will be used please contact Edoardo Rosso at edoardo.rosso@flinders.edu.au.

To participate in an interview, please write to the above e-mail address indicating your availability and I will contact you to arrange a suitable time for the interview.

Yours sincerely

Edoardo Rosso
PhD candidate
School of Geography, Population and Environmental Management
Flinders University
A.1.1.4 Consent form for participation in interview process

I ................................................................., being over the age of 18 years hereby consent to participate as requested in the letter of introduction and information sheet for the research project on the role of social networks in the development of elite women’s soccer players in South Australia.

1. I have read the information provided.
2. Details of procedures and any risks have been explained to my satisfaction.
3. I agree to my information and participation being recorded on tape.
4. I am aware that I should retain a copy of the Information Sheet and Consent Form for future reference.
5. I understand that:
   • I may not directly benefit from taking part in this research.
   • I am free to withdraw from the project at any time and am free to decline to answer particular questions.
   • While the information gained in this study will be published as explained, I will not be identified unless I explicitly agree to the contrary, and individual information will remain confidential.
   • I may ask that the recording be stopped at any time, and that I may withdraw at any time from the session or the research without disadvantage.
6. I agree/do not agree (please circle) to the tape being made available to other researchers who are not members of this research team, but who are judged by the research team to be doing related research, on condition that my identity is not revealed.

Participant’s signature……………………………………Date……………………

7. I agree/do not agree (please circle) that my name and/or (please circle) position is used by the researcher in the final dissertation.

Participant’s signature……………………………………Date……………………

I certify that I have explained the study to the volunteer and consider that she/he understands what is involved and freely consents to participation.

Researcher’s name: Edoardo Rosso

Researcher’s signature……………………………………Date……………………
A.1.2 Base questionnaire used for semi-structured interviews

- What is it that determines the ability of clubs to attract and develop quality players?

- Do you think social networks within your club – including committee members, volunteers, coaches, parents, spectators and players – may affect (positively or negatively) the clubs’ ability to produce (attract and develop) elite players?

- Are your club’s members particularly homogeneous or heterogeneous (e.g. socio-economic characteristics; area of residence; ethnicity; special interests)?

- Does your club represent a particular community (e.g. geographical, ethnic)?

- Are there particular social groups identifiable within your club (e.g. cliques)?

- Would you describe the networks within your club as ‘close-knit’?

- Can you describe the nature of social networks within your club (which networks exist; are they particularly strong or weak; how do these networks work; how are they established; who do they involve)?

- Are there any existing policies (formal) or norms (informal but recognised and accepted) for networking within your institution?

- What kind of policies/norms are these (aim; scope; when where they established; do they work)?

- How is information disseminated around the club (especially relative to players’ development – coaching tips; availability of programs; players’ performance and needs)? Is there any privileged information channel within the club (formal – e.g. meetings – or informal)?

- Do social relations within the club bring particular benefit to the club (particularly in relation to the production and attraction of elite players)? Do such benefits play a part in the ways players are developed and encouraged to ‘take the next step’?

- What networks contribute to the development of players within the club?

- Does your club have any policy in place regarding the provision of state coaches (are the club’s coaches encouraged to become state coaches?)

- Can social relations within the club undermine in any way the development of good-quality players? What are those networks?
- Do you think social networks between clubs and between clubs and local communities (including members of two different clubs; members of a club and a local community organisation; members of a club and individuals involved in local businesses; members of a club and individuals involved in local schools; and members of a club and representatives of local government) may affect (positively or negatively) the clubs’ ability to produce (attract and develop) elite players?

- Are there significant networks between your institution and external entities (e.g. other clubs; other sport/non-sport institutions; the wider community; loose individuals)? What is the nature of these networks?

- Does your club exchange information with other clubs?

- How are these networks established and maintained?

- Does your club have any privileged relationship with local schools?

- What benefits (if any) do extra-club networks bring to your institution (i.e. access to information; coaches; players; facilities)? Do such benefits play a part in the ways players are developed and encouraged to ‘take the next step’?

- Do you think extra-club networks may undermine in any way the ability of the club to produce elite players (e.g. networks with another club/sporting association may bring club players away from the club to the other club/association, including players deciding to take on another sport)?

- Are there any existing policies for networking between your institution and other entities?

- What are the resources (e.g. capable coaches; equipment; physical facilities; large population pool) that are seen as determinant for clubs in order to develop high quality players?

- Do social networks (both intra-club ties and extra-club networks) play a role in: accessing good-quality coaches; attracting promising players; developing existing talented players; setting up, developing and maintaining a junior system; accessing sponsorships; accessing facilities; accessing ‘know-how’?

- Can you describe ‘pull’ and ‘push’ factors that may facilitate the development of talented players within your club? (For example a player may be ‘pushed’ by her family, someone in her club, a ‘loose individual not associated with clubs or the federation, or even just herself to ‘take the next step’. On the other hand, a player may be ‘pulled’ to the next step by forces external to her existing networks, such as the interest of a federation figure (state coach, SAWSA/SASI representatives), the influence of peers who play in state teams or take part in state development programs and/or identification programs.
• Can you describe any negative ‘pull’/’push’ factor that may inhibit potential elite players from developing their talent?

• What types of networks are/could be particularly useful for clubs to enhance their players’ productivity?

• What is the nature of the social networks between the State and the women’s soccer community (including clubs)? (e.g. only formal; informal and formal; depending on clubs…with one person only per club?…)

• What networks link the State and the school system?

• What networks link the State and the business sector?

• What networks link the State and ‘other women’s soccer people’ (loose individuals – coaches, volunteers etc. – who are not associated with any club).

• How are the above networks established and maintained?

• What kind of profit do they bring to the State in relation to the development of players (e.g. information, ‘know how’, coaching tips, volunteers, physical or monetary resources…)?

• Are there existing policies for networking between the State and the clubs? And between the State and the wider women’s soccer community?

• How do information flow between the State and the ‘women’s soccer community’ (incl. Information relative to player development – coaching tips, identification of players, identification of particular needs of players etc.)? Are there privileged networks between certain clubs and the State?

• Why are certain clubs particularly active in providing State coaches? And State players?

• How do players get into the State system? Do they get identified by someone or is it totally up to them to trial?

• Do clubs always encourage players to try out for State?

• Is the State system organised in such way to favour the inclusion of all players?

• Is the State system organised in such way to include all clubs (with juniors)? Are Prem. clubs linked more strongly with the State system than non-Prem. clubs?

• What are the (social relationship-based) pulling and pushing factors that favour players to try out for State?
• What are the negative pulling and pushing factors that may prevent players from taking part in State/SASI programs?

• What types of State-society networks are/could be particularly useful for the State to enhance the players’ ‘productivity’?

• What type of networks can instead undermine the State’s productivity (e.g. close networks between SAWSA and a particular club may discourage members – coaches, players etc – of a third ‘enemy’ club to participate…)?

• Who are the ‘gatekeepers’ of the networks between the State and the clubs’ systems?

• Does the State interact with clubs or other representatives of the ‘women’s soccer community’ to enhance problem-solving (is there a forum for the clubs and the State system to interact and learn? How does it work? Is it successful?)

• Are the clubs producing elite players particularly homogeneous (within themselves and among themselves) or heterogeneous?

• What is the nature of social networks linking the representatives of SAWSA and SASI (formal, informal, strong, weak)?

• How are SAWSA and SASI linked to the other sporting institutions in South Australia and in Australia? What is the nature of these networks (formal, informal, strong, weak)?

• How are SAWSA and SASI linked to the Government in South Australia and in Australia? What is the nature of these networks (formal, informal, strong, weak)?

• What are the benefits/problems associated with the above networks? What networks are/could be particularly important to assist with the development of players in South Australia (e.g. local coaches establishing relationships with national coaches; networks across sporting institutions)?

• What networks internal to SAWSA/SASI or connecting SAWSA/SASI with the Government and/or the national level may undermine the ability of the state to develop elite players (e.g. closeness of SASI players may make it difficult for newcomers to fit in)?

• Are there policies for networking within and across institutions?

• How does the state system gain its ‘know how’?
A.2 Questionnaire survey

A.2.1 Content of documents used to recruit survey respondents

A.2.1.1 Letter of introduction from supervisor to potential survey respondents

Dear parent/guardian,

This letter is to introduce Edoardo Rosso, who is a Research Higher Degree (PhD) candidate in the School of Geography, Population and Environmental Management at Flinders University, Adelaide.

Edoardo is undertaking research leading to the production of a thesis on the role of social networks in the development of women’s soccer in South Australia. The thesis title will be ‘The role of social capital in the development of elite women’s soccer players in South Australia’. The project aims to investigate social factors contributing to the development of elite women’s soccer players in South Australia. It also aims to inform South Australian women’s soccer institutions on matters arising from the current impact of social networks in the development of players.

Edoardo would be most grateful if your daughter could spare the time to assist in this project, by volunteering to complete a questionnaire, which touches upon certain aspects of this topic. The questionnaire is enclosed, and, although Edoardo believes that the nature of the questions should not pose any ethical issues, he invites you to assess the content of the questionnaire before its completion. The questionnaire should take no longer than 20 minutes to complete.

Be assured that any information provided will be treated in the strictest confidence and none of the participants in this survey will be individually identifiable in the resulting thesis, report or other publications. Your daughter is, of course, entirely free to discontinue her participation at any time or to decline to answer particular questions. The participation or not of your daughter in this survey will not affect in any way the opportunities that she may enjoy as a women’s soccer player in South Australia. The completed questionnaire forms will not be accessible for any person, association or other entity, except from the researcher and his supervisors.

PLEASE NOTE: since the participants in this survey are, due to the nature of the age groups targeted for the State Development Squads, persons under 18 years old, parental consent is required. If you are happy to contribute to this research by having your daughter completing the enclosed questionnaire, please complete and sign the Parental Consent Form and return it with the questionnaire form. To return the questionnaire, please use the pre-addressed and pre-stamped envelope enclosed. We would be grateful if you could return the completed questionnaire as soon as possible.

Any enquiries you may have concerning this project should be directed to me at the address given above or by telephone on (08) 8201 2308, fax (08) 8201 3521 or e-mail clive.forster@flinders.edu.au
Thank you for your attention and assistance.

Yours sincerely,

A/Prof Clive Forster
Head of School
School of Geography, Population and Environmental Management
Flinders University
Adelaide (SA)
(08) 2801 2308
clive.forster@flinders.edu.au

This research project has been approved by the Flinders University Social and Behavioural Research Ethics Committee. The Secretary of the Committee can be contacted by telephone on 8201 5962, by fax on 8201 2035 or by email sandy.huxtable@flinders.edu.au.
A.2.1.2 Letter of endorsement from SAWSA

7 April 2008

Dear parent/guardian,

The purpose of this letter is to provide endorsement to the research carried out by Mr. Edoardo Rosso on the social aspects of women’s soccer in South Australia.

The South Australian Women’s Soccer Association (SAWSA) is aware of the work conducted by Mr. Edoardo Rosso within the South Australian women’s soccer community, and it endorses this survey as a method of research.

Mr. Edoardo Rosso assures that any information provided in the survey will be treated in the strictest of confidence and none of the participants in this survey will be individually identifiable in the resulting thesis, report or other publications. The participation of your daughter in this survey will not affect in any way the opportunities that she may enjoy as a women’s soccer player in South Australia. The completed questionnaire forms will not be accessible for any person, association or other entity, except from Mr. Edoardo Rosso and his supervisors.

Yours in Sport

Wendy Carter
SAWSA Executive Officer
A.2.1.3 Information sheet for potential survey respondents

The project aims to explore the relationship between social capital and the development of elite women’s soccer players in South Australia. Social capital is defined as the ability of individuals and groups to gain resources by means of membership in social networks. Social capital, built through social networks, is seen as a potential non-technical factor that could contribute to, or undermine, the development of women’s soccer players. The key research questions are:

What role does social capital play in the development of elite women’s soccer players in South Australia?
Does it facilitate or undermine the State’s output of elite players?

The research objectives are:

To appreciate the dynamics related to social networks that facilitate or inhibit the development of elite women’s soccer players;
To explore social networks within the SA women’s soccer system and to discuss their role in the production of elite players.

Methods include a questionnaire survey. The outcome of the study will reveal non-technical aspects of the process of production of elite women’s soccer players in South Australia and will be of interest to sports administrators at club and State levels.

The information sought by means of surveying players involved with the State Development Squads is fundamental in relation to the appreciation of the networks that characterise the local women’s soccer system. It would provide important, first-hand insights and personal views on the importance of social networks within the South Australian women’s soccer system for the development of elite players.

If you have further questions concerning your participation in this survey and/or how the data will be used please do not hesitate to contact the researcher, Edoardo Rosso, at edoardo.rosso@flinders.edu.au.

Yours sincerely

Edoardo Rosso
PhD candidate
School of Geography, Population and Environmental Management
Flinders University
Adelaide (SA)
08 8201 2877
edoardo.rosso@flinders.edu.au
A.2.1.4 Parental consent form for potential survey respondents

I …………………………………………………………………………………………………………………..
being over the age of 18 years hereby consent to my child ………………………………………
participating, as requested, in the Letter of Introduction and Information Sheet for the
research project on the role of social capital in the development of women’s soccer
players in South Australia.

1. I have read the information provided.
2. Details of procedures and any risks have been explained to my satisfaction.
3. I am aware that I should retain a copy of the Information Sheet and Consent
   Form for future reference.
4. I understand that:
   • My child may not directly benefit from taking part in this research.
   • My child is free to withdraw from the project at any time and is free to
decline to answer particular questions.
   • While the information gained in this study will be published as explained,
my child will not be identified, and individual information will remain
confidential.
   • Whether my child participates or not, or withdraws after participating,
will have no effect on any treatment or service that is being provided to
him/her.
5. I agree to the transcript (questionnaire form) being made available to other
researchers who are not members of this research team, but who are judged by
the research team to be doing related research, on condition that my identity is
not revealed.

Participant’s signature……………………………………Date…………………………

I certify that I have explained the study to the volunteer and consider that she/he
understands what is involved and freely consents to participation.

Researcher’s name………………………………………………………………………………

Researcher’s signature……………………………………Date…………………………

I, the participant whose signature appears below, have read a transcript (the
questionnaire form) of my participation and agree to its use by the researcher as
explained.

Participant’s signature……………………………………Date…………………………

Please return this parental consent form signed with the completed
questionnaire form, using the self-addressed pre-stamped envelope enclosed.
Thank you.
A.2.2 Questionnaire survey form

Please answer the following questions:

1. In which year were you born? .................................................................

2. In which Development Squad did you play in 2007/2008? ..............................

3. Were the 2007/08 Development Squads your first experience at the State level? ............
   a. If not, what other State experiences have you had in women’s soccer (incl. State teams and Development Squads)? .................................................................

4. Were you friends with any of your Development Squads team-mates before the start of the 2007/08 Development Squads? ..............................
   a. How many? .................................................................
   b. How many were other players from your club? .................................................................
   c. How many were from other clubs? .................................................................
   d. How many were from school? .................................................................
   e. How many from previous State (incl. State teams and Dev Squads) experiences? ............

5. Were you friends with any of your State Development Squads team-mates the first time that you participated in the program? .................................................................

6. Do you know other women’s soccer players through school? ..............................
   a. How many of them play in your club? .................................................................
   b. And in other clubs? .................................................................

Please indicate (circle) your level of agreement with the following statements (1=STRONGLY AGREE; 5=STRONGLY DISAGREE):

7. It was very important to have friends in my decision to participate in the Development Squads. 1 2 3 4 5

8. Encouragement/support from others (incl. family) was very important for my decision to take the next step to the State level. 1 2 3 4 5

9. I got help/support/encouragement mostly from:
   a. My family 1 2 3 4 5
   b. My school 1 2 3 4 5
   c. My club 1 2 3 4 5
   d. Other (please state) .........................................

10. I got a lot of support from:
    a. My club coach 1 2 3 4 5
    b. My club team-mates 1 2 3 4 5
c. Other club players not part of my team 1 2 3 4 5
d. Other club coaches 1 2 3 4 5
e. Other club officials 1 2 3 4 5
f. Parents of other players of my club 1 2 3 4 5

11. I generally felt that I belonged with the State Development Squads.
   1 2 3 4 5

12. After the Development Squads, I feel/felt enthusiastic about participating in the State teams’
   trials.
   a. If I didn’t know people from the Development Squads I would be less enthusiastic
      about participating in the State teams’ trials. 1 2 3 4 5

13. I generally feel that I belong with my club.
    1 2 3 4 5

14. I generally feel that I belong with the women’s soccer community in SA.
    1 2 3 4 5

15. I felt that I could always ask my Development Squad team-mates for help for anything
    related to soccer.
    1 2 3 4 5

16. I felt that I could always ask my Development Squad team-mates for help for matters not
    related to soccer.
    1 2 3 4 5

17. I feel that I can always ask my club team-mates for help for anything related to soccer.
    1 2 3 4 5

18. I feel that I can always ask my club team-mates for help for matters not related to soccer.
    1 2 3 4 5

19. I was always aware and up-to date with any plans, programs and decisions relative to my
    Development Squad.
    1 2 3 4 5

20. I am always aware and up-to-date with any plans, programs and decision relative to my club
    team.
    1 2 3 4 5

21. The State environment is a positive and friendly learning environment where development
    results from everybody’s co-operation.
    1 2 3 4 5

22. My club environment is a positive and friendly learning environment where development
    results from everybody’s co-operation.
    1 2 3 4 5

23. I feel that I can generally trust the State coaches/officials.
    1 2 3 4 5

24. I feel that I can generally trust my State team-mates. 1 2 3 4 5

25. I feel that I can generally trust my club.
    1 2 3 4 5

26. I feel that I can trust SAWSA and the women’s soccer institutions in general.
    1 2 3 4 5

27. I feel that I can trust women’s soccer people in general.
    1 2 3 4 5

28. I feel that I can trust my family in general.
    1 2 3 4 5

29. I feel that I can trust my community in general.
    1 2 3 4 5
30. I generally see other women’s soccer people (players etc.) outside soccer.

Thank you for participating in this survey. Please return this form with a signed copy of the Parental Consent Form using the self-addressed pre-stamped envelope enclosed.

This research project has been approved by the Flinders University Social and Behavioural Research Ethics Committee. The Secretary of the Committee can be contacted by telephone on 8201 5962, by fax on 8201 2035 or by email sandy.huxtable@flinders.edu.au.
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