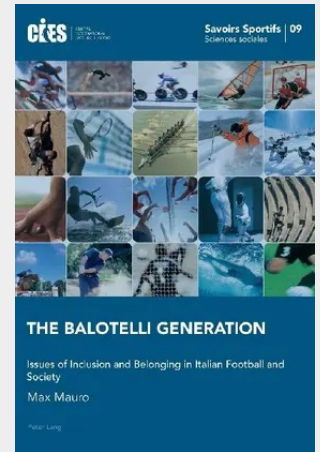


The Balotelli Generation

Issues of Inclusion and Belonging in Italian Football and Society

Sports governing bodies, governments and European institutions highlight the inclusive power of sport and its capacity to foster a sense of belonging among youth of immigrant background. At the same time, sport at youth and grassroots level can be as much an exclusionary as an inclusive experience. As a country of relatively short immigration history and with a great passion for sport, particularly football, Italy makes a compelling case on which to situate an analysis of sport participation of youth of immigrant background and issues of representation in relation to national identity. The book originates from 40 in-depth interviews with young players aged seventeen to twenty-three, born in Italy to immigrant parents or raised in Italy since their childhood. It further collates over thirty interviews and conversations with coaches, club and league administrators, educators, and migrants' rights activists. Analysis of official documents and media analysis further contribute to the construction of a specific body of knowledge which sheds an unprecedented light on issues which are at the forefront of policy discussions and media discourses across Europe.

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