



“Assume teus b.o.”, de Salinê Saunders, aquarela e acrílica sobre papel A3

Resistance, intersectionality, and journalistic documentary sources: filling gaps in women's football*

Enny Vieira Moraes**

Mariane Pisani***

Claudia Samuel Kessler****

Abstract

Based on an analysis of journalistic documentary sources we consider various social markers of difference such as race/ethnicity, social class and gender that influenced the invisibility of women in Brazilian football. The objective of this article is to discuss the social structures that led to the concealment of minority groups and a distancing in the study of themes considered uncommon in the academic field. We understand that historical research using documentary sources and memory helps to build a plural history about (women's) football in Brazil.

Keywords: Historiography, Memory, Gender, Women's football, Resistance.

* Received August 26, 2022, accepted January 09, 2024. The authors are grateful to CNPq and to the Instituto Nacional de Ciência e Tecnologia Estudos do Futebol Brasileiro (nº 406632/2022-7) for the financial support for the translation of this article. We would also like to thank the translator Jeffrey Hoff.

** Professor at the State University of Bahia (UNEB), Alagoinhas, BA, Brazil. e.vieira.moraes@gmail.com / <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-2771-2003>

*** Professor at the Federal University of Piauí (UFPI), Teresina, PI, Brazil and Vice-Coordinator of the INCT Brazilian Football Studies. marianepisani@gmail.com / <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-6925-4912>

**** Professor at the Federal University of Santa Maria (UFSM), Santa Maria, RS, Brazil. jornalista24h@gmail.com / <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1292-6914>

Introduction

Resistance. This is perhaps the most appropriate word to begin a text that reflects on women's football in Brazil and internationally. Resistance and micro-resistance (Certeau, 1998) are part of strategies to subvert controls imposed by power mechanisms over the exercise of everyday practices considered socially unsuitable to the tradition and customs of an era. This resistance includes waiting for the most appropriate time to tell stories silenced by certain forms of historiographical production. The cultural acceptance of women's football varies among countries. In the United States, for instance, football is considered a predominantly female sport (Moura, 2003). Yet in Brazil the practice of football by women has encountered structural and social obstacles, such as legislation and rules that have kept women away from the sport, particularly Decree Law 3.199 of 1941, which established the foundations for sports in the country and stated that there were "sports incompatible with the conditions of their nature" (Brazil, 1941). Being a woman in sexist environments requires reflection and strategies to subvert cultural impositions related to ways of dressing, thinking, and behaving.

Michael Pollak (1989), recognized for his writings on memory in the context of war, affirms that there is no single memory. All memory is selective, establishing negotiations between the subjective and the social. There are multiple silenced memories, memories that are not included in official records, but which, even if they are buried, are still important.

By privileging the analysis of the excluded, the marginalized and minorities, oral history has highlighted the importance of buried memories which, as an integral part of minority and dominated cultures, oppose 'official memory', in this case the national memory (Pollak, 1989:4).

The history of women's soccer in Brazil has been marked by various forms of violence. When defining forms of violence against women, Soihet (2002) points out that women suffer from symbolic violence, which is carried out in a more subtle and elaborate way, yet also produces harmful consequences. The author considers that these aggressions occurred (or were more noticed) in historical periods when women were demanding social rights that had never been granted to them before, resulting in tension between the genders. In the periods studied, between the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, as well as the 1960s and 1980s, Soihet (2002) believes that these attacks were directed at middle-class women, because they dared to stand out in social movements. However, it is worth remembering that, although they are made invisible, members of various categories of race and class fought for women's freedom and social rights.

Since the first information we have about women playing football in Brazil, recorded in the early twentieth century (Almeida, 2019), a climate of debauchery and estrangement marked the sport's trajectory. The discourses of female players in the last century and in the twenty-first century reinforced requests for assistance related to both structural conditions for practice, and to pleas for greater appreciation, respect and recognition. The sporting practices of women were not considered relevant to the nation's history, mainly because women's activities in public environments were rarely treated seriously.

Sporting trajectories have historically been neglected, which also influences the lack of precise information that would allow affirming, for example, how, when and where women's soccer began in the country. Academic texts such as those by Eriberto Moura (2003), Aira Bonfim (2019) and Raphael Ribeiro (2023) shed light on this issue and indicate that there is still much to be uncovered about the beginnings of women's soccer. This void can be considered odd in a country that considers football to essentially be part of its culture. Illustrious women footballers such as Marta Vieira, who, like many men, have become world icons in the sport, lead us to ask: why are discourses about Brazilian women in football still rarely heard? A possible answer to this question involves not only historical aspects, but also media, financial and cultural ones.

For researchers and scholars of the sport, whether they are from the fields of history, social communication, social sciences or physical education, certain tools make a huge contribution to tracing aspects of this scenario, one of the main ones being the use of memory, through oral history and life history, which allow us to make greater use of documentary sources. Good examples of the use of these methodologies are the studies by Goellner (2019) and Moraes (2012).

In preparing this article we understand that the universe of women in Brazilian football is not a uniform group. Throughout this study, we have uncovered clues that various attributes of class, gender, sexuality, and ethnicity have historically been mixed in this context. Research such as that by Kessler (2015) and Pisani (2018) points in this direction, presenting footballers of Black ethnicity, women from an unprivileged social class and many self-identified as lesbians. Due to the lack of state or national quantitative research on this data, it is difficult to accurately trace this profile and expand it as representative for the entire nation, but we intend to dialogue from the foundation of the social markers of difference and the resistance of these women to marginalization in the sports arena.

Methodological and theoretical discussion

To guide the development of this article, we present the hypothesis that while social class, ethnicity, gender and sexuality are central aspects that have characterized and socially marked Brazilian female footballers, these same social markers of difference have been used to construct arguments and instruments that have contributed to silencing their individual stories and to the invisibility and unviability of the football they play.

The methodology chosen for this article was historical research, using oral history, memory, and life history as supports for writing another history of women in the Brazilian soccer world. In addition, based on academic research and productions, as well as newspaper, television, and magazine pieces, we will address these issues to point out some of the elements that, in combination, served to obscure and silence the sporting practice of these women.

Based on Perrot (1998)¹, we understand that it is extremely useful to aggregate memory to other sources when revisiting the past, not only through the prism of subjectivity, but also by establishing associations with elements recorded in documentary sources. This allows us to weave other paths and reveal another, certainly more plural, story about the subjects and their time. Still in this sense, while we observe this data in history, we advocate the continuity and deepening of historical research as an element to enable us to build new paths and avenues of scientific investigation, not only to reveal new social subjects who have built the history of their football, but also other perspectives that steer us to their subjectivities, the careers built and intercepted, as well as the barriers they faced.

(Memory) is effective when it comes to studying everyday life. There are things in it that are not told anywhere else and that we will only know through memory. For example, in relation to the history of sensibilities, can we ask how a child from the past experienced the way he or she was brought up? Only that child will be able to say. These aspects of history help to enrich it (Perrot, 1998:359).

The aim of this article is to discuss issues that point to the permanent and deliberate invisibility of certain social groups in sport, without, however, concluding this problematic with pragmatic answers. In this sense, we have identified some theoretical and analytical categories that initially seem to underlie this discussion, but which, in a fundamental way – especially when intersecting – contribute to promoting actions of belittlement and depreciation that have marked the history of Brazilian women's football. These include ethnicity, social class and gender and sexuality issues.

In terms of the analytical and theoretical categories that guide us, it is worth noting that when we ask about issues involving social class, ethnicity, gender and sexuality in Brazilian women's football, we realize that we must resort to the concept of intersectionality. US attorney and professor Kimberlé Williams Crenshaw was the first to develop and discuss the concept of intersectionality, in an 1989 article entitled *Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics*. In this text she stated that the intersectional experience is greater than the sum of racist or sexist discrimination and indicates that

¹ Perrot (1998) raises an important discussion about this research method. Either because of the time limit imposed on us or even because of the forgetting produced in memory, and because memory is also constituted by a subject's relationships with time and their interpersonal relationships, memory contains exclusive fragments of the subjects' stories that only they can reveal.

any analysis that does not consider intersectionality cannot adequately address the experiences of Black women (Crenshaw, 1989). Thus for Crenshaw (2002:176):

In under-inclusive approaches to discrimination, difference turns a set of problems invisible; while in over-inclusive approaches, difference itself is invisible. Intersectional discrimination is particularly difficult to identify in contexts where economic, cultural and social forces silently shape the background in such a way as to place women in a position where they end up being affected by other systems of subordination. (...) To understand discrimination as an intersectional problem, the racial or gender dimensions, which are part of the structure, would have to be placed in the foreground, as factors that contribute to the production of subordination.

According to the author, different axes of power structure the social, economic, and political terrain. These axes can be defined by social markers of difference such as race, ethnicity, gender, and class and often overlap and intersect, creating complex intersections. American sociologists Patricia Hill Collins and Sirma Bilge add to the concept of intersectionalities:

Ordinary people can draw upon intersectionality as an analytic tool when they recognize that they need better frame works to grapple with the complex discriminations that they face. In the 1960s and 1970s, African-American women activists confronted the puzzle of how their needs simply fell through the cracks of anti-racist social movements, feminism, and unions organizing for workers' rights [...] Black women's use of intersectionality as an analytic tool emerged in response to these challenges (Collins; Bilge, 2016:03).

It is no accident that the concept emerged among Black women activists. It relates to the political actions of the US feminist movement at the time, which had essentially been focused on the particularities of white university-educated women and members of the middle and upper-middle classes. In other words, the specificities experienced by women of African descent and/or Indigenous women were not included in the feminist movement, or even in other social movements such as anti-racist movements or trade unions. Black women were pushed to the margins of political struggles. It was necessary to find a place for political and social action that addressed gender, class, ethnicity, and race issues in an articulated way. Collins and Bilge (2021) think of intersectionality from the perspective of power relations and how they influence social relations, and for them “intersectionality is a way of understanding and explaining the complexity of the world, of people and of human experiences” (Collins; Bilge, 2021:16).

In Brazil, Carla Akotirene deepens and broadens the discussion by including a decolonial perspective in her analysis. For Akotirene, it is urgent to “decolonize hegemonic perspectives on the theory of intersectionality and adopt the Atlantic as a locus of intersecting oppressions” (Akotirene, 2022:20). The author continues in this vein by stating that

We have learned that there is no hierarchy of oppression. Identities stand out to Western eyes, but intersectionality refers to what we do politically with the matrix of oppression responsible for producing differences, after seeing them as identities. Within the flow of structures, the dynamism of identity produces new ways of living, thinking and feeling, which can be subsumed under certain insurgent identities, re-signified by oppressions (Akotirene, 2022:40).

Intersectionality, as an analytical and theoretical category, requires understanding subjects as multifaceted. In other words, it is no longer possible to analyze from a perspective of gender, or race/ethnicity or social class in isolation. It is necessary to assume that people carry all these categories, which are articulated in their bodies, and that they intersect, promoting a series of distinct experiences. We chose this concept not only because it promotes a more complex debate over the historical constitution of football, but also because, as Collins and Bilge show:

Because many people enjoy sporting events or play sports themselves, sports (*especially football*) seem distant from intersectionality's concern with social inequality. Yet using intersectionality as an analytic tool to examine the FIFA World Cup sheds light on the organization of power. Intersectionality as an analytic tool examines how power relations are intertwined and mutually constructing. Race, class, gender, sexuality, dis/ability, ethnicity, nation, religion, and age are

categories of analysis, terms that refer to important social divisions. But they are also categories that gain meaning from power relations of racism, sexism, heterosexism, and class exploitation (Collins; Bilge, 2016:06, emphasis added)

In this context we begin to discuss how the categories of gender, race/ethnicity, social class and sexuality, when articulated together, have impacted or still impact the world of women's football.

Unlike the typical behavior of women who play sports in general, class and race have the opposite effect on their adherence to football. In other words, if on the one hand white women from higher economic strata have a greater tendency to play sport, on the other hand it is black and poorer women who take up soccer (Martins; Silva; Vasquez, 2021:3).

By entering a “male reserved area” (Dunning; Maguire, 1997), Brazilian women players have paid a high price: for a long time, invisibility and oblivion were the norms for their sporting careers. Therefore, we set out to review the history of women's football from a different perspective and thus recover some trajectories in sports that have remained forgotten until now.

Going back in time...markers of their football: stories that remain in a silenced past

From the beginning of the history of women's soccer in the country, the position of the Brazilian press was clear, it constantly opposed this practice. This was the first decades of the last century – which suggests that we have already had more than a century of women's football in Brazil – although it is difficult to say when the sport began in the country, both due to the loss of records, and the lack of any records about certain actions of minority social groups. At that time efforts were underway to build a new Brazil and a “new Brazilian race”, strongly influenced by hygienic and eugenic medicine, and by political efforts to build a modern, whitened nation – supported by the idea of constructing a strong people (Goellner, 1999).

At the beginning of the 20th century, men, women, and children had to dedicate themselves to defending the construction of this “new nation”. This dedication included building a people with a new identity of body/subject along the lines of European societies, understood as references for the concept of modernity. From the mid-1930s onwards, the Brazilian state began to intervene in the bodies and behavior of individuals in order to make them strong, healthy, productive, and docile – ready to face the challenges of modern life (Goellner, 1999).

This scenario was extremely favorable to the creation and publication of the *Revista Educação Physica*, which was launched in 1932 under the title *Revista Técnica de Athletismo e Sports*. The magazine was published monthly from 1937 with its last issue in 1945. The publication not only disseminated information about the sporting achievements of groups or individuals, but also provided the population with scientific and pedagogical knowledge about various possibilities for moving bodies and adapting them to a “new” society under construction (Goellner, 1999).

In this context, we start from the vision of an individual and ideal body based on the perspective of those who wrote for the *Revista Educação Physica* (mostly doctors and military personnel). Scientifically, this ideal began not only to classify, but also to criticize bodies and behaviors that differed from the standard elected as normal and to be followed. In these editions, you would find information for men and women on how they should be and behave, each performing their social role. The information dealt with various sports, such as equestrian competitions, rowing, swimming, diving, gymnastics, cycling, basketball, etc. In short, various modalities and their competitions, scoring, and winners were recorded and, of course, pedagogic instructions were provided on how to practice them and, fundamentally, who should practice what.

According to Goellner (1999:25), the editors and writers of the *Revista Educação Physica*, as early as its third issue, paid special attention to women's bodies:

Made responsible for her physical appearance, the woman is urged to participate in the world of bodily practices, making efforts not only to benefit her state of health, but also to be recognized and approved of by the male gaze. This gaze subjects her to the imperative of seduction, that is, to a discourse that associates female appearance to beauty and youthfulness (Goellner, 1999:25).

With the centralizing and authoritarian force of the Estado Novo [New State government], it was understood that the country needed to develop strong and disciplined male bodies for the factory and industrial work that was beginning to develop at that time. It also needed strong female bodies to generate a “strong nation”, which sports and physical education would help to build. But just as important was a female body capable of looking after children, the home, and the husband, setting an example for other generations of what a real woman should be like: beautiful, healthy, young, strong, but fundamentally feminine (Goellner, 1999).

In 1939, the *Revista Educação Physica* created a specific section for women that provided guidance on which modalities were best suited to building a female body that should be strong enough to bear children while assuring its “natural femininity”. These pages had numerous images of women exercising and instructions on how to do so.

The body perceived/printed in the *Revista Educação Physica*, which served as a mold and model, was that of a white, middle class woman, fitting the heteronormative standard. Other bodies that deviated from this standard were not represented. However, the body that was sought as a reference was found in the journal, in movement, in many different places, always in the spotlight:

In movement, women’s bodies are photographed/drawn in different spaces, possibilities and outfits: on a diving board at the swimming pool, in the gym, on the tennis court, rolling, jumping, diving, doing gymnastics using furniture in the house... images cut out and juxtaposed together on a single page plunge the observer into the universe of women’s physical culture (Goellner, 1999:28).

The *Revista Educação Physica* disseminated the thinking of the time, informing what was expected to be followed by a good portion of the female population – logically that portion understood to be part of a reference group, boasting a standard of civility expected by that society. It is interesting to note that the spaces and activities aimed at women were supposed to be opposed to those suggested for men. Women were recommended more “gentle” disciplines, such as gymnastics and swimming, to preserve the feminine and maternal image of women. Gymnastics was also widely encouraged, since while it strengthened the body, it could be undertaken and practiced in domestic space. It is worth noting that this domestic space was idealized and prescribed as a female domain.

In the texts of the *Revista Educação Physica*, it was not only the gender category that guided the recommendations of sports that should be practiced by men and women. There was a subdivision between the sports that white women could enjoy and those that were intended for Black women. Race and ethnicity categories also appeared to demarcate differences, limits and prohibitions.

In the pages of the magazine, standards were set that determined what was expected of white, middle-class, heterosexual women. Those who deviated from these standards could – or should – be harshly criticized. Still in this sense, and according to Jéferson Luis Staudt and Magna Lima Magalhães:

to be recognized as such, the woman of the 1930s necessarily had to distance herself from any behavior or practice in which masculine predicates were present: physical strength, violence, prominent muscles, among others. As such, the visibility of black women, in a sport that was considered only appropriate for the "male universe", had the potential to make them recognized, based on the immorality of their "masculinized behavior", placing their femininity and sexuality under suspicion (Staudt; Magalhães, 2018:235).

Black and Indigenous women stood in opposition to the idealized profile, the required standard. Most of the time, these women were subjected to imposed invisibility and, at times criticism and mockery. For example, in the *Jornal dos Sports*, in 1940, the beauty contests were presented alongside the practices of female footballers, who in comparison were seen as “‘ugly’, ‘brutish’ and ‘smell’” - this was how the medical discourse, a large part of the press and the sports academy saw the peripheral women who played soccer” (Moura, 2003:47).

Silva (2019), carried out an historiographical investigation of the Rio sports daily *Jornal dos Sports* between 1931 and 1941. The author found that the publication reproduced discourses based on certain ideals of femininity, conducting what could be called a “game of letters”, which alternated

between encouraging and silencing matches played in the peripheries by Black women who were not from the economic elite. “The narratives produced by the Rio de Janeiro press heralded this practice as a ‘novelty’ and/or an ‘attempt to imitate the stronger sex’” (Silva, 2019:161).

The authors Staudt and Magalhães (2018) point out that, at that time, Black and Indigenous women were defined as different, and therefore classified as “abnormal” The few times these women were featured in the *Revista Educação Física*, it was in relation to football.

The magazine’s editors Hollanda Loyola and Humberto Ballariny had very controversial opinions about women’s football. In a 1940 issue Loyola affirmed that women could play football, as long as it didn’t compromise the criteria of beauty and delicacy, attributes thought to be typical of women. The journal recommended other sporting activities such as dance and above all, gymnastics, both of which would be very useful for developing grace and ensuring femininity. As for Staudt and Magalhães (2018), practices that were inappropriate for women were those that could affect areas of the body that made it impossible for them to reproduce:

By constituting the mother-woman as a *true* Brazilian woman, endowed with beauty, grace, charm and docility, Ballariny designated motherhood as a feminine *mission*, and all of a woman’s moral, intellectual and physical training should be based on the “destinies of her nature”. From this perspective, football would be a violent, combative and aggressive practice, inappropriate for maintaining physical beauty and a woman’s reproductive “vocation”, under the threat of causing trauma to her pelvic region (Staudt; Magalhães, 2018:232, emphasis in the original).

Thus, when they were presented in the *Revista*, Black women were associated with football, an activity that did not fit the ideal of femininity, a scientifically justified evaluation criterion. Associated with skills such as physical endurance, strong muscles and violence - attributes that were seen as exclusively masculine and indispensable for practicing this sport - women who practiced it came to be defined by these attributes. Thus the pages of *Revista Educação Física* featured Black, peripheral women linked to soccer². As deviations from the norm, Staudt and Magalhães state that:

Socially rejected in the female sphere, Black women, in turn, could be seen as “being feminine”, according to the magazine, only in football. Muscular prominence, which is not sexually attractive, an unsightly physique and an aggressive spirit would be qualities that arose from the practice of sport and inappropriate to a woman’s moral and physical formation (Staudt, Magalhães, 2018:235).

Therefore, the criteria to be followed by Brazilian women from the 1930s onwards were circumscribed and defined: an ideal model and another that was far from the norm, a deviation that questioned the standards and which, for this reason, could/should be harshly censored. It is important to note that, at the same time as she was disparaged, the Black woman was simultaneously presented as a transgressor of norms, someone who challenged and destabilized certain rules and distanced herself from what was considered the feminine ideal.

According to Dias (1995), in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, like today, Black women were forced out of domestic spaces and into the labor market, usually underemployed, and to act as breadwinners for their families. Precisely because of this they were held to a standard that deviated from the socially desired sweetness and femininity.

To present the plurality of bodies found in football was no easy task. When dealing with the beginnings of the sport and questions about its pioneering spirit, Cunha (2016:235) points to the importance of historical research in the quest to understand and recover its traces. The author records the presence of documentary sources, from as early as 1913, on women’s football in the peripheries. From the 1940s onwards, the presence of women’s football was associated to circuses:

the *Folha da Manhã* newspaper acknowledged the existence of ten women’s football teams in the federal capital (...). The possibility for improvisation was great, given that football fields in the

² Souza (2020) explains that the *Jornal Correio da Manhã* newspaper criticized a *women’s football team* from the Rio de Janeiro suburbs, made up of “humble” teenagers from less privileged economic backgrounds and possibly with less formal education.

peripheries were not supposed to have official measurements or follow the rules in force at the time.

[...] the games between 1913 and 1940 were concerned with presenting football, without much concern for technique. In 1913, they were circus-like performances. The carefree attitude of the players was portrayed in the newspaper article about the event, which had “more pleasant moments, especially humorous ones, because, while the fragile women players didn’t display football technique, standards of play etc. they completely pleased the audience, most of the time by their mistakes, which were received with laughter by the audience” (Cunha, 2016:235).

Regarding opinions about these presentations, the author perceives a divergence of views among the Rio de Janeiro audience, who at times praised the practice and at times criticized it, due to the fact that these women were associated with men, because “others criticized the fact that the girls began to acquire behaviors characteristic of men, such as spitting on the grass” (Cunha, 2016:235).

Leaving the domestic space and carrying out the same practices as men could be considered dangerous. As an example of this, we should remember a famous document written by José Fuzeira in the 1940s, which considered women’s teams to be “nuclei that destroy the health of 2,200 future mothers” and which was responded to by medical arguments that advised against football because it was a violent activity incompatible with women’s bodies (Souza, 2020). This document, addressed to President Getúlio Vargas, led to a sanction, the fateful Decree-Law No. 3,199, which would only be revoked in 1979 (Moraes, 2012; Kessler, 2015; Pisani, 2018). The acceptance of the letter from Fuzeira, a man unknown in the sports world (Bonfim, 2019), echoed the sports institutions of the time, which were dominated by conservative white men. As mentioned in Santos’ thesis (2021), today there is still a lack of women, Black and queer people in positions of power in football, which influences the strategies taken for the future of the sport.

Since 1941, when soccer was banned for women, there has been a gap in the history of women's soccer, which was already framed as women deviating from a supposed normality. Recently, new clues have been identified about the practice in the country. As an example we can cite the interesting story of Carlota Alves de Resende, who encouraged the creation of teams in the peripheries of Rio de Janeiro in the 1940s, and even organized amateur soccer tournaments on weekends (Bonfim, 2020).

According to Bonfim (2020), Carlota received an invitation from Argentine businessman Afonso Doce to take her players on a tour of Latin America, to places like Montevideo (Uruguay) and Santiago (Chile). This opportunity became news in the newspapers of the time and Carlota was accused of enticing her players, poor girls from the periphery, to make money from their exposure in games. Carlota was arrested and her house, where the girls met, was considered a “den”, where the players allegedly smoked and gambled (which at the time was illegal). While Carlota first appeared in the newspapers as a promoter of football in the peripheries of Rio de Janeiro, she was soon accused by the same periodicals of being a bad influence and of prostituting girls.

The image of the Brazilian female footballer always included an aspect of subversion, combining a set of socially undesirable attributes: such as Blackness, poverty or the expression of characteristics associated with masculinity. These attributes distanced these athletes from the ideal of the idealized woman who served as an example for future generations. Black women were still associated to the imagery of slavery and the colonial period in Brazil, and for a long time occupied a “non-place”, or the place of the “other of the other”. During the Republic period, although Black women had a more active role, the football they played in the 20th century was treated with invisibility and silenced. The presence of Black women is found in a few records, such as photos of a match between the Brasil Suburbano Football Club teams during a festival to inaugurate the lighting of the field of the River F.C. team, in 1931 (Bonfim, 2019).

Despite suffering criticism and bans, women never stopped playing football. To illustrate this, we can cite the research by Cunha (2016) and the historical records of the team from the city of Araguari, which played between 1958 and 1959 during the period when the ban was in force. About the period of the ban, Morel and Salles (2006) point to a 1976 article in the newspaper O Globo about domestic workers who played football at night on Leblon beach, in Rio de Janeiro, after their working hours.

The ridicule generated since the beginning of the last century around women's football culminated in a ban - justified not only by questionable scientific arguments about the fragility of women - but above all because this body was linked to the prerequisites of what was considered to belong to the masculine. Therefore, it was undesirable/incompatible with what classified and defined the woman-mother-wife, conceived as absolutely feminine at the time. In this sense, popular discourse issued a ruling: women's football was not a beautiful spectacle to watch.

Even with an argumentative arsenal that imposed silencing and invisibility, we can see that for a long time women's football questioned social standards and continued, albeit anonymously, to be practiced in suburbs and peripheries throughout the country. According to Moraes (2012), there is also evidence of this permanence in oral testimonies and documentary sources referring to Bahian women who played football in the 1970s and 1990s.

In relation to the practitioners, from the beginning of the more competitive practice, the social marks were present: Black women were considered similar to men because of their aggressiveness and masculinized stereotypes. They publicly presented strong bodies and were usually from the peripheries and suburbs of cities. Therefore, those who decided to transgress the norms of body and behavior, who took to the playing fields to tell the apparently "invisible" story of football were considered to be "macho-women", and referred to disparagingly as "machos" [tough guys] or "sapatões" [butch]. They represented much of what was compiled in a prejudiced and derogatory stereotype associated to women in Brazilian football, created from social and cultural values that perpetuated throughout the 20th century.

Thus, throughout the history of female footballers in our country, there have been frequent clashes over their entrance to a space that is culturally considered to be a place of male sociability. Although there have been changes from the previous historical context, it can be seen, according to Vieira and Rodrigues (2021), that practices that disrespect the work of female footballers persist, such as the recent embezzlement of funds allocated by the Brazilian Football Confederation (CBF) to clubs during the covid-19 pandemic.

Violence, whether symbolic or physical, has always accompanied the individual and collective trajectories of women footballers, whether through insults and verbal aggression, as we have seen; through the lack of structure, contempt and public disinterest in the institutions that should promote the sport, such as the CBF; through the legal impediment in Brazil that lasted some forty years; through the way in which the press questioned and ridiculed these women; and through the symbolic violence imposed by silencing of so many stories of Brazilian protagonists.

Newspapers as important documentary sources: observing histories about women's football in Bahia (1984)

Probably because of the ban that lasted until 1979, between the 1950s and the late 1970s there was a curtailment of the activities of female footballers', at least of official activities. It was only in the 1980s that field soccer and futsal teams emerged in greater numbers across the country, with state and national tournaments. Women continued to play in the "várzea" [informal playing fields], especially on makeshift fields. There are still gaps and "vacuums" of information about the period of legal prohibition and the subsequent period, both in terms of the subjects who played a leading role in these stories, as well as their subjectivities and daily lives, which were certainly quite difficult. What we do know is that their activities ensured the survival of the sport in the country.

This could be seen, for example, in the peripheries of the interior of Bahia, as we observed in a previous study (Moraes, 2016), and in Rio de Janeiro, on beaches and empty lots (Almeida, 2020):

Interviews with former women players from the 1980s revealed two ways of entering the world of football: the field and the beach (...).

When they were children, these women players used spaces in the streets, near their homes (...). The *várzea* was a place that brought everyone together (...). The clothes, according to reports from the time, were improvised - volleyball shorts, their brother's socks and a "kichute" (...).³

It is also in Rio de Janeiro that we find another access route: Copacabana beach was a major center from which emanated what became a fad among local youth during this period (Almeida, 2020:317)

In research carried out in the cities of Jequié and Feira de Santana (Bahia), Moraes (2012) identified teams that had been active since the early 1970s. The author reports that soccer developed on the outskirts of the city, among boys and girls, including at schools, back in the 1960s. In Feira de Santana, it was also possible to find, in testimonies and documentary sources provided by her interviewees, girls who played football on the streets of the peripheries during the 1970s. This led to the creation of several teams identified not only in these cities, but throughout Bahia, enabling state championships to be held, and the inclusion of these girls in national championships in the following decades.

In this period, and even during the legal ban on the practice, the reports suggest that the women's movement in soccer could not be turned back and its professionalization would only be a matter of time. This process was driven by the struggle of women footballers who found gaps in their daily lives to play the game. This is highlighted in an interesting article in the sports section of the newspaper *Jornal Hoje* (1984:45), from the city of Salvador, entitled "Elas entram em campo para a alegria da galera: as mulheres baianas aderiram ao futebol feminino com força total e apoio da TV Itapoan" (They enter the field to the delight of the crowd: Bahian women have adhered to women's soccer with full force and support from TV Itapoan), with a text that portrays the structural obstacles faced by female players:

Despite not having the support of the Bahian Football Federation and facing resistance from society, even from within the athletes' own families, women's soccer is now a major reality in Bahia, thanks above all to the encouragement of TV Itapoan. Channel 5 has embraced this form of sport, sponsoring the first Cup last year and currently supporting the first state championship (*Jornal Hoje*, 1984:45).

The first championship took place in 1983, with several teams that were distributed throughout much of the state. The article in *Jornal Hoje* (1984) also features the testimony of sports commentator Raimundo Varela. He said that shortly before 1983, when one of Brazil's first teams was composed to play matches in the United States, "they came to get the midfielders Solange (a star of Bahian women's soccer), Elinei and Helena Nova, all from the Baiano de Tênis team" (*Jornal Hoje*, 1984:45). The sports commentator also criticized the indifference of Giulite Coutinho, president of the CBF at the time, saying:

(he) "knows nothing about the sport". There is no support, there is a lack of greater publicity, which is only done with intensity by TV Itapoan with the collaboration of Rádio Sociedade da Bahia, the *Jornal da Bahia*, *Correio da Bahia* and some radio stations in the interior of the state that always broadcast the matches (*Jornal Hoje*, 1984:45).

The text criticizes the Confederação Baiana for not even having the organization to maintain men's soccer and for only issuing documents to officialize matches and providing referees. Bahian women's soccer began to be broadcast in 1978, when the legal impediment was still in place. In the city of Simões Filho, TV Itapoan filmed and broadcast a preliminary match between the UFBA⁴ women's soccer team and Leônico. At the time, the UFBA team included the university students Dora, Solange, Dalvinha and Helena Nova, some of whom were renowned athletes in Bahia.

³ A "Kichute" is a type of football boot produced in Brazil since the 1970s by the Alpargatas company. It is a combination of a sneaker and a football boot, made of canvas with a rubberized sole with studs.

⁴ The Federal University of Bahia, located in the capital Salvador, was the first federal university created in the state of Bahia

Complementing this data, the article in *Jornal Hoje* (1984) states that there were 200 women's soccer teams in Bahia, 120 in the capital alone and ten more in the metropolitan region. Twelve teams took part in that first championship: Bahiano de Tênis, Ipiranga, Itapagipe, Agrovecó (from Salvador), Catuense and Tejan (from Alagoinhas), Flamengo de Feira and Cajueiro (both from Feira de Santana), 13 de Maio (from Castro Alves) and the Panteras (from Ipiaú). The article also reported that Bahiano de Tênis “considered the best, pays [the athletes] from the income from the matches, with the starters receiving Cr\$ 60 to Cr\$ 70 thousand monthly” (*Jornal Hoje*, 1984:46)⁵.

The article in *Jornal Hoje* (1984) also reported that the team for football played on large fields was formed by selecting the best athletes from the futsal team. This team played matches against local teams such as Flamengo de Feira, Ipiranga and Usina, without losing a single match, even against the 1981 Rio de Janeiro state champions, Clube Federal. After winning the Copa Baiana, the team was definitively organized, with the creation of departments specifically linked to women's soccer. This allowed the team to play in the interior, responding to invitations, and remaining undefeated in all matches. Mr. Newton Mota, the team's coach at the time, lavished praise on the players:

they are attentive girls with a good grasp of instructions, intelligent and easily understand the rules. And he highlights left midfielder Solange, goalkeeper Norminha (a position in which almost no team has a good athlete, perhaps because they play with fear of being hit in the breasts and belly), midfielder and center forward Tânia Meireles (*Jornal Hoje*, 1984:46).

The two-page article provided a wealth of information about women's football (for example, that the sport began in Bahia in 1959). The article went on to discuss the playing conditions, as well as the improvised conditions.

In the interior - Nazaré das Farinhas⁶, Feira de Santana⁷, Santo Antônio de Jesus⁸... - there were also teams that emerged from games between boys and girls, on makeshift pitches that could be in a street, or on a vacant lot (*Jornal Hoje*, 1984:46).

Until the end of the last century most of these encounters took place in the streets, according to Giglio (2005), indicating the informality of the environment of the sport that began as a game. Playing ball in the street, what they essentially understand as football, children develop skills that have made several generations of Brazilians unquestionable athletes and sports stars. Giglio (2005) was referring to men's football, his object of analysis. But the same applies to women. After all, just like the boys, many began to play on the “várzea”, the improvised fields on vacant lots. Having fun with the ball at their feet and beginning their insertion into the “babas”.⁹ This is how these girls developed and increased their technical quality of play, definitively linking their lives to soccer. Looking at it this way, i.e. through the culture, it becomes easier to understand the relationship between the girls and the “babas”, and their soccer. Deepening the understanding of this relationship, from our point of view, is fundamental.

Finally, the newspaper also featured an interview with Solange Rebouças Barbosa, 24, one of the stars of Bahian soccer, the number eight shirt of the Clube Bahiano de Tênis (*Jornal Hoje*, 1984:46):

One of six children born to Antônio Barbosa a farmer and the retired teacher Maria do Carmo Alves Rebouças, Solange talks about the taboo regarding women's football, saying that it had been worse, “traumatizing”, and affirms that the prejudice is greater for women. A physical education

⁵ The salary in February 1984 was Cr\$57,120.00 (Decree 88.930 of 1983) (Audtec, 2022). The players on the Bahiano de Tênis team were therefore paid slightly less than the minimum wage.

⁶ Nazaré das Farinhas is located in the interior of Bahia, in the central southern portion of the Recôncavo Baiano region, along the Jaguaripe River. The municipality is 79 km from the state capital [<http://www.v-brazil.com/tourism/bahia/map-bahia.htm>] - accessed: 11 December 2020].

⁷ Feira de Santana is a municipality in the Salvador Metropolitan region, 108 kilometers from the capital.

⁸ Santo Antônio de Jesus is also in the interior of Bahia, 187 km from the capital. It is considered the capital of the Recôncavo Baiano region.

⁹ A “baba” is a recreational game of football with open rules, usually among friends. The term is used mainly in the states of Bahia, Pernambuco, and Sergipe.

teacher, the athlete, who has already received invitations, even to join the Radar team in Rio de Janeiro, is not thinking of becoming a professional, but wants to continue playing, as she says: "(...) as long as possible" (*Jornal Hoje*, 1984:46).

In addition to revealing the existence of the sport in the 1950s in Bahia, the article indicates the considerable number of journalistic sources in that period, as well as the significant number of teams and women athletes who composed the soccer scene in the 1980s.

In this sense, we once again highlight the importance of historical research for understanding this universe, combining documentary sources with the resources of memory and oral history. Together, these elements will be able to uncover facts that are still completely unknown and will make it possible to realize how much we still need to discover about the histories and trajectories of Brazil's women athletes.

Final Considerations

There is much to be researched and reviewed in Brazilian women's soccer, because we are dealing with a space that is still thought of based on binary gender divisions. History shows us various social structures forged to perpetuate this division, while studies are increasingly enabling us to understand that women never stopped playing, even when legally forbidden to do so. The binomials that classify male versus female, heteronormativity versus homosexuality, Black versus white, for example, have not been able to locate Black and poor women in these environments - and here we are talking about a very substantial portion of women in Brazilian soccer.

When we add aspects of gender to this context, we are considering characteristics and social places that have defined and imposed various forms of violence and silencing on the stories of female footballers, and on the history of the sport itself. It is likely that if these women had met the standards of white femininity, and had been from the elite or middle class, they would have gained more visibility and support in the press and history.

We believe that it is important for new studies to focus on issues related to intersectionality, given that various social markers of difference have been made invisible for a long time. To look at these aspects is to defend quality historical research that is attentive to diversity. The course of history can be plural, attentive to understanding everyday actions that allow questioning standards, choosing new ones, and reconstructing societies as a whole.

With regard to women in Brazilian football, we can recognize their struggle and understand how much they destabilized binary gender standards that were quite useful to male interests. Women footballers have helped us to look at and think about not only the world of sport, but society itself, raising questions about powers which, precisely because they are hegemonic, have always been open to problematization.

It is in this sense that historical research and memory help us to discover even more about this universe which, after all, speaks not only about soccer or soccer in Brazil. It speaks about the strength and courage of Brazilian women. It expresses resistance and different ways of producing football.

References

AKOTIRENE, Carla. *Interseccionalidade*. São Paulo, Editora Jandaíra, 2022.

ALMEIDA, Caroline Soares de. Nas praias e nas várzeas: o movimento do retorno do futebol feminino da década de 1970 e início de 1980. In: KESSLER, Cláudia; COSTA, Leda; PISANI, Mariane (org.). *As mulheres no universo do futebol brasileiro*. Santa Maria, Editora da Universidade Federal de Santa Maria, RS, 2020.

ALMEIDA, Caroline Soares de. Mulheres futebolistas: debates sobre violência e moral durante o Estado Novo brasileiro. *Lusotopie* (1), XVIII, 2019, pp.95-118 [<https://journals.openedition.org/lusotopie/3844> – acesso em 22 mai. 2024].

AUDTEC. *Tabelas de valores de salário mínimo de 1940 a 2022*, [s.d] [<https://audtecgestao.com.br/capa.asp?inford=1336> – acesso em 14 fev. 2022].

- BONFIM, Aira Fernandes. *Os Torcedores*. Carlota Resende: a dirigente do futebol que planejou excursionar com jogadoras e foi presa em 1941, 7 mar. 2020 [<https://www.torcedores.com/noticias/2020/03/carlota-resende-a-dirigente-do-futebol-que-planejou-excursionar-com-jogadoras-e-foi-presa-em-1941> – acesso em 10 out. 2020].
- BONFIM, Aira Fernandes. *Football Feminino entre festas esportivas, circos e campos suburbanos: uma história social do futebol praticado por mulheres da introdução à proibição (1915-1941)*. Dissertação (Mestrado em História Política e Bens Culturais), Escola de Ciências Sociais, Fundação Getúlio Vargas, Rio de Janeiro, 2019 [<https://repositorio.fgv.br/items/01930c3e-8765-49b2-ab18-13bbcbb49f4b> – acesso em 22 maio 2024].
- BRASIL. Decreto-Lei nº 3.199, de 14 de abril 1941. *Diário oficial da União*, seção 1, pp.7453 [<https://www2.camara.leg.br/legin/fed/decllei/1940-1949/decreto-lei-3199-14-abril-1941-413238-publicacaooriginal-1-pe.html> – acesso em 15 ago. 2023].
- CERTEAU, Michel de. *A invenção do cotidiano: artes de fazer*. Petrópolis, Vozes, 1998.
- COLLINS, Patricia; BILGE, Sirma. *Interseccionalidade*. Polity Press, 2016.
- CRENSHAW, Kimberlé. Documento para o encontro de especialistas em aspectos da discriminação racial relativos ao gênero. *Revista Estudos Feministas*, Florianópolis, ano 10, 2002, pp.171-188 [<https://www.scielo.br/j/ref/a/mbTpP4SFXPnJZ397j8fSBQQ/abstract/?lang=pt> – acesso em 22 maio 2024].
- CRENSHAW, Kimberlé. *Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics*. University of Chicago Legal Forum, 1989 [<https://chicagounbound.uchicago.edu/uclf/vol1989/iss1/8> – acesso em 15 ago. 2023].
- CUNHA, Teresa Cristina de Paiva. O início do futebol feminino no Brasil: divergências históricas e o pioneirismo na prática. In: KESSLER, Cláudia Samuel (org.). *Mulheres na área: gênero, diversidade e inserções no futebol*. Porto Alegre, Editora da UFRGS, 2016, pp.233-254.
- DIAS, Maria Odila Leite da Silva. *Quotidiano e Poder em São Paulo no século XIX*. 2ed., São Paulo, Brasiliense, 1995.
- DUNNING, Eric; MAGUIRE, Joseph. As relações entre os sexos no esporte. *Revista Estudos Feministas*, 5(2), 1997, pp.321-348 [<https://periodicos.ufsc.br/index.php/ref/article/view/12151> – acesso em 22 mai. 2024]. Xerox de Fonte impressa, pertencente ao acervo pessoal e gentilmente cedida pela ex-atleta de Futebol, Solange Santos Bastos, Feira de Santana (BA), 2010.
- GIGLIO, Sérgio Settani. Futebol-arte ou futebol-força? O estilo brasileiro em jogo. In: DAOLIO, Jocimar (org.). *Futebol, cultura e sociedade*. Campinas, Autores Associados, 2005.
- GOELLNER, Silvana Vilodre. Sissi, a Imperatriz: entrevista com Sisleide Lima do Amor. *Fúlia*, 4(1), UFMG, 2019, pp.117-133 [<https://periodicos.ufmg.br/index.php/fulia/article/view/14661> – acesso em 22 maio 2024].
- GOELLNER, Silvana Vilodre. *Bela, maternal e feminina: imagens da mulher na Revista Educação Physica*. Tese (Doutorado em Educação), Universidade Estadual de Campinas, Campinas, 1999 [<https://lume.ufrgs.br/handle/10183/2709> – acesso em 22 maio 2024].
- KESSLER, Cláudia Samuel. *Mais que Barbies e ostras: uma etnografia do futebol de mulheres no Brasil e nos Estados Unidos*. Tese (Doutorado em Antropologia Social), UFRGS, Porto Alegre, 2015 [<https://lume.ufrgs.br/handle/10183/131770> – acesso em 22 maio 2024].
- MARTINS, Mariana Zuaneti; SILVA, Kerzia Railane Santos; VASQUEZ, Vitor. As mulheres e o país do futebol: intersecções de gênero, classe e raça no Brasil. *Movimento* (27), 2021 [<https://seer.ufrgs.br/Movimento/article/view/109328> – acesso em 22 maio 2024].
- MORAES, Enny Vieira. O gramado como espaço de disputa entre gêneros: alguns aspectos sobre a história do futebol feminino no Brasil. In: KESSLER, Cláudia Samuel. *Mulheres na área: gênero, diversidade e inserções no futebol*. Porto Alegre, Editora da UFRGS, 2016, pp.193-210.
- MORAES, Enny Vieira. *As mulheres também são boas de bola: histórias de vida de jogadoras baianas*. Tese (Doutorado em História), Pontifícia Universidade Católica de São Paulo, São Paulo, 2012 [<https://tede2.pucsp.br/handle/handle/12739> – acesso em 22 maio 2024].

- MOREL, Márcia; SALLES, José Geraldo do C. Futebol Feminino. In: DACOSTA, Lamartine (org.). *Atlas do esporte no brasil*. Rio De Janeiro, CONFEF, 2006, pp.1.
- MOURA, Eriberto José Lessa de. As relações entre lazer, futebol e gênero. Dissertação (Mestrado em Educação Física), Programa de Pós-Graduação da Faculdade de Educação Física, Universidade Estadual de Campinas, Campinas, 2003 [https://repositorio.unicamp.br/acervo/detalhe/346938 – acesso em 22 maio 2024].
- PERROT, Michelle. Entrevista: A força da memória e da pesquisa histórica. *Projeto História* (17), São Paulo, nov. 1998 [https://revistas.pucsp.br/index.php/revph/article/view/11133 – acesso em 22 maio 2024].
- PISANI, Mariane. “Sou feita de chuva, sol e barro”: o futebol de mulheres praticado na cidade de São Paulo. Tese de Doutorado (Antropologia Social), Universidade de São Paulo, São Paulo, 2018 [https://www.teses.usp.br/teses/disponiveis/8/8134/tde-11102018-110139/pt-br.php – acesso em 22 maio 2024].
- POLLAK, Michael. Memória, esquecimento, silêncio. *Revista Estudos Históricos*, 2(3), 1989, pp.3-15 [https://periodicos.fgv.br/reh/article/view/2278 – acesso em 22 maio 2024].
- RIBEIRO, Raphael Rajão. Da proibição do futebol de mulheres: a atuação do Conselho Nacional de Desportos e a interdição esportiva feminina no Brasil (1941-1957). *Tempo*, 29(2), mai.-ago. 2023 [https://www.scielo.br/j/tem/a/8qYpfxJRJfQbm8qdWGBfJMp/ – acesso em 22 maio 2024].
- SANTOS, Ineildes Calheiro dos. Nem mulheres, nem negrxs, nem queer of colour (QOC) na liderança do futebol brasileiro!: a interseccionalidade no esporte. Tese (Doutorado Multi Institucional em Difusão do Conhecimento), UFBA, Salvador, 2021 [https://repositoriodev.ufba.br/bitstream/ri/33477/1/Tese_Ineildes%20Calheiro%20dos%20Santos.pdf – acesso em 22 maio 2024].
- SILVA, Kelen Katia Prates. “O jogo das letras”: Práticas esportivas e futebol de mulheres nas páginas do *Jornal dos Sports* (1931-1941). Dissertação (Mestrado em História), Universidade Federal da Grande Dourados, Dourados, 2019 [https://repositorio.ufgd.edu.br/jspui/handle/prefix/5794 – acesso em 22 maio 2024].
- SOIHET, Rachel. O Corpo Feminino como lugar de Violência. *Projeto História* (25), São Paulo, 2002 [https://revistas.pucsp.br/revph/article/viewFile/10592/7882 – acesso em 26 out. 2020].
- SOUZA, Denaldo Alchorne de. A “Primavera” do futebol feminino (1940-1941) (2ª e última parte). *Ludopédio*, 129(38), São Paulo, 2020 [https://ludopedio.org.br/arquibancada/a-primavera-do-futebol-feminino-1940-19412a-e-ultima-parte/ – acesso em 22 maio 2024].
- STAUDT, Jéferson Luis; MAGALHÃES, Magna Lima. “Naturalmente” feias, subalternas e masculinas: representações da mulher negra na revista *Educação Physica* (1939-1944). *MÉTIS: História & Cultura*, 17(33), jan./jun. 2018, pp.227-247 [http://www.ucs.br/etc/revistas/index.php/metis/article/view/6691 – acesso em 10 nov. 2021].
- VIEIRA, Talita M.; RODRIGUES, Joyce C. Fora de jogo? *Revista Espaço Acadêmico* (20), pp.112-122, 2021 [https://periodicos.uem.br/ojs/index.php/EspacoAcademico/article/view/57145 – acesso em 22 maio 2024].