



Women and 'futebol' in Brazil: an autoethnographic study

Master by Research thesis

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Abstract

"As a little girl I dreamed of being a ballet dancer, because that's what was expected of me as a well-behaved, delicate girl. Today, however, I wear my boots and grab my whistle: In Australia, I am a football referee. Growing up in Brazil in the 1970s, women were forbidden to play *futebol* – a ban that, after 38 years, ended in 1979." Applying autoethnography as a method, this study investigates the norms and values within the Brazilian society and its views towards women in football. Exploring my own history as a female growing up in Brazil and the influences of traditional Brazilian gender and social norms, I reflect upon my own prejudicial attitudes towards the sport. Until today female football players continue to face difficulties and barriers for recognition and development due to the lack of support and promotion, as well as lack of interest in women's football. This dissertation examines gender and social inequalities in Brazilian football using sociological and historical lenses and a reflexive methodology. Divided into mini-audio episodes, I write the self into the research as a way of achieving wider cultural, political and social understanding about women's football and the possibility of change.

Statement of authenticity

I, Luciane Lauffer, declare that this thesis is my own work
and it has not been submitted for a higher degree to any other university or institution.

Luciane Lauffer

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Introduction

*Samba, Carnaval, Futebol*¹: Three words which carry Brazil's trademark abroad, but not necessarily in that order. It has been the sport of *futebol* that for over 100 years has reshaped the country's national identity.

This research project is an exploration of *futebol* through the eyes of a Brazilian woman living in Australia. Examining the different aspects of the sport and its direct relation to the construction of society as it is today, I take dual perspectives in my analysis: from the inside, as a player and a referee; and from the outside as a fan and supporter. It is also a dual geographical perspective from inside and outside Brazil.

Focusing on football allows us to explore the importance of this particular sport for women worldwide: it is the fastest growing team sport globally, currently involving an estimate of 30 million players, a figure projected to expand to 45 million² by 2019 (Fédération Internationale de Football Association [FIFA] 2015, p. 1). Its relevance and impact as a group and physical activity for women will be further explored in Chapter 2.

As a sport, Gilberto Freyre (1947) wrote that, despite the attempts to make other sports as popular, "...the development of *futebol* in Brazil became a national institution, allowing the sublimation of all our irrational social and cultural traits" (cited in Stein 2015a, para 1). Today, the game of the round ball is so intertwined in the country's identity that it is impossible to separate aspects such as music, language and arts from the sport (*ibid*, para 5). Hence, in Brazilian society, *futebol* is embedded in the definition of the country's way of life (Souza & Antônio, 2014; Guterman, 2009; Stein 2015a, para 4), almost appropriating the form of a religion³. Therefore, analyzing the sport's many facets is to scrutinize the nuances of the social interaction or social and cultural cues in Brazil.

These origins and influences and their importance to the country deserve a broader study in itself. As for this project, I focus my reflections upon questioning the restrictions to women's participation and acceptance in the sport in Brazil, and examine the mechanisms embedded in the reasoning for their exclusion. From the early beginnings of women's sexual liberation, sports have received little attention from feminists and academia (Bennett, Whitaker, Smith & Sablove 1987; Williams, Lawrence & Rowe, 1985) maintaining its label of a problem-free landscape despite the presence of key issues such as discrimination, disadvantage and prejudice (Women's Advisory Council to the Premier 1985, p. 9). Furthermore, to the present day, the feminist fight has only partially changed

¹ Association Football or Soccer. It will be used whenever referring to the sport in Brazil.

² Despite the projected growth, the figures are still small compared to men's football, estimated to be practiced by almost 240 million male players in 207 countries (Kunz 2006, p. 14).

³ A common saying in Brazil is: "*futebol* is my religion".

the landscape of sports for women, especially in the areas of funding and access to sports outside Western countries (Jarvie & Thornton 2012, p. 104).

In my analysis, I use concepts from the sociology of sport, Brazilian history⁴, as well as key concepts of Pierre Bourdieu's and Berger and Luckmann's theoretical frames. While Bourdieu explores the different aspects of masculine domination⁵, I apply Berger and Luckmann's Social Construction of Reality models to decode how these concepts are internalized within the gender norms in Brazil.

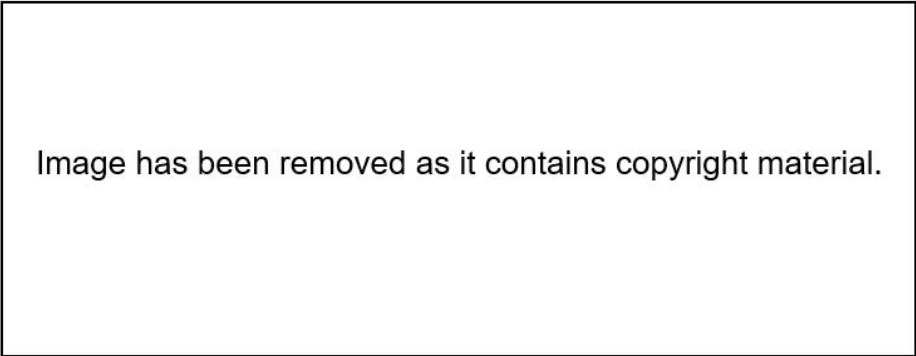


Image has been removed as it contains copyright material.

Figure 1 - Masculine domination? Technical staff for Brazil's women national team celebrate the gold medal at the Pan American Games 2015, in Canada. Photo: Rafael Ribeiro/CBF

In a patriarchal society, *futebol* as a historically male dominant sport has been the conveyor of the social and gender order. Since the formal beginnings of the sport in Brazil, at the end of the 1800s, women had one role in the sport: supporters on the sidelines. The early accounts present stories of women beautifully dressed (Guterman 2009; Capraro 2007), detailing their presence more as an embellishment of the stands. However, once women started to take to the pitches in the 1920's, their presence defied the moral standards of the time, to which the federal government responded, banning women from the fields for almost 38 years, from 1941.

To date, very few books actually explore the theme of women's participation in *futebol*. Works such as Hong and Mangan's "Soccer, Women and Sexual Liberation" (2003) is a rare exception. More recently, the UK's Goldblatt (2014) recovered the history of the sport in Brazil, but dedicated less than four pages of secondary sources to women footballers. Therefore, his work will not be added to this thesis. A more in-depth study of *futebol*'s history lies in Brazilian Marcos Guterman's "Futebol

⁴ While some aspects of sport share common characteristics, it is questionable that it happens in the same way in two given countries. Hence, it is pivotal to analyze the historical elements in each one (Jarvie & Thornton 2013, p. 53).

⁵ See Figure 1.

explains Brazil”⁶ (2009), however only mentioning women as players’ mothers or as supporters on the stands. These two examples point out what Del Priore (2007) claims as the “denial of the historical role women play in Brazil, which has allowed the dissemination of stereotypes” (p. 11).

With this gap in mind, my research will bring *futebol* and its cultural perspectives under a feminist light. In this thesis, I present my own experiences of the contrasting realities of women’s football in Australia, where I live, while comparing it to and questioning the discriminatory state of women’s sport in the *futebol* nation of Brazil. I use autoethnography as the method to tell my own story and to self-reflect upon my own experiences related to others’ stories.

As a qualitative research method, autoethnography, according to Fleming & Fullagar (2007), encourages new readership in the fields of sport and leisure, in which the participants are able to question “the complex power relations that regulate freedom, participation and leadership” (p. 253). These qualities allowed me to explore my own process of transformation from a supporter in the *stadia* in Brazil into a referee, goalkeeper and kids coach in Australia. Using my audio passages, I reflect upon these stages of conformity and change, and analyze the different steps of my transition, as well as my motivations for such a transformation.

How to read this thesis

This research is presented as a composite of two distinct elements: 14 mini-audio recordings, each one followed by an analytical written component. My choice for audio as a practical component is motivated by three factors: firstly, as a former radio-journalist in Brazil, I understand the power of voice and the personal narrative. The second factor is directly related to the history of *futebol*: radio, as the most immediate form of media in the 1930s was actually critical in shaping the sport’s identity in Brazil through broadcasting matches. Radio’s contribution was described as a ‘game changer’ since the first broadcast in July 1931 (Guterman 2009, chap. 4). Finally, and perhaps most importantly, using audio is a metaphorical representation to *giving voice* to the women who are unable to tell their own stories of struggles and challenges around the world.

In Chapter One, I introduce autoethnography as the methodology used in this research. In Chapter Two there are 14 mini-audios presented in the form of life passages which constitute my data. For each one, I present the written theoretical frame in addition to my self-reflexive analysis about these experiences.

I hope the reader will enjoy listening to these passages, engage in the Brazilian passion for the game of *futebol*, and will understand women’s need for recognition not only in sports, but in all sectors of life.

⁶ Original title in Portuguese: “O Futebol Explica o Brasil”.

Chapter 1

Autoethnography as my Method

The writing of transforming auto-ethnography, containing multiple layers of consciousness, connecting the personal to the cultural ... has the potential to move both the author and the readers into the Landscape of Transformation.

(Emphasis in original – Dyson 2007, p. 46)

1. Introduction

Aiming to explore the aspects of my lived experiences as a woman in football, the research method I employ in this thesis is autoethnography. Described as a qualitative method that “seeks to describe and systematically analyze personal experience in order to understand cultural experience” (Ellis, Adams & Bochner 2011, p. 273), autoethnography is the only methodology to allow me to acknowledge and accommodate my own subjectivity, emotionality and influence as a form of research (ibid 2011, p. 274).

Much more than telling my own story in an autobiographical narrative, this method permits me to rethink not only the process, but to be able to question old against newly gained knowledge, since my course of change, or as Denzin (2014) defines, an *epiphany*. This concept refers to “...interactional moments and experiences which leave marks on people’s lives... They alter the fundamental meaning structures in a person’s life” (p. 52). Chang (2008, p. 74) refers to this change as *extraordinary events*, or anything that disrupts a comfortably established routine. In my process, I call it “the awakening”.

The advantages of examining this moment of ‘crisis’ are best validated by Reed-Danahay (1997). She writes that “the notion of auto-ethnography foregrounds the multiple nature of selfhood and opens up new ways of writing about social life. A dualistic view of the auto-ethnographer may be better substituted with one stressing multiple, shifting identities” (p.3).

In this research, I use my own ‘transformational’ experience from a *futebol* supporter raised in Brazil into a football referee, player and coach after moving to Australia. From this transition, I start to question the pre-established norms that require women to occupy a restricted space, normally away from the *futebol* pitches in Brazil.

Having this in mind, my objective is to tell my personal story as a female in a country where the main sport is designed by and for men and my transition when moving to a country where football is just *another* sport. These experiences are being remembered, reflexively reviewed and analyzed in this thesis. Such relativist criteria (Sparkes & Smith 2009, p. 496) accommodate my particular context and

purpose in women's sport and do not intend to be a one-size-fits-all approach. They sprout from my point of view as a 'gendered being' in sport (Allen-Collinson 2013, p. 283).

Autoethnographic writing as increasingly influential in academic social science and humanities research, as it does not produce the traditional written paper (Hackley 2007). It instead requires personal reflection and the direct standing of the author and his/her research product, using his/her own tone in writing and collecting and presenting biographical matter as data (ibid, p. 98).

This total immersion of the autoethnographer emerges to present a real alternative to the impossible ideal of *neutrality* imposed to a researcher, initially bestowed as the only approach to research. In fact, no person can refrain him or herself entirely his or her own views and biases in framing or describing the results of his/her research (Dyson 2007, p.38). Particularly in the field of sports, Fleming and Fullagar (2007) advocate about the importance of autoethnography as a method which allows "...a unique approach for leisure and sport management students to reflect upon what they bring to their professional roles and how they may engage with professional cultures to bring about social change" (p. 239). Distinctively from other disciplines, the sports researcher has the advantage of inserting oneself as the fully embodied 'key-player' of his/her explorations (Allen-Collinson 2013, p. 281).

2. Brief history of autoethnography

As a qualitative research method, autoethnography applies the analysis (*graphy*) of a single (*auto*) experience as a reference to comprehend larger social (*ethno*) experiences (Holman Jones, 2005, as cited in Ellis et al. 2011, p. 273). It has been used for about 40 years not only by anthropologists and sociologists, but also by literary critics (Reed-Danahay 1997, p. 4).

Autoethnography springs from ethnography as employed in anthropology. As a method, autoethnography has become more useful to the once 'neutral, unbiased' researcher who can now, as an objective observer, be a subjective participant of a given group (Angrosino 2007, p. 5). From ethnography, in which a researcher is immersed in a particular culture under study (ibid, p. 14), autoethnography gathers pace when applied to the self (*auto*) study that becomes the one of self-analysis. It shares the characteristics of field-based, long-term commitment and personalized to the extent that the researcher also is engaged in this environment (ibid, p. 15).

In the sociological context, autoethnography can be described as an approach to methodology, in which anthropologists study their own peers about a specific theme (Hayano, 1979, as cited in Reed-Danahay 1997). This characteristic brings the autoethnographer to the category of an 'insider'. The researcher's qualities lie in partaking in some form of affiliation to a given group, which can be recognizable and asserted by their members (Svensson 1997, p. 100).

In defense of academic criticisms of the method, Denzin (2014) states: “auto-ethnography cannot be judged by traditional positivist criteria. The goal is not to produce a standard social science article. The goal is to write performance texts in a way that moves others to ethical action” (p. 70). Bochner (1994, p. 24) sees autoethnography as possessing characteristics which are linked to the field of human sciences. The knowledge we want to gain takes us into the social landscape. Autoethnography enables the reader to relate to our various stories, adding the all-important researcher’s voice in speaking for the world (ibid, p. 26).

3. The power of one (story)

In today’s society, storytelling can be conveyed by the sole voice of one individual. Differently from older forms of collective memory, now the concept of individual identity is, instead, highly regarded and even demanded (Svensson 1997, p. 92). These remembrances now can be expressed by a single story, such as memoirs and autobiographies (ibid, p. 93). Avoiding the cracks of pessimistic critics of the single story, Squire (2013, p. 62) promotes the view that a narrative approach needs to expand its focus to the social and cultural aspects of a particular story. In addition, Lindgren and Phillips (2011, p. 76) remind us how the contribution of story-telling has been seen positively by social science researchers in diverse areas of academic exploration.

From an autoethnographic account, recounting my experiences and lived emotions serves another purpose, especially in the dimension of a personified sports researcher. Such physical dimension marks an ethnographic move for action (Pelias 2004, p. 1) as “an embodied (sports studies) project that matters must locate the body within a radically contextual politics” (Denzin, 2012, as cited in Allen-Collinson 2013, p. 283). Within the body, the author’s heart also comes into play through his/her own perspectives and choices on how to organize and depict the results of a given research (Chang 2008, p. 35).

In the first person storytelling, narratives can be seen and studied not as events *per se*, but rather as experiences (Squire 2013, p. 47). This experience-centered approach comes from stories that are human, meaningful, and reconstitute and express experience, also presenting transformation and change (ibid, p. 48). Applying this model, I am narrating the history of *futebol* as a national icon and a woman’s place within this scenario.

There is always an aspect of *others* even when just defining *self*. “The irony of self-narratives is that they are of self but not self alone. Others often enter self-narratives as persons intimately and remotely connected to self” (Chang 2008, p. 33). Throughout this project, I delve into the sometimes silent, invisible discrimination suffered by Brazilian female footballers. The power of a single narrative is to reflect and give a voice to hundreds of other silent stories.

4. The audio format

I compartmentalize key football-related passages of my life into 14 audio episodes. They are my data as well as my data collection tool. Placing my own story at the center of this analysis, autoethnography defines the elements of the author's own self-observations and experiences as main data (Dyson 2007, p. 38). In this sense, I take the place of an insider with the critical and analytical views of an outsider.

These key elements of my life as a female and my relationship to football are presented in mini audio recordings. The narrative style for the audio segment is the most appropriate option when exploring personal experiences and exhorting others to action. As storytelling, narratives contribute to "...human sense-making (and as) representation and reconstruction" of a given experience (Andrews, Squire & Tamboukou 2013, p. 50).

Using these audio episodes as a practical tool is also another way for autoethnographers to communicate their research through adding intimate elements, such as sentiment and personification (Ellis et al. 2011, p. 274). Davies (2003, p. 19) suggests that adding the practice to written research may serve best for creative arts practitioners, to whom the traditional academic models may resemble an encrypted code.

The choice of audio recordings proposes a means of conveying a message in a simple, yet undervalued way. As a direct metaphor for giving someone a voice, I am inviting others to repeat this process to tell their own stories. In a practical form of 'giving voice to the voiceless', Parry and Fullagar (2013) suggest that one of the most valuable contributions of autoethnography to the rising feminist methodologies, is allow the study of "...gendered leisure experiences as serious objects/subjects of inquiry, but also problematize and analyze the sociopolitical context that shapes possibilities for women..." (p. 577).

Finally, as for the use of audio, Lindgren and Phillips (2011) state how there is limited emphasis on radio production and its studies as part of academic life by researchers, especially those media-based:

Radio tends to be taken for granted as a background medium, a natural part of everyday existence where mostly the listener is thinking about something else...(hence) as a secondary medium, it can be seen as less important than other media... (p. 77)

This audio experience, may serve to broaden the use of radio as a way to expand this study into a documentary, exploring the stories of other women in sport.

The following chapter will present my story and my reflections upon the experiences I have had in and out of football throughout my life.

Chapter 2

Futebol and me

2.1 - Born into football

From an early age, gender pre-defines life activities. Social norms have divided habits into masculine and feminine (Bourdieu 2000, p.30). Within patriarchal rules, the same activity is valued differently for boys and girls, with “men decid(ing) what is proper behavior for both sexes” (Fasting 1987, p. 361). The ‘ballet for girls, football for boys’ divide demonstrates the adults’ influences in childrens’ physical activities (Bleichmar, 1988, as cited in Knijnik & Horton 2013), that gradually shape stereotypes to form prejudice (Santos, Oliveira & Wichi 2013, para 2).

Debates involving sport and women have explored how life and its experiences follow this gendered divide (Jarvie & Thornton 2012, p. 387). In physical activities girls are normally directed to those requiring little complexity, limited cooperation and small need for space, while boys are placed into intense physical activities (Bennett et al 1987, p. 370).

In a deeper sociological analysis of gender norms, Bourdieu (2001) determines that, to feel included, one would have “... embodied the historical structures of the masculine order in the form of unconscious schemes of perception and appreciation” (p. 5). Hence my redirected interest for dancing in my school years, instead of my passion for climbing things during early childhood. I would have received much more attention and praise, especially from my mother, for performing delicately than for bruising my knees and legs or for developing my skills as a runner.

Until today, in patriarchal Brazilian society, boys’ and girls’ roles are clearly pre-defined and *institutionalized* into society. Applying Berger and Luckmann’s concepts from the Social Construction of Reality theory (1966), the process of *institutionalization* of norms is crystalized through the *habitualization* of practices: that is, through repetition, they become habits. In the case of women and *futebol*, male-centered customs gradually *habitualized* the model of sport as fast, violent, demanding muscular strength and a robust physique (Williams et al, 1985; Hong & Mangan, 2003). In opposition, women are defined as fragile and delicate, and hence not suitable for this sport (Mourão & Morel, 2008; Martins & Moraes, 2014).

Such gendered division excludes women from participation, which is repeated since childhood. These norms of exclusion present double standards (Eichler 1987): In *futebol*, while women are highly encouraged to dress in their team colors and take the stands, they remain discouraged from taking to the pitch. Here, the old normative structures of masculine domination remain entrenched (Souza & Antônio 2014, para 61), *institutionalized* and reproduced by both men and women in this social context. In this order, when men take the pitch, women embellish the sidelines.

If one is to predict change on the landscape of sports and physical activity in future generations, Bennett et al. (1987, p. 387) suggest adults observe how children are playing today, and in what sports and activities they are developing their skills. If I look around in Australia, I can see many girls involved in different sports. On the other hand, very few girls are kicking a ball on the streets of Brazil.

2.2 - In the 1970's

Despite technological advances, radio still plays a role in live futebol as supporters carry their devices to follow the tense developments of a match – a foul, a corner, a goal. I tried to follow live football on the radio in Australia, but there was no similarity. And I had no idea why...

Radio's influences in futebol go back to the 1930's, when the new medium was introduced in Brazil. With growing interest in the sport, journalists aimed to extend a match's coverage by broadcasting it live (Guterman 2009, chap. 4). The experience would change the sport forever: Taking the games well beyond the confines of the stadium, radio created idols, developed new expressions and immortalized the narration of a goal (ibid, chap. 4).

With the arrival of TV in the 1970's, a new scenario took place, but the existence of video did not exclude radio, as they carry different elements. "TV reflects and constructs the social imaginary through image and discourse... (also when it is) concerned about futebol" (Rial 2003, p. 62). While on radio there is a clear coverage limitation, TV restricts the facets of a given event by judging and excluding/including certain components and moments of the game. Hence, what is not shown can be interpreted by the viewers as if it never happened (ibid, p. 69).

By winning its third FIFA World Cup title in 1970, Brazil exhibited a newly developed nationalism through sport. Futebol became the pennant of a country on the verge of economic growth, attempting to reach global recognition, as the military regime used this to cement the concepts of patriotism and the success of an emerging nation (Guterman 2009, chap. 7). At that time, through focusing on the sport, the visual media was reinforcing the construction of this image through repeatedly displaying the Brazilian flag in the stadium and the portrayal of players in a close relationship to those in power (Rial 2003, p. 73-74).

A sociological analysis of sport confirms this nationalist aspect, in which the case for 'power' in sport involves more than one aspect of it, including the one of hegemony, or the acceptance of a notion of "nationhood" (Marjoribanks & Farquharson 2012, p. 3). I can recall our passion and flag waving on the streets, and the images of our team and the crowds in yellow, blue and green on TV as a key moment in our lives.

If the 1970's meant consolidation, I understand the development of futebol as the national sport in Brazil as the tool of social agglutination at the beginning of the last century (Franzini 2005, p. 316). Emerging in a country of vast diversity, futebol was formally introduced in the country in the 1890's (Stein 2015a, para 2), at a time when Brazil was undergoing its third colonization wave (Ribeiro 2006, p. 394).

I infer that futebol became a cohering factor (Messner 1988, p. 199-200) to accommodate the different cultures, languages and customs to form a Brazilian identity. Defined as the era of the first 'masculinity crisis', the 1890's through to the 1920's presented the development of mass recreation as a vehicle for cultural integration for immigrants and the working class into a new capitalist order (ibid, p. 199). Futebol in Brazil was the common ground to acclimatize these newly freed black slaves, white aristocrats and new immigrants, the last named becoming the founders of many of Brazil's clubs at that time (Stein, 2015b; Guterman, 2009).

2.3 - And the end of the 1970's

During the decade that Brazilian *futebol* consolidated its dominance in the men's global arena, women were only being allowed back onto the pitches, after almost 40 years of exclusion. I personally learnt about it only four years ago. "In Brazilian history, women have been constantly portrayed under the light of stereotypes, creating the illusion of their immobility", writes feminist historian Mary del Priore (2007, p. 11). I have noticed this apparent stillness when researching on women's *futebol*.

Hence, there are few accounts about when women started playing *futebol* in the country (Rial 2014b, para 12), with some authors writing about a match in 1913 (Franzini 2005, p. 317) while others mention another in 1921, but emphasizing that *futebol* had been also informally practiced on the beach and on the streets (Santos et al. 2013, para 6-7).

From its humble beginnings, soon after the sport started to shake the gender norms in the country. At a time when some European countries had started racial 'whitening' in the mid 1930's, Brazil would follow the trend. Even in men's *futebol* the dark-skinned players were a target for discrimination and controversy until the 1970's (Guterman 2009, ch 1).

For women, however, the development of a "Brazilian race" had direct constraints: a government decree⁷ ruled it illegal for women to play sports that were deemed violent, which included weightlifting, rugby and boxing (Mourão & Morel, 2008; Santos et al., 2013). Contact sports, such as

⁷ The article 54 of the Decree 3199 released by the National Sports Council was introduced in 14 April 1941 and made official in 1965, banning women from the practice of sports deemed violent (Franzini, 2005; Goellner, 2005; Knijnik, 2015; Rial, 2014b).

futebol, were directly linked to masculine characteristics: physically-disposed bodies, speed, and for connecting power to domination and strength (Theberge, 1987; Scraton, Fasting, Pfister & Buñuel, 1999). Intended to preserve feminine grace and beauty, the law aimed equally at safe-guarding women's bodies for a more 'noble' purpose: a safe motherhood (Franzini, 2005; Goellner, 2005; Rial, 2014a). The new ruling terminated most of the women's teams in Brazil (Rial 2014b, para 13).

In those decades, the incapacity of the female body for more physical sports had been backed by international authorities that considered football unsuitable. Defended by physicians, the focus was on the hypothetical damage of high-intensity physical activities on the female body, especially linked to a negative impact on their reproduction system (Fasting, 1987; Lopiano, 2000; Goellner, 2005). This was the reigning era of the "medical mythology" around the female body (Lopiano 2000, p. 170).

Such discouragement resulted in men delimiting the participation of women in sports through their exclusion from clubs in many countries, with similarities in prejudice, prohibition and resistance towards women players, with very few exceptions (Hong & Mangan 2003, p. 8). These barriers have "... involved the persistent 'unmaking' of laughable pseudo-logic, crude stereotype and malicious myth" (ibid, p. 2) which stem from patriarchy in the shape of medical advices.

2.4 – Jerseys and lipsticks on the stands

As sport and competitiveness are based on the masculine premise of strength and power, men are traditionally defined as physically strong while women are physically fragile. "In sport, men are usually the active subjects while women fill passive roles, often as wives, sweethearts and admirers" (Theberge 1987, p. 388). As a patriarchal institution, sport prevents females from becoming the active, main participants. Patriarchal societies are at the core of maintaining women in a secondary, passive role, while men take the stage.

In this separation, Eichler (1987) explains that "sex role socialization is the systematic teaching of a double standard, and it is internalized to such a degree that any of its manifestations seem just natural to the people affected by it" (as cited in Fasting 1987, p. 361). The acceptance of a secondary role after decades of exclusion from the pitches seems to have been easily introjected and virtually uncontested (Rial 2014a, para 11), since very few accounts of resistance and transgressions can be found (Franzini, 2005; Rial, 2014b). When researching about football in Brazil, during the 1980s, Laver (1985) remembers the answer from a member of the Brazilian *Futebol* Federation [CBF] about an existing ban imposed on women: "there is no need to have a law about it – it is unimaginable that women can play *futebol*" (as cited in Rial 2014a, para 11).

However, women have been able to leave some marks in sports, even from the sidelines. Since the first *futebol* matches held in São Paulo, the presence of women on the stands has been documented,

although the focus has been on their beauty (Guterman 2009, ch 1). Nonetheless, they were still able to make a cultural and historical contribution: From the *futebol* sidelines, female fans coined the expression 'torcedor'⁸ to name the fans and supporters (Rial 2014b, para 9) of any sport in Brazil.

In Brazilian society, the mechanisms employed by males to control female bodies may be taken from Engel's (1884) concept of 'private property': women belong to men and are preserved for procreation (as cited in Santos et al. 2013, para 1). This dominance is also found in the early accounts of life in Brazil since European colonization, from the year 1500⁹.

2.5 – Sports fandom in Australia...

As stated previously, futebol is part of my identity, as it is for many of those born and raised in Brazil. Among the ones who adore the sport, watching the matches on TV, sharing the passion with music and cheer, or the frustration, it is still engraved in me. So here it is once more Eichler's (1987) double standard: as a Brazilian citizen, I am encouraged to engage in the sport, but as a female, my position is confined to the sidelines, to cheer and support the men who battle on the field. In patriarchal logic, women, restricted to the stands, confirm men as superior while they take the grounds (Toffoletti & Mewett 2012, p. 104).

However, this logic may take different aspects and a less passive role in different cultural contexts. Both in England and Germany, female football supporters were identified as attracted to the game by the sexual appeal of players rather than by their genuine interest in the sport (Pope 2010; Meier, Strauss & Riedl 2015). Such shifting may indicate the "challenging (of) dominant masculine definitions of fandom" (Meier et al, 2015, p. 18). Despite this change, this form of participation still maintains women within the domain of the male environment, with men as the main actors.

Being part of a group of supporters involve a process of identification and socialization (Souza and Antônio 2014, para 11), which also carries characteristics of a 'ritual' in following a match (Souza & Antônio, 2014; Marjoribanks & Farquharson, 2012). In this context, the event as a whole is described as an act of collective experience, in which each person internally carries a sense of belonging to their teams through imagery and symbolism (Marjoribanks & Farquharson 2012, p. 180).

⁸ The term refers to the ladies who would twist their handkerchiefs when watching the matches, creating the expression 'torcer' (to twist).

⁹ Native peoples would donate a woman to marry a white male, who would become part of the tribe, an exchange that would also guarantee the tribes access to favors and equipment brought by the colonizers (Ribeiro 2006, p. 72). It continued once African slaves were brought by the Portuguese 50 years later, when men and women became the working class of the newly developed land, over three centuries. The role of the females is clearly described in this passage: "...the black female slaves will be the ones who please the male colonizer who lacked women from their race and category" (Prado Júnior, 1999, as cited in Guterman 2009, chap. 2).

From this understanding, my own identity as a passive spectator in Australia had undergone a confronting moment – I could not relate to a group, formed by individuals that, united by the same sport, did not seem to mutually interact, at least not the way that I was used to. There was neither identification with the supporters nor the connection to the team. In the stadium, there was a gap, irreconcilable differences, and, without the rituals, I did not feel that I belonged.

2.6 - Close encounter with my origins

Reliving my past in football was reenergizing. Going through the complete *futebol* experience brought me back to my origins. It was the beginning of Chang's *extraordinary event* (2008, p. 74), as described in Chapter 1. My moment of shift occurred since migration, having disrupted my comfortably established routine. My new life in Australia, had kept me away from the sport, but at the same time pushed me to take part in physical activity, which is highly encouraged in this country. In this new stage of my life, I was also of rethinking the social order: I was crossing my *institutionalized* gender norms boundary for wanting to take an active role as a female in football.

Having crossed geographical and cultural borders, my previous passive role in my beloved sport was no longer fulfilling me, as it did in Brazil. Navigating through different cultures, living in Australia directed me to new alternatives. Without knowledge, I was about to transgress the rules, passing "the 'falsifying lens' of reality as constructed through men's eyes" (emphasis in original – Markula, 2005, as cited in Toffoletti & Mewett, 2012).

In the pre-defined and restrictive spectator character of *futebol* in Brazil, women can be seen as defiant in wanting an active part. Under the social norms, a woman - allowed to cheer and participate in group rituals on the sidelines, would be labelled "masculine" if she followed *futebol* to the extent of understanding the sport (Souza & Antônio 2014, para 16). However, my personal transgression opened the possibility of adding a feminist point of view, through questioning and redesigning gender norms in this passive involvement (Parry & Fullagar 2013, p. 579). As described by Meier et al (2015), this was "the growth of the 'true' female fandom" (emphasis in original, p. 17).

A dedicated study of the sidelines in Brazil identified one *futebol* club in Southern Brazil, in which most of the supporters are women (Souza & Antônio, 2014). On its stands, groups of females were comfortably watching the matches either alone or in groups of friends, some without any make up or trying to look seductive *per se*, and expressing no feelings or pressure for being that way (ibid, para 66). Such characteristics may indicate a gradual change of pattern, in which this 'femininity transgression' could start to redefine the culture associated with the sport for women in the country (Goellner 2005, p. 150).

Gender norms in Brazil restrict females to the passive role of 'being' watched on the stands. However, as examined in Australia, England and Germany, female fans in a less passive role were identified as attracted to the stadiums by seeing male players as sexual objects (Toffoletti & Mewett, 2012; Pope 2010; Meier et al, 2015¹⁰). Examining both aspects of such female supporter engagement can be as "meaningful and valuable", and should be considered within the context of sport (Pavlidis & Olive 2014, p. 228). Hence, women fandom and spectatorship in sport deserve further exploration.

2.7 - Tipping point

Crossing the boundaries of what I had once judged a male-only arena was the only way to realize that there is so much more to the sport than I could have ever imagined. Such constrained thinking had been constructed since childhood and never questioned. Such subconscious influence had been *habitualized* (Berger & Luckmann, 1966). In this process, I had internalized that only men can play *futebol*, as seen on TV, heard on the radio, and read on newspapers and magazines. In the very rare occasions I had seen women footballers on TV, the images were of unskilled play and portraying women who I would normally not relate to.

As writes Bourdieu, "to point out what appears in history as being eternal is merely the product of a labor of externalization performed by interconnected institutions such as the family, (and) the state" (Bourdieu 2001, p. VII). Similar to other women, my experience of prohibition of playing *futebol* seemed to have been well internalized. Despite the few women's teams that continued to play during the years of *futebol* ban in Brazil, "what is surprising is precisely the rarity of the transgressions" (Rial 2014b, para 19). If remaining in this passive state, women affirm their roles as "...self-as-object rather than agents" (Bennett et al. 1987, p. 372).

For me, the possibility of joining football was my awakening moment, or my moment of *epiphany* (Denzin 2014, p. 52), as described in Chapter 1. This moment was triggered by my need to develop an active identity, only feasible through the alteration of the gendered meaning as a female raised within patriarchal norms. My basic assumption was that I would never actually play football being a woman – it was unfeminine to play *futebol* in Brazil, especially if you are not young enough to be deemed as a sexual symbol, a muse to be positively framed by the media and others.

This transformation process is not always so clear. Unfortunately, very few Brazilian players, even those who had the chance to experience similar opportunities living abroad, seemed to have undergone a similar questioning process. One of the positive examples is former Brazilian women's national team captain, Juliana Cabral (Knijnik, 2013). After winning the silver medal at the Athens

¹⁰ Toffoletti & Mewett examined female Australian Rules Football supporters, while the other authors studied women football fans in their respective countries.

2004 Olympics, she became one of the few players who were vocal about the difficult conditions of women's *futebol*. According to the author's analysis, by expressing herself, Juliana was seeking gender justice for all players (ibid, p. 23).

2.8 - Game changer

These on-the-ground experiences have absolutely changed my life, allowing me to rediscover football. I would have never imagined how hard it could be to control a ball with my feet, while running around the pitch. For women, one of the great benefits of sport resides exactly in the possibility of physical experiences in collaboration with other women (Theberge 1987, p. 393). At this stage, I started questioning the potential for change in which women would see themselves as the agent of a reconceptualization of the current masculine model of physical power.

Focusing on football as a physical activity only, I emphasize the 90-minute match and the access to play. Within this physical aspect, as a girl, I had been deprived from developing any of the skills involved in the game since childhood. I had "...not developed the ability to create the rapid, forceful and sequential neuro-motor coordination necessary to move myself assertive(ly) and well" (Bennett et al. 1987, p. 371). In addition, I did not have any women to look up to in *futebol*. Brazilian media played a role in stereotyping female footballers as 'unattractive', 'masculinized', 'unskilled'. Or simply the opposite, being silent about the women's game, indicating "...the lack of interest, or disapproval, or both" (ibid, p. 372).

To date, many more males have reached the status of media celebrities in comparison to females (Marjoribanks & Farquharson 2012, p. 168), hence projecting themselves as role models and sports icons for children and adults. Despite the steady change, this gender imbalance remains present (Knoppers & Elling 2004; Jarvie & Thornton 2013) as we live in "...a sporting and societal context in which the achievements of men are prioritized over those of women" (Lines, 2001, as cited in Marjoribanks & Farquharson, 2012).

While there is lack of female idols as coaches and managers in football, Lopiano (2000, p. 169) notes how having female role models would also increase the demand for more sports prospects. In the meantime, as most girls are coached by their fathers and other men, they may face demanding comparisons to reach and perform according to male standards (ibid, p. 171), as well as follow the male benchmarks of competitiveness. If females are unable to recreate a different experience, these masculine requirements will be unconsciously carried by the sporting cultures of women through the generations (Fasting 1987, p. 365).

From my experiences on the pitch, these masculine influences are present in different forms. In a girls' only match, players still use the expression "man on" to indicate an incoming challenge by the opponent, for example. Girls and women also continue to call me 'linesman' instead of assistant referee. In addition, a new generation of girls seem to be demonstrating a more physical¹¹ game, usually seen in the men's style of sport.

2.9 – More, more, more

Feeling that I could develop new skills with a ball at my feet was an amazing, empowering discovery. From having only beginner contact with a ball, overtime I gained more control: I was developing more skill, like some of the eight-year-olds that I used to train. This sentiment of gaining ability, although imperfectly, was liberating, and I was free to kick 'like a girl'¹².

Developed under the male point of view of success, sport has inhibited girls from 'developing skill' from an early age (Bennett et al. 1987, p. 370). "Indeed, it is the very purpose of organized sport to celebrate and elevate physical differences" (William, Lawrence & Rowe 1985, p. 639), since the winner is usually determined by the strongest and not necessarily by the most skilled participant. The power in sport lies in the physical body, and, as such, it is also directly linked to the gendered body and the construction of an identity (Jarvie & Thornton 2012, p. 293). Hence, winning and losing is conceptualized distinctively for boys and girls: for girls, winning is directly connected to luck but being unsuccessful relates to inability, while in boys' games triumph lies on "... personal prowess: bodily skill, strategy, conceptualization" – and failure is only 'bad luck' (Bennett et al. 1987, p. 370).

Such contrast is present on the pitches, where I see parents and coaches of female teams perpetuating this condescending acceptance: loss is easily tolerated by a women's team, but when it comes to men's, it is equivalent to failure. Post-match reactions show men usually angry, while women remain cheerful.

For decades, men have controlled sporting bodies which, despite allowing women to take part, would be constrained to 'men's terms' (Fasting 1987, p. 361). This also includes the need for a slim, slender body, a depiction so *institutionalized* in a woman's mind that has not been fully addressed by feminism (Jarvie & Thornton 2012, p. 288).

¹¹ Also evident on the 'diving' or a fake foul.

¹² Normally employed as an expression of weakness. "Like a girl" is described as the development of movement in young children, lacking coordination and speed. While most boys will master a throwing/kicking ability by the age of eight, most girls will never do, due to a "...socially derived result stemming from systematic (prevention of) practice and learning" (Bennett et al. 1987, p. 371).

In that sense, I emphasize Bennett et al's (1987) claims that girls and women should have the basic right to train and develop their bodies to "...become skillful performers... (and by that) we mean instead one who exhibits *movement literacy*" (emphasis in original, p. 370). That translates into giving girls and women a choice on how they want to move and what skills they want to develop, without the restraints of gender-confined norms. Rather, patriarchy has been promoting "women's movement disability" (ibid p. 370).

2.10 – My own questions

I call this stage of my life in football as my process of 'gaining consciousness'. Once I had 'awakened' to a new perspective of the football world, this consciousness allowed me to compare the old and the new structures involved in the practice of this sport. They are two contrasting realities, two very different environments, especially if you are a woman. From my inside and outside views of the pitch, I realized how the stands and the field experiences, within the one cultural context, can contain such distinct characteristics (Pavlidis & Olive 2014, p. 218).

My cultural roots had been uncovered and exposed, perhaps looking for new grounds to explore. Culture as an interaction of self and others has its facets, also located in one's mind. That is a space in which individuals are not only conveyors of their own culture, but also "active agents who create, transmit, transform, and sometimes discard certain cultural traits" (Chang 2008, p. 20).

In *futebol*, I noticed women's general lack of interest in playing. However, women like Marta Vieira da Silva¹³ was one of the strong exceptions. Discouraged by her family to play from childhood, her ability was discovered by a scout and she was taken to professional team in São Paulo over fifteen years ago, moving to Sweden soon after. In 2014, a blogger wrote about Marta to describe the situation of women in *futebol* in Brazil:

Marta at the FIFA men's World Cup draw in Bahia. Out of place, uncomfortable. While hundreds of journalists from around the globe were searching for stories, there she was, left alone, without any disturbance – especially from Brazilian reporters, despite Marta being the most talented female player in the world.
(Rímoli 2014, np)

Such disinterest in women's *futebol* is also reflected by the number of players in Brazil. By the time of the sport's reintroduction to the country in the 1980's, there were about 3,000 women's teams (Knijnik 2013, p. 15), but this number started to steadily decline from the 1990's (Votré & Mourão 2003, p.

¹³ Brazilian football player Marta Vieira da Silva is the only female to have won FIFA's Ballon D'Or five times in a row. Sometimes called 'Pelé in skirts', she is still well underpaid (The Atlantic, 2015; Rial 2014b), as further presented in part 2-12.

265). In 2005, Brazil had less than half a million¹⁴ women playing *futebol* as a leisure activity (Franzini 2005, p. 316), and in 2014, CBF had only about 6,000 registered female footballers (Mendes 2014, para. 6).

2.11 – From all angles

Sport needs to be defined and understood as both a physical activity as well as a social process (Marjoribanks & Farquharson 2011, p. 4-6). Team sports for women even more so, as they provide a space in which we can share a common goal and enjoy togetherness in a competitive environment (Knijnik 2015; Theberge 1987), but equally emphasizing collaboration and mutual encouragement. Promoting togetherness for women towards a common objective will also “...thereby bridge the gaps that have separated them.” (Theberge 1987, p.392).

Scruton et al. (1999) identified such aspects in a study of top women footballers. The players:

...derived a tremendous amount of pleasure from playing the game and feeling in control and the excitement of being physical. Probably the most frequently mentioned aspect of their experiences was the pleasure they gained from being together, their connectedness as women and as a team... words such as ‘togetherness’, ‘social’ and ‘belonging’ dominated the interview transcripts.
(emphasis in original - p.106-107)

On the other hand, the absence of engagement with one another can work towards women’s social isolation (Theberge 1987, p. 392). In my own journey, while going through this exciting new world of an all-female environment, I have also uncovered its “dark side” (Pavlidis & Olive 2014, p. 221) through player’s defiance and lack of respect. Such challenge can be interpreted as the quest against each other “...for power and authority” (ibid, p. 221). For Hacker (1951) women continue to display characteristics of a “minority group”, hence demeaning and challenging each other (as cited in Eichler, 1980).

Nonetheless, the power of sport goes much beyond the fields. Its learning value and taking part in competitive physical activity have presented many benefits. Sport demonstrates its importance as the environment in which men have been learning “...about teamwork, goal-setting, the pursuit of excellence in performance, and other achievement-oriented behavior and other critical skills necessary for success in the workplace” (Lopiano 2000, p. 165).

Since entering the so-called masculine sports, women have gradually managed to disrupt some of its predetermined male standards, which determine that the athlete’s capacity to perform equates to

¹⁴ This figure represents less than one percent of today’s total female population in Brazil, according to the latest census (Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística [IBGE] 2016, np.)

their physical adequacy. Thus, once entering the sports arena, women also need to focus on redefinition of sport under their own terms (Bennett et al 1987, p. 375).

In this sense, a redevelopment of women's experience should create a new *verstehen*¹⁵ of sport and physical activity (emphasis in original – Markula, 2005, as cited in Toffoletti & Mewett 2013). This new process of *verstehen* is what I have undergone, now allowing me to redesign my own knowledge.

2.12 – Going places

The number of women footballers departing Brazil to play abroad grows every year (Pisani 2012, p. 3). Although an indicator of success in the men's game, for women players it is only the search for professionalization and a decent life through sport, leaving Brazil behind to gain recognition elsewhere. The future for women footballers is uncertain¹⁶ as they continue to be regarded as amateurs in Brazil.

Between 2004 and 2009, the CBF registered the departure of 46 women, mostly headed to clubs in the United States and European countries, but others going as far as Japan (Rial 2014b, p. 6). Ironically, Brazil's positive reputation in the sport precedes these athletes overseas, and even though female players are not valued in their home country, abroad they are among the top favorites of foreign coaches (Pisani 2012, p.6).

Most professional clubs still do not have a women's division, and sponsorship opportunities remain limited in women's *futebol* (Pisani 2012, p. 2). Furthermore, being part of a club does not translate into equal treatment and opportunities. A Chilean footballer who played for Santos in 2011 remembers having to eat in her room while the male players would use the dining area, training on the beach while the juniors were coached on the main pitch; and also wearing old uniforms from the men's teams (Duarte 2016, para 7). Santos' women's division closed soon after (Pisani 2014, p. 7) to use the money to cover Neymar Jr's¹⁷ contract.

When it comes to wages, "In Brazil, most professional women players earn monthly about U\$ 155. In large clubs, the salaries average about U\$1,000" (Rial 2014b, p.5). Marta, at the top of her game,

¹⁵ From German, the word translates into 'meaning, understanding' (as translated by the author).

¹⁶ A government decree introduced in 2015 (ProFut) has determined that clubs that want to renegotiate their debts will need to invest in women's division. However, it is too early to analyze its effects.

¹⁷ Neymar Jr, today is one of the top footballers in the world and the Brazilian national team's captain (Transfermarkt 2016, np.), left the club in 2013 to play in Europe (Duarte 2016, para 9).

earned about U\$ 400,000 a year playing in Sweden last year, while male footballer Kaká¹⁸ made about U\$7 million playing in the United States in 2015 (Nardini 2015, para 2-5).

As a way of continuing to play football and developing their game as a career path, playing overseas has proved to be an option, but will not advance women's *futebol* in Brazil. It is not a one-size-fits-all solution either, as many of these players come from poor families, do not speak other languages, and may have difficulties in adapting to a different culture.

2.13 - Through the media lenses

In my teenage years, I would have teased and downplayed the 'ability' of female footballers portrayed by the media. This is what I was taught: '*futebol* is a men's sport'. I would imagine it only possible with the ball at men's feet.

Despite the growth of the women athlete's visibility throughout the twentieth century, female footballers have continuously faced barriers when trying to gain space in traditional media (Mourão & Morel 2008, p. 73). If the role of media is to convey images that reflect reality, its portrayal can be compared to the 'House of Mirrors' in amusement parks, reflecting selective and distorted views (ibid, p. 74). Such attributes could be linked to a chauvinistic model as sports newsrooms have been predominantly controlled by male staff (Knoppers & Elling, 2004; Souza & Antônio 2014).

The emphasis is not only in gender differences. Sports coverage generally focus on the white male, and reinforce the image of virility and achievement (Martins & Moraes 2014, p. 71). And while men's visibility is normally linked to their athleticism and accomplishments, women are generally portrayed by the media as eroticized, "...hence diminish(ing) their legitimacy as athletes" (Kane & Greendorfer, 1994, and Lenskyi, 1998, as cited in Toffoletti & Mewett 2012, p. 106). Around the world, despite the encouraging growth of women's sport in the news, their presence is not always positive (Lumby, Caple & Greenwood, 2010). Once women are portrayed in the media, they are normally depicted by their "attractiveness and appeal ... (only to promote) the sexualization of physical activity" (Theberge 1987, p. 389).

In Brazil, gender differences seem to be amplified when magnified through media lenses (Martins & Moraes 2014, p. 71). Visual media, such as TV, seemed to have mastered the representation of gender in which women are portrayed by their "vulnerable passivity" while men are shown in (hyper) activity (Rowe 1999, p. 135). Reproducing gendered labels, these images promote prejudice and

¹⁸ Ricardo dos Santos Leite, or Kaká, is a Brazilian football player elected best player in Europe and in the world in 2007, and is now close to retirement (Transfermarkt 2016, np.).

stigmatized concepts in which even the athletes' sexuality fits into pre-defined roles (Souza & Knijnik 2007, p. 35).

A study by Mourão and Morel (2008) demonstrated how media articles about female footballers in Brazil continuously employed words such as “charming”, “beauty”, “make-up” and “feminine touch” (p. 81) focusing on their beauty rather than their sporting abilities (Souza & Knijnik 2007; Martins & Moraes, 2014). Results of another comparative media study showed huge gender representation discrepancy, in which men could get 700% more coverage in written material than female athletes (Souza & Knijnik 2007, p. 42)¹⁹. In these articles, gender specific remarks were clear:

Men are seen as 'heroes', 'idols' and 'leaders'. Women are often referred to in terms that emphasize normative femininity. Articles relating to women are full of childish terms; women are almost always referred to by their first names, while men are usually referred to by their surnames and described in language that is more adult. (ibid, p. 44)

Some of these standards have been quietly introjected and accepted by women. In recent studies, Knijnik (2015) and Fisher and Dennehy (2015) explored the current trend of players insisting on having long hair and wearing make-up as a display of femininity, demonstrating a rational counter measure to being labeled tomboys²⁰ or lesbians as footballers (Knijnik 2015)²¹. These studies describe how female footballers in Brazil have even strongly reinforced the femininity traits by excluding players who do not conform to these demands (Knijnik, 2015; Fisher & Dennahy, 2015). Such forms of masculine domination have been engrained in a woman's mind and body, and institute “...women as symbolic objects whose being is a being perceived ... keeping them in a permanent state of bodily insecurity, or more precisely of symbolic dependence...” (Bourdieu 2001, p. 66). In being compliant with normative femininity, women players then expect to be allowed to take to the pitch, still unaware of the masculine domination and significance embedded in the sport.

2.14 - Moving forward

Gender discrimination in sport is not exclusive to Brazil or to developing countries. Even though policies towards equality have been implemented in several nations, until the beginning of this century, women are still minor participants in most sports (Jarvie & Thornton 2012, p. 63). Allowing

¹⁹ With the growth of the internet and rapid expansion of social media in Brazil, blogs, websites and their podcasts have opened their own space in portraying and debating women's *futebol* around the country (see mainly dibradoras.com.br and planetafutebofeminino.com.br).

²⁰ Culturally defining tomboy “...is a girl who displays masculine attributes, particularly those valued most highly in the sports world, such as competitiveness, aggressiveness and boisterousness” (Scruton et al. 1999, p. 105).

²¹ It would be interesting to also investigate the rising appearance of large tattoos on footballers, similarly to the ones their male counterparts have been exhibiting in the past decade.

and encouraging women to become active players, coaches and mentors can only have positive result, especially when inspired from an early age.

Knijnik (2015) examined how female footballers in Brazil could create a 'domino effect' in promoting the sport. However, most of the interviewed players would not encourage a young girl to be part of the *futebol* world in Brazil²². For those who would, they suggested a girl to follow the gender rules of normative femininity (ibid, p. 63). Such discouragement demonstrates how women continue to reproduce the social norms, and how women in Brazil remain passive about their own restraints in the masculine domain of *futebol*.

Rímoli (2014, np) confirms this trend from another angle, in which discrimination comes from other women: female footballers say that they dislike watching other women playing – preferring to watch the men. This inclination for men's sport may follow normative femininity: in watching men play, they are also reinforcing their femininity and heterosexuality in being attracted to men (Toffoletti & Mewett 2012, p. 105). According to Bourdieu's theory, "men (and the women themselves) remain unaware that it is the logic of the relationship of domination which imposes on and inculcates in women ... imputes to their (very own) nature" (2001, p. 31). That is, in aiming for femininity they are only following patriarchal notions of the gender norms.

As for my experience, it was only through this process of change and questioning that I was able to reconstitute this logic. Until today, when interacting with other Brazilian women and players, most of them are unaware of the pre-determined roles and how much of these rules are still being perpetrated by themselves. This progress may be slow. Just recently, back in Brazil, I met a mother who has been taking her seven year-old girl to play *futebol* against her husband's wishes. She is there to support her little girl's love of *futebol*, even though she has never been a player herself. Her attitude defies stereotypes, but shows her support in redefining a feminine experience in sport.

²² Knijnik writes: "They would never support a 12 years-old girl from their families, a daughter, a younger sister or a cousin, in their football career. Ana, an 18 years-old player, was emphatic: *If I had a daughter, I wouldn't like her playing ball. Do you think that I want her going through humiliation, hunger, even discrimination?*". (2015, p.62-63)

Conclusions

Women's soccer, a game that now embraces nations, cultures, ethnicities and classes, has become a world sport for women. It represents modern feminism: unapologetic, individualistic, empowered and assertive.

(Hong & Mangan 2003, p. 268)

This thesis is a documentation of over forty years of my direct and indirect relationship to football. With the undoubtedly positive autoethnographic approach, I was able to revisit and reconceptualize many aspects of my life within and outside the sport, also rediscovering the formation of my role as a woman in a country like Brazil.

More than a tool for voicing a different perspective on women and *futebol* in Brazil, this study allowed me to reflect upon my own prejudices and contradictions as a female. It permitted me to transform my understandings about the processes of identity-building for other Brazilian women and to question the role of socialization in maintaining patriarchy, here framed within the boundaries of sport.

Adopting the autoethnographic model proved a challenge for me. Until 2015 I did not even know that such a methodology existed, let alone learn and apply it. However, although daring, autoethnography has been a very rewarding path “both as a process and a product” (Ellis, Adams & Bochner 2011, p. 273). It allowed me to review and analyze my lived experiences in football, while I producing my research from these reflections.

As a model, autoethnography and the narrative format can be empowering tools for individuals. By sharing their own experiences, athletes like Marta and other pioneers of the sport in Brazil would be able to inspire other girls and exemplify how it is possible to overcome obstacles in their path to success and recognition. Instead of thinking of their own stories as simple events, they could see, through autoethnography, each passage as a narrative of experience (Squire 2013, p. 49). These stories, such as mine, reflect constant critical thought and questioning, and portray the opening of doors that do not always carry a welcome sign to women.

As explored in this research, in this long-term fight for space, I have found evidence on how Brazilian women seem to have been slowly finding their way quietly into *futebol*, including other formats, such as *futsal*²³. In addition, by gaining experience overseas, and stepping into positions of power as managers and referees, as well as in to sports newsrooms, women can find ways for further progress. Bringing their experiences from the field into academic discussion is another avenue, since very few authors seem to have emerged from the pitches.

²³ In English called five-a-side, indoor football

From my journey, I conclude that, in Brazil, denying women an active part in *futebol* is not the sole reason for exclusion, but is partnered with the fact that women continue to reproduce the prejudice and to accept the passive role they have been assigned to in the past. While women 'refrain from pain' in allowing men to remain in key positions in the sport, they have not been able to develop their own game.

Improvements will only happen once women trespass the comfort zone which they currently inhabit. Adopting a male model of *futebol*, although seemingly a shortcut, is not the answer. By taking up managerial positions, and from that empowering other women and girls, women will develop a new framework in which prejudice and discrimination will diminish, instead of reproducing stereotypes themselves, as happens today.

Traces of patriarchy are equally apparent in academic discussions in Brazil. In one article, the author praised how much women have increased their 'participation' on the stands (Rial 2003, p. 74), conflating participation with presence. In another article, the authors defined as a positive promotion strategy the presence of a model²⁴ in the Brazilian national squad in 2003 (Mourão & Morel 2008, p. 82-83).

Souza and Antônio (2014, para 60) describe Brazilian society's long history as 'racist', '*macho* dominant', 'heteronormative' and 'elitist', so they call for individuals to oppose these prejudices. However, it is inertia that allows media and advertising to continue perpetrating the stereotyping and discrimination in the country. "Your silence will not protect you"²⁵, write Bennett *et al* (1987, p. 375) to describe how being complacent has not changed the reality of women's *futebol*.

From my own observations on the pitch, men's and women's football once seemed to carry different characteristics, with men highly physical and competitive, while women would follow the rules of the game and fair play. However, one can now identify how, instead of developing their own feminist model of competition, women footballers have adopted not only the male model, but embraced the values of aggressiveness and power, and accepted the quest for pre-determined standards of femininity.

Revisiting Theberge's analysis of women's sports in the 1980s, the contemporary model of "competition" remains a male design framed by aggression, power and dominance (1987, p. 391). She proposes that a female prototype of competition would be one in which "the object is not to

²⁴ Milene Domingues was the most expensive player in the team representing Brazil at the FIFA Women's World Cup, but was kept permanently on the bench (Mourão & Morel, 2003, p. 83). She was also a mother and married to a famous Brazilian *futebol* player.

²⁵ See Figure 2.

dominate, but to join with the opponent in a mutually supportive and rewarding experience” (ibid, p. 391). Birrell and Slatton (1981) assert how the male definition of competition is wrong, since

...to compete means to strive together... Thus competition is a process, but not necessarily a dehumanizing one. In fact, by challenging each other to demonstrate certain skills, by calling out the best in each other, sport can be an ennobling process. (as cited in Theberge, 1987)



Image has been removed as it contains copyright material.

Figure 2. *Silent* – The depiction of Brazilian women in *futebol* during the Discover Football Seminar 2014 in Rio de Janeiro. Photo: Dana Rösiger.

I am clearly aware of how discrimination is not exclusive to Brazil or to strictly patriarchal societies. In Australia, for instance, I am reminded about prejudice every weekend, either in men’s or women’s games. Aspects like these come in the form of angry expressions from male players, and by the challenging and defiant positioning from female players. For some, that type of confrontation is enough to make them to quit. As for me, these experiences have the dual meaning of a challenge at the same time they are a stimulus to continue to stand up for change.

From my explorations, I call for a more vocal role from those women active in *futebol* and to voice their demands, but also to be the agents of their own transformation. This means continuing to transgress the ‘rules’ of the game, to empower each other and to document their experiences. For those who would like to pursue a more engaged research role in the fields of sport, culture and society, Jarvie and Thornton (2013) call for commitment to discuss and “...clarify issues, expose the errors of other public intellectuals, draw attention to neglected issues and generally be a catalyst for public discussion and discovery” (p. 453).

As suggested by Lopiano (2000), a different reality in sports is possible. When reviewing the impact of Title IX²⁶ of the Education Amendments on women since its implementation in the United States, she identified many positive changes. Her findings mirrored transformations in self-image, in which girls and women started to “...see themselves being accepted as strong, competitive and skilled athletes”, in addition to significant gains in health, self-esteem and confidence (ibid, p. 164-165). Knijnik (2015) defended the implementation of a similar law in Brazil, which would allow women to develop and compete at the same level as men (2015, p. 66). Thus, equal access to play is the first step, as the current model has proved ineffective.

Women’s activism²⁷ in sport and independent initiatives have kept women’s *futebol* afloat. The newly introduced *Profut* decree has pushed for the opening of women’s divisions in professional clubs. However, I see the expansion of the internet and social media as key factors for visibility²⁸ and awareness of the sport in this century. In addition, the recent appointment of the first ever female²⁹ to coach the women’s national team will assist to develop role models for the new generations.

The debate involving women and *futebol* does not stop here. Women’s exclusion from the sport in Brazil carries layers of cultural, psychological and social elements that need to be explored in further studies. Today, most young girls no longer want to be ballet dancers – they want to become top models, reinforcing even more the value of normative femininity. In this thesis, I have used the sport as a frame to circumscribe discrimination issues generally involving women in Brazil, such as femicide, human trafficking and sexual violence. Hence the negative experiences in *futebol* expose only the tip of the iceberg for women in the country.

²⁶ Title IX is the name given to the Federal Anti-discrimination Law implemented in the United States in 1972. It “mandated non-discrimination in admissions, access and treatment in all educational programs offered by institutions that were recipients of federal funds” (Lopiano 2000, p. 163)

²⁷ A number of female amateur teams and schools have been run by women, which has allowed the development of good players. There is also the rise of female academics writing on the topic also in English.

²⁸ This is the focus of my proposed PhD research.

²⁹ Emily Lima, a former *futebol* player and experienced coach, was the first ever female appointed to manage the women’s national team by CBF in November 2016.

Appendix

Audio links and transcripts

1. Born into football

https://soundcloud.com/luciane-lauffer/1born-into-football-2_1/s-5vAx7

"I can't recall when my passion for *futebol* started... But it's easy to see how everyone who's born in Brazil is immediately immersed into the game's culture, language, and passion. I see my friends dressing their young babies in uniform or wearing the colors of their team, or given a ball if you are born a boy. But the passion takes different forms if you are born a female. I was never given a ball to kick around unlike the boys in my neighborhood or even introduced to the sport at any age in my younger years. Instead, at the age of 7, all I wanted to be was a ballet dancer, spinning around in pink, fluffy tutus, showing how delicate I could be, and doing what my other girlfriends were doing. Unfortunately, my parents couldn't afford the cost of the lessons. It actually took me years to forget about my sadness and frustration for the dancer that would never become. But at that time, I was settled that way, and didn't try to kick a ball until a much, much later age..."

2. In the 1970s

<https://soundcloud.com/luciane-lauffer/2in-the-70s/s-BZnew>

"Brazil was living under a military regime and the men's national team was playing the World Cup – *Copa do Mundo* - in Mexico when I was learning to walk. Radio was the only quick way to find out about the match results and what was happening at that time, or wait for the newspapers the next day. In fact, until today the radio, now in the shape of a mobile phone, continues to be our companion even when watching the matches in the stadium, as the broadcasters seem to bring the games to life only through voices and sounds. Their passion is contagious! TV would reach our house only about the mid 70's, in black and white, and it remained a fascinating thing. Being able to watch football on TV was an amazing experience: the movement, seeing the reactions of the crowds, watching our team play. Because TVs were expensive, groups of people would get together to watch a major event, and since then, this has been a kind of ritual to get together in groups to watch Brazil playing at the FIFA World Cup. All dressed in blue, yellow & green, painted faces, blowing horns and the like, life is always a party during the *Copa do Mundo*."

3. And the end of the 1970s

<https://soundcloud.com/luciane-lauffer/3-and-the-end-of-the-70s/s-b1pG2>

"1979 was a key year for women in *futebol* in Brazil, a fact that I have just recently discovered: It was the year in which women were allowed back to the pitch after decades of exclusion from them. *Futebol* as we know it was formally introduced to the country by the British at the end of the 1800's and it didn't take long to become a national entity in itself. Initially a sport for the affluent, the presence of rich women on the stands was part of a main event as reported by newspapers. After a few years, women started to practice *futebol* – as a hobby and even as part of circus exhibitions in some parts of Brazil. However, their contribution to the sport would have an impact on the morality of the times and women's *futebol* was forbidden for almost forty years. With Western movements for women's sexual liberation and after the country's political opening, following heated debates in the field of physical education, the Brazilian government dropped the ban and women were once again allowed to take the pitches. But for me, it would not make any difference, as I had learnt to experience the game as a supporter."

4. Jerseys and lipsticks on the stands

<https://soundcloud.com/luciane-lauffer/4jerseys-and-lipstick/s-ouOi6>

"I was in my early 20s when I was able to buy my first team jersey. Sports apparel is very expensive in Brazil for what people earn, and *futebol* teams are no charity even for their supporters – if you love them, you'll sacrifice whatever to buy their gear to be part of a crowd and watch a match. It's usually in front of the TV, as my team, *Grêmio*, has its stadium in another city, and costs will add up. Women are encouraged to take the stands - preferably with her brothers, boyfriends or husbands - and cheer for their teams. A woman going to see a match on her own is still a target of sexualized remarks and not deemed safe, so we always go in groups, and even better if there's a guy with us. So we cheer, we sing and chant together – and that's what the girls and women seemed to be designated to do. Recently I watched an interview with two female supporters, in which they were so adamant on how their 'participation' on the sidelines was intense, through emphasizing their constant swearing and in complaining about decisions during a match. They never mentioned anything about experiencing kicking a ball with friends."

5. Sports fandom in Australia

<https://soundcloud.com/luciane-lauffer/5sports-fandom-in-australia/s-5Umgx>

"In 2001, I made the decision to leave everything behind in Brazil and see what it would be like in another country. I discovered that it was very different! I came to study in Australia, got a job and stayed much longer than I expected. From a distance, I had always loved the country, but once being here experiencing the multiculturalism and being immersed in a new language were even more interesting than my imagination could expect. But in terms of sport and passion, this shift was a challenge. Already aware that football was not big here, and initially living in Western Australia, the dominant sport played was Australian Rules, played with an egg-shaped ball. As my housemate tried to introduce me to the spirit of the AFL, or footy as they call, I never felt any interest for a game that has only a played by one country. Despite the noisy crowd, the sport missed a particular passion. But even in my football there were still some elements missing. I had the chance of meeting a Brazilian player for the local football team, Perth Glory, and joined his wife in the stadium, but the exuberant passion that I was used to was not there: the crowd was politely sitting down, no cheering, no music, no emotions displayed – except for mine."

6. A close encounter with my origins

<https://soundcloud.com/luciane-lauffer/6-close-encounter/s-datWw>

"December, 2012 – I was visiting my family at the end of the year and, on another happy coincidence, I managed to get a spare ticket for the great opening of *Grêmio's* new stadium in Porto Alegre. The preparations were big – a friend had hired a bus to take us there, a group of about 25 males and six females, and only two of us were there without male partners. All of us in our official jersey, blue jeans, faces painted in white, blue and black – our team colors, happily singing while heading to the stadium. Whilst waiting in line, people sang, others laughed, and others joked, but all joined in one happy spirit. This was the joy I talk about. Inside the brand new, but still unfinished arena, a crowd of over 50,000 people cheered, sang, drummed, and booed. And while the others watched the game, I had my eyes focused on the referees. It had been sometime since I had seen a female referee, only on TV, and that was during an international tournament. I kept wondering how it would be if..."

7. Tipping point

<https://soundcloud.com/luciane-lauffer/7tipping-point/s-RPC31>

"2013 marked the year that my relationship with football completely changed. The *futebol* experience at *Grêmio's* Stadium had been unforgettable, and the one that I had been looking for in almost a decade. Upon my return to Australia, I was looking for a more active participation: Never imagining myself as a player, I enrolled in a course to become, yes, a referee! But still unsure, I asked twice whether women could be football

referees, and I felt surprisingly welcomed, included since the beginning. I just needed to get over my arrogance of thinking that I already knew everything about the game! Being in the center of a match is a totally different experience, and it should be experienced by every single woman. I felt active, in charge, and part of a team. It developed my self-confidence, mediation and people management skills. It was also great for fitness, which was one of my motivators to do something more physical and lose weight after pregnancy. Who would have imagined! Since then I have met amazing people, trained with FIFA level referees and also got mentored by the first Australian female who became a FIFA referee in the 1990s. And from there, I could have barely ever imagined that this journey had only just begun!”

8. Game changer

<https://soundcloud.com/luciane-lauffer/8-game-changer/s-pdbYa>

“Throughout my time refereeing, I had quite a few people to look up to. And it started from Day One. At the referee course, I was intrigued by the tiny lady who had solely achieved the top score among over 30 participants. Later on, I learnt that Lorna* was a North American who had been refereeing in her home country for over 20 years, and she became one of my role models – as well as a good friend and mentor. She’s sixty years old. In another case, when I was refereeing an under 14’s girls game, I noticed how the coach was more closely directing the goalkeeper. At the end of my match, we would be refereeing the next game together. Jason* told me how he had been training his thirteen year-old daughter as a goalie, and how much he also enjoyed coaching. I was fascinated! He was all-in-one, and I immediately saw the potential in doing the same for my then four year-old daughter. From that day, I wanted to learn coaching from the early stages and enrolled in a grassroots course. At the course, I was the only female – and the only referee – to attend. I felt empowered in many ways: not only for my single presence among the men, but for kicking around for the first time (and having a **ball** of a time!) and most of all, because our trainer was one of the top female coaches in the State!”

9. More, more, more

<https://soundcloud.com/luciane-lauffer/9-more-more-more/s-zaGHJ>

“From my humble beginnings playing with the round ball, I realized – with no shame – my skills were at the level of five year-old kids, so I had to start from the beginning. I was lucky enough to be embraced by my local football club to assist training grassroots once a week during the season, and so I did. From those humble beginnings, I learnt a lot, even from the kids. So I wanted more. Searching for a course one step further, I discovered a female-only junior level, in another city, where I’d have to travel and spend one night away, but it was worth it. If I had already been fascinated by women’s football in Australia, that weekend gave me another dimension of women with a round ball at their feet in any place in the world. We weren’t many, and I wasn’t the oldest, but I met amazing players, with skills that would kick the butt of many of my Brazilian male friends. They told me they had been playing from an early age, attackers, defenders, goalkeepers, midfielders. My body had never been so sore, but my mind was going a hundred miles per hour!”

10. My own questions

<https://soundcloud.com/luciane-lauffer/10my-own-questions/s-QdEhj>

“My intense participation and the possibility of a different horizon in women’s football started populating my mind with thoughts, feelings and questions, many questions. My new role in sport and especially in football, made me take for granted the idea that this space would be open to all women, everywhere. But even in Australia, female numbers were not at their peak, despite so much openness and acceptance. This got me started in researching about the lives of women in football around the world, and very little I could find about Brazil. There are hundreds of books, documentaries and magazines about Garrincha, Pelé, Ronaldo, but very little dedicated to women. I found some articles about our top female player, Marta Vieira, and her successful career overseas, only to learn that her way up had never been an easy one. So why does it have to be different in Brazil? It was when I started finding out that, despite having a relatively successful women’s national team, behind the façade, there was a house in ruins...”

11. From all angles

<https://soundcloud.com/luciane-lauffer/11from-all-angles/s-XGTjo>

“Continuing my skyrocketing path in football has made me go where it was never imagined: At the age of forty-three, I also became a goalkeeper for my local women’s team. Almost all of us were mums, looking to get our bodies back after pregnancy. One of them became the club president at the end of that year. Being able to see the game from, once more, a different angle, was fascinating. Being part of a team was yet another experience – we had honest fun, the field was not made for a battle, and we would laugh at tripping over the ball and apologizing for bumping into our opponents. A clean face, hair imperfectly tied up, sweaty, and sometimes covered in mud or drenched by rain. There was no beauty or sexy standard here. It was a safe place. On the sidelines, no one was making fun of us either. Instead, we had our kids, our parents, friends and partners cheering and yelling when we were close to score a goal. That year, I was the fittest self I had been in years!”

12. Going places

<https://soundcloud.com/luciane-lauffer/12going-places/s-gFeed>

“Ok, so now I’m a football referee, a kids’ coach and a goalkeeper: what’s next? Since I had been intrigued about women in the sport. I continued my personal investigation. As Brazil was hosting the FIFA men’s *Copa do Mundo* in 2014, a German organization wanted to discuss the other side of the tournament: women’s football. I applied to take part in this event and got accepted, joining eleven other women from countries like Mexico, Iran, Cameroon and Argentina to discuss about the difficulties of being a female in male dominated sport. While in Rio, I met these brave Brazilian footballers who gave me a better sense of the reality about wanting to be a professional player. One of them was Bianca^{*30}: in her mid-twenties, she had to leave the country to fulfill her dreams: to be a professional player. Her skills were recognized by a talent scout from the USA and she was taken to North America to play football as a career, and be paid. The other was Edna*, a former player and now a coach, who was about to depart for Spain, where she had secured a contract to coach. Another one was the true example of a fighter. Originally a goalkeeper in the USA, Carlie* once came to play in Brazil, but after learning about the difficult life of female players, she embraced the cause and became an activist, fighting for better conditions for women in the country. From them, I learnt that theirs - and other similar stories - were not uncommon in Brazil.”

13. Through the media lenses

<https://soundcloud.com/luciane-lauffer/13through-the-media-lenses/s-QwqWD>

“I never imagined how wearing boots and taking the pitch could be a liberating, empowering thing: it is how I feel when I get ready for a game. It is a kind of transgression at the same time – no need to look attractive, but simply keep my hair up in a ponytail and only sunscreen on my skin. Looking back in time, I remember – vaguely – about women footballers in my teenage years. I visibly recall them mostly on TV portrayed as butchy, untidy, unfeminine for Brazilian standards. The opposite emphasis on players would be then the *futebol* ‘models’ - the attractive young girls, praised for their beauty independently of the level of skill they may have had in the game. Their uniforms looked tighter, revealing their curves, and they would have make up on. It seemed that, for the male gaze, it would be all sorted: if they played badly, at least they were a pleasant view. And if they didn’t play well enough (for their level, or expected level), the male reporters made sure that the audience would see them through the magnified lenses of inadequacy. In 2013, I watched sports news on women’s *futebol* just like that. I’m also shocked to have recently seen the snuggled shorts worn by a female assistant referee in Brazil. It is amazing how my female friends still remain oblivious to this kind of portrayal.”

³⁰ *All names have been changed to preserve the identity of the people involved

14. Moving forward

<https://soundcloud.com/luciane-lauffer/14moving-foward/s-osc9>

“Perhaps my greatest achievement is not personal, but will pay off in the future. Learning from scratch about football on the fields was not an easy task, and many times I doubted myself. A few times, I wanted to quit, when facing the lack of respect not only from men, but also from women. At the same time, there are aspects of my journey which have proved rewarding. Exactly four years ago, when I started coaching kids, I brought my daughter along a few times. She didn’t get involved, would hold the ball in her hands, and complained about being tired, about being hit by the ball, about the weather... This year, at the age of seven, she asked me to play football. The day we went to get her boots, she put them on and moved the ball – with her feet – with surprising ability! As for Brazil, it was not until recently that I had revealed to my close friends about being a referee in Australia. Some of my girlfriends laughed, many of my male friends cheered, but it is difficult to gather their instant reactions being far away. But I still remember the look on a male’s face at the shoe store in Brazil where I tried to buy football boots – there were no women sizes, so I was trying on the smallest I could get. He looked at me top to bottom, with an expression of disbelief and shook his head, without saying a word. I smiled. I stood up tall and proud of wearing those boots, to defy his logic and to show him that I can. I can imagine the hurdles other women face every day if they want to play *futebol* in Brazil, and many other countries. But at the end of the day, it is about standing tall, that changes will occur.”

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