



SEXISM IN FOOTBALL: A COLONIAL HERITAGE

MACHISMO NO FUTEBOL: UMA HERANÇA COLONIAL

MACHISMO EN EL FÚTBOL: UNA HERENCIA COLONIAL

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Abstract: This article deals with sexism in football – a colonial heritage – being naturalized in Brazilian society. We aim to smooth out the effects, in the view of professionals of Physical Education, of practices and sexist postures in football and to present indicators for a teaching proposal that co-assigns to the eradication, or at least for mitigation, of this prejudice in football. As methodology we used van Dijk's critical discourse analysis (ACD) from a decolonial perspective. We conclude that to combat sexism in football educational institutions and football clubs can collaboratively: value the discipline of football in their curriculum; select trained professionals in this sport; provide adequate infrastructure to their practice; emphasize human training; and develop educational campaigns.

Keywords: Football; Sexism; Colonial heritage; Decoloniality.

Resumo: Este artigo trata do machismo no futebol – uma herança colonial –, estando naturalizado na sociedade brasileira. Objetivamos analisar os efeitos, na visão de profissionais de Educação Física, de práticas e posturas machistas no futebol e apresentar indicadores para uma proposta de ensino que contribua para a erradicação, ou pelo menos para a mitigação, desse preconceito no futebol. Como metodologia utilizamos a análise crítica de discurso (ACD), de Van Dijk, na perspectiva decolonial. Concluímos que para combater o machismo no futebol as instituições educacionais e os clubes de futebol podem, de forma colaborativa: valorizar a disciplina de futebol nos seus currículos; selecionar profissionais capacitados nesse desporto; proporcionar infraestrutura adequada à sua prática; enfatizar a formação humana; e desenvolver campanhas educativas.

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Palavra-chave: Futebol; Machismo; Herança colonial; Decolonialidade.

Resumen: Este artículo trata sobre el machismo en el fútbol – una herencia colonial – naturalizada en la sociedad brasileña. Nuestro objetivo es suavizar los efectos, en opinión de los profesionales de la Educação Física, de las prácticas y posturas machistas en el fútbol y presentar indicadores para una propuesta de enseñanza que contribuya para la erradicación, o al menos para la mitigación, de este prejuicio en el fútbol. Como metodología utilizamos el análisis crítico del discurso (ACD) de van Dijk desde una perspectiva decolonial. Concluimos que para combatir el machismo en el fútbol las instituciones educativas y los clubes de fútbol pueden colaborar: valorar la disciplina del fútbol en su currículo; seleccionar profesionales capacitados en este deporte; proporcionar una infraestructura adecuada a su práctica; enfatizar la formación humana; y desarrollar campañas educativas.

Palabras clave: Fútbol; Machismo; Patrimonio colonial; Decolonialidad.

1 Introduction

This work is a clipping from the thesis titled “The teaching of football through the decolonial perspective: unraveling the production of unskilled/unvalued players (‘pés de obra’) - from higher education to sports clubs”.

In a globalized world, the roots of colonialism - typical of modernity - still remain alive in society. Even after the decolonization processes worldwide, the marks of colonization linger and are reproduced. And sports - most precisely football -, one of the mechanisms of modernity, also transmits and upkeeps colonial heritage. Despite football being a democratic sport in its essence, being played worldwide, with more national federations being linked to FIFA (top organization for football) than to those within the United Nations, it brings about a series of problems. In the case of Brazil, one of the biggest issues is the sexism faced by female players, Physical Education professionals, the press, technical commissions, female fans, among others.

About this issue, it is fundamental to understand the causes and ways in which it develops and, from there, try to understand how football may be useful in the process of decolonizing the heritage of sexism that has been passed down to modernity. In this sense, with this text, we have the objectives of: a) analyzing the effect - from the viewpoint of Physical Education (PE) professionals - of sexist practices and stances in football; and b) present indicators for the proposal of teaching football that contribute to eradication of sexism within the sport.

The text is structured in three topics, in addition to this introduction and final considerations. In the first topic, we present the methodological decisions of the research, with an emphasis on the semi-structured interviews. In the second topic, we analyze the practices and stances that contribute to sexism in football from the viewpoint of PE professionals, all the while

backed by Van Dijk' Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). In the third topic, we present indicators to mitigate sexism in schools, clubs, and universities.

2 Methodological decisions

By opting for a decolonial⁴ methodology, we looked to an approximation with the reality of Latin America, which requires other worldviews to deal with the crisis of modernity, taking into consideration the knowledge and experience of local cultures. In this sense, we rely on the concepts by Fals Borda (1973, p. 9):

[...] trabajar arduamente con nuestros materiales y realidades, tratando de articular nuestras respuestas con fórmulas, conceptos y marcos de referencia de aquí mismo [...] fortalecer la investigación autónoma e independiente de los hechos sociales, estimulando el pensamiento creador y la originalidad.

[...] work hard with our materials and realities, articulating our answers with formulas, concepts, and our own references [...] to strengthen autonomous investigation independent of social facts, stimulating creative thought and originality.

Fals Borda proposes the thought of a region elaborated in the region itself, concerned with interpreting and proposing original solutions to the main social and political dilemmas in Latin America.

As for approach, qualitative research was used. Its main difference, in relation to quantitative research, is the inclusion of subjectivity, as it is not possible to think about them without the subject's participation. Knowing the event thoroughly, we can better describe, interpret, explain, and understand the perceptions and meanings of this group in particular - the PE professionals that work with the teaching of football in the club and university and its relation to sexism in football.

The study was carried out in three Higher Education Institutions (HEI) that have PE in their curriculum, in the metropolitan region of Porto Alegre, and in three football clubs in Rio Grande do Sul. The choice of these institutions was made according to the interest of the researcher, considering that, in these places, we had easy access, due to good professional relationships with the managers of these institutions.

To preserve the identities of these HEI-PE, we adopted the following acronyms: HEI1, HEI2, HEI3. As for the sports institutions, the Football Clubs (FC), in addition to being located in the state of Rio Grande do Sul, they must have: professions with degrees or in the process of getting their PE degree; under 16/17 team that participate in championships of that category; main

⁴ We adhered to the decolonial option because we believe it to be epistemic, that is, it detaches itself from western concepts and the accumulation of knowledge. By epistemic detachment, we don't mean abandon of of what has already been institutionalized worldwide We mean to reframe the knowledge of western imperial history of the last five centuries, in which people, languages, religions, political and economic concepts, subjectivities and others were racialized/marginalized. The decolonial option means - among other definitions - learning to unlearn, as our brains have already been programmed by imperial/colonial reason.

team that participate in the main league (série A) of the state's football championship; and a specific technical commission for the under sub-16/17⁵category. To preserve the identities of the clubs, we adopted the acronyms: FC1, FC2 e FC3.

Seventeen PE professionals participated in the survey, as follows: three HEI PE professors that minister or have ministered classes about football; three PE department coordinators that minister or have ministered classes about football at HEI; four coaches of under 16/17 category at a FC; three fitness coaches of under 16/17 category at a FC; two technical coordinators that work with the under 16/17 category at a FC; and two general coordinators of the youth teams at FC. To preserve the identity of the institutions and the PE professionals in the survey, we used letters and numbers to identify them. Letters to assign the function of the player, followed by place of work - HEI or FC. We used numbers to differentiate between institutions.

Next, we defined institutions and professionals: CoPE-HEI1 - coordinator of Physical Education at Higher Education Institution 1; FP-HEI1 - professor of football at Higher Education Institution 1; CoPE-HEI2 - coordinator of Physical Education at Higher Education Institution 2; FP-HEI2 - professor of football at Higher Education Institution 2; CoPE-HEI3 - coordinator of Physical Education at Higher Education Institution 3; FP-HEI3 - professor of football at Higher Education Institution 3; GCYT-FC1 - general coordinator of youth teams at football club 1; TCo-FC1 - technical coordinator for under-16 and under-17 at football club 1; MF17-FC1 - manager of under-17 category at football club 1; FC17-FC1 - fitness coach of under-17 category at football club 1; MF16-FC1 - manager of under 16 category at football club 1; FC16-FC1 - fitness coach of under-16 category at football club 1; TCo-FC2 - technical coordinator of under-17 category at football club 2; MF17-FC2 - manager of under-17 category at football club 2; GCYT-FC3 - general coordinator of youth teams at football club 3; MF17-FC3 - manager of under-17 category at football club 3; FC17-FC3 - fitness coach of under-17 category at football club 3.

In this research, we split the participants into two groups, according to professional/social/cultural orientation, that is: participants at Higher Education Institutions - HEI-PE - (Group I) and participants at football clubs (Group II). The participants of the survey were invited to answer the following question: "Do you find that there is prejudice - sexism - in football? If yes, how?"

For the analysis of data, we used the following instruments: semi-structured interviews, field logs, participant observation - the relationship between student/professor/coach/fitness coach and the external situations that may occur during observation; document analysis - the

⁵ We chose professionals at sports institutions that work with under-16/17 categories because, at this age, practice becomes daily and the club expects more of them in terms of football *performance*. Another reason is because, in Brazil, the Federal Constitution (1988) forbids children under 14 from working and, from 14 to 16, only apprentices can work. However, any sports practice project promoted by clubs with children under 14 must contain education features, avoiding selectivity and hyper-competitiveness, as stated in the Pelé Law (BRAZIL, 1998) and in the New Pelé Law (BRAZIL, 2011), article 3, item I.

proposals by HEI-PE, the summary of football classes. Regarding the clubs, we considered the proposals for the youth teams.

The research project was approved by the ethical committee of both PE HEIs, via plataforma Brasil. The first was HEI3: CAAE – 19579019.2.0000.5307; Registration nº 3.622.692: The researcher followed all the recommendations of Registration nº 3.568.544. The second was HEI1: CAAE – 19579019.2.3001.5308; Registration nº 3.751.358: The project is approved according to Resolution nº 466/12 of the CNS.

3 Results and data analysis

Considering the difficulty of decolonial methodology, and observing, in the literature, hybrid proposals⁶ for research through this perspective, we identified in CDA (Critical Discourse Analysis) socio-cognitive⁷ of Teun A. Van Dijk a data analysis proposal that aligns with our research. Thus, we proposed to critically analyze the prejudice of sexism in football, universities, and clubs, through a social, cultural, and political analysis of teachers/researchers. According to Van Dijk (2013), CDA does not supply a ready-made method for studying social issues, but emphasizes that, for each social issue, it is necessary to make choices and select the most relevant structures in the study of the phenomenon.

In relation to sexism in football, Group I emphasized that prejudice against women's football has decreased, but it still exists. "Without a doubt, there is prejudice against women's football, by men's football" (FP-HEI1). [...] "Sexism has decreased a little since the 90's - when I started going to games. Nowadays, women can even frequent stadiums with more ease, but it is still a sexist environment" (PECo-HEI1). [...] "There is prejudice against women's football, despite its growth" (FP-HEI2).

The existing prejudice against women in football is historical⁸ and social, and is strongly linked to sexist society. According to Chaves and Capraro (2007), society in general acts this way: when a child is born, it is conditioned early to act a certain way and to have certain preferences. If the child is a boy, he gets toy cars and guns, and sports balls, whereas girls get dolls, toy-sized domestic appliances and utensils. Subsequently, football is a part of boy's preferences and actions, because, socially, playing ball on the weekends or going out with friends to watch a football match are important instruments of male socialization.

According to Van Dijk (2018), prejudice isn't innate, but learned. Therefore, no one is

⁶ See Carvalho Filho *et al.* (2015).

⁷ CDA research is, oftentimes, interested in ideologically biased discourse, as well as the shapes through which such discourse polarizes its representations of "us" (endogroup) and "them" (exogroup). In both levels of the analysis of meaning - local and global -, we can often verify a general strategy of "positive-representation-of-self" and of "negative-representation-of-others", where "our good things" and "others' bad things" are emphasized, and "our bad things" and "others' good things" are minimized. (VAN DIJK, 2013).

⁸ The practice of football by women was regulated only on January 8th, 1983, when the National Sports Council (CND) made official the practice of football and futsal by women.

born sexist. To the author, we must consider the sociocultural environment for this process of ideological acquisition and practice. People learn to be prejudiced in their day-to-day lives, in their family, at school, at work, with the media, among others. According to Pizarro (2014), prejudice is a living legacy of colonialism in contemporary societies, under many forms of social discrimination, integrating itself into many social orders, including football. To the author, “modern football” is linked to the discourse of who holds powers, through prejudiced attitudes, like sexism.

This mechanism of subjugation - sexism used by men to assert power, according to Grosfoguel (2016), makes epistemic racism/sexism one of the most important issues of the contemporary world. To the author, epistemic privilege of western men over knowledge produced by “the other” has been one of the mechanisms used to favor imperial/colonial/patriarchal projects around the world. The inferiorization of knowledge produced by women has granted western men the epistemic right to define what is true. In effect, football, being a socially and culturally male space, is a space where these mechanisms are made. In this relation of inequality between men and women, according to Goellner (2005), in men’s football the players’ competence is fundamental in transforming the sport into a commercial endeavor, but in women’s football, that is not enough. Football society’s interest is that women players, in addition to “playing their little game”, are also good-looking.

Regarding what was said about prejudice against women and women’s football has been decreasing - like “Nowadays, women can even frequent stadiums with more ease” (PECo-IES1); “despite its growth” (PECo-HEI2); “with women’s football, even though it’s decreasing” (FP-HEI2) -, we admitted this is a fact. These days, women do go to football stadiums more often and women’s football championships are publicized, but they still occupy a small portion of sports press when compared to that of men. In this sense, to Aragão (2010), women’s representation in sports coverage, indirectly or in presence, is limited to the to certain space in the dynamics of these programs and broadcastings, which strongly contributes to the maintenance of this exclusion mentality by the public. When it comes to stadium presence, according to Campos (2010), some female fans, in an attempt to legitimize themselves in this space - looking for the permission and respect, especially that of men - seek to differentiate themselves, reinforcing stereotypes and prejudices once created by men and reinforced by women themselves.

A relevant situation, which appears infrequently in discourse about the presence of women in football, is that of the mothers of players and future players. For a long time, the discourse was that “the father stimulated the boy” - “belonging” (DAMO, 2003) - to practice football and was responsible for this commitment. But we have observed that this reality has changed a bit - these days, mothers are a part of it. According to Menezes (2019), the story published about the single mothers of the National Brazilian Team players at the 2018 World Cup shows the main role black women and single mothers play in the commitment of their children,

grandchildren, nephews, and other members of their families, as a reality in the youth teams of Brazilian football - a situation little publicized by the media.

To exemplify the aforementioned reality, we bring some statements made after that observation carried out on October 30th, 2019 at FC2. We realized that fathers and mothers - mothers even more so - watch practices. In their speech, mothers show themselves to be heavily involved in football: “This club is gateway for my child, here is where they are seen by the big club”; “Athlete X stayed in the big club because he had an agent”; “Without an agent for my son, he won’t get into a big club”; “I will hire my son an agent”; “I’m selling European teams shirts, Barcelona, PSG, Real Madrid”; “My son tried out for Inter and did well, but, as he didn’t have an agent, he wasn’t picked”. Mothers believe in the possibility of their children being professional players more than fathers do, as proved by their statements: “I’ll take my son to Team A and Team B’s showcase”, “We are the ones that get things done, the husbands don’t do anything”; “My husband doesn’t even understand football”; “If my husband had his way, my son wouldn’t even play”; “My husband doesn’t help with anything”; “We are the ones who buy our sons’ equipment”. (FIELD LOG).

We verified that women’s participation in football is a fact, but we still don’t know if they are respected by clubs and managers. This presence of women accompanying their sons in football is transforming a reality from the past, which was the presence of fathers in football. But this discourse of female presence is little talked about. Hardly do we hear or see something alluding to this fact. In this sense, to Menezes (2019) there seems to be a contradictory relationship in families whose goal is to make their child into a football player, as it is possible to observe the main role of women in the upkeep of this endeavor, be it as the head of “solo family” or in the agency of family management and, on the other hand, their invisibility must be taken into consideration. Once more, we observe the discourse of power according to Van Dijk (2013), but not in hiding female presence in football, as football is, historically, a “man’s thing” and the patriarchal discourse must continue to be imparted by society.

The prejudice against women is also reflected on academia, as seen in the discourse of Group I, where the football professor is a woman: “The first time I went to minister a football class, at another institution, I was thrilled because I love football, but when I walked into the room, many students said: ‘argh! a woman teaching football’” (PECo-HEI2). [...] There’s still a lot of prejudice against women being football professors in university, mainly from older male students who have already worked in football, whereas the younger students understand the situation better” (PECo-HEI2).

Prejudice is integrated in every space of society, including university, which should be a democratic space of liberty, diversity, respect. Prejudice against women in football is historic, evident in many spaces and subtle in others. In practical football classes in university, we notice there the subtlety of “preserving” women - usually, the only ones that play are those who possess

technical conditions, whereas others don't participate, be it to preserve themselves or because the kind of activity proposed only benefits those that are more skilled. This practice appears to be very common in football classes in PE courses and, somehow, it does not bother neither the professor nor most students. Even in the PE course "football isn't for women".

About the aforementioned, we seek a relation between Grosfoguel (2016) and the structure of knowledge of westernized universities. To the author, at westernized universities, the knowledge produced by epistemologies, cosmologies, and "other" worldviews that aren't considered westernized are taken as "inferior" when compared to the "superior" knowledge produced by a few western men. Grosfoguel also states that knowledge produced by women - western or not - is also seen as inferior and outside the thinking canon. The foundational structures of knowledge at westernized universities are epistemically racist and sexist at the same time.

The observation of classes carried out at two HEIs ratifies the aforementioned. At the observation on November 16th, 2019 at HEI3, we witnessed the following: a class of 18 students present, of which 6 were women; a heterogeneous class regarding age (between 19 and 45). heterogeneous regarding practical experience in futsal, especially women; out of the eighteen students, only eleven participated in the practical lesson, with only two of the women. At the observation carried out at HEI1 on November 21st, 2019, we verified: the main professor taught the 2nd group of students, in the gymnasium, with two interns (female) who jotted down the number of children's technical actions; the auxiliary professor and an intern (male) accompanied the 1st group of students on a field of Football 7; the female interns did not participate in the practical lessons on the field; the male intern worked as the referee and played when they needed a goalkeeper. At the observation carried out on November 25th, 2019 at the same institution, we verified: a mixed class, with 45 students of which 11 were women; heterogeneous in age, between 19 and 40; a very crowded practical lesson due to the large number of students, with three classes at the same time in the gymnasium; vast majority of the students with little experience; only three women participated in the practical lesson. (FIELD LOG).

According to Pimenta and Anastasiou (2008), when teachers get to university, they bring with them countless and varied experiences of what it is like to be a teacher. Experiences acquired as students of different teachers throughout their school life. To add to this, Gomes (2010) highlights that some studies on the constitution of a teacher consider that most teachers acquired a conduct in school from their experience as students, learnings that now make up their professional self. Following this logic, teachers repeat, in their practices, the same situations they lived as students. Therefore, if a woman does not play or participate, there is no problem there. In this sense, Silva and Campos (2014) point out what is commonly seen in schools: the football pitches are handed over to boys while girls get a peripheral space to play dodgeball, volleyball, or anything else. That is, when they are not invited to watch the boys play and make up a cheering squad during PE.

This discourse seems to be instituted in the PE environment. Considering the theory presented by Van Dijk (2012), once again, we emphasize that discourses can receive distinct influences from hegemonic groups - such as education systems -, contributing to the construction of the social memory of a specific professional category, in the case of PE, which reinforced the prejudiced aspects against women's participation in football. We understand that the teacher, in their pedagogical duty, can be the mediator and enabler for the transformation of these realities, teaching and showing there are "other" ways to act in the world, especially with actions through which everyone can participate with dignity. To J.B. Freire (2003), the important part is to teach football - and teach it well - to all. As an example of a "decolonial" football practice, we cite the work done by Belmonte and Gonçalves Junior (2018), called *fútbol callejero*. According to the authors, modern football advocates for the mandatory separation by sex in its practice due to anatomic-functional features. Differently, in *fútbol callejero*, men and women, both very skilled and less skilled, are included, play together in the same team, with the possibility of reworking the rules, favoring the fair participation of its participants with equity, grounded in respectful, cooperative, and solidary coexistence - premisses of *fútbol callejero*. Some manifestations are being made to lessen the differences instituted in society, between men and women in football. But, this practice still persists, despite several contrary attitudes and manifestations. We view this discourse as needing to stem from school, affecting students, parents, and the school community in general, but for that, teachers, agents of change, must believe the premise: "football does not have gender".

Regarding sexism, in the discourse of Group II, we highlight two aspects: women are the ones who must adapt to the world of football, and the number of women working in football is small: "Sexism as well, we do have many women working here, but I know it's an exception to have a female technical coordinator" (TC-FC1). [...] "The idea in football is that women need to work with women, and men need to work with men, because we look at the picture, not the context (GCYT-FC1). [...] "I am the only woman in the club's football department since 2009" (TC-FC1). [...] "How many women work at the club? Just the secretary. Why can't I have a woman as an assistant? Women are of equal or superior capability to men, but many of them don't believe themselves to be capable of working in football" (MF-FC2).

As for the discourse about the small number of women working in professional football, despite it being the national sport, this matter is still being silenced by the media, as the spaces for women's football and women working in football are still small. We understand this silence begins in the structure of women's football, with the lack of women occupying positions of leadership at state federations, at the CBF (Brazilian Football Confederation), at FIFA, in referee positions, as club directors, in medical departments, that is, everything that involves women's football. Reflecting upon these facts, we verified that, in general, for a woman to be in a position of power in football, they have to stand out a lot in their profession, whereas for men, a "good

IQ” is enough.

The prejudiced discourse of the white, sexist elite, through the perspective of Van Dijk’s theory (2018), is also reflected in the field of opportunities for positions of power in women’s football. If we observe the characteristics of leaders at CBF, we have: men, white, from the traditional and economical elite of Brazilian society. In this sense, we ascertain that while this is the command model at CBF, women will hardly have more space in football. Relating the profile of the leaders of Brazilian football with the prejudice against women, we verify this is a historical discourse, created by them and which is internalized within society.

According to Goellner (2005), these historically built prejudices by our culture and within our culture are what keep these issues in the present. Prejudices against representations of masculinity and femininity, that is, what is expected of men and women in society. To the author, the fact that football is created, modified, practiced, commented, and directed by men makes it seem as though it belongs to the male gender, just like the judgment of who can practice it or work in it. According to the author, it’s like women depend on male permission to participate. We ascertain that it is in school where we can reverse this reality about the concepts and practices of football, that is, question these “truths”. It is important to show students that football and the access to its universe can be different, building a practice that values the participation of women in the world of football, which in and of itself constitutes an act of boldness in the current scenario, seeking equality, solidarity, companionship, and learning.

Other discourses in Group II about sexism referred to the adaptation of women to the sexist world of football: “I have never felt the prejudice here at the club. I think we need to know the environment we are in; I inserted myself in a male majority setting, so I can’t expect people to change everything that is done because of me” (MF-FC1). [...] “I never wanted the club to adapt to me, to have a locker room just for me, so I adapted to the club, I got here extra early to use the locker room” (MF-FC1). [...] “They never changed the way they talked just because I was there; I joke with my husband that I know every ‘nook and cranny’ of football” (MF-FC1). [...] “This guy said I couldn’t work with the older boys, then he wanted me to work with all categories; I understood his reasoning, I understood it wasn’t prejudice” (MF-FC1). [...] “There’s also the matter of sexism, especially when a girl from university comes to do research here; they are all treated with respect, but there’s always a little jeering, not to degrade anyone, but for the simple fact they are of a different gender or color” (GCYT-FC3).

Analyzing the discourse of Group II, regarding women occupying positions in football, we verified how much structural sexism is present in their talking. Sentences like “we need to know the the environment we are in”, “They never changed their way of talking”, “I didn’t want the club to adapt to me”, “I understood it wasn’t prejudice” (MF-FC1), “but there’s always a little jeering, not to degrade anyone” (GCYT-FC3), only emphasize the sexism in workplaces of football. Understanding that women must adapt to the sexist world of football, and that gender

jokes must not be taken as prejudice, only corroborate the differentiation between genders in football.

What was said by GCYT-FC3 - “but there’s always a little jeering, not to degrade anyone, just for the simple fact they are of a different gender or color” - denounces commonplace situations in the “world of football”, where sexism is structural. Furthermore, most times, these events go without reprehension and young players are not warned about their wrong attitudes. We ascertain that if this kind of attitude was approached in “another” way, we would contribute to “another” kind of football formation - we would be minimizing the production of unskilled/unvalued players (‘pés de obra’) and incentivizing the formation of citizens.

We also observe in the speeches of Group II that, even when women are in a position of power in football, they repeat the sexist discourse, be it due to conviction or to maintain their jobs. In this case, it seemed to us it was conviction. This conviction is the product of a historical discourse, as previously exposed and, according to Van Dijk (2018), learned in school’s PE, because, if we observe the whole discourse on school football, it is related to men and the presence of women is ignored or taken as a negative stereotype of the practice of this sport. The belief that women must not be a part of football is reproduced in society by dominant groups in a stereotyped, negative, and biased manner, but, most of the time, it goes unnoticed by people, becoming the famous discourse of subtle or structural sexism.

In the previous sense, Daólio (2006), in Brazil, the differences between men and women are so rooted to the cultural dynamic of our society that awareness and the desire to effect the process of change to this reality are not enough. To the author, the process of passing down habits and cultural values is done through imitation that becomes tradition and prestige of a certain value or cultural custom. In this context, for a girl to insert herself in the environment of football, she would be going against social and historical tradition, an attitude seen as rebellious. In most cases, for women to enter football it is more comfortable to fit into social dictates and not contest them, and thus, being valued as a more successful person. Many are the examples of these manifestations of accepting the discourse of structural sexism.

To Goellner (2005), PE teachers are already so entrenched in these prejudiced discourses that, instead of questioning them, they collaborate to legitimize its force. By separating boys and girls during PE classes, they are consolidating these dominant conventions. When they silence this and other facts, they also accept these segregations, mystifications, and conventions that football is almost exclusive to men. Once again, we support that, despite strong cultural influence, it is in school that a new discourse about the participation of women in football must be proliferated, starting with the question: can women play football?

4 Indicators to mitigate football sexism in school, in university, and in clubs

Regarding the indicators for football to be a decolonial mechanism to mitigate its

prejudices - in this case, sexism -, still marked by coloniality, we defend that a proposal of teaching football in the perspective of deconstructing that football is a thing for men, creating opportunity for women. We understand that this is historical, cultural discourse is entrenched in Brazilian sexist society.

In the previous sense, it isn't rare to hear women are more docile and fragile and more suited for the practice of volleyball and dance, and boys, more "agile" and "strong", are more suited to football and fighting sports. We realize the forces of the process of cultural transmission reinforce prejudice, aiding in girls not having the same motor experiences as boys, thus creating a chain of situations that leads to the exclusion and lack of motivation of girls regarding the practice of football.

We agree with Daólio (2004) that, in the phase previous to sports initiation, we must offer girls the same motor stimuli explored by boys, minimizing the effects provided by their bigger involvement in several activities, not only at school, but at home, on the street, in the park, and in the club. We believe the joining of content for children of both sexes, from the start of their physical activities, can promote a similarity in motor, psychic, and social development of the genders, thus enabling a joint work. Therefore, we ascertain that, to deconstruct this discourse, we can start within the family, then at school, especially during PE, going through PE courses during higher education, until we get to the job market. For that, we need to encourage and offer opportunities to women to learn and show their competence. In this perspective, we will describe some experiences we had, helping to deconstruct sexist discourse.

We start with the work done alongside Ane Caroline, PE student at IEFES/UFCI with the objective of verifying the impact of a proposal for teaching futsal, in school PE, to girls in elementary school, at a private school in Fortaleza. We analyzed the girls' knowledge about the sport before and after the project, as well as their contact with the foundations and rules of futsal. We also verified the contributions, in the perspective of the students, of the process of teaching-learning, through futsal at school PE class. We started from the assumption that, by modifying the view of the practice of futsal in school PE classes - based in the segregation of activities by gender, in the reproduction and teaching of foundations in an individual manner -, developing a pedagogical practice of futsal contextualized and carried out in a collective manner, we possibillitate learning from a creative configuration. The field work was carried out at Santa Isabel School, in Fortaleza, with a class of eighteen girls between the ages of nine and ten, from the fourth grande of elementary school, in 2015. The impact of the proposal was positive, where the involvement and well-being of the girls was demonstrated by the interest and the playful practice, revealing the importance of adequate professionals and planning to their audience. By providing games and play that led the students to realize the necessary motions of the sport in a recreational way, we noticed that this manner of teaching facilitated the understanding of futsal and that this sport can be practiced by everyone, thus aiding in the equal motor developed between genders.

We have hope that, in the future, it can contribute to more significant teaching of futsal in schools, aiming to break with the traditional teaching of this sport and possibilitating an equal formation. In 2016, the student Ane Caroline was hired by Santa Isabel School to minister PE classes to children.

Another work⁹ we did, this time alongside Ana Clara, PE student at IEFES/UFC, served to deconstruct the discourse that women would not have the competence to manage male futsal teams in clubs and schools. This work was carried out at 7 de Setembro School in Fortaleza, in 2013, with male futsal students of the school's under-11 team. The objective was to develop and apply a proposal for the teaching-learning process and training of tactical system 2.2 and individual marking, in a male team of futsal initial in school. In 2014, the student Ana Clara was invited to be a PE teacher at 7 de Setembro School, ministering PE classes to elementary school and managing male and female futsal teams of the under-11 category.

Another experience we had to contribute to the deconstruction of the discourse that “football is for men only” was the experience as manager and organizer of the female futsal team at the Federal University of Ceará (UFC), in 2012. At the time we also carried out a research¹⁰, alongside a student in the team, with the objective of learning about the reality of female futsal in the state of Ceará. At UFC, high-performance sport offers a diverse group of modalities, serving the high number of student-athletes, and presents as one of its characteristics management of teams that is compatible with the academic trajectory, avoiding loss in academic performance. The Department of College Sports (DDU) at UFC works to encourage participation in college competitions and the implantation of sports incentive scholarships. The female futsal team offers UFC students guided training three times a week, equipment for games and practice, fifteen sports incentive scholarships worth R\$ 400,00 each, financial support for transportation, meals, and lodging during national competitions, as well as the participating and paying administrative fees during regional and national competitions.

In addition to all the benefits sports can provide, we also find in college sports, more specifically within the female futsal team, the opportunity for students to attend university and not have to abandon competitive sports, in case they already played before getting into the school. In this context, UFC enables the access to sports practice, helping them to not abandon sports when entering university. We noticed that the female futsal team at UFC, despite the university's incentive, possess amateur features because, for the majority of these athletes, it is activity more aimed at recreation and continuation of sports practice started at school. We understand the main goal of UFC regarding its female futsal team is to provide a guided space for the practice of women's futsal, a space so very scarce for that gender in our country.

⁹ See Oliveira and Balzano (2014).

¹⁰ See Montenegro and Balzano (2012).

We must highlight the importance of PE professionals in this process of cultural transformation, by being an active agent of change, starting in school and continuing it in university, because it breaks the paradigm, creating opportunities in sport for all, without gender restriction or any other kind of prejudices, as those are practices that contribute to the deconstruction of the discourse “football is for men only”.

5 Final Considerations

We know there is still a long way to go for cases of prejudice and discrimination to cease to exist. After all, they are a reflection of a prejudiced and sexist society. We ascertain that both clubs and teaching institutions must make public and publicly condemn cases of discrimination, as well as developing informative and educational actions that seek to eradicate these acts that so stain our society.

In this sense, it is important to highlight the cultural contribution of football to the formation of Brazilian society, especially valuing the participation of popular classes and women to the development of this sport. Thus, beyond school, higher education institutions - PE courses, to be specific - can: value and increase hours of the class of football in their curriculum; select capable professionals of this sport; provide adequate infrastructure to its practice; and, in addition to the technical formation, emphasize the the formation of humans, including themes like the formation of players, prejudices and difficulties in football. We believe that the university and school need to become closer to clubs, seeking the sharing of knowledge, a “two-way street”.

In clubs, we believe in a parallel work model of sports formation and personal/human formation for youth teams. In this direction, we propose that football clubs hire specialized professionals, especially in the field of PE, to enhance the formation of athletes in clubs and schools. Professionals who will work with issues of citizenship - as well as *performance* on the pitch -, work directed toward the integral formation of the youth (during and after the football stage), stimulating the learning of another language, approaching matters of prejudice in football, home economics, investments, adequate media posture, and the value of image to the public, recommending book and films - re-teaching them to read, see, and interpret - that will contribute to the social, cultural, and political formation of the athletes.

We defend “another” epistemic model of teaching football, in university and in clubs, that will form future PE professionals and and student-athletes within and without the four lines of the pitch, creating conditions for them to, in a critical manner, experience “other” forms of exercise and learn, in an existential act that value the whole of the human experience, the “feel-think”.¹¹

¹¹ Feel-think indicates the process through which we work thoughts and feelings at the same time. It is the fusion of two ways to interpret reality, from the reflection and emotional impact to the converging of the two into a single act of knowledge: feeling, thinking, and acting. (MORAES; TORRE, 2004).

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Article received in: 10/20/2021

Article accepted for publication in: 12/16/2021