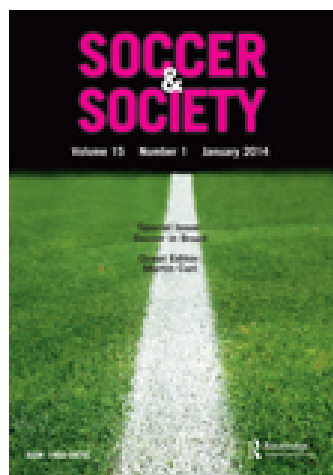


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Beauty, effort and talent: a brief history of Brazilian women's soccer in press discourse

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This essay offers a brief historical background to the evolution of women's soccer in Brazil. It focuses on the main obstacles women faced to pursue the game, which was forbidden to women in Brazil in 1941. By analysing how the newspapers treat women's teams, the essay will try to highlight significant changes in the stereotypes that long guided perceptions of people about women soccer players.

Introduction

On 12 January, 2009, Brazil's Marta was elected the world's best soccer player, for the third time in her life. The Brazilian press endorsed her achievement with great enthusiasm, for Marta had already been known there as 'Queen Marta', in a reference to 'Pelé, the king of soccer', who, up to then, had reigned alone since, until recently, there were not any women's games at all to share the Brazilian soccer podium. Thus, Marta is making soccer history in the country. Besides being constantly compared to Pelé – the most respected soccer player in the country –, in 2007, she became the first woman to have her footprint inscribed on Maracanã's sidewalk of fame. Brazil's best known soccer players, such as Didi, Nilton Santos, Romário and Tostão, have all left their footprints on this sidewalk. The time had finally arrived for a female player to do the same.

It took some time for Brazil to elect a soccer queen because women took an equally long time to be incorporated as legitimate players of the world's most popular sport. However, Marta's success story is an exception in a country where women's soccer was once prohibited. Women's teams were only given official recognition in the 1980s, and even so, to this day, Brazil still offers few opportunities for young women to become professional soccer players. This is why Marta had to count on her lucky star more than once to overcome all the difficulties she had to face on the road up to fame.

Born in a poor family in a town called Riacho Doce, in the northeastern state of Alagoas, Marta moved to Rio de Janeiro when she was only 14 years old, in search of better opportunities on the soccer field. After passing a test, she was accepted on the Clube de Regatas Vasco da Gama, which had a strong women's soccer team since the mid 1990s, stimulated by the Brazilian national team's success in the 1996 Olympics in Atlanta.¹ However, the club's amateur structure meant that the players could not receive decent salaries; basically, they only received a small monthly

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allowance, generally not enough to cover their basic needs.² To make things even worse, Vasco da Gama's women's team did not last very long, which is how Marta found herself unemployed only two years after arriving in Rio. However, her performances in the Brazilian national team drew the attention of Umeå IK, a Swedish team that decided to hire Marta and offer her good pay and working conditions, completely different from anything she had ever experienced in Brazil.

Playing on a foreign soccer team is one of the few options open to Brazilian women who wish to become fulltime soccer players³ because, despite the country's great soccer fame, few clubs support women's soccer, whose competitions are irregular and held in a disorganized fashion. This lack of infrastructure also plagues the national women's team. Since many of the players do not play regularly in established teams, they do not get the opportunity to practice as much as they should and, as such, come onto the field without being properly prepared. Once on the national team, they barely participate in scrimmages, which are important for physical conditioning and defining the team tactically. Compared to Germany and the USA, for example, Brazil's women's team is at a great disadvantage. In the last 25 years, Germany has scored 298 goals against other national women's soccer teams. These figures are not comparable with the Brazilian team, which, in the same period of time, never even got out onto the field even once. On the other hand, the men's soccer team has a strong sponsor, a technical commission set-up in advance and constant participation in international preparatory scrimmages.

This is why, winning the world vice-championship in 2007 and getting silver medals in the 2004 and 2008 Olympic games may be basically credited to great individual talent and effort, on the part of the athletes as well as the technical commission, neither of whom can ever be sure of their national team's professional destiny once the season ends. René Simões, who coached the national team in 2004, understandably justified his constant concern about how women's soccer will fare in Brazil. He wrote the book, *O dia em que as mulheres viraram a cabeça dos homens* (The day women turned men's heads around), in which he reviewed the whole preparatory scheme used, both before and during the Olympic Games that year. In the final chapter, there is a section entitled 'manifesto', in which players' suggestions and complaints were registered. In this 'manifesto', the team's coach pleads for the creation of a higher-level organization to administer women's soccer and especially for the 'Creation of a professional league within the molds of the futsal and volleyball league, with ten teams and a four-year minimum guarantee period until the next Olympic tournament'.⁴

Simões mentions the crucial problem faced by women's soccer in Brazil: 'In a country with a five-time world champion (men's) soccer team, women have a hard time proving they are good players. As far as soccer teams are concerned, there is a kind of consensus among its supporters and experts that only male canaries can fly'.⁵ The former coach is right. In many countries, soccer – and sports in general – are still arenas designed for masculine values to be affirmed and praised. And Brazil is no exception. Among the game's supporters and professionals, it is common, for example, to hear the expression 'soccer is a man's game', which, according to the historiographer Fábio Franzini, is a sentence used to reaffirm 'the virtuous virility of the sport [soccer]'.⁶ Linking sports to virility leads to a frequent association between women's soccer and lesbianism, as made evident by the press' persistent questioning of the female players' sexuality. *Veja*, Brazil's most widely read weekly magazine, for example, asked coach René Simões during an interview: 'How do you deal with

the issue of homosexuality in women's soccer?'⁷ Marta also had to answer a similar question in an interview given to the *Folha de São Paulo*, right after the world championship held that year.⁸ It is interesting to note that men do not have to deal with these kinds of questions at all and neither do athletes of either sex who play other sports modalities such as volleyball, swimming, artistic gymnastics or basketball.

This is why, I conclude that asking questions about women soccer players' femininity probably has to do with the strong connection usually made between soccer and masculinity, which still heavily affects perceptions of the game. Masculinity is traditionally conceived of such values as courage, manliness and strength, qualities not generally associated with women. Masculinity is thus intimately related to playing soccer, especially in a country such as Brazil, where this modality is seen as a brutal and violent sport and, as such, more 'masculine'. The imaginary on women and femininity, on the contrary, since the twelfth century, as Gilles Lipovetsky has observed, has been constructed around the attributes of beauty and gracefulness:

The images show it, behavior proves it, and expectations confirm it: Beauty doesn't carry the same value for a man and a woman (...) everything reminds us insistently of the privileged position enjoyed by feminine loveliness, identifying women with the 'beautiful sex'.⁹

Throughout the history of women's soccer in Brazil, this image is not understood as being historically and socially constructed, but as a kind of feminine 'essence', one of the main obstacles faced by women who wish to play soccer. Such attributions given to the female body and behaviour have doubtlessly functioned as great barriers to women fully entering the soccer arena in Brazil. The essay looks at this historical problem, starting in the 1940s, until nowadays, in which we may verify a weakening of these concepts. Today there are no longer obstacles for women playing soccer.

Beautiful and feminine

In Brazil, certain standards of femininity raised a debate in the early 1940s on whether or not women should play professional soccer, resulting in the prohibition of this modality, set forth by Decree-Law. At that time, several journalists, physicians and athletes expressed their opinions in newspapers and magazines. This was how women's soccer teams, as well as the few tournaments actually held, started drawing attention of the press, gaining widespread publicity.¹⁰ Most of this news referred to matches between neighbourhood teams, mainly from the poorer outlying neighbourhoods of Rio de Janeiro. However, women's soccer expanded way beyond city limits and some newspapers looked at the possibility of a warm-up match between the Casino Realengo and the S.C. Brasileiro women's teams, before starting an important men's game between São Paulo and América (RJ), to inaugurate the newly built Pacaembu stadium in São Paulo. The warm-up game was postponed, however, and later took place before a São Paulo vs. Flamengo (RJ) (men's teams) game.

The women's game had probably been postponed because of all the controversy surrounding women playing soccer at the time. After informing the departure date of the referred women's soccer teams to the city of São Paulo, the *Jornal dos Sports*, then one of the best known sports papers in the country, mentioned some of

problems that female players had to deal with. The *Jornal*, which sponsored the trip, thanked the president of the Federação Paulista for his efforts to: ‘take care of this difficult trip, since we’re talking about women’s teams’.¹¹ When word got out about this game, there was indignation. For example, the columnist of the renowned *Gazeta Esportiva* stated that the preliminary match represented a ‘true attack on physical education, sports, and even to State sports organizations’.¹² An extreme case of rejecting women’s soccer was led by a citizen named José Fuzeira who sent a letter to the president, Getúlio Vargas, in which he demonstrated his concern about the increase in women’s soccer teams:

(...) and growing, year by year, it is likely that in all of Brazil, 200 women’s soccer clubs will be organized, this means, 200 nucleuses destroying the health of 2000 future mothers who, besides, will be kept in a depressive mentality and open to rude and extravagant exhibitions.¹³

The letter of this citizen reverberated far beyond readers’ opinions. The Division of Physical Education of the Ministry of Health and Education issued a document of opinion stating:

The gesture of Mr. José Fuzeira (...) deserves all honors (...) the formation of several female soccer ensembles (...) deserves disapproval of sensible people (...) for reasons of physiological order that do not approve of such a violent genre of physical activity, incompatible with the possibilities of the female organism.¹⁴

Several opinions contrary to women’s soccer came forth, especially in the newspapers of that time. The *O Imparcial*, for example, declared on 8 May 1940, that ‘Women’s soccer needs to be controlled’.¹⁵ Certainly, women might play soccer in festive or local games, but the problem apparently began with what was seen as excessive public exposure. Public opinion feared that other women might become interested in playing soccer, following the example of the established players, who in the Pacaembu Stadium or in other sports arenas, had showed off their talent with the ball. This might lead to such women ‘becoming men’, a fear that, according to the researcher Silvana Goellner, was constantly mentioned in 1940s sports and physical education sections of the newspapers:

the changes that occur in women’s bodies and behavior due to physical activities, when different from the standards culturally accepted as normal, seems to threaten not only male superiority in sports, but the very representation of male and femaleness.¹⁶

In other words, what was at stake was the risk that certain sports – among which, soccer – would necessarily provoke changes in the female body, making it incompatible with the current patterns of that time and, also, cause women to deviate from their roles as mothers and wives, the only socially accepted roles attributed to them at the time. This becomes clear in opinions debating, as was common in the early 1940s whether or not women should play soccer. For example, Dr Humberto Ballaryni shares a quite illustrative opinion; he held the important position of assistant in the Escola de Medicina, and published a suggestive article in the *Revista Educação Physica* entitled ‘Why women should not play soccer’, in which he advised against it because this sport would be ‘contrary to the natural inclination of the feminine soul’.¹⁷ This ‘natural inclination’ is resumed in ‘grace, charm,

sweetness, a spirit that is handed down from our mothers, the portrait of the contemporary woman'.¹⁸

Thus, women should not play soccer for health reasons, but these were considered as a part of their beauty. In other words, it was not hygienic, but above all, it was not compatible with the accepted standards of femininity. After much discussion and controversy, in 1941, the Decree-Law 3199, which set forth the basis for sports in Brazil, prohibited women's soccer by stating that: 'women may not allow themselves to practice sports since this is incompatible *with their nature*'.¹⁹ The rationale for this prohibition was clearly founded on stereotyped assumptions regarding the female body. On this matter, a sports chronicle from the 1970s is quite exemplary, quoted here from the soccer commentator and former coach of the Brazilian men's team, João Saldanha, in which he put forth the following hypothesis:

Let's imagine a boy who wishes to marry a girl and asks her: what do you do? The girl answers vigorously: 'I'm am the main soccer player for my neighborhood team (...)' It is not possible to say if this relationship would result in marriage (...) But the female physique as has been developed throughout history is incompatible with soccer.²⁰

Thus, João Saldanha still expressed an opinion pretty similar to that which was circulated in the 1940s. However, despite the persistent prejudice, in 1975, the law was annulled.²¹ In any case, the prohibition did not effectively stop many women from playing amateur soccer, even if illegally,²² but there can be no doubt about how the prohibition affected the possibilities of creating a professional structure for women's soccer. Even after lifting the prohibition, women's soccer still did not have institutional recognition, a phenomenon not restricted to Brazil. Despite these problems, the 1970s were fructiferous for women's soccer, especially in Europe, with the world's first women's championship being held in Italy – without any support from FIFA – in which Denmark won.²³ This was an important event that most likely influenced the end of the soccer prohibition for women in Brazil,²⁴ as well as having provoked an increasing clamour in Argentina for the AFA (Argentinean Soccer Association) to legalize and encourage women's soccer.²⁵ In 1981, in Rio de Janeiro, a Women's Soccer League was created with nine participating teams, considered as the first female soccer league in the country. In 1982, around 200 female teams spread across the country while they waited for women's soccer to be formalized,²⁶ which only actually happened in 1983, when the CBD (Brazilian Sports Confederation)²⁷ finally announced the necessary recognition.

In the mid 1990s, already under the aegis of the CBF, Brazilian women's soccer went through a boom, thanks to the national team taking fourth place in the 1996 Olympic Games in Atlanta. Women's increasing demands for soccer schools, especially middle-class women, got published. This pressure also drew attention to the fact that the teams required talent as well as beauty. The article 'Flowers on the field' published in *Veja* magazine showed that some of the female teams were put together using criteria that privileged the liveliness and beauty of the players: 'Teams demand that the players be both talented and pretty'.²⁸ This was possibly why the most sought after female team players came from the Fluminense Futebol Clube, from Rio de Janeiro, whose members included well-known Brazilian models such as Suzana Werner, now married to Júlio César, goalie for the Internazionale in Milan. This team of beauties did not win any titles, but in 1997, they did take part in a historically important game: the first women's soccer classic played in

Maracanã, the largest and best known stadium in Brazil. They did not have much chance against their opponent, Vasco da Gama, though, which used all their best players, such as Pretinha and the goalie, Meg. Fluminense lost 4–1.

In the first part of the year 2000, issues related to beauty, femininity and the risk of masculinization still continued to affect public opinion on women's soccer, to the point of influencing the rules of an important competition: the São Paulo women's soccer championship in 2001. This event, organized by the Federação Paulista de Futebol, whose objective was to promote and popularize women's soccer, caused a big fit after their vice-president, responsible for the tournament, declared that players with 'shaved heads cannot play. That's the regulation'.²⁹ The federation's president, José Farah, justified the ban by alleging the need to 'create a new image of women's soccer that is repressed by chauvinism. We have to combine soccer with femininity'.³⁰

Thus, we can see that beauty no longer remained a health requirement, but a marketing problem; women would have to remain beautiful and feminine, so that soccer could be transformed into a viable product on the market, especially to a male audience, as explained in the marketing project of the championship, whose aim was: 'To develop actions that magnify the beauty and sensuality of the players in order to attract a male public'.³¹ This quote clearly shows us that even though women's soccer was officially permitted, it was still surrounded by negative stereotypes, such as its players being too masculine. Stereotypes aside, though, this was still an especially fertile time for women's soccer in Brazil, since the most important players in the country, such as Sissi, Pretinha and Marta, gained international recognition.

After all, the popularization of this sport was motivated not only by the beautiful models who sought fame by playing for the country's teams, but also by the national women's team's successful campaign in the 1996 and 2000 Olympics. It is very difficult for a sport to gain the attention necessary for its survival without producing tangible results. These results depend on the technical excellence of its players. As far as the Brazilian women's soccer team goes, their performance on the field, their achievements and even their near-successes have attracted the interest and attention of sports journalists and chroniclers. Recognizing the quality of soccer played by Marta and other players has led to concerns over beauty and femininity to diminish. The women's talent, especially on the Brazilian national team, has been just what they needed to get a good press rap for themselves and for women's soccer in general. Thus, the media has been providing good coverage of the women's teams' participations in important championships such as World Cups, Pan American and Olympic Games. Certainly, such coverage does not come close to that given to the men's team, in terms of the number of professionals involved in such coverage and how much space is given to them, whether in the press, TV or radio. But there are interesting issues that may be analysed using such press coverage, which reveals the current stage of women's soccer in Brazil, as well as some significant changes in the role of women as players. On this point, I would now like to analyse how the women's team's failures recuperated in the country, using some of the most important championships in which they participated.

The effort and the talent

While the men's team's shortcomings are received in an extremely negative fashion by the sports media, leading to controversy and debate over responsibilities³² for

such failures, the women's team generates a different kind of discourse in the press, marked by a more sympathetic narrative tone. Rather than the excessive criticism given to the athletes' performance or the non-conformity with the team's failures, the press prefers incentivizing women's soccer. Illustrative examples come from the reports on the women's failure to win the gold medal in China, in the 2008 Olympic Games, and also the world championship in 2007, in which the gold was lost to the German team. In both cases, the media emphasized the non-favourable conditions of women's soccer in Brazil as a crucial cause of such failures. On the day following the final game lost to Germany, the *Folha de São Paulo* newspaper declared: 'Germany gave Brazil a wake-up call'.³³ The 'wake up call' meant looking into what was wrong with women's soccer in Brazil, basically a lack of support and infrastructure. The fact that the women even reached the final game of the championship was almost exclusively due to their own talent.

This question was also mentioned in comments about Brazil's failure to win the Olympic Gold in 2008 in China, against the USA. At the time, a photo of Marta crying featured on most of the country's newspapers. These tears were not only shed for losing the match, but also because Marta had declared, on many different occasions, that winning such a title would be important for the women's team in order to win greater support from the CBF (Brazilian Soccer Federation). *O Globo*, one of the newspapers most read in the country, published a piece entitled 'Marta does not recognize failure, which might affect the future of the team and the sport'.³⁴ While the *Folha de São Paulo* also made reference to players' concerns about the future, as made evident by Barbara, the goalie, who declared that: 'Unfortunately, Brazil does not give importance to women's soccer, and the Olympic games are the best chance for us to show off our work, so that we can play abroad, on foreign teams'.³⁵

This clear lack of structural conditions in women's soccer has led players and would-be players to be represented in the press as victims of instability of opportunities. This representation is quite noteworthy in Brazilian soccer, and viewed as a problem that must be solved. There is also a lot of criticism addressed to the CBF, whose promises to give greater support to women's soccer have never been honoured. However, despite not earning the same support and salaries as male players, the Brazilian women's team uniform is still respected in foreign stadiums. As a result, besides being forgiven for its failures, the women are also seen as heroic figures, having surged from such negative results, something unimaginable on the men's team. The first page of the popular newspaper, *O Dia*, published the day after the women lost the Olympic Gold to the USA, in 2008, serves as an example. Here, we see a picture of Marta crying and Ronaldinho Gaúcho laughing, followed by this headline: 'It was only silver, but at least they know how to be ashamed'.³⁶ This was a reference to the fact that the men's national team is full of millionaire players, who would have easily played in the Olympic Games without having the same drive for victory as their female counterparts.

However, these problems are more than a motto for the way the women's team is treated in the press; there is also great public recognition not only of their efforts, but, above all, their talent. The talent attributed to the players is a relevant factor in the Brazilian press' representation of the women's national team, and especially Marta. What is more, exalting the players' skill demonstrates that prejudice against female athletes has lost ground since the discovery that women are also capable of producing a great soccer spectacle on the field. Even though the national team has not yet achieved a major international title such as the World Cup or Olympic Gold

Medal, there is a consensus that women are capable of embodying ‘artistic soccer’, a native category so precious to Brazilian soccer’s image and self image that deserves further commentary here.

Journalists and chroniclers are unanimous in recognizing the quality of soccer practiced by women, which is significant in a country that has long revered Pelé, Garrincha and Romário, not to mention many other great players who all have in common the fact that they are men. The exaltation of the women’s team’s capabilities is evident in the way they are treated in the press, such as in this article taken from the newspaper, *O Globo*, published after the victory of the national team over the USA in the 2008 Olympics: ‘The turn came from individual talent, which made Brazil doubtlessly the most technical team on the planet’.³⁷ And in recent years, another curious phenomenon is getting press coverage: women’s capabilities are being used to criticize the male team. This is clear, for example, on an article entitled ‘Women play for the gold and for teaching their male counterparts a lesson’ published shortly before the final Olympic match:

The male team came in fifth in the last World Cup, did not play at all in the Athens Games – has not reached the classification in South America (...) If the bridge that separates teams is long in terms of money and visibility, the other gap starts to become evident on the field itself. Today, this gap has reached its maximal amplitude, with women winning the gold, the only prize that the male team has never obtained.³⁸

This leads us to an important issue concerning the possibility of a future sports media creating a metonymical relationship between the women’s team and the Brazilian people as a nation, as occurs with the men’s team. This metonymy, as has been demonstrated by the anthropologist Simoni Guedes, can be understood as a process in which ‘the national teams become transformed into their own countries, while the players represent, by extension, a whole nationality’.³⁹ We know, for example, that the male team is usually a depository of typical attributes of *Brazility*, mainly regarding the ‘usages of the body’.⁴⁰ Dancing, swaying, swing, and dribble make soccer an art – close to dance, especially samba – finally, a Dionysian body as claimed by the sociologist Gilberto Freyre in his article ‘Football Mulato’.⁴¹ This is central to the concept of playing in a Brazilian style, a style based on the idea of an artistic soccer.

This *Brazility* has been extended to the representation of the women’s team, in which no star shines brighter than Marta, who, as we have seen, is known as the Queen and constantly compared to Pelé. A brief analysis, for example, can demonstrate that the press usually appreciates her dribbling several times, always praising her skill with the ball.⁴² One of the most famous sports chroniclers of the country, Juca Kfoury, even said that ‘There is no one in the world who plays soccer today as well as the girl from Alagoas wearing a number 10 shirt for the Brazilian national team’.⁴³ If we consider that women’s soccer was prohibited in the 1940s and only made legal by the CBF in the 1980s, we may now say that despite all the difficulties faced by Brazilian women’s soccer, there are lots of doors being opened. Besides getting good press coverage in the Pan-American Games, which was held in Rio de Janeiro in 2007, this experience also helped make evident how women’s soccer, and specifically the Brazilian women’s team, can arouse the interest of the general public. The Brazil vs. USA game, which decided the gold medal, was eagerly watched by around 70,000 people who filled Maracanã, on the morning of 26 July, 2007.

Conclusion

In today's soccer scenario, the expression 'soccer is a man's thing', although still used and frequently pronounced, is no longer an unquestionable truth. In Brazil, an important sports commentator publicly challenged this idea, because if years ago it was possible to make this sort of declaration with impunity, today one risks an avalanche of criticism. There is an increasing awareness that this expression designates a culturally and socially constructed conception, which is currently being transformed. Women are gradually being incorporated into the real and imaginary territory of Brazilian soccer and legitimated as players of the most popular sport in the country. If, previously, the association between women and soccer was subject to debate and prohibition, nowadays female participation is not only considered possible, but also desirable and worthy of being celebrated, as happened with the 70,000 spectators in Maracanã. This phenomenon is related to the new possibilities for constructing female identities, because as Patrick Murphy has observed, female participation in soccer 'depends on the balance of socially generated powers between genders, in the wider context of a whole society',⁴⁴ a context in which 'a new model enters into vigor and a woman's social destiny follows a new model characterized by its autonomy regarding the influence that men traditionally exercised over definitions and meanings of the female socio-imaginary'.⁴⁵

Contemporary culture has offered women greater opportunities for self creation (id, idem), releasing them from a limited set of standards and expectations to which they were traditionally attached. It is also important to emphasize that female participation in soccer – as well as in other sports seen as masculine – tends to gain force in a period of intense struggle for equality between genders and in which difference and otherness has gained legitimacy and political force, as demonstrated by Stuart Hall.⁴⁶ This is evident in the way the Brazilian national women's team has participated in international championships, in which the press, as I have shown here, often questions a lack of investment, demanding a more egalitarian policy on the part of the CBF. It should be also emphasized here that the heavy merchandising context of today's soccer has been a favourable to women, since the game itself has become a spectacle to be sold to a consuming public, representing a considerable share in the lucrative soccer market. Certainly, as players, women have a long way to go before they enjoy the same prestige and salaries as men. In fact, women's soccer in most countries where this sport is hegemonic, is never given the same importance as the men's teams.⁴⁷ Yet, at the same time, we must take into account that men's soccer has been long consolidated and women's sports are still relatively recent. As mentioned earlier, the first world women's soccer championship ever took place in Italy in the 1970s,⁴⁸ while men's teams have been participating in World Cups since 1930. Women are still constructing their own space in the soccer world and this certainly has not been an easy task, since, once again, soccer has always been historically associated with masculinity.

Difficulties and lack of incentives still burden women's soccer in Brazil. Few teams have female counterparts and few of these female athletes are able to become fulltime professionals. However, if in previous years it was possible to use biased arguments in order to justify the lack of support or even the prohibition of women's teams, today these positions are no longer sustainable, especially the idea that 'soccer is a man's game'. This change in mentality is not only important for women; after all, when we say that 'soccer is a man's thing', we are not just excluding the

female element, but a whole variety of male elements as well. As Eduardo Archetti⁴⁹ has shown, masculinity (like femininity) cannot be understood as a universal and stable attribute, but one that may be expressed in a variety of ways. What is expected of soccer, therefore, is that it is a sport not only capable of comporting ‘masculinities’, but also ‘femininities’ in the plural. There are a number of roads to be trailed so that, in the future, Brazil may genuinely become the ‘soccer country’.

Notes

1. After taking fourth place in the 1996 Olympic Games in Atlanta, women’s soccer turned into a common theme in the Brazilian media. Interest in the game grew to such a point that, in 1997, for example, a São Paulo women’s championship was organized and broadcast by a national TV station.
2. Marta had to sleep on the Vasco da Gama club premises, since she did not have enough money to pay rent elsewhere.
3. News regarding the creation of a new Women’s soccer League in the USA has been celebrated by female soccer players in Brazil who see this league as a new work opportunity.
4. Simões, *O dia em que as mulheres viraram a cabeça dos homens*, 168.
5. Because the colours of its shirt, ‘canarinho’ (little canaries) is the affectionate nickname usually given to the Brazilian national team. Canarie is a yellow bird. Ibid., 8.
6. Franzini, ‘Futebol é “coisa para macho”?’ 316.
7. René Simões, in an interview given to André Fontenelle *Veja*, September 1, 1994.
8. Besides being asked if she had a boyfriend, Marta had to answer the following question: ‘Is there too much homosexuality in women’s soccer?’ Marta, in an interview to Rodrigo Bueno, *Folha de São Paulo*. October 15, 2007. Sissi, on the other hand, in an interview given some time ago, showed her irritation at this kind of question when she ironized that ‘The first question is if I have a boyfriend’. *Veja*, December 8, 1999.
9. Lipovetsky, *La tercera mujer*, 93.
10. A brief investigation of Rio de Janeiro’s main sports paper, the most respected in the country, *Jornal dos Sports*, often divulged news during 1940 on the formation, performance and tournaments or isolated matches of women’s teams. The June 11, 1940 edition of the *Jornal dos Sports* published the following news: ‘Two women’s teams will face each other, from the A. C Independente and Vila Valqueire, on the Silva Xavier Street field’. In this article, the names of the teams and a brief background were also published.
11. *Jornal dos Sports*, May 14, 1940.
12. Franzini, 322.
13. Ibid., 320.
14. Ibid.
15. *O Imparcial*, May 8, 1940; *apud* Moura, *As relações entre lazer, futebol e gênero*, 38.
16. Goelner, *Bela Maternal e feminina*, 123.
17. Ibid., 77.
18. Ibid.
19. Brhuns, *Futebol, carnaval e capoeira*, 73.
20. Saldanha, *O futebol*, 56.
21. Brhuns, *Futebol, carnaval e capoeira*, 73.
22. In the 1970s, some articles announced women’s matches, mainly beach soccer. Articles published in the *O Globo* newspaper, in April 11, 1976, and the *Jornal do Brasil*, in November 29, 1976, commented on women’s beach soccer games performed on the beach of the Leblon neighbourhood.
23. Jansson, ‘Aproximaciones al tema del fútbol femenino’, 205.
24. Reis, *Futebol e sociedade*, 58.
25. Only in 1991, AFA officialize women’s soccer in Argentina (cf. Jansson, 1998, 204).
26. Brhuns, *Futebol, carnaval e capoeira*, 75.

27. CBD (Brazilian Confederation of Sports – Confederação Brasileira de Desportos) is how the current CBF (Brazilian Soccer Federation – Confederação Brasileira de Futebol) was then called.
28. *Veja*, October 30, 1996.
29. *Folha de São Paulo*, September 16, 2001.
30. *Ibid.*
31. *Ibid.*
32. Every loss of the Brazilian national team, especially in World Cups, stirs up heated reactions in the press, which usually elects ‘villains’, that is, players considered guilty for the national team’s losses on the field. For more information, see Leda Costa (2008).
33. *Folha de São Paulo*, January 10, 2007
34. *O Globo*, August 22, 2008.
35. *Folha de São Paulo*, August 22, 2008.
36. *O Dia*, August 22, 2008.
37. *O Globo*, August 19, 2008.
38. *Folha de São Paulo*, August 21, 2008.
39. Guedes, ‘Malandros, caxias e estrangeiros no futebol: de heróis e anti-heróis’, 49.
40. *Ibid.*
41. In this context, sociologist Gilberto Freyre, author of the classic *Casa-Grande e Senzala* (*The Masters and the Slaves*), analyses the Brazilian style of playing soccer which, according to him, began when the national team started incorporating Afro-Brazilian players, thus being able to practice a different game in which the elements of Dionysian culture afforded variety and beauty to the games. Using Ruth Benedict’s classification, Freyre concludes that: ‘psychologically, being Brazilian means being mulatto – an enemy of Apollonian formalism – to use, with some pedantry, Benedict’s classification – and Dionysian – the great mulatto way’ ...
42. Marta’s goal scored against the USA in the semi-final match of the World Championship in 2007 was described by a TV commentator as a ‘genius’s goal’ (Private file).
43. *Folha de São Paulo*, September 30, 2007.
44. Murphy, *O futebol no banco dos réus*, 217.
45. Lipovetsky, *La tercera mujer*, 218.
46. Hall, *The question of cultural identity*, 1992.
47. Giulianotti, *Sociologia do futebol*, 195.
48. Jansson, ‘Aproximaciones al tema del fútbol femenino’, 205.
49. Archetti, *Masculinidades*.

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