

WOMEN AND THE COUNTRY OF FOOTBALL: INTERSECTIONS OF GENDER, CLASS, AND RACE IN BRAZIL

*AS MULHERES E O PAÍS DO FUTEBOL: INTERSECÇÕES DE
GÊNERO, CLASSE E RAÇA NO BRASIL.* 

*LAS MUJERES Y EL PAÍS DEL FÚTBOL: INTERSECCIONANES DE
GÉNERO, CLASE Y RAZA EN BRASIL.* 

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Abstract: The field of research on women's football has grown in Brazil in the past two decades. However, there is still a gap related to how class and race intersect gender in the constitution of that practice. To fill this gap, we analyzed the 2015 National Household Sample Survey's Special Sports Supplement, based on descriptive and inferential statistics. We describe the profiles of women who play football in contemporary Brazil and compare them to those of men and other women who play sports other than football. Our results indicate that, in comparison to what occurs with women who practice sports in general, class and race have the opposite impact on adherence to football. The majority of women who practice football come from the lower classes and are black. By indicating this relationship, we demonstrate the need to promote racial equality, diversity, and inclusion of black women's football narratives in Brazil.

Keywords: Black women. Football. Sports.

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1 INTRODUCTION

It has become common sense to hold Brazil as the country of football. In fact, according to National Household Sample Survey (PNAD) data (IBGE, 2017), football is the most practiced sport in the country. However, two problematizations must be made in relation to these discourses that link national identity to football and the coldness of absolute numbers: what is the place of women in this statement, and who are the women who incorporate this practice in their daily lives? Little is known about them and, despite some studies (CALHEIRO; OLIVEIRA, 2018; PISANI, 2018), the description of the female experience in football has silenced other social markers, such as race and class (BRUENING, 2005; SMITH 1992).

In general, the narratives about women's football in Brazil begin with historical landmarks that enact the prohibitions, invisibilities, and silences to which this practice has been subjected for much of the 20th century. A certain part of the historiography of the theme, more recently, has also demarcated the resistance of these women, especially in the contexts of formal prohibition of the sport, which occurred from 1941 to 1979 (RIBEIRO, 2018; SILVA, 2015). Such studies demonstrate, from the narratives of women, so-called pioneers, who played football in that context and who, later, came to form the first generations of athletes in the country, that the ban could represent silencing and erasure, but not non-existence (GOELLNER, 2005; MORAES, 2018; RIBEIRO, 2018; SILVA, 2015; ALMEIDA, 2013).

More recently, some research has claimed that women played football even before the main milestone celebrated in traditional historiography, known as the 1921 "ladies" match in the Tremembé and Cantareira neighborhood, in São Paulo (GOELLNER, 2005). According to these perspectives, the initiation of ladies into football took place in the 1910s, among elite women participating in sports festivities (BONFIM, 2019).

In addition to this initiation that accompanied the aristocratic traditions of the emergence of the sport in the country, the practice of football by women also took place in suburban areas and in circuses. However, unlike those that belonged to the Brazilian elite, women who became involved in the practice in these contexts were stigmatized, indicating that the abjection discourses linked to women's football have been in existence for over a century (BONFIM, 2019). That is, they have been extant for longer than the prohibition and the hygienist discourses of controlling sexuality and the women's bodies, above all White women (ALTMANN, 2003). On the other hand, such notes show the involvement of women from different social strata and contribute to looking at women's football, regardless of historical time, considering the gender issue in its intersectionality with other social divisions, such as class, race, locality, and generation (BUTLER, 1990).

Brazilian research, therefore, is breaking the barriers of erasing narratives and women's participation in football before the 21st century (BARREIRA *et al.*, 2018). Thus, although research on men in this modality is confused with the emergence of the fields of history, sociology, and anthropology of sports, studies on women and gender in football have grown mainly since the end of the first decade of the 2000s.

As a consequence, the recency of these surveys implies a range of objects and questions that have not yet been investigated, especially with regard to the issue of the intersectionality of gender and other social markers.

Considering this gap, in this article, we address the following question: who are the women who play football in Brazil in contemporary times? In this way, more than portraying the narratives of athletes whose image still wins the attention of the press in slow steps, we aim to present just who these anonymous women on the pitch are, raising dust and dribbling on dirt fields and grass across the country. We aim to focus on those women living and playing in small communities, at schools, and in large centers where women develop a keen interest in, learn, and play football. Thus, our objective is to describe the profile of women football players in Brazil, demonstrating that the intersectionality of gender, class, and race interferes in adherence to such sports.

Based on the data from the 2015 PNAD's Special Supplement on Sports, we describe the profile of women who play football, in relation to women and men who play sports (IGBE, 2017). We demonstrate that, unlike the average behavior of women who practice sports in general, class and race interfere in the opposite way in women's adherence to football. That is, if, on the one hand, White women and those of higher economic backgrounds have a greater tendency to practice sports, on the other, it is primarily Black and poor women who practice football¹. When we analyze the men who play football, we observe that this popular sport also has a greater correlation to the lower classes. However, in the case of women, this effect is much more pronounced.

Such trends indicate that women's football in Brazil is marked by race and social class, so it is critical to discuss the reasons and causes that contribute to the sport having a greater correlation to those whose identities are marked by these intersections. The issues of race and class in the practice of football gain even greater relevance when compared to the women who practice sports in general—mostly White women of higher social strata. In other words, the barriers to sports engagement Black and poor women face are immeasurably higher than those of their White peers—nevertheless, they opt to actively practice football. In this sense, in order to observe the barriers and support that make up women's relationships to sports, it is necessary to consider the intersectionality of gender, race, and class. That is, a specific description, a model that intends to account for the levels at which and the ways in which women engage (or not) with football and with sports in general, needs to consider these other social markers, which act in an intersectional way, forming not only other possible identifications, but addressing discourses and subjects of social practices in a distinct manner.

¹ We understand race as a social construct, so it is important to describe the parameters used in the denomination of Blacks in Brazil. In 2015, IBGE worked with the question "what is your [skin] color or race?" and provided the answer choices: "Black, White, Brown, Yellow, or Indigenous". As this "colorism" is criticized in the literature on race and related subjects, here we acknowledge our binary focus on the categories White and Black. As has been problematized by other authors, Brown and Black represent categories of Black racial identity in Brazil, sharing a common African ancestry that may contribute to discrimination (COSTA 2019; SILVA; LEÃO, 2012).

2 GENDER, CLASS, AND RACE: MARKERS OF INTERSECTIONALITY IN ADHERENCE TO BODY PRACTICES

When we observe the predominance of men in football, the issue of gender relations is evoked to explain the inequalities women face in access to opportunities to practice the sport. The gender category refers to the social, cultural and linguistic constructs that constitute the way we perceive the differences between men and women (SCOTT, 1995). Therefore, this analytical category allows us to understand that such differences and inequalities are not biologically determined (LOURO, 1999; MEYER, 2003; SCOTT, 1995). As it is part of the culture, gender is learned, reiterated, and negotiated daily. This means that we learn gender norms in effect in processes that are not “linear, progressive, or harmonious and that [are] never finalized or completed” (MEYER, 2003, p. 16). This learning also takes place through different instances, such as football, sports, and body practices. In this perspective, by practicing them people also learn to “be” women and to “be” men within a cultural context. Therefore, through sports, we “do” gender.

As part of our culture, we learn to embody and to do our gender, influenced by specific times and spaces, forming different ways of experiencing femininities and masculinities. These experiences intersect with other social markers, which can be configured differently according to one’s moment in life (MEYER, 2003). Thus, instead of thinking of women’s experience as unique, we must also perceive the plurality of existing ways of performing femininities, managed by people in relation to the contexts, power relations, masculinities, and specific situations of their lives. These assemblages also intersect with other social markers, such as race and class (BUTLER, 1990).

This perspective dialogues with the criticisms that Black feminists have made against traditional feminism. bell hooks (2019) affirms that the experience of Black women differs from that of White women, which confirms the insufficiency of generalizations arising from the traditional descriptions of feminism. In the Brazilian case, Sueli Carneiro wonders who we are talking about when we refer to a representation of feminine fragility. For the author, Black women have never identified with this myth, as they have consistently worked outside their own domestic environment and have performed costly labor functions, such as working “in the fields or on the streets, as vendors, greengrocers, prostitutes” (CARNEIRO, 2019, p. 314). Therefore, looking at the plurality of women’s experiences in Brazil implies demarcating the weight of the racial issue.

In general, cultural discourses refer to Black women by way of two metaphors. The first is the *Black mother*: an older, docile woman who cares for the domestic environment. The second metaphorical figure is that of the *hypersexualized mulatto*, whose body is available to the White man (CARNEIRO, 2019). Both are always already servile, which implies a representation that leaves such women with little time to dedicate to leisure activities. Furthermore, when Black women transgress these metaphors or escape the walls of private space and work, that is, when they are outside the confines of those representations of their domesticity, they are described as irrational, uncivilized, and out-of-control (PISANI, 2018).

These narratives have the effect of placing Black women outside a place of agency and voice, in a space where they remain silenced or unheard. Therefore, said narratives have an impact on the way such women and girls are viewed or gazed on and (not) narrated. A survey of African American girls in school showed how they are often seen as “problem girls.” The reason for this stereotype is the fact that they do not fit the expectations of female domesticity or docility in that environment, asserting and defending themselves publicly in relation to the violence they suffer (NUNN, 2018). As a consequence, teachers have low expectations about their participation in the school space, and more severe disciplinary processes fall on them than on their peers.

Similar discriminatory processes occur when it comes to the inclusion of Black girls and women in sports. Race and class intersect with gender when it comes to the choice of sports activities in which girls engage (WALKER-PICKETT *et al.*, 2012). In this sense, Black girls practice sports with lower financial and social costs of maintenance and engagement. As a result, in the United States, they have become more prevalent in sports such as basketball and those athletics whose practice is more economically accessible. In addition to the financial cost, the authors still claim that there are few opportunities and invitations for them to practice other modalities, demonstrating that there are both economic and symbolic barriers. In Brazil, this reality is observed in football (PISANI, 2018), which contributes to understanding a second aspect of this intersection of gender, race, and class.

This second aspect refers to the ways in which Black ladies perceive gender stereotypes linked to sports in a different way from their White peers. In the North American context, for example, while, on the one hand, White women often perceive that team sports are less appropriate for girls, on the other, Black women recognize some modalities such as basketball, football, and martial arts as “gender-neutral” practices (HANNON *et al.*, 2009). According to the authors, this difference in the perception of these stereotypes occurs due to the existence of “role models” of Black athletes that allow the recognition of these girls in these practices. Another reason is physical education, which contributes to their being inserted only in those sports considered “aggressive and explosive” (AZZARITO; SOLOMON, 2005), despite the interest in carrying out other practices (BRUENING, 2005). Thus, the sporting experience of African American girls ends up constrained by stereotyped and racialized cultural discourses (AZZARITO; SOLOMON, 2005).

As for Brazilian football, Mariane Pisani (2018) demonstrated that the experiences of White and Black women differ in relation to the meanings of the practice. For Black women, football was understood as a possibility for a profession, although one is unlikely to materialize. On the other hand, for their White peers, football represents a moment of leisure and fun. From the point of view of social representation, the media sometimes describes Black women footballers as “beast” and masculinized, rather than as beautiful, as White women are described (ALMEIDA, 2016). Such a narrative subjects Black women to a kind of “beastialization” for transgressing the norms of femininity and compulsory heterosexuality.

Paradoxically, on the one hand, Black football players were considered abject by the media, suffering numerous acts of physical and symbolic violence, such as racism and homophobia; on the other hand, in the daily spaces of football practice,

performing other non-normalized femininities makes these women more respectable (PISANI, 2018). In other words, at the level of their relationship with other women who live in the daily space of sports practice, they can transgress gender norms without suffering discrimination, making it possible to express other ways of being a woman, without ratifying “hegemonic femininity” (BRUENING, 2005). In the case of Pisani’s research (2018), Black women still position themselves more securely in the power relations configured on the pitch and locker rooms in amateur football practice. Therefore, this sport can be a space where different “transgressive” and non-normative femininities find safe ground for their manifestation. Such points about the discussion on gender, race, and sports ratify the demand not to generalize the experience of White women, nor to frame the racial discussion as if a gender distinction were irrelevant (BRUENING, 2005; SMITH, 1992).

3 METHODOLOGY

Data were extracted from the Supplement for Sports Practices and Physical Activities of the 2015 PNAD (IBGE, 2017). Until 2015, PNAD was an annual survey that contributed to the updating, by means of samples, of the national Census data about the general characteristics of the population: education levels, employment, income, and housing. In some editions, the research gained a special theme, as was the case with the Supplement for Sports and Physical Activities, carried out in partnership with the Ministry of Sports. The aim was to contribute to the formulation and evaluation of public policies linked to the democratization of access to sports and body practices (IBGE, 2017).

According to the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE), information on sports practices was established for one person from each household visited, aged 15 years or older, and randomly selected. In all, 71,143 people were interviewed for this supplement. For the purposes of our research, we analyzed the distributions of sex, color, or race as well as individual monthly income and monthly per capita family income². Such distributions were investigated through the framework of two questions: (1) During the reference period of 365 days, did you practice any sport in your free time (outside of working hours and physical education at school)? (2) What is the main sport you practiced in the 365-day reference period? As our main focus is football, we explored only data related to sports, that is, we do not mobilize information about physical activities that the person does not consider a sport. The data were treated with descriptive and inferential statistics.

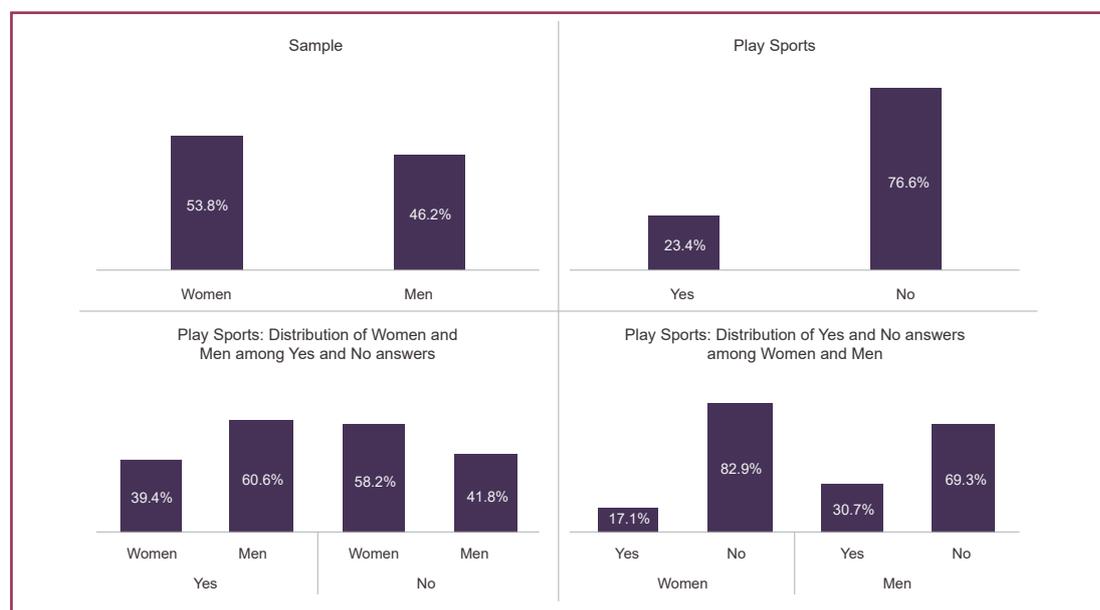
4 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Before analyzing the women who play football in Brazil, it is necessary to draw the context into which women who play sports in the country are inserted. For this purpose, we describe an overview of the PNAD 2015 sample of those who played sports in the last 365 days before the interview and who, among those who played sports, specifically played football. The Figure 1 shows four distributions. At the top, we show an overview of the sample of women and men and another of those who

² We kept the names of the categories identical to the those defined and used by the PNAD 2015.

have practiced sports in the last 365 days and those who have not. At the bottom, there is a graph that separates the sample between those who did or did not play sports, distributed among women and men; and another that separates the sample by sex and identifies those who do or do not practice sports.

Figure 1 - Sample distribution and sports practice.



Source: Prepared by the authors based on 2015 PNAD data.

Among the interviewees, less than twenty-five percent (25%) stated that they had practiced some type of sport in the last 365 days prior to the interview. Although sports practice is frequent among those who compose this segment of respondents³, the small size of this group reaffirms the conclusion of other studies on the prevalence of low participation rates in physical activities in the country (KNUTH *et al.* 2010). However, despite the homogeneous division of the sample between women and men—with slightly more women than men—sports practice is more frequent among men than among women, confirming a global diagnosis of less female participation in sports activities (HALLAL *et al.*, 2012).

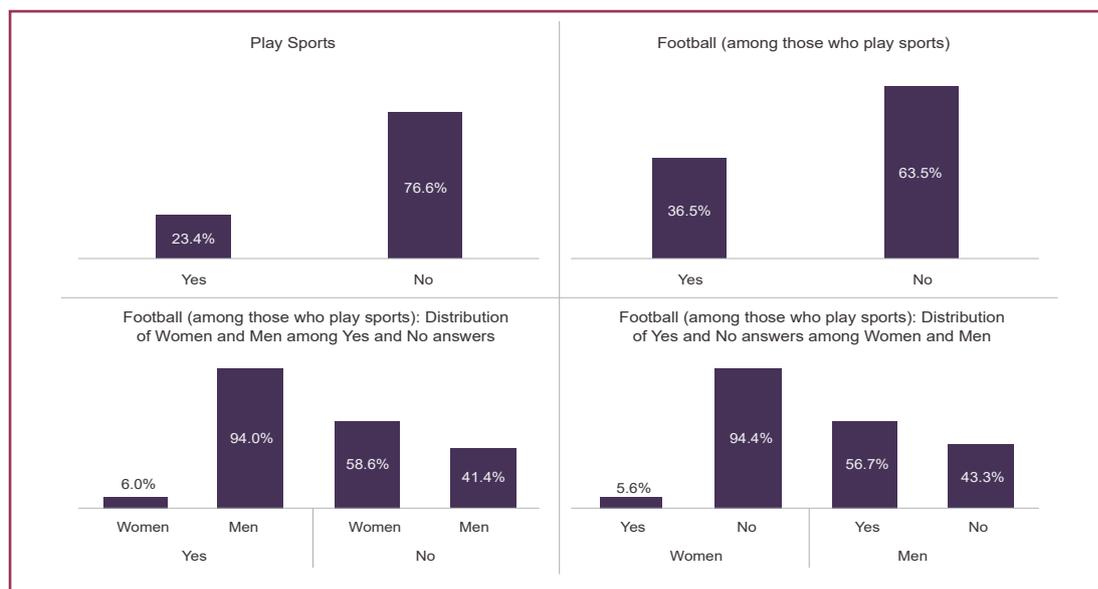
Among all respondents who practiced a sport, only 39.4% were women, although they represented 53.8% of the sample. Thus, while 30.7% of the men interviewed practiced a sport, among women this percentage reaches only 17.1%. In short, the first figure suggests that men have more incentives to practice sports than women do and, therefore, are the majority among sports practitioners in Brazil. This scenario reflects the cultural discourses that push different relationships with sports for girls and boys and women and men. After all, most sports are described as practices linked to masculinity and male aggression and virility (MESSNER, 2010). For this reason, women are less encouraged to engage in sports and have less availability of resources for such engagement; moreover, when they are engaged in such activities, they are more likely to suffer discrimination.

With this in view, we describe in the sequence, also differentiating between women and men, who plays football in the country, according to the survey carried

3 According to data from the same survey, 95% of people who said they practice sports said that this occurs at least once a week, with 66.7% playing sports on three or more days of the week.

out in 2015. In this case, we consider only 23.4% of the sample who claimed to play sports (Figure 2).

Figure 2 - Sports and football distribution among women and men.



Source: Prepared by the authors based on 2015 PNAD data.

Among the people who practiced sports, 36.5% played football (in its various manifestations such as futsal, football 7, beach football, and football, etc.). Football is the most practiced sport in the country, confirming the popularity of this sport in Brazil. However, when we analyze this distribution according to gender, we notice how much this sport is predominantly practiced by men. Among the people who play football, only 6% are women, which represents 5.6% of women who play sports. If we put men in perspective, the disparity is accentuated, as they represent 94% of those who play football - a number that corresponds to 56.7% of men who practice sports in general, according to PNAD (IBGE, 2017).

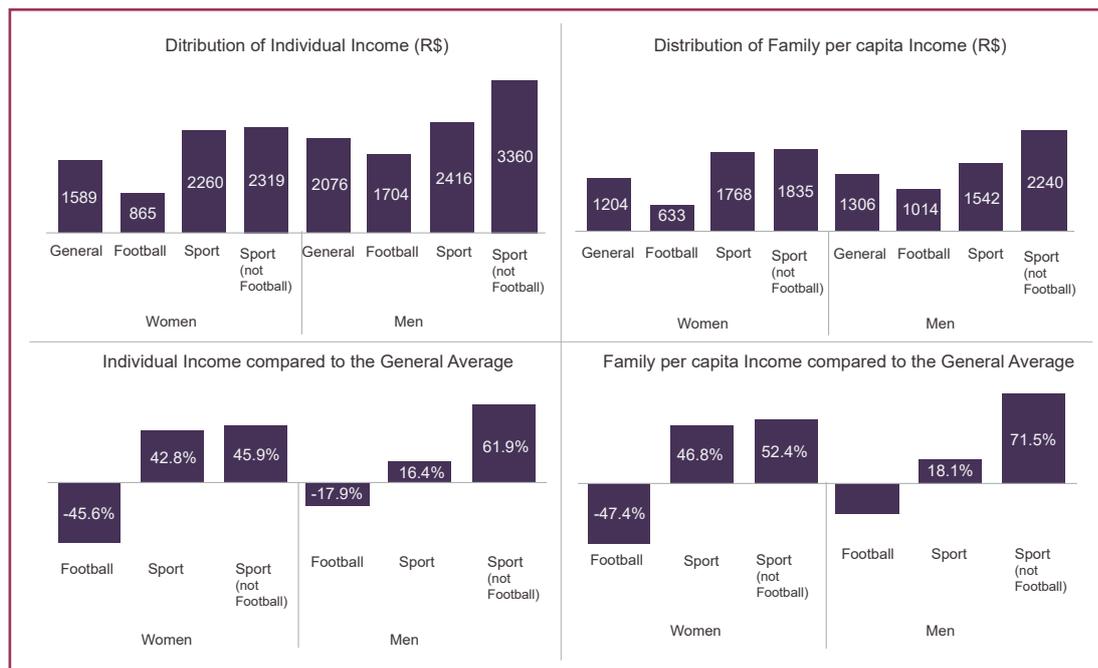
In other words, more than half of men have a preference for and practice football over other sports. Therefore, it is clear that football, in Brazil, is a sport practiced primarily by men although it has grown in popularity among women. The reason is that football is traversed by discourses imbued with a density of representations of masculinity, virility, and aggressivity, a fact that explains the attractiveness of the practice to boys and men (DAMO, 2007; MESSNER, 2010). Furthermore, it is through football that a pedagogy of masculinity is taught to boys (BANDEIRA, 2010; MESSNER, 1990; SILVA *et al.*, 2012).

This does not mean that girls and women are unable to play football, as there are 6% of women who practice the sport. However, as an effect of these cultural discourses, they face a series of interdictions and prejudices and must negotiate and resist efforts to exclude them from the sport and culture. Moreover, they often face demands from that they prove they know how to play (SOUSA; ALTMANN, 1999). This need to provide proof, at the same time, challenges and reinforces gender norms. After all, while the sport often makes them seem as “if they were not girls,” reaffirming the male hierarchy,

it also challenges notions of femininity and repositions gender as a construct in light of the demand to make the sport more inclusive of women (HILLS *et al.*, 2020).

Having outlined this panorama, we proceed to describe who makes up this group of women who play football in Brazil. In this sense, we explored this group according to two variables: income and race / color. In all cases, we compare this portion of the sample to men; to all women, including those who do not practice a sport; to all who practice a sport; and to those who play sports other than football. The results related to income are shown in the Figure 3.

Figure 3 - General distribution, football, all sports, and sports (other than football) by income among women and men.



Source: Prepared by the authors based on 2015 PNAD data.

In more general terms, the figure ratifies something known in Brazilian society: women’s income is considerably lower than that of men (MUNIZ; VENEROSO, 2019). In addition, considering women and men, people who play football have, on average, lower incomes than the sample as a whole and, mainly, than those who play sports. This is accentuated when averaging only those who play sports other than football.

When comparing women who play football to men in the same category, we realize this disparity is even more pronounced among the former. In this sense, we highlight that women who play football have an average individual income 45.6% lower than the general average for women interviewed in the PNAD, and 47.6% lower if we consider the per capita family income. On the other hand, when we observe the men who play football, we realize that, although they also have incomes below the general average of male respondents of the PNAD, the difference is not as discrepant as in the case of women (17.9% lower individual income and 22.5% lower per capita family income).

Therefore, women who play football not only have the lowest incomes in the sample on average, but also come from families with the lowest per capita income.

Similar dynamics have been observed in studies of Black women in the United States, pointing out that often the choice to play a sport - predominantly basketball and athletics - is due to a lack of availability and opportunities to engage in other practices (BRUENING, 2005; SMITH, 1992). However, in this case, not only class, but also race overlap as explanatory factors. The lack of financial resources contributes to these women choosing those modalities that are more financially accessible. In addition, the overrepresentation of Black women restricted to these sports means that they are not welcomed or are discriminated against in others. Since race and income combine as dynamics of exclusion in Brazil, this juxtaposition produces different opportunities for education and occupation between Whites and Blacks (SALATA, 2020), with indirect effects on socialization and leisure. Consequently, the exclusion dynamics produced by the intersectionality between race and class is juxtaposed with gender and is also imposed in women's football.

In the Figure 5 that follows, we explore the dimension of race, separating the sample between people who declared themselves White and those who declared themselves Black or Brown. This second group, we refer to as Black people, as they share a common African heritage⁴. When adopting such a strategy, we excluded from the sample people who declared themselves Indigenous or Yellow. We did this for two reasons. First, because the races Indigenous and Yellow represent less than 1% of the sample (613 people out of 71,142 respondents). Second, to establish a direct dialogue with the literature that deals with this social issue. As a result of these aspects, we opted for this strategy for statistical and analytical reasons, even recognizing the limits that they may entail. Thus, for this specific part of the analysis, our sample went from 71,142 respondents to 70,529, considering only people who declared themselves Black or mixed race (classified as Black) and those who identified as White.

Figure 4 - General distribution, football, all sports, and sports (other than football) by race / color between women and men.



Source: Prepared by the authors based on 2015 PNAD data.

4 According to the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE, 2017), the brown color option includes mulatto, cabocla, cafuza, mameluca, or mestizo (a mixture of Black with another color or race).

In terms of race / color, we see that most of the sample - between women and men - identifies as Black. However, the difference is even greater when considering who plays football, and the proportion of Black women (71.7%), in this regard, is higher than that of Black men (66.1%), even though it is lower in the general distribution (55.8% and 58.7%, respectively). This disproportion is evident when we compare women who play football with those who play sports. After all, if on the one hand the fraction of Black women who play football is higher than the percentage of Black women in the sample (71.7% vs. 55.8%), the same does not happen when considering all women who practice sports (49.8% vs. 55.8%). That is, although sports practice among White women is disproportionate in relation to the sample, the picture is reversed when we consider football.

It should also be noted that the proportion of Black men who practice sports (58.6%) is very similar to the general sample (58.7%). Thus, although there is a disproportion of Black men who play football, it is far more pronounced among women, further still if we put in perspective those who play sports.

In order to better understand these disproportions, we calculated the odds ratio of a Black women in relation to their White peers of: i) playing sports, considering all women in the sample; ii) playing football, considering all women in the sample; iii) playing football, considering only women who said they practice sports. To this end, we performed three logistic regressions assuming that the color or race aspect impacts on women's chances of playing sports and playing football. Next, we present the variables considered in the models, a Table 1 with the results of the three regressions and a Graph 1 showing the calculated odds ratios.

Model 1: Practicing Sports. All women respondents:

- Dependent Variable (Practicing Sports) - If the woman interviewed declared that she practiced a sport in the last 365 days, 1; otherwise, 0;
- Independent Variable (Black Woman) - If the woman interviewed declared herself Black or Brown, 1; if she declared herself White, 0.

Model 2: Playing Football. All women respondents:

- Dependent Variable (Playing Football) - If the woman interviewed declared that the main sport she played in the last 365 days was football, 1; otherwise, 0;
- Independent Variable (Black Woman) - If the woman interviewed declared herself Black or Brown, 1; if she declared herself White, 0.

Model 3: Playing Football. Only women who practiced sports in the last 365 days:

- Dependent Variable (Practicing Sports) - If the woman interviewed declared that the main sport she practiced in the last 365 days was football, 1; otherwise, 0;
- Independent Variable (Black Woman) - If the woman interviewed declared herself Black or Brown, 1; if she declared herself White, 0.

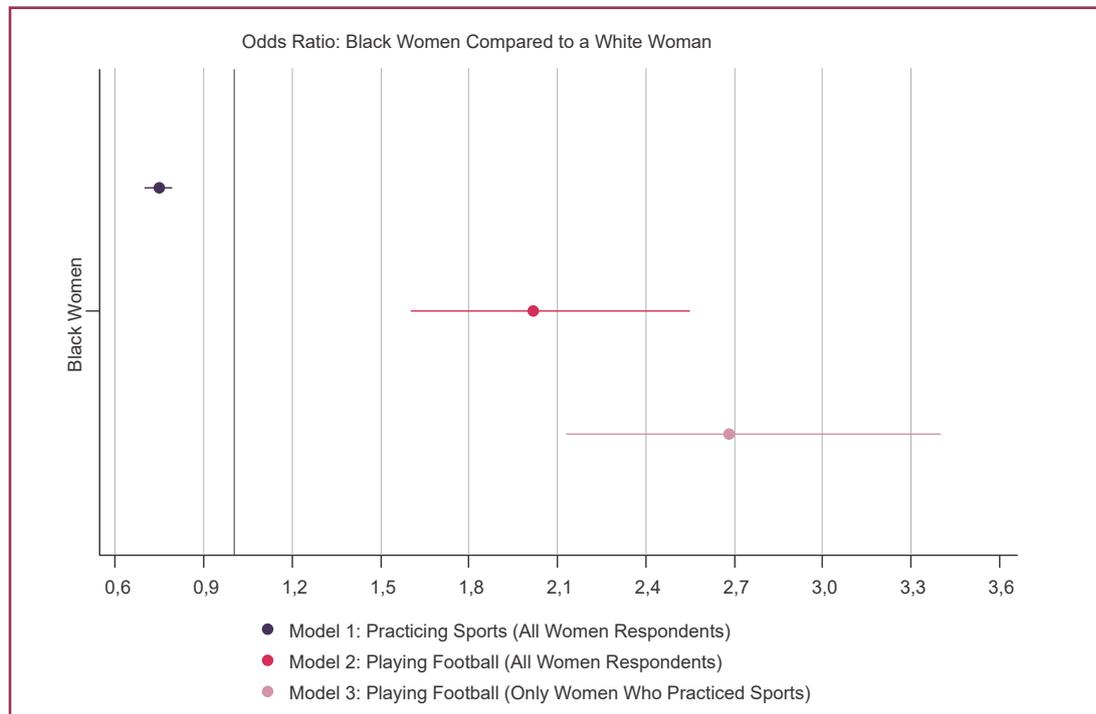
Table 1 - Logistic regression. Odds ratio of a Black woman playing sports and football compared to a White woman.

Practicing Sports. All women respondents				
Practicing Sports	Odds Ratio	Standard Error	Confidence Interval - 95%	
Black Woman	0,747***	(0,020)	0,708	0,789
Constant	0,240***	(0,005)	0,231	0,250
Number of Observations = 37.966				
Pseudo R ² = 0,0033				
Playing Football. All women respondents				
Practicing Sports	Odds Ratio	Standard Error	Confidence Interval - 95%	
Black Woman	2,017***	(0,240)	1,597	2,548
Constant	0,006***	(0,001)	0,005	0,007
Number of Observations = 37.966				
Pseudo R ² = 0,0095				
Playing Football. Only women who practiced sports in the last 365 days				
Practicing Sports	Odds Ratio	Standard Error	Confidence Interval - 95%	
Black Woman	2,685***	(0,326)	2,116	3,406
Constant	0,031***	(0,003)	0,026	0,038
Number of Observations = 6.471				
Pseudo R ² = 0,0269				

***p<0,001.

Source: Prepared by the authors based on 2015 PNAD data and using Stata.

Graph 1 - Odds ratio of a Black woman playing sports and football compared to a White woman.



Source: Prepared by the authors based on 2015 PNAD data using Stata.

We emphasize that the chances of a Black woman playing sports is (0.747 times) lower than the chances of a White woman, when we observe all women in the sample. However, when we consider the practice of football, the image is reversed. In this case, the chances of a Black woman playing is 2.017 times greater than those

of a White woman. This ratio is even higher when we consider only women who practice the sport; among these women, the odds of a Black woman playing football are 2.685 times greater than the odds of a White woman. It should be noted that all the results of the regressions are statistically significant, considering a 95% confidence interval. Thus, we ratify the scenario that the chances of involvement in the practice of sports are lower for poor and Black women. However, in the face of unequal access opportunities, in football there has been more acceptance of Black women than their White peers. In this way, anyone who talks about the history of women's football in Brazil cannot remain silent about the situation of racialization of the practice.

5 FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

When faced with a statistical scenario that demonstrates the need to “Blacken” (CARNEIRO, 2019) or promote diversity, equity, and inclusion of Black women in the narratives about women's football in Brazil, it is necessary that some precautions be taken. First, statistical data should not be considered as an “inescapable destination” for Black women (BRUENING, 2005). It is necessary to listen and critically look at the experiences, opportunities, and meanings attributed to the practice of football, without hushing or neglecting the racial issue.

Secondly, it should be noted that since 2016, but especially in 2019, we have witnessed a significant growth in the popularity of women's football in the country. The Olympic Games and the World Cup brought visibility to the national selection and the recent regulations of Conmebol forced Brazilian popular clubs to form women's teams. As a result, more attention has been paid to women, which may result in an increase in the number of women engaged in the sport. This highlights a limitation of our article, which is based on a survey that captures data restricted to 2015. For this reason, it would be interesting for other surveys like the PNAD to similarly include questions about engagement in sports in general and football in particular, which would allow a longitudinal monitoring of the effects of these changes for future study, especially studies of the racial, gender, and class dimensions of sports in society.

Additionally, it is necessary to observe, describe, and narrate in future research the meanings and uses that are made of football by these anonymous women. It is worth listening to these women about their agency, bodies, and lives, and the daily relationships that entangle their participation in sports and football. It is necessary, therefore, to develop an approach that intersects with Black feminism, that considers the plurality of female experiences and the non-colonization of this narrative by White supremacy.

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Resumo: O campo de pesquisas sobre o futebol de mulheres cresceu no Brasil nas últimas duas décadas. Contudo, há ainda uma lacuna sobre como marcadores sociais, como classe e raça, interseccionam o gênero na constituição dessa prática. Para preenchê-la, analisamos, com base em estatística descritiva e inferencial, o suplemento especial sobre esporte da PNAD de 2015. Assim, descrevemos o perfil das mulheres que jogam futebol no Brasil contemporâneo e o comparamos em relação aos homens e às demais mulheres que praticam esportes diferentes do futebol. Nossos resultados apontam que, em comparação ao que ocorre com mulheres que praticam esporte em geral, classe e raça impactam de forma oposta na adesão ao futebol. A maioria das mulheres que pratica o futebol advém de classes mais baixas e é negra. Ao indicar esta relação, demonstramos a necessidade de enegrecer as narrativas sobre o futebol de mulheres no Brasil.

Palavras chave: Mulheres Negras. Futebol. Esportes.

Resumen: El campo de investigación sobre el fútbol de mujeres ha crecido en Brasil en las últimas dos décadas. Sin embargo, todavía existe una laguna sobre cómo marcadores sociales, como clase y raza, tienen intersección con el género en la constitución de esta práctica. Para subsanar esa falta, analizamos, con base en estadística descriptiva e inferencial, el suplemento especial sobre deporte de la PNAD 2015. Así, describimos el perfil de las mujeres que juegan al fútbol en el Brasil contemporáneo y lo comparamos con relación a los hombres y a las demás mujeres que practican deportes distintos al fútbol. Nuestros resultados indican que, en comparación con lo que ocurre con las mujeres que practican deportes en general, clase y raza impactan de manera opuesta cuando se trata del fútbol. La mayoría de las mujeres que practican el fútbol provienen de clases bajas y son negras. Al señalar esta relación, demostramos la necesidad de ennegrecer las narrativas sobre el fútbol femenino en Brasil.

Palabras clave: Mujeres Negras. Fútbol. Deportes.

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CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

The authors have declared that this work involves no conflict of interest.

AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTIONS

Mariana Zuaneti Martins: Construction of the central argument and data analysis.

Kerzia Railane Santos Silva: Construction of the argument and the database.

Vitor Lacerda Vasquez: Construction of the research design, database and statistical analysis

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