

## “BEING A WOMAN IN A FOOTBALL COURSE IS ALREADY A DISADVANTAGE”: EXPERIENCES OF FEMALE COACHES IN CBF ACADEMY COURSES

“SER MULHER EM UM CURSO DE FUTEBOL JÁ É COMEÇAR COM UM PASSO ATRÁS”: EXPERIÊNCIAS DAS TREINADORAS EM CURSOS DA CBF ACADEMY [↗](#)

“SER MUJER EN UN CURSO DE FÚTBOL YA ES COMENZAR CON UN PASO ATRÁS”: EXPERIENCIAS DE ENTRENADORAS EN CURSOS DE LA ACADEMIA DE LA CBF [↗](#)

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**Abstract:** This study aimed to explore the experiences of women football coaches in certification courses offered by the CBF Academy of the Brazilian Football Confederation. Drawing on semi-structured interviews carried out with six female coaches, we found that the courses are still mostly taught by men and for men. While men regularly feel at ease and safe to speak their minds, women report discomfort and constant reflection on their behavior to prove their ability to occupy that environment. This situation gradually changes throughout the course as women take a stand and have their knowledge and competence recognized to occupy that space. Despite these challenges, the female participants view this experience as positive mainly for the networking and knowledge it provides. The results of this study can help propose changes that favor greater participation of female coaches in certification courses in football and sports in general.

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## 1 INTRODUCTION

I particularly have this view when I talk to women who attended the courses. If there weren't a lot of women talking about it all the time, addressing the subject and literally doing as you said, being a pain in the neck, things wouldn't happen by the organization alone (Participant 2).

The presence of women in leadership positions in football, especially as coaches, has received increasing attention from the scientific literature and sport management (LEWIS; ROBERTS; ANDREWS, 2018; PASSERO *et al.*, 2020; SAWIUK; LEWIS; TAYLOR, 2021). Although the number of practitioners has increased in recent decades, the presence of women in coaching staff positions has not increased proportionally (PASSERO *et al.*, 2020). For example, in Brazil, the members of coaching staff in the Brazilian Women's Football Championship are predominantly men (85%), with the highest number of women (22%) in positions of coaching assistants (PASSERO *et al.*, 2020). Social, cultural, economic and historical factors contribute to the low number of women head coaches in Brazil, such as lack of support, sport policies and programs that propose strategies for the development of the sports at various levels (FERREIRA; SALLES; MOURÃO, 2015).

One of the most investigated aspects hindering the entry, maintenance and progression of women as coaches is the low perception of self-efficacy (CUNNINGHAM; DOHERTY; GREGG, 2007; GREENHILL *et al.*, 2009). It is well documented in the scientific literature that women have a low perception of confidence and competence in relation to men, even when they are highly qualified for the position (KILTY, 2006). For example, Cunningham *et al.*, (2007) investigated male and female assistant coaches of different sports in a US university league and showed that women had a lower perception of self-efficacy and greater fear in relation to their professional progress compared to men. Likewise, Greenhill *et al.* (2009) found that women would not apply for higher positions in their careers as coaches if they did not have all the required qualifications, even with extensive professional experience. On the other hand, men would not hesitate to apply for higher positions regardless of their previous experience.

To increase their confidence and avoid having their competence questioned based on gender stereotypes, women usually undergo an extensive qualification process (KILTY, 2006). In Brazil, specifically, female football coaches report the constant search for qualification and training experiences that develop their professional skills to maintain themselves and progress in the profession (NOVAIS *et al.*, 2021). In this sense, certification courses are one of the main possibilities to develop their coaching skills (BARRETT; SHERWIN; BLACKETT, 2021; CARDOSO *et al.*, 2022). These courses are commonly offered by sports federations and confederations that play an important role in developing professionals in sports. In recent years, there has been a significant increase in the offer and importance of such courses for professionals in the area (LEWIS; ROBERTS; ANDREWS, 2018; CARDOSO *et al.*, 2022). However, their impact on the lives of these participants and their formative experiences, especially among women coaches, has received little attention in the scientific literature so far (CHESTERFIELD; POTRAC; JONES, 2010).

Recent studies show that although courses have the potential to transform gender issues in sports, they are still mostly attended by men and perpetuate the exclusion of women in this process (FASTING; PFISTER, 2000; LEWIS; ROBERTS; ANDREWS, 2018). According to Novais *et al.* (2021, p. 10), coaching positions and participation in qualification courses are “a powerful strategy of resistance to and subversion of under-representation”. However, the participating women coaches still tend to receive little structural support for their development, in addition to facing embarrassing situations, since the instructors perpetuate gender stereotypes and create uncomfortable environments for them (LEWIS; ROBERTS; ANDREWS, 2018; NORMAN, 2008; SAWIUK; LEWIS; TAYLOR, 2021).

The study by Lewis, Roberts and Andrews (2018) is particularly important for being a pioneering effort to investigate the perceptions of women coaches who attended certification courses to work in football. After carrying out semi-structured interviews with ten women coaches who work in the English sports system, the authors showed that the participants faced high levels of gender discrimination and inappropriate cultural practices within that environment. More recently, Sawiuk, Lewis and Taylor (2021) advanced these investigations by interviewing nine women coaches who attended the A License offered by UEFA. The study showed that the course is marked by androcentric assumptions, toxic masculinity, sexualized language, derisive practices and unfamiliarity with the women’s game. These studies are important in showing that although certification courses have the potential to challenge gender constructions, they perpetuate unequal power relations in sports and make it difficult for women to remain.

Although these studies have fostered advances in policies for greater gender equity in sports, there are still important gaps to be investigated. First, most investigations were carried out in North American and European countries, presenting different cultural, political and economic aspects from those of countries in the southern hemisphere, such as Brazil. Second, we know that the number of women working as coaches in Brazilian football has grown in recent years (PASSERO *et al.*, 2020). However, one must understand their formative experiences to promote more initiatives in this regard. Third, being a coach in Brazilian football has its particularities. While an undergraduate degree in physical education is required to work in other sports (BRASIL, 1998), this is not the case for football coaches, as football has specific previous regulations (BRASIL, 1993). In this sport, the Brazilian Football Confederation (CBF) is the entity responsible for organizing the sport nationally and offering certification courses.

CBF Academy is the educational part of CBF and has been responsible for offering certification courses since 2016. Its official website<sup>1</sup> lists four licenses for training coaches, namely A, B, C and PRO. License C is aimed at working in schools for children and adolescents. License B has the same qualification and certification proposal as license A, but focused on youth teams. License A is indicated for people who work or want to work in football in professional teams, according to a competent

1 CBF ACADEMY BRASIL. Available at: <https://www.cbf.com.br/cbfacademy>. Accessed on: Feb. 23, 2023.

and scientifically updated practice based on ethical and scientific foundations. Finally, the PRO License is similar to an A License, but offers the possibility of working abroad, provided the person meets the minimum requirements of local confederations. The organization aims to offer high-level training that enhances the scientific knowledge and practical skills of professionals who want to work as football coaches in Brazil.

Based on these specificities of the Brazilian context and the existing gaps in the scientific literature, our goal with this study was to investigate the experiences of women coaches in certification courses offered by CBF Academy. With this work, we intend to reflect on the training environments offered to professionals and provide information to promote more inclusive and safer courses for women.

## 2 METHOD

### 2.1 PARTICIPANTS

We carried out a survey of the certification courses offered by CBF Academy for football coaches, followed by a search to identify women who attended them, on the official CBF website.<sup>2</sup> However, we did not find any kind of list naming the people who took part in the courses. Therefore, as the authors of the study have professional trajectories that intersect with women's football, we opted for a convenience sampling. As a selection criterion, participants should identify themselves as women and have attended at least one CBF Academy certification course (Licence A, B, C or PRO). We found eight women who attended courses to become coaches, six of whom agreed to take part in the study. Invitations were made through social media and telephone contact. In this first contact, we briefly explained the objective of the study and scheduled the video conferencing interviews for the days and times most suitable for the participants.

As a feminist research, this study was developed by women and with women. In this sense, the investigation aimed to collect the experiences of women narrated by themselves as political individuals, rather than through the lens of men and their dominance.

**Chart 1** – Female coaches who attended CBF Academy courses and took part in this study.

Coach	Course(s) attended
Participant 1	License C
Participant 2	License C and B
Participant 3	License B
Participant 4	License B and A
Participant 5	License C, B and A
Participant 6	License B

Source: Authors

## 2.2 PROCEDURES

For data collection, we used semi-structured interviews due to the possibility of learning about the experiences of these professionals in the training processes. This approach made it possible to investigate the information from different perspectives, enabling additional questions to emerge as the interview progressed (SMITH; SPARKES, 2016). The semi-structured questionnaire was an adaptation to the Brazilian cultural context of the study by Lewis, Roberts and Andrews (2018) addressing issues such as prejudice, representativeness, gender, socioeconomic profile, job opportunities, access to courses and other issues that emerged during the interview. Since the study aims to understand the complexity of the environment as an empowering or discouraging agent for women coaches in certification courses, we addressed questions and issues related to the experiences and feelings involved in taking CBF courses: ‘How did you feel in the course? What were your perceptions about the environment experienced there?’, ‘How many women were there? Do you believe that may have influenced the course’s environment in some way?’ All interviews were recorded with the consent of the coaches and faithfully transcribed by the first author. In addition, all names have been replaced by numbers in order to preserve the coaches’ identity and ensure a safe conversation environment. The study was approved by the Ethics Committee of the University of Campinas, CAAE: 18722619.6.0000.5404.

## 2.3 THEMATIC ANALYSIS

We used thematic analysis for the systematic process of analyzing the interviews, which makes it possible to find patterns (themes) in the analyzed data set and also helps in describing and interpreting its meaning and importance in the analyzed context (BRAUN; CLARKE, 2006). Given its flexibility, thematic analysis can be performed in different ways, making it necessary to define the pathways used in this study. The deductive analysis is based on pre-existing categories or points of reference that guide data interpretation. Inductive analysis, in turn, makes it possible to identify new categories that were not previously related to the theoretical basis (BRAUN; CLARKE, 2006). These processes were present in the six stages of analysis proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006): familiarization, generating codes, constructing themes, reviewing themes, naming themes, and writing the final report. From those processes, we came up with three main themes:

- “Being a woman in a football course is already a disadvantage”;
- Verbal violence experienced in the course;
- Would you take the course again? The potential of the content and networking provided.

## 2.4 RELIABILITY

To ensure the reliability of data collection and analysis, we used two different strategies. The first was a pilot study carried out with a women football coach who

attended CBF Academy courses in order to assess the relevance of the interview questionnaire and its understanding by professionals in the field. The second precaution was taken at the time of data analysis, which included the participation of a critical friend, a researcher with extensive experience in analyses of this kind (COSTA; KALIICK, 1993). The role of this researcher (second author of the study) was to supervise the data analysis process and formulate provocative questions that stimulated and deepened reflections during data analysis.

### 3 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

#### 3.1 “BEING A WOMAN IN A FOOTBALL COURSE IS ALREADY A DISADVANTAGE”

Just as we had difficulty finding women coaches who had attended CBF courses, the participants also reported having met few women in this environment. For example, Participant 6, after taking several CBF courses, commented that ‘I’ve never taken a football course in which I was not the only woman’. The same perception was reported by Participant 4, when commenting that ‘I took License A too, in the first part I was the only woman also, but this time the group was huge, almost 90 people and I was the only one’. The other coaches reported having met other women in the courses, but they were a minority of the attendees.

I don’t know if it’s because of how I was raised, what I went through in life, my circumstances, but most times I was the only woman in the course and being a woman in a football course is already a disadvantage, knowing less, and then I thought that people might expect less from me and want to help me with things instead of giving me a voice. (Participant 5)

These statements reinforce the fact that certification courses are still mostly attended by men. The under-representation of women coaches in these training environments was also found in other countries around the world (FASTING; PFISTER, 2000; LEWIS; ROBERTS; ANDREWS, 2018). According to previous studies, gender stereotypes, the expectations of male instructors and the predominance of men coaches make the environment uncomfortable and lead to the exclusion of women from this training process. These reasons are also cited to justify why women end up not entering or continuing this formal education process and can be used to explain the low presence of women coaches in certification courses in Brazil.

The women coaches reported discomfort and embarrassment at the beginning of the course regarding their presence in that environment. For example, according to Participant 2, ‘at first men always look at you sideways, they will always look at you sideways, “does she even know what offside means?”, you know, things like that’. The same perception was reported by women coaches who attended English football courses (LEWIS; ROBERTS; ANDREWS, 2018). The participants commented that they were not welcome and sensed they were not appreciated in that environment. According to the study, women are perceived as strangers to the ‘boys club’, a term used to metaphorically represent this circle of relationships to which men have free access (LEWIS; ROBERTS; ANDREWS, 2018). The exclusion of women does

not represent their lack of competence to be in that space, but the lack of social characteristics (GREENHILL *et al.*, 2009).

This issue of an environment that is comfortable for men and wary of women is also reflected in different participation throughout the course. While men feel safe to openly speak and ask questions, regardless of the content, women reflect on what they are going to say before taking a stance. For example, ‘women, being a minority in the class, are still the ones who speak the least (...). Unlike men coaches who talk a lot and don’t necessarily say something good or relevant’ (Participant 3).

In the coach’s statement below, we note that this process of gaining recognition happens slowly and gradually during the course.

Maybe I had some moments when that happened, but as I gradually took a stand in the course, for example, there was a class and I would ask some good questions, or sometimes right there in the coffee break, as I gradually took a stand and gave my opinion there about everything I think and have studied, the boys started to trust me more. So I did have the feeling that as the course progressed I gained their confidence thanks to my attitude (Participant 1).

This same perception was reported by another coach when commenting that ‘and then it breaks down over the days, more and more the barrier breaks down and by the time the certificates are awarded, everything is fine. But of course, in the beginning, there is always some suspicion’ (Participant 2). Therefore, women coaches report that course beginnings are marked by wariness and the need to impose themselves with relevant questions and observations that demonstrate their knowledge of football in order to be respected throughout the course. In investigating the trajectory of women coaches in Brazilian football, Novais *et al.* (2021) showed that in order to remain in the sport, women must show their competence daily, evidencing that the need to prove themselves to occupy this environment goes beyond training courses.

These findings reinforce the fact that certification courses are still resistant to the presence of women, mainly due to distrust of their knowledge and competence to occupy that space. Although participating in an unfamiliar environment may generate estrangement and discomfort, such feelings are amplified among women coaches as gender stereotypes perpetuate their supposed lack of knowledge about football (and sport). Therefore, the presence of women in this environment, as well as their attitudes over the course, is a means of resisting and fighting gender constructions in sports.

### 3.2 VERBAL VIOLENCE EXPERIENCED IN THE COURSE

Although male wariness is mitigated as the course progresses thanks to the women taking a stance and speaking up, women coaches report that comments and jokes made by the instructors are elements of discomfort for their permanence in this environment. For example, Participant 1 comments that one instructor ‘would make some very sexist jokes. I don’t remember exactly what the joke was, but it was very sexist [...] all the girls were furious’. Another coach mentions that ‘there was an instructor who had taught me in C and now also in B who made some jokes or

comments that were uncalled for' (Participant 2). The same perception comes from Participant 3, when she says that 'there were some instructors who made inadequate comments'.

The statements above reveal that the comments are frequent and viewed as a kind of violence by the participants. According to Sawiuk, Lewis and Taylor (2021), this specific type of language represents micro-aggressions used as a form of social control. Based on the perceptions of the participants, we noticed that the comments reinforced the unequal power relations, perpetuating the inferiority of women in the social and sports environment. These systematic manifestations are used to sustain the sport as an institution of men and to marginalize women from those environments, representing hegemonic masculinity (GREENHILL *et al.*, 2009). Whether through overt or covert discrimination, hegemonic masculinity results in constraints that reinforce the acceptance of masculinity as the defining characteristic within an occupation or culture and supports the idea that women in Western society are confined to appropriate gender roles (GREENHILL *et al.*, 2009).

These remarks are often reproduced with no social awareness on the part of the speakers, as noted in the following observations: 'Structural sexism is imperceptible for many people, regardless of their intelligence' (Participant 6). It is interesting to note from the quote that such comments are possibly made by instructors who are recognized and admired by the participants. Therefore, it is important that sports organizations offer training courses for their own instructors in order to raise their awareness of existing gender inequalities in sports (such as female athletes, coaches, managers and others) and make this environment safer and more comfortable for women's participation and empowerment.

It is interesting to note how such comments also generated different reactions among the participants. Some did not speak up while others got irritated and took a stance both when the comments were made and at the end of the course. For example, one coach commented about an instructor, 'he is taking you seriously and then suddenly comes out with a totally inappropriate joke, and it's just banter, I don't mind' (Participant 6). Another coach said that

In the evaluation, I really stuck it to him and signed my name (...) And then I remember that on the last day, I don't know if he actually read it, but he said 'yeah, we can't please everyone'. But I was very angry with the way he made the joke, I didn't like it, I don't remember, but it was quite demeaning. (Participant 1)

Even so, when they did criticize, they were afraid of the possible consequences. For example:

I signed all my evaluations, I said everything that bothered me, especially about that guy. And then in the end I kind of regretted it, can you believe it? Because I thought 'I shouldn't have signed it', and that's crazy. If I take the License B here he'll remember me, he'll remember. Or if he wants to refer me, he won't refer me because he'll be mad at me. And I said it, well, whatever, it's done, I signed my name. (Participant 1).

Similar situations were identified in other studies. In the study by Sawiuki, Lewis and Taylor (2021), women coaches had different attitudes when facing

inappropriate comments in UEFA certification courses: they either tried to engage in the conversations and actively challenge both tone and content, running the risk of isolation, or passively accepted the nature of the conversation, keeping their opinions to themselves. Although examples of women who stood up to this verbal violence were identified, there was always the chance that such an attitude would undermine their position and further alienate them from the group (SAWIUK; LEWIS; TAYLOR, 2021). In the study by Lewis, Roberts and Andrews (2018) it was shown that women coaches who attended courses in the English football system ended up accepting the inappropriate comments of the instructors, indicating a common and standard behavior in this environment. Other studies have shown that, in football, violence based on language is frequent and people tend to accept it because they find themselves in an unequal system of power and struggle to succeed in that environment (CUSHION; JONES, 2014).

In this sense, we understand that the women coaches' attitudes are important to express their dissatisfaction with this situation, but that they also generate further discomfort and insecurity when they criticize an unequal relationship. Knowing that the person receiving this feedback is the same one who frequently makes those comments can be discouraging. Therefore, we stress the importance of having a communication channel (including women in this ombudsman service) that provides a safer environment for women coaches to give their opinion. In addition, it is important to make the instructors themselves aware of gender issues. Although this is an arduous and long-term process, the use of more inclusive language and the avoidance of jokes and comments that reflect unequal power situations would be important changes to make the environment more comfortable for women. Previous studies show that exclusive references to men and the universal use of the masculine gender decrease commitment to the environment and increase drop-out rates in these training programs (LEWIS; ROBERTS; ANDREWS, 2018).

### 3.3 WOULD YOU TAKE THE COURSE AGAIN? THE POTENTIAL OF THE CONTENT AND NETWORKING PROVIDED

Even with the challenges that are faced and may be overcome in the future, women coaches stress the importance of these experiences for their education and the positive aspects they provide. Among the positive aspects, the participants recognize that they learnt important content for their professional training. For example, one coach commented that

Some classes I found very good, and well organized. For example, football rules was a class given by a referee and for me it was the best class. These are things that we usually think we know, about rules, and it was an excellent class! There was a performance analysis class that was very good, wonderful! (Participant 3)

Another coach also recognizes the importance of the content and materials provided by the courses.

It is certainly a very rich environment with a lot of content, with people from different places, so there is a huge diversity that I believe is fantastic. Obviously, this networking that is wonderful and the place that inspires you

to learn, so all the courses are in nice places, that give you a good structure, the material is important, the internet platform you access, the material is easily found, the instructors are very approachable (Participant 4).

The women coaches' statements show their recognition of the content and lessons of the courses. It is important to appreciate these characteristics in training courses for women coaches, since coaching knowledge has been cited as an important factor for the success of women in this career (GREENHILL *et al.*, 2009). After an extensive literature review on the barriers and supports that women coaches come across in their professional careers, Lavoie and Dutove (2012) show that the skills and knowledge acquired as an athlete or in qualification processes are supporting factors that help these professionals feel confident and persevering. In this sense, the course contributes to women feeling empowered in terms of knowledge and networking to work as coaches, but the course itself must be reviewed in terms of how women are (badly) welcomed compared to their male counterparts.

In addition to this aspect, several participants mentioned the importance of relationships during the course. For example, one coach mentions that 'in relation to people, I think it is the richest part of the course. When you exchange ideas there, whether with a man or a woman, you are starting a relationship' (Participant 1). Another coach stresses that the main gain from this experience is networking, as shown in the statement below.

The most important thing about this course is networking. You buy the contact, you buy your place at the table. It's a VIP dinner, you go there and get to sit next to people you'll have the opportunity to talk with, people that maybe can help you in the future or get to know you. It's more than anything else. And obviously, exposing your ideas gives you the opportunity to show your intelligence, as well as not gaining that credibility (Participant 3).

This ability to expand participants' relationships reinforces once again the course's potential to increase women's participation in football. Several studies pointed out that networking is an element of positive influence in a coaching career (GREENHILL *et al.*, 2009; LAVOI; DUTOVE, 2012; NORMAN, 2012). Such relationships are supportive factors for two reasons. First, this network becomes a gateway for women who are in training and wish to work as coaches in sports (LAVOI; DUTOVE, 2012). Hiring processes are not always widely publicized, being restricted to people who are known in the field. In addition, positive references from professionals who also attended certification courses can increase their perception of confidence and competence, commonly reported as an aspect of insecurity among women sports coaches (KILTY, 2006).

In addition, these contacts, when fostered mainly between women coaches, can favor their permanence in this career. This aspect was cited by one of the participants when commenting that 'I made new friends, I'm always with Participant 1, we chat, she talks about all her projects, through her I've already met another professor in the area, and so on. It was very useful' (Participant 2). According to Norman (2012), this network of relationships between women is essential for coaches to share experiences, discuss practical issues and reflect on challenges faced in this

male-dominated environment. Therefore, this aspect of the course could be further enhanced with greater participation of women coaches in its editions. It is noteworthy that the author also emphasizes the importance of men in this networking, especially when they offer support and advice in a non-intimidating way.

#### 4 LIMITATIONS AND FURTHER STUDIES

Although this study presented an interesting overview of the experiences of women coaches in CBF Academy certification courses, it is important to recognize its limitations. Throughout the study, we explored the experiences in the A, B, C and PRO licenses together, without considering the specificities of each one. It would be interesting for future studies to delve deeper into the content of each license, as well as the possible different perceptions of women coaches in each one of them. Second, we recognize that the intersections between social class, race, sexual orientation and other factors also influence the different paths followed by women to access these courses, as well as the perceptions from the experiences in this environment (BARREIRA, 2021). Previous studies showed how homophobia and racism also act as barriers to the entry and permanence of female coaches in this career (CLARKSON; COX; THELWELL, 2019). Therefore, we suggest that future studies also take these aspects into account when investigating the perceptions of women coaches in training courses.

#### 5 CONCLUSIONS

In this study, we investigated the experiences of women football coaches in CBF Academy certification courses. We noticed that, besides being a minority in this environment, women report distrust regarding their knowledge and competence when starting this training process. While men coaches constantly speak up and feel safe to do so, women coaches report discomfort and constant reflection on their behavior in order to prove their ability to occupy that space. This initial context changes throughout the course as the women take a stand and have their knowledge and competence acknowledged.

Even with this unwelcoming initial experience and the inappropriate comments they witness throughout the course, participants report that courses are good training experiences. The content learnt and the networking with other professionals are the distinctive features behind a positive perception of this experience.

This study contributes important information about the perceptions of women in these training environments and changes that can be made to make this environment more welcoming and effective for them. If the organization's mission is to increasingly promote the education of women coaches to work in football, policies that facilitate the participation of women are important to increasingly expand contact with men coaches and diminish mistrust based on gender stereotypes. Also, offensive comments and jokes are not simply banter, but violence against participating women. Therefore, we stress that the actual instructors should also undergo training processes that

include content on barriers imposed on women coaches and possible supports. We understand that these reflections and discussions are important to promote changes in relation to gender constructions in sports and society.

Lastly, as much as this study has been dedicated to the perceptions of women coaches in training processes to work with football, the experiences mentioned here and the possible practical applications can also be incorporated by organizations responsible for other sports.

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**Resumo:** Este estudo teve como objetivo explorar as vivências de treinadoras de futebol em cursos de certificação oferecidos pela CBF Academy. A partir de entrevistas semiestruturadas realizadas com seis treinadoras, notamos que os cursos ainda são majoritariamente ministrados por homens e para homens. Ao passo que os treinadores se expõem constantemente e sentem-se seguros para isso, as treinadoras relatam desconforto e uma constante reflexão sobre o seu posicionamento para provar sua capacidade de ocupar aquele ambiente. Esse cenário é transformado ao longo do curso à medida que as treinadoras se posicionam e tem seu conhecimento e competência reconhecidos para ocupar esse espaço. Mesmo com esses desafios, as treinadoras reconhecem essa experiência como positiva principalmente pelos relacionamentos e conteúdos proporcionados. Os conhecimentos deste estudo podem auxiliar na proposta de mudanças que favoreçam uma maior participação de treinadoras em cursos de certificação no futebol e em outros esportes.

**Palavras-chaves:** Formação Profissional; Identidade de Gênero; Liderança/ Esportes.

**Resumen:** Este estudio tuvo como objetivo explorar las experiencias de las entrenadoras de fútbol en los cursos de certificación ofrecidos por la Academia CBF. A partir de entrevistas semiestruturadas realizadas a seis entrenadoras, notamos que los cursos aún son, mayoritariamente, impartidos por hombres y para hombres. Mientras los entrenadores se exponen constantemente y se sienten seguros al hacerlo, las entrenadoras reportan incomodidad y reflexión constante sobre su posicionamiento para demostrar su capacidad para ocupar ese ambiente. Este escenario se va transformando a lo largo del curso a medida que las entrenadoras se posicionan y se les reconoce su conocimiento y competencia para ocupar este espacio. Aún con estos desafíos, las entrenadoras reconocen esta experiencia como positiva, principalmente por las relaciones y el contenido brindado. El conocimiento de este estudio puede ayudar en la propuesta de cursos que favorezcan una mayor participación de las entrenadoras en cursos de certificación en fútbol.

**Palabras clave:** Capacitación Profesional; Identidad de Género; Liderazgo; Deportes.

### LICENCE TO USE

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### CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

### AUTHOR PARTICIPATION

**Karen Letícia Guimarães:** Conceptualization, data curation, formal analysis and manuscript writing.

**Júlia Barreira:** Conceptualization, data curation, formal analysis and manuscript writing.

**Larissa Rafaela Galatti:** Conceptualization and manuscript writing.

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The research was approved by the Research Ethics Committee (CEP) of the University of Campinas. CAAE: 18722619.6.0000.5404.

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### EDITORIAL RESPONSIBILITY

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