68 - GENDER IN THE PROFESSIONAL FIELD OF PHYSICAL EDUCATION: THE CASE OF THE FEMALE SWIMMING COACHES OF RIO DE JANEIRO

GABRIELA ARAGÃO SOUZA DE OLIVEIRA
UGF/RJ/BR
SANDRA BELLAS DE ROMARIZ
UGF/FAMATh/UNIPLI/RJ/BR
SEBASTIÃO JOSUÉ VOTRE
UGF/CNPq/RJ/BR
gabrielaragao@yahoo.com.br

Introducing the theme of female coaches

The little visibility women have in the brazilian society, specially on Physical Education and sports, justifies the frequent attention specialists give on the matter of gender in the national sports scope, where women have to fight for their space as coaches, referees, managers, sports handlers and athlets, considering that these spaces belong, by right, to both women and men.

In this article we approach specifically the social representation (Moscovici, 2003) of female swimming coaches on the command of sports teams, since we perceive the matter of gender in the formation of Physical Education's professionals in our professional practice, what leads us to conclude that the opportunities to work and remain as a sport's coach are uneven for a woman and a man.

The little representativity of the female coaches strengthen the understanding that the sport's system creates and reinforces the gender link between sports and masculinity, supported by an authoritarian structure of patriarcal base that stress qualities of *domain*, *toughness*, *competitiveness* and *risk*, tradicionally appreciated as male characteristics, thus developing the notion that coachinh athlets is a job for men and not for women (Staurowsky, 1990).

Regarding the insertion, accession and remaining in the career of high level team coach, women tend to face countless barriers (Souza de Oliveira, 2002), and this challenge goes beyond lack of professional qualification or the fierce competitiveness of the profession.

To do so, we gathered informations about the performance of the swimming coaches through published articles and also interviewing three women that work as swimming coaches. The collection was made from visits to institutions that allowed the consultation and reproduction of the wanted informations. The main institutions visited were: Jornal dos Sports, Fluminense Football Club, Olaria Atlético Clube, Clube de Regatas Guanabara and Botafogo Futebol and Regatas archives in Rio de Janeiro.

Intrroduction of the coaches: Juçara Trancoso, Letícia Macedo e Rosane Carneiro.

Juçara Trancoso: Born in Rio de Janeiro, 51 years old, used to compete on swimming and diving for Vasco and Fluminense. She has graduated in Physical Education. She began her career teaching swimming classes for beginners at Fluminense, and became a coach in 1978, winning from the 10 to 19 years-old categories. She was the only woman working with swimming teams in Rio de Janeiro back then. In 1984, she coached the team of Praia Tênis of Vitória, in Espírito Santo. Her husband quit his job and went there with her. For us, Juçara's husband going along with her represents a step forward and a conquest, since in our culture it's usually the women who follow their husbands when they have to move because of their jobs.

The contract with Praia Tênis Club said that she had to come back to work twenty days after her gestation. Mother of two, this wasn't an obstacle for her to keep her training, doing so in a pragmatic way, focusing on the success of the club:

"... I breast fed in the border of the pool and started taking my daughter on my travellings when she turned three months old... we must think about the sport... when they hire us, they think about the victory...".

At Clube Álvares Cabral/ES, she reached the peak as coach when some of her athlets took part on the South American Championship. Since 1993, she coordinates the acquatic park and manages the swimming teams.

Letícia Macedo**:** Born in Rio de Janeiro, 40 years of age, graduated in Physical Education, started swimming at five and stopped at fifteen years old. She worked at Jequiá Club, in Ilha do Governador, from 1987 to 1991 and is currently working at Olaria Club with all levels of swimming.

She is part of a group that's studying changes on the regulations of the Acquatic Federation of Rio de Janeiro, the Coaches' Council of the Federation and is also involved in the Permanent Technical Comission of the Infant-juvenile State Swimming Team.

Letícia manages 17 professionals at Olaria Club and at home is a mother of three.

Rosane Carneiro: Born in Rio de Janeiro, 34 years old, was a swimming athlete for Botafogo from five to eighteen years of age. She graduated in Turism and teaches Physical Education.

She started to give swim lessons at Botafogo, coaching children. Her teams were champions from the Infant to the Juvenile categories from 1991 to 1998. Her infant team won the title of brazilian champion in Manaus, in 1998. Brazilian juvenile champion competing for Flamenfo in 1999. In 2000 she went back to Botafogo and coached the Brazilian Swimming Team in a championship in Africa.

Approaching the restriction and male reservation in the training

In order to understand the personal and social ultimatums that motivated and stimulate the coaches to keep fighting for a place in this profession, we have selected and commented some quotes of the informers' speeches about 5 (five) themes: 1- the change of the coaches' behaviour to command sports teams, 2- the use of the mother figure on the relationship with the athletes, 3- the interaction with the male coaches, 4- the resistance the managers have to their work, ,and the resistance of the clubs to hire female coaches and 5- the male reservation on training female teams. In each one of these topics, we present the attitude and exemplary posture of these coaches as a motivation to other women that wish to pursue a career on sports training.

1- The change of behaviour to command a sports team.

To Juçara, women change their behaviour to attend the characteristics that are necessary to the training process, reinforcing gender-related stereotypes.

"Sure! I think she changes countless things. The first one: she must be articulate... change her posture. Must know how to talk to a co-worker, know when to keep her mouth shut, cause we tend to talk too much. But when it comes to acting and behaving like a man... I never went to a competition without my hair being done, without lipstick... there's no such thing as

masculinization".

When constructing her speech in dual terms, she puts emphasis on the maintenance of her feminine side, stressing, even unwittingly, the differences of the sex instead of the gender. Embodies notions historically associated to the feminine figure when confirming the importance of the "feminine appearance", jutting out the feminine and masculine dualities imposed by the society, such as sensitivity and reason, fragility and strength, affected manners and seriousness, tenderness and aggression.

Yet to Letícia and Rosane, the female coaches don't need to change e don't alter their behaviour to command big teams. They state that the personality doesn't change and there's no reason why it should and that what matter is the competence, the leadership to train, which are qualities inherent to certain people, regardless of their gender, although considered "masculine" characteristics.

Meanwhile, these coaches take advantage of the masculine stereotypes and combine them - brilliantly - with their so called "feminine side", using consecrated techniques to assure adhesion and commitment and acting on the breaches of sport's own patriarcal culture to ascend on the professional área of training and to distinguish their work.

According to Chartier (1995), they exercise this kind of power as they notice breaches on the command dominion and brightly use counter-powers focusing on what they can alter in each circumstance in order to not miss alternatives they can recruit in their day-by-day work. When using the same instruments that establish the masculine domination, as a built image that they are seductive, maternal and flexible, they use them in their advantage as tools to remain ascending in the training.

Letícia stresses aware of these mechanisms, when using her "feminine atributes" to train:

"I go with the flow of being everybody's mother, or daughter. I play with this thing of being really feminine... you must... work more with the emotion that with reason... and not masculinize yourself but use good sense to train...".

This "feminine" tone, with a maternal touch, critically distant from the rude gesture associated to a certain masculine behaviour, becomes evident on Rosane's speech:

"... to be a swimming coach I don't need to... speak roughly... and scratch the balls that I don't even have... And also because I have a very thin voice... we deal with education, with children... they see me feminine, regardless of me being a coach that have to boss them around, scold them...".

2- Using the mother figure to realte with the athletes

When they started their speeches, the coaches had declared that the relationship they have with the group of athletes and with each athlete is of respect and competence for the result they offer as sports coaches. But later on they let us see that the image of the maternity or the mother figure is one of the many breaches used by them to get a bigger approximation with the other members of the team. Perhaps the most sympathetic and receptive posture of the female coach make the difference on the feminine trainings. Almost all try to "adopt" the athletes and bring this theme of being a "sort of mother" to them.

The firm maternal side is present in Juçara, when calling her athletes boys and girls and also on using the authority (not necessarily a mother's atribute) to reprimand them:

"I've adapted well with the boys... and with the girls... sometimes we disagree with each other... we talk... they say what they are feeling. Sometimes a reprimand is neceessary, there's no other way...".

The use of multiple resources to gain adhesion, that conjugates traces of mother, educator and coach with a composition of these characteristics is made clear in Letícia Macedo's speech when affirming that:

"... when you succeed on being intelligent... you end up becoming their mother, because you actually take on the maternity side for real... I don't see why distinguish the coach from the educator...".

Rosane explores the resources of making each athlete feel the center of attention, increasing his self esteem and, consequently, reasing his efficiency and she bets on a friendly, but firm, relationship with her group for training:

"(...) I know how to raise the self-esteem of each and everyone of them... I appreciate my athletes... I argue when I have to... I developped a huge sense of friendship with all of... there is a consensus on the good things I wish them... Our friendship is huge because I'm really close to them...".

3- Interacting with the male coaches

Letícia e Rosane state that they felt discriminated by the male coaches that - according to them - react badly to the training of the female coaches, because they don't like to have women as adversaries. The men believe that their presence is a threat to the masculine hegemony on the training of big teams. To Rosane, the struggle isn't easy, because victory itself can bring complications in a mine field, a male chauvinist field that is, to say the least, complicated:

"... this is a very male chauvinist field, it is very complicated. If you don't have a winning athlete people will only greet you. But if you have someone they handle you better... way better or try to cross you over...".

Nevertheless Juçara says that she is well accepted and respected by the male coaches first of all as an athlete and, then, for her aptness and leadership on training. But during the interview she builds other senses that lead us to comment on the various meanings of her speech.

Juçara recognizes that the men accept her because of her trajectory on the command of swimming teams, which would be a kind of pre-requirement for the male coaches to accept women on the training. The female coaches would have to go through a time of experience to be accepted as "normal" people: *"... They all know that I had a trajectoryin my life... they see me as a normal person... we don't have any problem".*

4- Cohabitting with the resistance of the male managers

The three female coaches have conflicts of different nature with the male managers for several reasons.

According to Juçara, the resistance of the managers on hiring a woman is connected to the "belief" that the woman is completely devoted to her family and that could interfere in her progress as coach:

"I argue a lot with the manager... all the time... The managers think I'm polemic... they are apprehensive with women... when they hire someone... they have to feel that the person is really dedicated, if... the person will prioritize her family issues... Because when they hire us, they only think about the victory" .

Letícia Macedo confirms the resistance of the managers:

"... In every place I've been to, I always had, and still have, problems with the managers... And when my work start to show signs of progress, the manager can't be against... the only thing he wants is to profit (...) you can't imagine that the manager is gonna be a professional ... he's always an amateur (...)".

To Rosane, the managers do not trust in the professional capacity of the female coaches and think their place is at home and not in the clubs: *"... the idea that the president, the vice president or whoever's inside the major clubs have is that women are meant to stay home cooking...".*

5- Dealing with the male restriction on the training of female teams

The informers don't identify the masculine reservation on the training of the sports team, stating, instead, that the space of the training is unbounded and that it's up to the woman to conquer her space in the training domain.

They accuse the women, by assigning the responsability for their success or individual failure specifically to themselves. However they don't consider that, probably, the women are not interested, ou have little interest, on the training for knowing that it is a path full of "rocks" and "holes", not considering, above all, the hystorical and social barriers of gender that secludes the possible candidates to "future coach" of training.

Juçara, always paying attention on the competition between men and women on the command profession, states that the female coaches are gradually occupying more space in the training:

"Nowadays they are taking the space of the men... in the swimming there is no protection to man... it's the number of athletes that are convoked to the event... Sometimes it's a man because he has many athletes, and sometimes it's a woman, like Rosane, because she hás lots of athletes summoned to the competition...".

Then we asked: why isn't there any women in the main swimming team? Why in the Brazilian Confederation of Acquatic Sports (at least the Máster swimming ou Water-Pole), women do not have a position that can make decisions?

In our interpretation, there is a strong male restriction also in swimming, that Juçara can't see, because she speaks as a training female winning coach.

Letícia and Rosane blame women for the male reservation on sports training, specially the high level one:

"... I can't find something that confines... you really have to want it... actually we don't give ourselves the space... we create a barrier... we are used to... being the victims... We like to be the poor things, when we just aren't... And if we want, we are coaches... that's all".

She criticizes in a sharp way, the lack of confidence, the absence of obstinacy of women in competing for the coaches' openings without fear.

"... there's no such thing as distinction between man and woman... you have to bring results with the athletes... And not all women have the ability to do so... and who also don't want the challenge... they don't move forward due to the insecurity on what they are capable of doing... The woman, she doesn't believe she's got what it takes to be a coach... doesn't want to take the responsability... If we don't believe, how can we expect the man to do so... The clubs don't believe because the woman doesn't believe...".

The definition of the submission that was imposed to the women as a simbolic violence (Bourdieu, 1999), helps us understand how the relation of the domination, which is a relation social, cultural and hystorically built by a society that makes the outcast interiorize the segregation; in this case, part of the women consider the male reservation towards the training of swimming teams natural.

The coaches we interviewed, although being middle class and having achieved a privileged position in their work market, accepted certain attitudes, behaviours and values of the male-centered model of sports as being natural, incorporating and reproduzing them.

At this point, we refer to the article by Cullen, Hall and Slack (1990), to explain, considering the gender on sports, why the clubs hesitate to hire female coaches for their teams, we have to think about the traditional vision of the leadership that hás molded our society's culture, that is based on values that were manly, like racionality, competition and independence. In its organization, the sports assume this masculine model that does not "work well for women", because it is believed that women can't handle the "pressure" of training big sports teams.

Final Considerations

In this article, we tried to Project, underline and emphasise the voices of our own informers regarding the command of the sports teams e the qualities that every coach consider prime for the success. We know that these qualities pass by the three coaches that we interviewed, but the personal thought of each one of them on their profession is important in giving visibility to their voice as a active woman in mainly masculine space.

The point of view of the three coaches describe very precisely what happens in the social dynamics, part of the society is fighting for chagnes; even if the coaches aren't aware of this fight, unwittingly they are moving in this space and suffer influences from the society. However, no matter how the informers naturalize the pressure and the social conditions that impose rules and biological differences between men and women, we cannot question the system of singular values that opposes to what is imposed by society, and that is unique to every individual.

We used two maturity moments on the analysis of the interviews. One, in which we let the coaches elucidate their world, with their own voices, and the other in which we perceived that the informers, acting as interlocutors, went round and round, sometimes going back to what they had already said, other times being complementary or even contradicting their social representations about the command of sports teams. Sometimes they use a speech that has various meanings, others with a polifonic speech of different voices (Pecheux, 1995) when speaking the same time as coaches, mothers, women and teachers.

Juçara, Letícia and Rosane, whether consciously or not, testify the influence of gender in their work, resisting the day-by-day pressure at work and even taking advantage of the male and female stereotypes enconded in the society, taking a hold of the male control instruments in order to ascend as coaches and be able to command professional teams in state, national and international championships.

We believe that the increase of the female participation in all sectors of society, foremost at sports, tends to build a new model marked by the female autonomy and the social, political and economical participation of both men and women on the important decisions, both in private and public spaces.

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Gabriela Aragão Souza de Oliveira - Rua Moreira Sampaio nº.6 - apt.- 605 Meier; Rio de Janeiro. CEP:27.710-060. telefone: (21)8851-1128. e-mail: gabrielaragao@yahoo.com.br

GENDER IN THE PROFESSIONAL FIELD OF PHYSICAL EDUCATION: THE CASE OF THE FEMALE SWIMMING COACHES OF RIO DE JANEIRO

Abstract

This research has the goal to discuss the matter of gender in the professional field of Physical Education, specifically on the profession of swimming coach. We've tried to elucidate the barriers that the high level technical professional of swimming teams usually faces when trying to get in, ascend and remain in this career (Souza de Oliveira, 2002). This essay will be written based on the theoretical- methodological reference of the social representation according to Moscovici (2003). The research presents the professional journey of three swimming coaches (Juçara Trancoso, Letícia Macedo e Rosane Carneiro), former athlets and teachers of Physical Education. We found on the collaborators' speeches, even though hidden, a discrimination towards the matter of gender in the professional day-by-day referring to the category level of the teams that are trained by women and the constant doubting evaluation on the quality of their work and their ability to command sports teams. The lack of representation of the active coaches helps to increase the gender connection between sports and men.

Keywords: woman, gender, swimming coaches, Physical Education professional field.

GENRE DANS LE CHAMPS PROFISSIONAL DE L´EDUCATION PHYSIQUE: LE CAS DES TECNIQUES DE NATATION DE RIO DE JANEIRO

Resummée

Le but de cette recherche est discuter la question de genre dans le champs professional de l´éducation physique, plus specifiquement des tecniques de natation. On a cherché montrer les barrières que les professionelles, tecniques des equipes de natation de haut niveau, ont de supérer quand il se traite de l´insertion, ascension et permanence dans cette carrière (Souza de Oliveira, 2002). Dans ce travail, on utilize la théorie des représentations sociales, selon Moscovici (2003). L´étude presente la trajectoire professionale de trois tecniques de natation (Juçara Trancoso, Letícia Macedo e Rosane Carneiro), ex-atlètes et professeures d´éducation physique. Dans leurs discourses, on a trouvé des marques de discrimination atachée à la dimension de genre dans le cotidien professionale, em ce que concerne le niveau de la catégorie des equipes préparées par femmes et l´avaliation sur la qualité de son travail, aussi que la capacité de commander les equipes professionelles. La petite representativité des femmes a aussi revélé un lien entre genre, sport et masculinité.

Mots-clé: femme, genre, tecniques de natation, éducation physique.

GENERO EM EL CAMPO PROFISIONAL DE LA EDUCACIÓN FÍSICA: EL CASO DE LAS TÉCNICAS DE NATACIN EN RIO DE JANEIRO

Resumen

Esta investigación tiene por objectivo discutir la cuestión de género em el campo profesional de la educação física, especificamente em la profisión de técnicas de natación. Se a procurado evidenciar las barreras que las profisionales, técnicas de equipos de natación de alto nivel, enfrentan em lo que concerne insertión, ascensión e permanencia em esa carrera (Souza de Oliveira, 2002). Para este trabajo, se ha utilizado el referencial teórico-metodológico de las representações sociais segundo Moscovici (2003). La investigación presenta la trayectoria profesional de tres técnicas de natación: (Juçara Trancoso, Letícia Macedo e Rosane Carneiro), ex-atletas e profesoras de educación física. En los discursos registramos, aunque veladamente, una manifestación Del preconcepto relacionada a la cuestión de género en el cotidiano profesional, en lo que se refiere al nivel de categoría de las equipes trenadas por mujeres e en la constante evaluación dubitativa sobre la calidad de su trabajo e sobre su capacidad de comandar equipos esportivas. La pequeña representatividad de las técnicas actuantes también refuerza un líame de género entre esporte e masculinidad.

Palabras-llave: mujer, género, técnicas de natación, educación física.

GÊNERO NO CAMPO PROFISSIONAL DA EDUCAÇÃO FÍSICA: O CASO DAS TÉCNICAS DE NATAÇÃO DO RIO DE JANEIRO

Resumo

Esta pesquisa tem como objetivo discutir a questão de gênero no campo profissional da educação física, especificamente na profissão de técnicas de natação.Procuramos desvelar as barreiras que as profissionais, técnicas de equipes de natação de alto nível, tendem a enfrentar quando se trata da inserção, ascensão e permanência nessa carreira (Souza de Oliveira, 2002). Para este trabalho, será utilizado o referencial teórico-metodológico das representações sociais segundo Moscovici (2003). A pesquisa apresenta a trajetória profissional de três técnicas de natação (Juçara Trancoso, Letícia Macedo e Rosane Carneiro), ex-atletas e professoras de educação física. Encontramos nos discursos das colaboradoras, ainda que veladamente, uma discriminação ligada à questão de gênero no cotidiano profissional, no que se refere ao nível de categoria das equipes treinadas pelas mulheres e na constante avaliação dubitativa sobre a qualidade do seu trabalho e sobre sua capacidade de comandar equipes esportivas. A pouca representatividade das técnicas atuantes também acaba reforçando um elo de gênero entre esporte e

masculinidade.

Unitermos: mulher, gênero, técnicas de natação, educação física.