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Olympic Games in Brazil (Rio: 2009-2016): the host city, olympism and women¹

Abstract

The article aimed to analyze the news about the impacts of the Rio-2016 Olympic Games, published in the Folha de S. Paulo newspaper between October/2009 and December/2016. The methodology used was a multifactorial treatment of this historical of the Present Time (Chauveau & Tétart, 1999), with emphasis on the general and periodical press. We found the Rio-2016 Olympic Games were marked by three axes of impact on the history of the Olympics: the exhaustion of the host city model for an edition of the event, Olympism crisis, and the growing participation of women in the Olympic Movement.

Keywords: Rio 2016 Olympic Games; Sport; Press; History.

Jogos Olímpicos no Brasil (Rio: 2009-2016): cidade sede, olimpismo e mulheres

Resumo

O artigo objetivou analisar as notícias sobre os impactos dos Jogos Olímpicos Rio-2016, veiculadas no jornal Folha de S. Paulo no período entre outubro/2009 e dezembro/2016. A metodologia empregada foi um tratamento multifatorial desse evento histórico do tempo presente (Chauveau & Tétart, 1999), com ênfase na imprensa geral e periódica. Constatamos que os Jogos Olímpicos Rio-2016 foram marcados por terem três eixos de impacto na história das Olimpíadas: o esgotamento do modelo de cidade-sede; a continuidade da crise do Olimpismo; e a crescente participação das mulheres no movimento olímpico.

Palavras-chave: Jogos Olímpicos Rio 2016; Esporte; Imprensa; História.

Introducion

During the last ten years, Brazil has experienced an exponential growth in the scenario of major sports events, fostering the memory and history presently lived by Brazilians. Two of these were hosted in Brazil and considered mega-events: FIFA World Cup 2014 and Olympic Games 2016 (Almeida *et al.*, 2018). According to Santin (2009, p. 334), they are mega-events for mobilizing “millions of people in all countries, regardless of culture, age, ideology or social level”.

Every four years a new edition of the Olympic Games (OG) takes place, an event characterized by greatness and tradition, with immense symbolic resonance in the sports context

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(summer and winter games). In the modern Olympics (from 1896 on), each edition is conducted in a different city, but overtime the same city may be chosen again (Rubio, 2002).

Modern Olympics were conceived to be a unique event in the world's sports calendar, a great festival for the congregation of nations (Tavares, 2003; Dacosta; Mairagaya, 2008; Rubio, 2011; Almeida, 2015). In the 20th century, the event grew in size and importance, with proper symbols and rituals, turning out to be “the greatest spectacle on earth” (Proni, 2004, p. 1).

From traditional European origin, after 113 years South America received the seal for hosting the largest world multisport event, after two attempts by Brazil to host the event in its 2004 and 2012 editions. In 2009, things were different with the choice of Rio de Janeiro for hosting the XXXI Summer Olympics (Rio 2016 Olympic Games). This fact represented a continental novelty. Before that, Argentina had been the closest South American country about to hosting the OG in 1956, but lost this right by one vote to Melbourne, Australia (Castro, 2015).

Thus, Rio was internationally presented as “the perfect city,” for its beautiful landscapes, natural beauty, kind and receptive people, not to mention carnival and samba, and the beauty of Brazilian women, but no mentions were made to social inequalities and violence (Garcia, 2011).

With the OG in Rio de Janeiro, the agents and governments involved emphasized the city would go through urban transformations, with improvements in urban mobility, job creation, tourism expansion, strengthening of culture and national sports education, opening up a range of promises and opportunities, and the idea of a sustainable and solid Olympic legacy for the city and Brazil.

We highlight there is no single definition for sports legacy, being it a complex concept with multiple meanings. Hiller (2000) states legacy is a complex term to be defined, because it has several definitions and represents different values and conceptions. Lo Bianco (2010) mentions different types of legacies the Rio-2016 Olympic Games could leave, including material and immaterial ones. The legacy of the event itself includes facilities, infrastructure, equipment, jobs and even increased physical activity of the population. Moreover, there is the legacy of the urban planning that could benefit the city's population and also the country, with internal and external projections of its image, and economic opportunities. In addition, there is the governance legacy, i.e., participatory planning, public/private partnerships (PPP), the knowledge for future events, as well as organization and structure knowledge to be enjoyed by the host city and country.

The issue of the Rio-2016 Olympic Games sports legacy is still in the agenda of Brazilian and international media. In Brazil, especially in Rio de Janeiro, the feeling is that a change can be possible in the future due to sports events. Its successes and failures are still recent in the memory

of Brazilians and local media, being the mega-event part of the history of the present time.

Thus, the news about OG Rio 2016 published by the press led us to the following research question: which impacts can be analysed, according to *Folha de S. Paulo*, from 2009 to 2016, that represent the history of the present time limited to the mega event Rio 2016 Olympic Games? The article aimed to analyze the news about the impacts of the Rio-2016 Olympic Games, published in the *Folha de S. Paulo* newspaper between October/2009 and December/2016.

The history of the present time of the Olympic Games from the experience of the Rio-2016 according to the press highlights three impacts: 1) the problems of host cities; 2) the crisis of Olympism; 3) the increasing participation of women in the Olympic Movement.

Theoretical and methodological aspects

The historical period was chosen because 2009 was the year Brazil was elected as the host of the event; and 2016 because it was the year of the Rio-2016 Olympic Games. The research was based on a historiography that addresses the relationship between historical knowledge and the press (Capelato, 1988; Darton; Roche, 1996; Luca, 2006; Cruz & Peixoto, 2007).

FSP was the source of records that motivated us to research one history of the present time, which would be a renewal of the politics, a generation impact and a phenomenon of social demand (Chauveau & Tétart, 1999). It tells a story of the successes and failures experienced by a society in a short time frame and strongly marked by symmetrical events to the social demands that impacted it. Thus, Rio-2016 Games, as one of the main sports events in Latin America, have left their mark on social and sports memory.

“First of and above all, the history of the present time is just history” (Chauveau & Tétart, 1999, p. 127). This conception of history leads us both to controversy and instability, since its reflection acts incisively on time (Dosse, 2012). Therefore, it is established in the historiographical field as a history of duration, and not just of the moment, leading to studies and research and distinguishing itself from journalistic works (Huff Júnior, 2008).

During Classical Antiquity, historiography underlined in the texts the direct witnesses present at determined events (Ferreira, 2002). However, according to Huff Junior (2008, p. 54), ‘the first research initiative in the field came from Germany, through the *Institut für Zeitgeschichte of Munich*, founded in 1949’. Nevertheless, the influence of the history of the present time in Brazil, came from the *Institut d'histoire du temps présent* (Institute of the History of the Present Time, IHTP), France, created in 1978. It aimed to work with more recent past and contemporary history,

in the etymological sense of the term (Huff Júnior, 2008; Arend & Macedo, 2009).

Some historians present disagreements and concerns based on the fact that traditionally a temporal separation is necessary to conceive the production of history, and thus sectioning the present from the past to achieve greater objectivity in its writing (Ferreira, 2018). Marques, Berutti, and Faria (2003, p. 08) emphasize that “the time when it was believed that the further from us, the more scientific history would be” is now gone.

Another tension refers to the reliability of witnesses/narratives (oral sources) of Contemporary History. The criticism is directed at the subjectivity, distortion of testimonies and lack of veracity. This situation is now seen not as a research problem, but as a new bias (Ferreira, 2000).

Consistently with temporality, its memory increases the history of the present time as “presentified” constructions, that is, susceptible to updating, meaning that it ‘constantly rewrites itself, using the same sources through additions, revisions and corrections’ (Delgado & Ferreira 2013, p. 23). Thus, the main role of the present-day historian “is not to judge the past but to decode, interpret and explain it” (Padrós, 2009, p. 35).

The historical route, for the questions involving the history of the present time, is directly associated with the historian or actor who produces it, making the division between subject and his/her theme and time impossible, and thus turning it into part of history and society (Chauveau & Tétart, 1999). The historian and his research theme are close, and the historical context influences the historiographical relations, regardless of the period analysed.

Porto Júnior discusses precepts of the history of the present time:

The characteristic of the history of the present time would be called the temporal unity of the subject and the object, the one who studies and what he studies. The historian is contemporary with the events he studies in a different sense from that of physical cohabitation with the witnesses. (Porto Júnior, 2007, p. 36)

According to Ferreira (2018), there is an increase in the practice/production of recent history; however, there is, in return, a deficit in the construction of reflections on the method itself, implying the issue of the historian through his object of study. Dosse (2012) emphasizes that we must consider subjectivity in the writing of the history of the present or history at the present.

Two axes are important for analysing the historiography and genealogy (ancestry) of the history of the present time, which are contemplated by epistemology and methodology (Chauveau & Tétart, 1999). Studying the present time, contemporary or recent, a certain period of history,

demands the presence of the historian in the course of events, in the tension between past, present and future. The present is now understood as a gap between the past and the future, differently from the idea that considers the past and the future as “before and after” (Dosse, 2012, p. 20). Thus “the past is not being lost as it invades and inflates the present” (Porto Júnior, 2007, p. 42), allowing to look into the future.

The history of the present time entails multiple thematic possibilities to be interpreted (Costa & Souza, 2018). In the case of our research, the object is the Rio-2016 Olympic Games, interpreted by people linked to the field of physical education and sports, considering the press as an empirical source of historical research. This raised questions about the historical trajectory of the Olympics, the events at the Rio 2016 Games, and the continuing social, cultural, economic and political impacts linked to this mega event. As Melo (1997) points out, sports can be used as a fundamental object to understand society, but without undoing the close relationship between the present and the past. In the words of Vamplew (2012, p. 6), “the sport of the past shaped the sport of the present”.

As such, we regard the recent daily press as revealing the sports events of a present time by linking the past, the present, and the challenges lying ahead in the near future. The chosen press was *Folha de S. Paulo* (FSP) from 2009 to 2016.

FSP is published in São Paulo (São Paulo state, Brazil) and belongs to the Folha Group. It holds the largest circulation among Brazilian newspapers of general interest, according to data from *Instituto Verificador de Comunicação – IVC* (Communication Verification Institute) and surveys by *Consumo de Notícias do Brasileiro* (Brazilian News Consumption), from *Advice Comunicação Corporativa* and *BonusGuest* (Folha de S. Paulo 2016a). The average circulation, from Monday to Sunday, is 320,741 thousand copies. According to Napolitano (2017, p. 348), *Folha de S. Paulo* is a source of hegemonic memory, which means certain “recognition that the social processes of constructing memories about the past are the result of struggles and alliances”.

We considered the newspaper as the historical source for this research. With the historiographical renewal of the last decades, the press has been increasingly considered by academic research and history teaching as a pertinent historical source to periodically analyse events disseminated on a large social scale (Luca, 2006; Cruz & Peixoto, 2007).

FSP has an integrated character to the segments of society within the economic, political, cultural, social, and sports contexts. Approximately 2,640 issues were published during the research, from October 2009 to December 2016. The printed copies of the newspaper are available at the CEMIDEFEL (Memory, Physical Education, Sport and Leisure Information and Documentation Center) from UEL (Londrina State University - Brazil). As a result of the data

organization, we collected 2,987 records, generating files in Excel spreadsheets with the following indicators: newspaper (title, year, date of publication, page) and news (title of the section and the article, author of the text, summary, subjects/institution/legislation cited, iconography, author of the image, advertising, general remarks). The records relate to 35 journal sections. This information set provided us with data for an analysis of the historical event based on a multifactorial perspective.

Thus, we selected articles from FSP (2009-2016) that allowed to understand the impacts generated by the historical event Rio-2016 Olympic Games, considering three axes: the host city, Olympism and participation of women.

Host city and the problem of OG great increase

Brazil hosted two mega events: the men's soccer World Cup and the summer Olympic Games (OG). When elected as the host country of the Olympics in 2009, Brazil was in an exceptional economic moment, along with four other countries — BRICs (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa). These emerging economies today have impact on the world scenario (Boumann *et al.*, 2010), and this fact put the BRIC countries in evidence in the sports field. Between 2007 and 2022, BRIC countries were/will be responsible for hosting mega events. Brazil embraced a cycle that began in 2007, hosting the Rio-2007 Pan American Games, followed by the 2011 Military World Games; 2013 FIFA Confederations Cup; 2014 Men's Football World Cup (FIFA); 2016 Summer Olympics and Paralympics. Russia hosted the 2014 Winter Olympic and Paralympic Games and the 2018 Men's Football World Cup (FIFA). India hosted the 2007 World Military Games. China hosted the 2008 Summer Olympics and Paralympics and will host the 2022 Winter Olympics and Paralympics. Finally, South Africa hosted the 2010 Men's Football World Cup (FIFA). This is a snapshot of how these countries are having a leading role in the world sport arena, which creates opportunities in various sectors, especially for their host cities.

A distinctive characteristic of the Olympic cities is their importance linked to the competition aspect, within the international and regional scenario (Rubio, 2005). These opportunities created a unique moment for Brazil, the country who accepted the challenge of hosting all these events and leaving a legacy for the country and the host city.

Regarding these impacts and legacies established by mega-events, Santos Júnior and Lima (2015) consider that one important aspect is the legitimation and justification of projects aiming at urban renewal and restructuring. FSP Newspaper published several articles on the subject.

FSP Journalists such as Henrique Meirelles, Italo Nogueira, Leonardo Cruz and Mariana

Lajolo reported, in the period analysed, some legacies and planning objectives of the host cities. That was the case of the 1992 Barcelona Olympics, which became a successful model to be followed by other cities. Barcelona revitalized urban structures, architectures, and works of art, making the city more attractive to the public. Regarding the legacy plan of the Barcelona Olympics, the architect responsible for planning and urban change in 1992, said in an interview with Nogueira (2010) that only 10% of the budget was spent on Olympic themes, that is, most of the investments were spent to improve the host city. Another legacy example is the 2000 Sydney Games which — celebrating the turn of the century, the Australian capital used the Olympics primarily to bring global attention to its strengths as an organized, effective and friendly country, as well as to establish, in its edition, the first green Olympics with the depollution of Homebush Bay. In Beijing 2008, China showed itself to the other countries as a world power, not only economically but also in the sports, by reaching the highest number of medals among the countries participating in that edition (Meirelles, 2012). In the 2012 London Olympics (second time the city hosted the Games), they outlined two main plans for the event: urban regeneration and sustainability of areas contaminated by industrial pollution (Cruz & Bastos, 2009).

These interventions and projects for host cities emerged in the Olympic context established by the International Olympic Committee (IOC). The requirements to be a host city are linked to the proposed changes and planning for a legacy by the governments. As a result, after the Games the city would have reduced some of its problems. To achieve this goal, public (municipal, state and national) and private investments should be applied, with the national state as the main guarantor to enable this type of mega-event.

For Santos Júnior and Lima (2015, p. 15), the Federal Government represents a cluster of “direct investments, private sector financing and tax exemptions granted to private companies”. The public power is responsible for applying most of the resources for this type of mega-event, and may even lead municipal and state administrations to indebtedness.

Following the victory of Rio de Janeiro (Rio-2016) in Copenhagen on October 2, 2009, some strategies were consolidated to avoid mistakes made at the Pan American Games in 2007 when the Federal Government needed to provide more resources to the state and the city hall of Rio de Janeiro, since the budget of the event exceeded the expected amount. As a result, for the Rio-2016 Games, the Federal, state and municipal governments created the Olympic Public Authority (APO), whose primary function was based on the organization and administration of projects related to the Rio-2016 Games. APO also served as a guarantee to the IOC during the country's application process (Coutinho, 2010). Another public (and legal) body established during the Rio-

2016 Olympic Games was *Empresa Brasileira de Legado Esportivo* (Brazilian Company of Sports Legacy), with the function of providing services to APO.

Despite the creation of these bodies responsible for the control and management of resources for the Rio 2016 Olympic Games, they were not enough to solve some problems of Rio de Janeiro — few months before the opening ceremony of the Olympics, the “wonderful” city decreed a state of financial calamity due to the economic crisis affecting the state. This critical situation could have affected the Rio-2016 Games, if there were no contributions from the Federal Government with financial resources to complete the planned infrastructure (Franco *et al.*, 2016).

In 2016, the country was also going through a political crisis, when President Dilma Rousseff was impeached and the presidency was assumed by the vice president Michel Temer. This scenario represented the chaotic moment Brazil was going through, quite different from the comfortable and confident context of 2009, when the country was elected to host the Rio-2016 Olympic Games.

Another problem for the host city and country is the management of sports equipment and utilities after the mega-event. Commonly, public-private partnerships (PPPs) are established, in which governments make partnership with private companies that often provide services through concessions or marketing. In the Rio-2016 Olympic Games, according to data from APO and the organization of the event, its total cost was of R\$ 40.1 billion, of which R\$ 23 billion came from private sources (Mattoso, Nogueira & Mergulhão, 2016).

The economist Andrew Zimbalist, in a report to FSP journalist Tiago Ribas (2016, p. 4), pointed out that “generally hosting major sports events such as the Olympic Games and the World Cup is not financially justifiable” since, according to the economist, these mega-events are “deceptive”, and do not create the appropriate economic legacy.

According to the researcher and urban planner at MIT, Fernando Montejo, these mega-events in developing countries such as Brazil may even worsen the country's economic situation and promote political instability. An example of this situation was the 2022 Winter Olympics bid — from the six candidate cities, four withdrew, remaining only Almaty (Kazakhstan) and the winner Beijing (China). Another factor that influences the application of cities is the tensions with the local population: in the 2024 Summer Olympics, Boston (USA) and Hamburg (Germany) withdrew their applications after protests and resistance from the local population (Lemos, 2016).

Considering this, IOC in 2014 reformulated the models with 40 recommendations for an application, unanimously approved at the 127th IOC Session in Monaco. The 20+20 recommendations are part of the Olympic Agenda 2020, which in turn aims to reduce the costs of

the Games, thus making them more viable to host cities. That would also reduce the scope of the event, by limiting the number of sports to 28 and 310 sports events, and establishing a maximum limit of 10,500 athletes, in addition to 5,000 coaches and support staff (Merguizo & Conde, 2014). Regarding Rio 2016 Games, 207 countries participated, with 11,238 athletes, in 306 events from August 5 to 21, 2016 (IOC, 2019). Rio-2016 was until that moment the largest edition in terms of total number of participants.

In addition to the concern with the new dimensions of the Games, other relevant issues were part of the 127th IOC Session, addressing topics such as fighting corruption within the Olympic body, gender equality, doping control, empowerment of athletes, among others. These strategies are similar to the ones adopted by the Olympic Movement and the Olympic Games (Rubio, 2019).

The Rio 2016 Games set a milestone for the Olympic Movement and recent Games history, showing its structure has become unsustainable in terms of financial, human and logistical resources. The Rio-2016 mega-event followed the model established in the 20th century, different from the one proposed by Agenda 2020. The old model created some issues for the country, host city, government and mainly the local population. This mega-event brought some benefits, but at the same time showed to be dangerous for the tax contributors and for the structure of the city itself.

Founded in 1894, IOC “survived” the two great World Wars and the Cold War, and now lives its crisis in the 21st century — Olympism is in a moment of transition.

On the olympism crisis

The Olympic Movement produces a value system called Olympism, i.e., philosophical orientation in sports activities and in a wider social life, which was little reported by FSP (2009-2016). This expresses the reality of the present time and deserves attention.

Modern Olympism was created in late 19th century by Pierre de Coubertin and other collaborators, and would influence the Olympic Charter:

Olympism is a philosophy of life, exalting and combining, in a balanced whole, the qualities of body, will and mind. Blending sport with culture and education, Olympism seeks to create a way of life based on the joy found in effort, the educational value of good example and respect for universal fundamental ethical principles. (IOC, 2018, p. 11)

Nowadays Olympism advocates the preservation of values, not only those linked to the practice of sports, but all factors involved in sports events, bringing cultural and educational

meaning for those who share the Olympic spirit. It should enhance human conditions for life in a more peaceful world, integrating differences and ethical and environmental principles.

Thus, it is surprising to note that, during the preparation, organization and the Rio 2016 Olympic Games edition itself, the press talked little about Olympism. The fact is, the topic of Olympism did not appear strongly in the newspaper. The Olympism crisis is not directly linked to the lack of interest on the part of the media, on the contrary, the crisis is reflected in the media. This finding shows the crisis persists. Proni (2004) also points out the fact of Olympic Games becoming a political event and a large commercial business ruled by marketing strategies, media and sports professionalism. On the other hand, IOC leaders have always advocated an Olympic Movement without political and economic interference, with sports disputes anchored in professionalism. However, at new each edition of the Games, this ideal becomes harder to sustain, even in the discursive dimension, given the complexity of the relationships established around this mega-event held in a globalised society of spectacles ruled by the market.

In fact, this crisis is felt by all actors of the sports field. According to IOC speech by Thomas Bach (president of the organization since 2013), in response to the crisis, some changes have been suggested, in line with the recommendations of Agenda 2020:

If we want our values of Olympism — the values of excellence, respect, friendship, dialogue, diversity, non-discrimination, tolerance, fair-play, solidarity, development and peace — if we want these values to remain relevant in society, the time for change is now. (IOC, 2014, p. 3)

According to Rubio, the changes suggested by IOC (2019, p. 18) points out an effort of “rescuing the Olympic values and desired virtues lost throughout the transformation process of the Olympic Movement, which is unrecognizable to the current society”.

There are indications that greater care will be taken with issues related to the transparency of the postulation process; with care for the environment; promotion of gender equality — recalling the historical debt the Olympic Movement has with women, prohibited of participating in the competition at the beginning of the contemporary Olympic history; and greater investment to support athletes on and off the game field. This respect seems evident also in the honour given to clean athletes who inherited precisely the positions lost by the doped ones in Olympic competitions. To date, once doping is confirmed, the medal is given to the athlete immediately placed in the ranking, but without the same “pomp and circumstance” of the Olympic Games ceremony. However, Agenda 2020 recommends formal ceremonies in these situations. (Rubio, 2019, p. 18-19)

Announced in Agenda 2020, IOC’s struggle also deals with the difficulties experienced by

the Olympic Movement in recent decades, which defend a more tolerant, sustainable world, and the respect for differences, but contradictorily approved the application of countries with a history of disrespect to human rights. These are the cases of China with the 2008 Beijing Summer Games and Russia with the Sochi 2014 Winter Games, countries criticized by the IOC for being places that do not respect human rights principles advocated by the Olympic Movement (Bretherton, 2019).

The Olympic Movement has been discursively reinvented by the Agenda 2020 in an attempt to reconnect it with the reality of this early 21st century by advocating gender equality, more protection for 'clean' athletes, and less costly games. This also requires Olympic educative work to keep the flame of Olympism burning in people's daily lives all the time, not only during the mega-event.

During the 20th century, some events and institutions were created to strengthen and disseminate the values of Olympism, such as the OG Paralympics, the Olympic Academy, the Olympic Museum in Lausanne and the IOC National Olympic Committees. In the words of Carlos Arthur Nuzman, president of the Brazilian Olympic Committee (BOC) between 1995 and 2017: "Here is the home to Olympism" — a response to the tension between BOC and the Brazilian Ministry of Sports (Nogueira, 2009, p. 2).

In the Rio 2016 Olympic Games, some simple and more systematized experiences took place in the name of Olympism and disseminated by part of the press. In an article titled *O papel da memória* ('The Role of Memory'), published by the FSP on 6/11/2012 in the Sports page, Alves (2012, p. 9) suggests, after the London edition, the Rio-2016 Olympic Games would have to face challenges beyond spectacular plays, since the Olympics is "a complex, multi-faceted move" and should be considered a lever to enrich the memory of the Brazilian sports. The author referred to the installation in Rio de Janeiro of an exhibition with artefacts from the IOC Museum's collection, based in Lausanne, Switzerland.

Other news in FSP at the time addressed topics praising mainly the Itinerant Olympic Museum, which circulated through the five regions of Brazil with objects from the Modern Age of Olympic Games editions (Athens-1896 to London-2012). The exhibition was divided in five sessions, with History, Sports, Brazilian stories, curiosities and Rio-2016 (Rangel, 2016). With this experience, they tried to call the public's attention to the path taken by the Olympism until the Rio-2016 Games, outlining values and stories of this event as a way to enhance the historical awareness in the current social memory.

Franco (2016), author of the article *Escola de voluntários* ('School of volunteers') in the FSP's sports page on 5/23/2016, addressed the training of volunteers for the Rio-2016 Games. The

goal was to prepare about 50,000 people, with a first online stage for learning more about the event's history, Olympic values, service excellence, diversity and inclusion. The focus was mainly on receiving and monitoring of athletes.

Other news debated the critical side of the lost values over time and, above all, the capitalist principles that dominated the disputes. Santos (2009) highlights these aspects in FSP with the headline *Ouro (de tolo) olímpico* ('Olympic Fool's Gold'):

The Games have turned into a mere race for profit. The anachronism of the Olympics becomes clear when we recall that in the "almost mythical" times of ancient Greece, dexterity and physical strength were crucial factors in the survival of the city-states. "Citizen-athletes" defended the polis with their own lives. (Santos, 2009, p. 2)

The news allows to understand that the hero-athlete, beyond the glorifications of his/her athletic prowess and awards, should preserve patriotic values, but also consider collective challenges for social transformation. Part of the Olympic crisis is the sharp individualism that has predominated in recent times. This situation demands more actions to confront conservative paradigms — for instance, increasing the participation of women in the Olympic Games.

Women in the olympic movement

On 8/1/2016, FSP published three pages (B1-B3) in the page Rio-2016 disclosing a set of articles under the general title *Gêneros nos Jogos* ('Gender in the Games'), showing important data on the increasing participation of women:

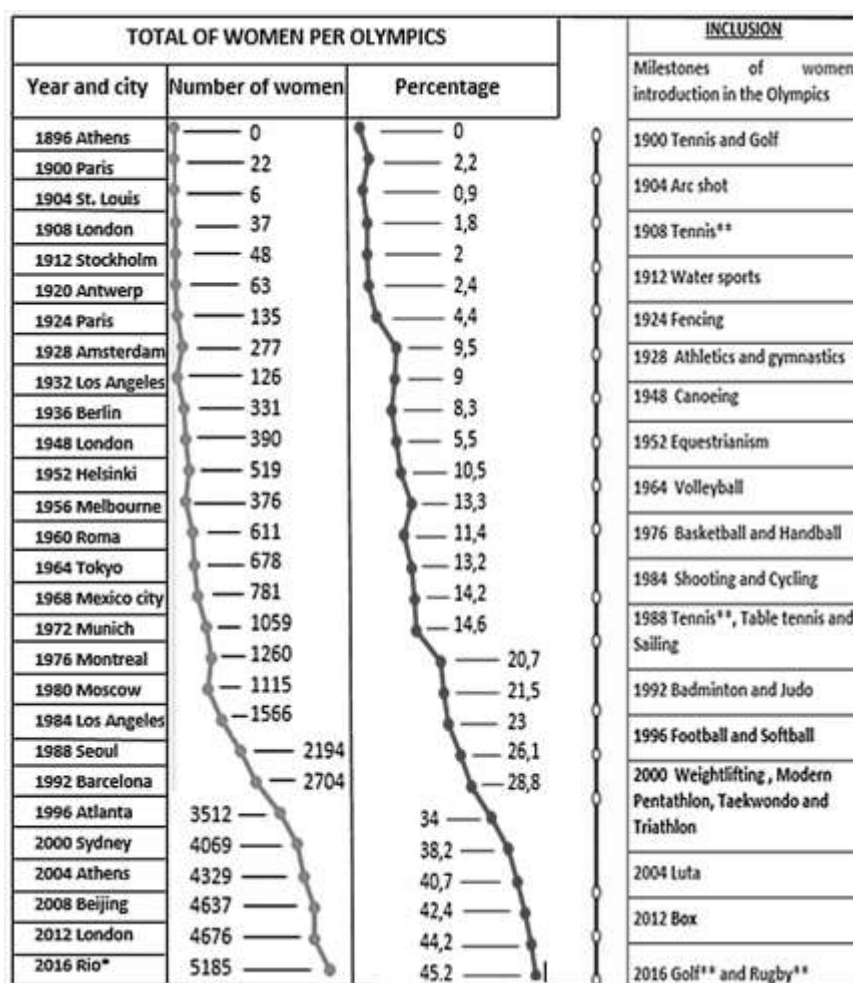


Figure 1. Evolution of women's participation in OG.

Source: *Folha de S. Paulo* (2016b, p. 2).

** Sports reintroduced in the Games.

The first edition of the modern Olympic Games in 1896, as well as the Ancient Games, did not featured female athletes in the sports arena (Miragaya, 2007). The first participation of women was at the Paris Games in 1900 (tennis and golf) (Alves, 2016).

The second edition of the Olympics had an interesting poster created by IOC (Figure 1, below), which portrays the participation of women in sports. Silva (2016, p. 2) report in their article that, for the Baron Pierre de Coubertin, “the presence of women at the Games would be unthinkable, impractical and incorrect”.



Figure 2. Jeux olympiques d'été de 1900.

Source: IOC (1900).

Despite the poster illustrating the woman in fencing costume, the participation of women in this modality only started in 1924, at the Games held also in Paris. The poster reads *Concours Internationaux d'Escrime* ('International Fencing Competitions').

Regarding the participation of Brazilian women, swimmer Maria Lenk made history in the sport, being the first Brazilian and South American swimmer to participate in an edition of the Summer Olympics, which took place in Los Angeles in 1932. Lenk, by that time a 17 year old and the only female among the 81 Brazilian athletes, had to stay in a hotel, as they did not allow the presence of women in the accommodations (Alves, 2016). Swimming has been open to women since 1912 at the Stockholm Games (Sweden). A quite different situation occurred in 2016:

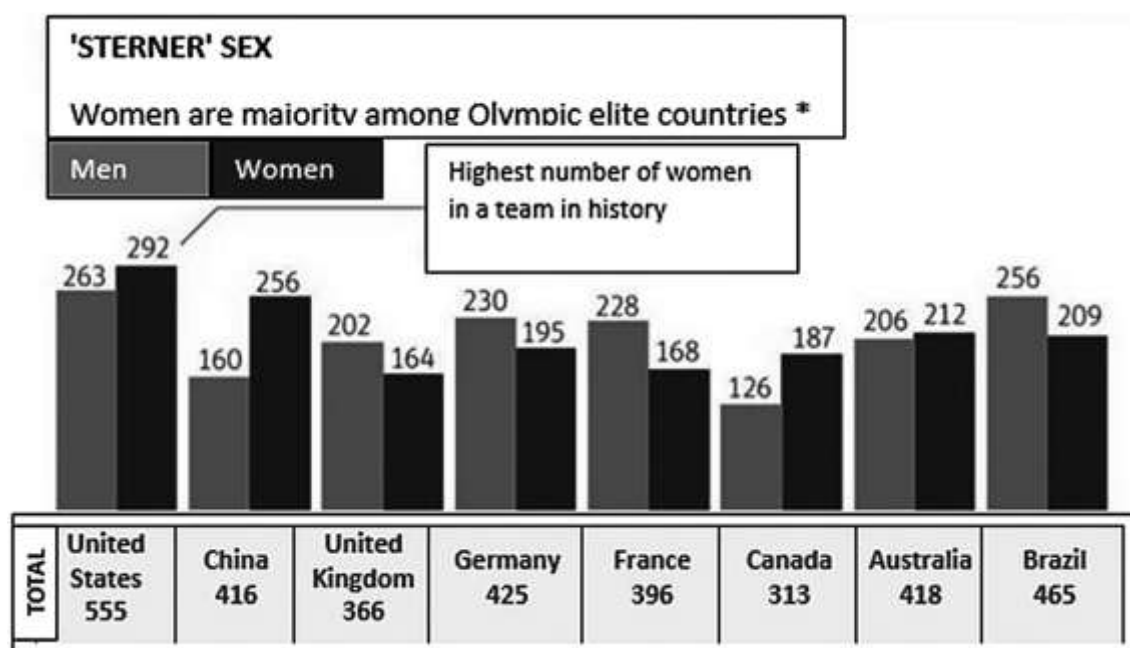


Figure 3. Forecast of women's participation in Olympic delegations in the Rio-2016 Games.

Source: *Folha de S. Paulo* (2016c, p. 2).

*Numbers still subject to change.

The number of women in delegations indicates more visibility by breaking down several barriers throughout the 20th century, as shown by Graph 1. The news also highlights the major sports nations expected women to win in different modalities for a better performance in the Olympic medal table. In Brazil, the press focused on women in judo, volleyball, and beach volleyball. The women's judo team had three athletes among the top five in the world, while the men's team did not have the same potential in the sport. So it was no surprise that the first gold medal won by the Brazilian delegation was in judo, by Rafaela Silva, at the Rio 2016 Olympic Games. According to Giglio *et al.* (2018, p. 19), the COB and sports federations should encourage appreciation for women's sport, "enabling the exposure of athletes in the media, coordinating actions to stimulate and publicize the sport, in order to enhance its practice at different levels in addition to revealing athletes".

Journalists Mariana Lajolo and Paulo Roberto Conde, in a text entitled *Potências têm maior participação feminina* ('Countries have greater women's participation'), point out the United States and China had in their delegations expressive number of women at Rio 2016: 52.6% and 61%, respectively (Lajolo & Conde, 2016). The Countries ranked first and third respectively in the Olympic medal table.

Women are no longer the “modest beauties”, but the warriors of sports. This new scenario has changed the Olympic Movement. However, the increasing participation of women does not mean total gender equality, since there is much to be achieved in this regard in the sports field.

The administrative sectors of the Olympic Movement still have few women. Moroccan Nawal El Mououtawakel, former athletics champion, was named head of the Rio-2016 Games coordination team, being the first woman in history to hold this position (Seixas, 2013) — she also was in the entity's executive committee. In 2016, at the eve of the Games, Adriana Behar, former beach volleyball player from Brazil, was BOC's sports planning manager and the only woman in an important position of the Brazilian entity. Nevertheless, through documents such as Agenda 2020, IOC has advocated the reduction of gender inequalities and greater presence of women in the National Olympic Committee (NOC) of all countries participating in the Games, encouraging and supporting ‘the promotion of women in sport at all levels and in all structures with a view to implementing the principle of equality of men and women’ (IOC, 2018; Lajolo, 2016).

Another important fact, at both the Rio 2016 Olympic Games and the Rio 2016 Paralympic Games, is that women were elected flagship representatives of the Brazilian delegations. Yane Marques, a modern pentathlon athlete, took the Brazilian flag at the opening ceremony of the OG (Conde, 2016) and, at the Paralympics, the flag bearer was Shirlhene Coelho, Paralympic javelin record holder (Lajolo & Macedo, 2016). Regarding Yane Marques and according to the FSP, BOC preferred an Olympic champion or twice champion in the position.

According to journalists Bôas, Franco and Vasconcelos (2016), the Rio 2016 Olympic Games counted on approximately 11,400 athletes: 5,200 women and 6,200 men. This shows the consolidation of the presence of women in Olympic sports, but there is still much to fight against harassment, abuse, discrimination, and for higher salaries.

Conclusions

The news about Rio 2016 Olympic Games, published in the Folha de S. Paulo (FSP, from 2009 to 2016), which was read and analysed according to the history of the present time revealed three axes of impact on the constitution of the recent history of the Olympics: the problem of the host city, the Olympism crisis, and the growing participation of women in the Olympic Movement.

Postulating the condition of host city of the OG became an increasingly untenable challenge. The Rio-2016 Olympic Games represent a certain exhaustion of having one single city (or country) model to promote a mega-event structured in this way since the 1970s. Apart from the internal

issues of Brazil, the very large structure of the OG is now a factor against its own promotion, because of its high financial cost, the logistics, political corruption, among other factors.

Concerning Olympism and its value system, we found a low volume of news released on the Rio-2016 Olympic Games in the press in general. This can be associated with the Olympic Movement crisis throughout the 20th century in the political, mercantile and professional dimensions of the Olympic sports. The event became a lucrative business, leaving the philosophical and educational principles of Olympism in the background. Nevertheless, we need to mention IOC's important official actions to reinvigorate the Olympic Movement, such as Agenda 2020, but their results are still yet to come.

The Olympic Movement has been going through some good changes due to the increasing women's participation in sports. Moreover, the participation of women in the delegations of countries regarded as Olympic powers is very significant. However, there is still much to expand regarding women participation in senior positions of the Olympic sports management.

Finally, the history of the Olympics continues to be currently lived by us, and soon another edition will take. Thus, we expect new changes to improve even more this important event and the Olympic Movement itself.

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