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Apollonians and Dionysians: The Role of Football in Gilberto Freyre's Vision of Brazilian People

Tiago Maranhão

The purpose of this work is to explore and suggest a reflection on the racial theories that were debated in Brazil at the beginning of the twentieth century, making a counterpoint with Gilberto Freyre's interpretation of the Brazilian way of playing football (Dionysian) in comparison with the European style (Apollonian) and using Freyre's texts on football as a background.

Introduction

In the early twentieth century, the Brazilian dominant class found itself facing the dilemma of a huge contingent of black people who were politically emancipated but socially subaltern. In the first two decades, there were moments of institutional and social disruption in Brazil, marked by exponents of an ethic posture seeking the return to the 'white' colour which should be achieved by stimulating European immigration and forsaking the 'dark' contingent of the population. For some thinkers, Brazil should be 'purified' of its Afro-Amerindian cultural heritage which was supposed to succumb, together with its representatives, in view of the European civilization vigour. This translated the quest for what 'the Brazilian people' should be like.

In the 1930s, one of the main goals of President Getúlio Vargas[1] was to overcome the cleavage caused by the low fidelity of a large number of Brazilians towards a feeling of national belonging as a result of foreign immigration policies promoted by many former governments. Most immigrant groups were not assimilated by the new country and maintained strongly their regional roots, nurtured by some connection with their respective 'native land'. Besides, the black contingent of the population was under the government's responsibility within the Brazilian national project, and over a long period, the elite were not very keen on their integration.

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In this context, a model of 'imagining the Brazilian nation' proposed by Gilberto Freyre emerges. This model seeks to solve the problem of integration of immigrants and Afro-Brazilians: to raise in those people the feeling of being part of the nation.

For some, the idea of nationalism should be first 'invented' before its application in people's common sense; [2] and, for a nation to imagine itself [3] the ideologies created by the elite should be disseminated. The image of the Mulatto superiority over the 'rigid' Europeans proposed by Freyre found its expression in the opposition Dionysius vs. Apollo, where the mestizo (mulatto) would represent the smart tropical style, a skilful and ludic one which could surpass the hard and disciplined European model. Football provided a powerful way to foment the feeling of 'belonging' amongst the Brazilian population, and it also spread Gilberto Freyre's ideas related to a full-fledged, triumphant and, consequently, a superior society of mulattos. This thinking carried a nationalist content and became highly functional in the process of 'imagining the community'.

Racist Theories in Brazil

Until the beginning of the 1930s, there was in Brazil an issue under discussion on how long the existence of the black contingent in the Brazilian society would last. The more 'optimistic' believed one hundred years; the more 'pessimistic' thought it would go as far as three centuries. Far more important than this strange controversy, the 'whitening' ideology as something definitive gave rise to discussions without any cultural or political opposition. According to the theorists of that time, black skin would disappear from the Brazilian population through miscegenation, which would purify the race and lead to whitening. However, from the end of nineteenth century, this thought persisted as a result of the assimilation of European racial theories with a racist bias by the Brazilian elite.

Inspired by the social sciences of that period, the Brazilian intellectual elite was influenced by August Comte's positivism, Charles Darwin and Herbert Spencer's evolutionism, as well as Joseph Arthur Gobineau and Georges V. de Lapouge's racism. However, there were some regional peculiarities in the main centres of the country, despite the universal pretension. 'It is the case of the Law Schools in São Paulo and Recife which, although they were concerned about the design of a national code, they used diverse interpretations: while in São Paulo the liberal analysis models were largely adopted, there was in Recife a predominance of Haeckel and Spencer's social-Darwinism.' [4]

To a large extent, the studied social sciences (particularly Spencer's social-Darwinism and Gobineau and Lapouge's 'scientific' racism) valued the Northern-Europeans and despised the Africans and Asians without disguising the apology of the bourgeoisie's domination as well as the justification of imperialism expansion throughout the planet. 'Thus, the intent is to demonstrate that these science intellectuals, despite their social origin, tried to legitimize and scientifically justify their positions in the institutions of which they took part.' [5]

However, in relation to the sociological attitudes which prevailed in the 1920s and 1930s, it can be observed that the positions remained similar to those from the previous

decades. It was assumed that the physical ‘whitening’ of Brazilian people was as irreversible as desirable. Nina Rodrigues (physician from Maranhão,[6] a follower of eugenic science and strongly in favour of the ‘whitening’ process of the Brazilian population), Sílvio Romero (member of the *Escola do Recife*)[7] and Oliveira Vianna (a famous author who defended the theory according to which black people were unable to reach civilization) were part of the social thought which emerged in Brazil with the establishment of the Republic and was based on the nineteenth century theories of human evolution,[8] advocating genetic inferiority of the black race in order to explain the state of affairs in Brazil. Nina Rodrigues – who was one of the precursors of studies related to black people in Brazil – wrote a book between late nineteenth and early twentieth century (the full text was published in 1932) asserting that:

The Black Race in Brazil, despite its incontestable services to our civilization, no matter how justified are the feelings against the revolting abuse of slavery and the generous exaggerations of their defenders, will always constitute one of the factors of our inferiority as a people.[9]

These ‘scientific’ backgrounds created a social determinism that enabled social hierarchy to be translated into racial hierarchy. In order to put the eugenic ideal into effect, it would be necessary to stimulate the procreation among the ‘superior eugenic types’. This way, the eugenic ideal would imply social practices that would incorporate public policies whose goal would be to ‘improve the race’ and, at the same time, ‘prevent its degeneration’. The whitening process achieved through immigration and miscegenation became the hegemonic solution for the so-called Brazilian racial problem.

Nevertheless, the ‘whitening’ theory innovated in terms of racist proposals since it did not associate miscegenation with race degeneration. If Gobineau, who had already visited Brazil, considered the country’s population as degenerated by miscegenation and, therefore, doomed to disappear, for Oliveira Vianna (one of the most important racist theorists in the nation and a defender of Aryan immigration), the mixture between races represented exactly a form of elevating the ‘white’ rate in the Brazilian blood. Maria Eunice Maciel argues:

In a highly hierarchized society like the Brazilian one, where, within the perspective of racial hierarchy, the white European was considered as ‘civilized and superior’; the indigenous and the black people were seen as ‘savage, primitive and inferior’ and the mestizos as ‘degenerated’. Projects of ‘national salvation’ through ‘race improvement’, i.e. eugenics, emerged.[10]

That was the general tendency of social-cultural ideology in Brazil. Such thought was not completely hegemonic, though. There were defenders who stood for a more nationalist and anti-European attitude – they were precursors of the Modernist Movement of 1922 – and others who were more conservative in relation to ‘modernity’ (those belonged to the Regionalist Movement, also in the 1920s).[11] At artistic and cultural levels, these movements reflected the nationalism of radical politicians during the 1920s and were highlighted during the 1930 Revolution and when Getúlio Vargas took power. Among these intellectuals, Gilberto Freyre’s name emerged with a new idea of nation and explanation for the meaning of the so-called ‘Brazilian people’.

Gilberto Freyre, 'Race' and Football

In his most famous, but not less controversial, work *The Masters and the Slaves*, Gilberto Freyre collided with 'scientific' theories of his time, which established racial classification according to craniometry[12] (amongst other methods) where the 'white' appears on the top of the scale and the 'mestizo' on the opposite side, right below the 'black'. Considering the existing discussions, Freyre's theory was, at the same time both innovative and disturbing. The Brazilian elite, who craved for the population 'whitening', ignored the black and the mestizo and had eyes turned to Europe, while the poor and the mulattos, in general, used to live in social exile in the suburbs.

The reason of the great impact of Freyre's theory lies in his vision of Brazilian mulatto's 'racial superiority'. For him, the mulatto gathered the strong elements of both races (white and black), in utter opposition to the mainstream intellectual vision. Freyre refuted the ideas that encouraged the disappearance of Afro-Brazilian presence in Brazil. Far from 'degenerated', it was a positive mark in Brazil's historical process, which was basically considered as an obstacle to the development of new societies.

Freyre firmly asserts the existence of a higher informality between the races in Brazil, more than anywhere else in the American continent. The black was better accepted in the community rather than in other countries. Far from defending the existence of the so-called 'racial democracy', which emerged from Freyre's work, what can be observed is the strong presence of this ideology for many decades as common sense in the Brazilian society. 'Racial democracy' is a myth,[13] but it is also something that Brazilian people believed (and believe) to be real.[14]

For sociologists like Ronaldo Helal and Cesar Gordon Jr., 'this vision became more powerful with the comparison of the relationship between the races in Brazil and in the United States, where segregation was widely and clearly manifested, as well as the conflict and a true national cleavage, surrounding the races'.[15] For Brazilian social-Darwinists of that period, race was considered a fundamental factor of development: the United States were more industrially powerful due to their racial superiority, while Brazil, with its large black and mestizo population, was doomed to underdevelopment.

However, the statements about the advantages of miscegenation and 'racial interaction' didn't change the fact that most of the scientists and writers who studied and wrote about such issues were largely influenced by the predominant ideological streams of that time, according to which the 'white race' was certainly superior. Thus, it must be realized that Gilberto Freyre's thought, when praising the black element as a fundamental element within culture and Brazilian ethnic composition, was daring considering the 'scientific' environment he experienced.

In the preface of *The Mansions and the Shanties* (published in 1949), Freyre pointed out, 'the rise of lighter and darker mulattos among the athletes, swimmers and football players; a group almost entirely formed by mestizos nowadays'.[16] These social possibilities offered in favour of the mulattos demonstrated to Gilberto Freyre that the Afro-Brazilians could integrate the world of 'the white men of the cities'. His narrative renders such social construction as essential and legitimate through a reality explained by miscegenation and racial qualities of the black.

With a new and positive vision of multiracialism, Freyre rendered legitimate new popular practices (sports) which started to grow in several parts of Brazil. In fact, on 19 December 1929, Freyre used a pseudonym to write an article on this issue. The article, entitled 'Fair Play', was published in the newspaper *A Província* in Pernambuco, where he made comments about the youngsters' violence during football matches in Rio de Janeiro.[17] The use of the pseudonym Jorge Rialto might be connected to his concerns in relation to writing about a not much respected activity in the academic world. The great landmark, though, of the consolidation of Freyre's racial theories and its reflex on football fields was the 1938 World Cup in France. For the first time, the Brazilian team represented what Freyre considered as the true Brazilian people as there were 'whites', 'blacks' and 'mulattos'. As explained above, the mulatto was still believed to lack hopes of salvation (as an ethnic factor in Brazil) according to the *esprit du temps*.

Victory over the teams of Poland and Czechoslovakia (after a draw in a previous match against the Czechs) served to prove Freyre's thesis. While the Brazilian mulattos became increasingly successful in their matches against the Europeans, the elite's non-acceptance of the dark-skinned persisted, since it would mean the admission of a second class status within the international community. So, on 17 June 1938, Gilberto Freyre wrote to *Diários Associados*, reporting the 'admirable Brazilian performance' in the fields of Strasbourg and Bordeaux:

Our football style seems to contrast with the European one due to an amount of qualities such as surprise, skill, cleverness, speed and, at the same time, individual brilliance and spontaneity that express the same Mulatism of Nilo Peçanha, who was the greatest name in Politics. Our passes, our catches, our misleads, our floridness with the ball ... there is something that reminds one of dancing and *capoeira*, making the Brazilian way of playing football a trademark, which sophisticates and often sweetens the game invented by the English and played so stiffly by them. All this seems to express in a very interesting way, for psychologists and sociologists, the flamboyant Mulatism and the trickery which are nowadays part of the true affirmation of what Brazil is.[18]

In fact, as Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger have rightly argued, social scientists play a special role,

since the history which became part of the fund of knowledge or the ideology of nation, state or movement is not what has actually been preserved in popular memory, but what has been selected, written, pictured, popularized and institutionalized by those whose function it is to do so.[19]

The 'invention of traditions' occurs in moments of disruption and great social changes. For this reason, no claim is made here that football, as a symbol of 'Brazilian racial democracy', has not also been an 'invented tradition'. However, what needs to be made clear is that, after being 'invented' and, more importantly, after being assimilated and accepted by the society, football plays an evident role in the construction of a collective subjectivity in relation to the Brazilian nation.

What has made sport so uniquely effective a medium for inculcating national feelings, at all events for males, is the ease with which even the least political or public individuals can identify with the nation as symbolized by young persons excelling at what practically every man wants, or at one time in life has wanted, to be good at. The

imagined community of millions seems more real as a team of 11 named people. The individual, even the one who only cheers, becomes a symbol of his nation himself.[20]

Gilberto Freyre, Football and Nationalism in Brazil

The troubled political/historical context and the use of 1938 World Cup by Getúlio Vargas' government (taking advantage of the positive results of the team), in order to create a kind of national identification linked to the Brazilian team (by installing loudspeakers in the streets to enable the people listen to the matches) contributed to render the positive image of being 'Brazilian', created by Gilberto Freyre, rooted in the society. It is important to distinguish the various discourses of the elite which 'invent' traditions from the others since not everything invented by the elite has predictable effects on the people. Hence, the importance of the dissemination of ideas through the mass media as well as the production of national symbols. Human beings in a community feel they are related to each other because they share a totem.[21] And, from 1938 onwards, the Brazilian 'totem' has been the national football team:

our mulatto football, with the artistic floridness whose efficiency – less in defense than in attack – was demonstrated with brilliance during the matches held this year against the Polish and the Czechoslovakians, is an expression of our social formation, democratic as no other one and rebel to excesses of internal and external ordering; to excesses of all that is uniform, geometrical and standardized; to radicalisms which make individual variation or personal spontaneity disappear.

In football, like in politics, Brazilian Mulatism has become known for its taste for flexion, for surprise and floridness which reminds one of dancing and capoeira steps, particularly dancing. Dionysian dance. A dance which allows improvising, diversity, individual spontaneity. Lyrical dance. While European football is an Apollonian expression of a scientific method and socialist sport in which personal action is mechanized and subordinated to the whole, the Brazilian is a sort of dance, in which the person is prominent and shines.[22]

Gilberto Freyre differentiated two opposite styles of playing football and, consequently, two different cultural styles: an 'Apollonian' style (formal, pent-up, rational) represented by the European; and the other 'Dionysian' (impulsive, individualist, emotional) portrayed in the mulatto's 'character'. Gilberto Freyre, just as the German philosopher Nietzsche did in relation to Greek culture,[23] used the opposites (Apollonian and Dionysian) to define different ways of playing football. This opposition is mentioned, not only in the quotation above, but also in many others, as may be seen as follows.

It is interesting that in Greek mythology, Apollo is a young god 'because Sun never gets old', youthful. He is the god of light, a constructor and colonizer god. Apollo was represented reigning over the Fortunate Island, the paradise of orphism.[24] Dionysius, however, had a less perfect story, as one might say. He was given to the Nymphs of Nisa (curiously, some locate Nisa in Ethiopia, Africa) and transformed into a goat to make him unrecognizable to the eyes of Hera. In mythology, he is characterized with many defects. He was mad and was held responsible by the Oracle for Thrace's failure due to

his impulses. He was also the one who introduced the bacchanals. His processions were always full of conflict and disorder and his cult was orgiastic and used musical instruments.[25]

Freyre insisted on saying that his understanding of ‘Aryanism’ and ‘Mulatism’ was that they were not ethnic expressions. Nonetheless, when talking about Brazilian performance in football, he believed that the Brazilian way of playing had ‘certainly, an influence from the Brazilians with African blood, or those who are predominantly African in their culture: they are the ones who try to reduce everything to dancing – work or game’.[26]

It would not be completely absurd to notice in his analysis a kind of racism (although under another perspective), an ‘assimilative racism’,[27] because the black was considered to be naturally talented in music, dancing, wrestling and, of course, football. This idea did not appear only in Freyre’s texts from the first half of the twentieth century. The proof is that several years after the 1938 World Cup, Freyre wrote a text for the catalogue of the *Museu do Homem do Nordeste* in Recife, where he said:

It is possible to suggest that, in the Northeast of Brazil, those contraries when in contact as if in a symbiosis would develop purgation of irrationalism, through Dionysian rites – one of them is Carnival with mythical aspects and mestizos, so much Northeasterner – without any loss of creative irrationality.[28]

The power of reasoning, of reckoning, calculus and coolness, obviously did not fit in his ‘praise’ of the African element. It was typically European.

Whenever possible, Freyre devoted himself to promote his theories concerning the ‘Dionysian’ way of the cultural representations of the Brazilian people and the reasons for their peculiarity and success at football:

After publishing my first notes on these two subjects – the regional ways of dancing and playing football, football still being a dance with something African – I have read an excellent page by Waldo Frank, where he thinks of Tango as a ‘sculptural dance-music’; and, at the same time he says that, observing a group of Brazilians playing football, he noticed that they tried to score as if they were playing ‘the melodic line of samba’. He has almost reproduced the very same observation I once made in an article of mine in 1938, and I am sure that Waldo Frank has never read it, as well as another article on the different ways of Carnival dancing in Brazil – Brazilians from different regions, from Bahia to Rio Grande, which I published in 1940.[29]

The impact and influences of Freyre’s theory were actually felt in the Brazilian intellectual environment. The mestizo defended by Gilberto Freyre presupposed that the European intellect and the Afro-Brazilian primitivism could coexist in one personality to form the ‘true Brazilian’, symbolized by the mulatto. Hence, in 1947 the book *O Negro no Futebol Brasileiro (The Black in Brazilian Football)*, written by Mário Filho, was published and Freyre wrote the preface of the book. According to Freyre,

with these residues, Brazilian football became more distant from the orderly and original British football, in order to become a dance full of irrational surprises and Dionysian variations. The dances performed by Leônidas[30] and Domingos[31], with an impassibility which probably indicates Amerindian suggestions or influences on its personality or formation. But, anyhow it is dancing.[32]

Mário Filho's work translates the thought that football, when it used to be exclusively practiced by white men, was something external and alien to the Brazilian society. And when the black and mulattos started playing it, the sport became national, Brazilian. Mário Filho (and other intellectuals) absorbed Freyre's thought and the prevailing theories of his time (1930–40), strongly influenced by the nationalist mentality and the quest for racial interaction. There was a hope that the mixture of races in Brazil would help create a feeling of emancipation and belonging in the minds of the Brazilians in relation to the idea of nation which was sought at the time. Based on Gilberto Freyre, *O Negro no Futebol Brasileiro* tries to show that football played a decisive part in racial 'democratization' and, thus, in the construction of an integral nation.

Amongst the scholars of nationalism who considered that the identity was a result of construction, the historian Eric Hobsbawm highlights the elements of invention and social engineering which takes part in the nation's construction, as well as the use of old materials to build invented traditions. Hobsbawm states that the word 'nation' denotes, in fact, a multiplicity of realities and that the term *nationalism* has very little significance. So, it is necessary to start from a definition of 'nation', understanding it as an entity produced in a given historical context:

a social entity only in so far as it relates to a certain kind of modern territorial state, the 'nation-state', and it is pointless to discuss nation and nationality except insofar as both relate to it (...) In short, for the purposes of analysis nationalism comes before nations. Nations do not make states and nationalisms but the other way round.[33]

Benedict Anderson goes even further than Hobsbawm and states that the nation is an 'imagined political community'[34] which constitutes in essence a shared awareness of a given group of identity elements. All nations, including the more homogeneous ones, are social constructs, the so-called 'imagined communities'. The mythicizing of the relationship between 'nation' and 'State' is universal and is deeply rooted in contemporary terminology. The nation identified itself with the State because since the middle of the nineteenth century, the romantic ideology of nationalism has become hegemonic in a large part of the world. Since then, assuming that all the States are 'nations' has become a functional fiction for the legitimation of the States, their internal order, as well as an inter-'national' order (which, in fact, is an inter-state order). The community imagined by Brazilian intellectuals and the use of football for that purpose had the goal of filling the empty space left by the disintegration of social networks in previous times.

Conclusion

At first sight, one might think that Freyre's discourse on the black and the mulatto seems to be flattering or that, somehow, he probably sought the perfect Brazilian or the eugenic mulatto.[35] Thus, the aim and the product of miscegenation should be the darkening of the white both culturally and spiritually. So, football would be the explicit representation of the perfect performance of an ideal 'race'. There is, however, the so-called 'silent discourse' in Gilberto Freyre's works. In other words, the discourse where 'it is necessary to say nothing in order to be able to say something'.[36] For example:

when the Brazilian players (that is, Brazilian people) are said to have a way of playing that is 'unmistakably, exclusively ours' and the European style is 'calculated, ordered, mathematical, apollonian and British',[37] the Brazilians are not seen as a disciplined and orderly people. Or, when it is claimed that 'they [Africans and Afro-descendants] are the ones who tend to reduce everything to dancing – work or play',[38] they cannot be considered 'serious' or 'rational'.

When qualifying people, Gilberto Freyre excludes the possibility whereby people X could have the characteristics of people Y. In other words, he does not explicitly claim that Brazilians are undisciplined, disorderly. However, he makes such a claim when he describes the Europeans in an opposite manner. Europeans would have a rational game due to their 'organization', while the Brazilians would have a 'distinct' way of playing, representing the disorganization of the country and its Afro-Brazilian culture. In summary, the unspoken qualities related to 'rationality', 'calculus' and 'order' in Brazilian football reflect the same opinion with regards to the structure of the society.

The process of Freyre's discourse provides the Brazilian with a definition which is part of the imaginary mechanism of the society. When he used to say that 'we need to conciliate the [Brazilian] individualism with the [European] discipline';[39] or that 'the mestizos, full of animal energies or irrational impulses',[40] the ideological effect that the Brazilians of his time are undisciplined, does not emerge by chance. Its specific materiality is the discourse.

Even nowadays, some opinion makers 'implicitly believe in a whiter Brazil, even if it were no longer respectable to talk about it, living with an intellectual legacy from their parents and grandparents and their commitment in relation to racist theories'.[41] The racial issue is still widely present in the Brazilian society and deserves special attention not only from anthropologists but especially from historians of all disciplines.[42] This is because a prevailing erroneous impression has been that in Brazil, the black people have a radically different and less complex problem than those in the United States. According to José Correia Leite: 'we are absorbed by the sentimental lie which claims there is no prejudice in Brazil, but the country continues to be a vast *senzala*, with some black people in the mansions'.[43]

In this theoretical context, football is seen as a nationalist feeling that should first be created and then transferred to the common sense. Within this perspective, such content could be a part of sports and become highly functional in the process of 'imagining the community'. By being a landmark of Brazilian cultural identity and a product of a political and cultural project headed by the Government and the national political classes for the society, football deserves to be considered in its historical and cultural state and in its role in the creation of a Brazilian identity.

This affirmation derives from the fact that football is, in fact, an agglutinant event of emotions and part of the construct of the national spirit. Evaluations are more plausible during the big football events (World Cups etc.), be it for acts of heroism, or for disappointment and failures in the expected performance. As it is a national issue, when the Brazilian team does not achieve the 'deserved result' in important competitions, there is a tendency to look for those who should be blamed and often the style that was unsuccessfully used is questioned. On many occasions, the playing style is

criticized for not being 'the true Brazilian Style'.^[44] Some social groups, in such a context, use images that are available in the cultural reality and re-use them (originally or not) to qualify the magnanimities and frustrations. Hence, all discussions and comments about football, in Brazil, carry an evaluative meaning, a conductor of traces of discrimination, judgment, distinction, prejudice or taboo.

From Freyre's perspective, the behaviour which identifies Brazilian people's attitude towards football idols is reminiscent of feline behaviour, just like when a cat caresses its owner's leg, it seems to be pleasing him, but, in fact, it caresses for pleasure itself is feeling. For the masses of Afro-Brazilians, those theories and the successive successes of their patricians in the Brazilian football team 'belonged to them, they understood them, the football kicks were theirs. As the value of the black race started to increase, the masses' self-awareness grew simultaneously and they started viewing black or mulatto football players as their authentic representatives.'^[45] This statement is still valid today, making the Brazilians feel their bissextus nationalism in times of international football tournaments (World Cups occur every four years) with the sensation that their compatriots success, when compared with the economic and military super powers, has a symbolic significance that the rest of the world respects them for what has been considered as the most important social phenomenon of the twentieth century.^[46]

The issue of how authentic an author can be when writing 'in favour' of the Afro-Brazilian has been raised. It is necessary to reflect more deeply about Gilberto Freyre's discourse on Brazilian football and his racial analysis in relation to it, because there are some ideas that are constantly repeated, for example: 'the *malandro* style of the Brazilian player, with skill' or 'the ballet-like football, of Afro-Brazilian dance with dribbles'. These expressions create in the collective imaginary^[47] a strongly rooted idea to the extent that it seems it has always existed, rendering it impossible to have any objection. When talking about the 'history of the black in football', one could say that this history is told by 'another person' (Gilberto Freyre, in this case) and this means that the discourse either determines the place where from the black should speak or gives them no voice'.^[48] The blacks do not speak, they are spoken of. With a more acute analysis, one may perceive the invention of an 'idea of what is Brazilian', through Freyre's discourse on football. His conception of what is to be 'Brazilian' created a slogan which remained valid throughout the twentieth century. And it is still so today!

The importance of analyzing football as a way of understanding the Brazilian society as a 'softer' way of producing nationalism (in comparison with other possible means, such as militarism) should be highlighted. In the period between the First and Second World Wars, however, international sports became the expression of national battle, and athletes represented their nations or states as primary expressions of their imagined communities.^[49] In general, sports have not been frequently studied by social scientists in Brazil and in the rest of the world. Still, some important authors (Johan Huizinga, Pierre Bourdieu and Norbert Elias, for example^[50]) studied it and produced rich works on this topic, bearing in mind that there is no fact or historical event which does not make sense or does not require interpretation.

Notes

- [1] Getúlio Dornelles Vargas was born in São Borja (Rio Grande do Sul) on 19 April 1882. He was the Head of State of the provisional government after the 1930 Revolution; he was elected president by the Constituent Assembly on 17 July 1934 and ruled the country until the implantation of dictatorship of the New State on 10 November 1937. On 29 October 1945 he was deposed. He ran for presidency under the PTB (Brazilian Labour Party) and he defeated Eduardo Gomes (UDN, União Democrática Nacional) and Cristiano Machado (PSD, Partido Social Democrata), and was elected President of the Republic with 3,849,000 votes. As he was confronted with the threat of being forced to renounce or being deposed, he committed suicide in 1954. Biographical information obtained from the website of CPDOC – Getúlio Vargas Foundation: <http://www.cpdoc.fgv.br>; INTERNET.
- [2] See Hobsbawm, *The Invention of Tradition* (Imagined Communities).
- [3] See Anderson, *Comunidades Imaginadas*.
- [4] Schwarcz, *The Spectacle of the Races*, 25.
- [5] *Ibid.*, 26.
- [6] The state of Maranhão is located in the Northeast Region of Brazil. Raimundo Nina Rodrigues, however, graduated in medicine in Rio de Janeiro (Southeast Region) and became a prominent professional in Bahia (the last Southern State in the Northeast Region). The states of Rio de Janeiro and Bahia were the poles of medical studies, while São Paulo and Pernambuco were famous in the legal field.
- [7] The *Faculdade de Direito do Recife* – Law School of Recife (capital of Pernambuco State) was the environment where the intellectual, literate, critical, philosophical, sociological, folklore and legal movement flourished. This movement, known as *Escola do Recife* in the 1860s and 1880s, was headed by Tobias Barreto de Menezes, who was from Sergipe (another state in the Northeast region). Prominent people like Silvio Romero, Artur Orlando, Clovis Bevilacqua, Capistrano de Abreu e Graça Aranha and others took part of the movement.
- [8] For a deeper study about the impact that the European theories of human evolution had on Brazil, see Schwarcz, *The Spectacle of the Races*. A more specialized work on the mentioned theories can be found in Gould, *The Mismeasure of Man*.
- [9] Chiavenato, *O negro no Brasil: da senzala à Guerra do Paraguai*, 171.
- [10] See Maciel, 'A Eugenia no Brasil'.
- [11] It must be kept on mind that the *Modernist Movement* started in São Paulo, a city where a significant part of the Afro-Brazilian culture was diminishing as a result of the arrival of a large number of European immigrants in the city. In 1920, 35 per cent of the population of São Paulo were foreigners. Source: Poppino, *Brazil: The Land and People*, 197; Brookshaw, *Raça e Cor na Literatura Brasileira*, 87. The *Manifesto Regionalista* (Regionalist Manifest), however, was a result of the Regionalist Congress organized in Recife, where essayists, novelists, musicians, painters as well as historians, sculptors, engineers, economists, biographers etc., could discover and articulate a legacy of peculiar myths, landscapes and memories from the influence of Portuguese, African, Dutch and Brazilian-Indian cultures. Through the selective recovery of what would individualize the referred space, this varied cultural production invented the codes of symbolic comprehension of a community and adapted to them simultaneously, thus acquiring a unequivocal regional character and enabling Pernambuco to perceive itself and present its own *pernambucano* identity. Freyre is one of the most important names among the articulators and propagators of the *Manifesto Regionalista*.
- [12] Craniometry (or craniology) is the measurement of the characteristics of the skull, in order to classify the people according to race, criminal temper, intelligence, etc. In the nineteenth century, the British used craniometry to justify racial policies against the Irish and Africans whom they considered to be inferior races. See Gould, *A Falsa Medida do Homem*.
- [13] A report on human development in Brazil disseminated by the UN, where a number of social and economic indicators in the country have been compiled, concluded that the Brazilian

- black people are in an unfavourable situation. 'ONU ataca "mito" da democracia racial no Brasil' ('The UN attacks the myth of social democracy in Brazil'), *Folha de São Paulo*, 18 November 2005.
- [14] 'Few places in the world have the degree of open-mindedness towards novelty as in Brazil. The reason is that racial democracy which has been constructed along the centuries.' Caldeira, 'Uma Nação Global' (A Global Nation). An interesting vision about the idea of 'racial democracy' today in Brazil can be found in Capuchinho 'Brasil vive ilusão da democracia racial' ('Brazil lives in the illusion of racial democracy').
- [15] Helal *et al.*, *A invenção do país do futebol – Mídia, Raça e Idolatria*, 35.
- [16] See Freyre, *Ingleses no Brasil*.
- [17] Rialto, Jorge (Gilberto Freyre). 'Fair Play', 3.
- [18] Freyre, 'Foot-ball mulato', 4.
- [19] Hobsbawm and Ranger, *The Invention of Tradition*, 13.
- [20] Hobsbawm, *Nation and Nationalism since 1780*, 143.
- [21] Marvin Harris recalls that 'there are variations in the specific forms of totemic belief, and it is inappropriate to say there is a single totemic complex. Totemic ceremonies reaffirm and intensify the sense of common identity of the members of a regional community.' Harris, 'Introducción a la antropología general', 613.
- [22] See Freyre, 'Sociologia', 1945. Excerpt taken from Coutinho, *Gilberto Freyre*, 53–60.
- [23] See Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy and the Genealogy of Morals*.
- [24] According to the Caldas Aulete Dictionary, it is the cult that preaches more pure principles of morals and hope, in happy immortality.
- [25] Guimarães, *Dicionário da Mitologia Grega*, 52–7 and 125–6.
- [26] Freyre, 'Unidade e diversidade, nação e região'. Taken from Freyre, *Interpretação do Brasil*, 182–4. The book was originally published in 1947 and contains a series of lectures given in 1944 in the United States, including the one mentioned above.
- [27] Ribeiro, *O Povo Brasileiro: a formação e o sentido do Brasil*, 226. For the author, 'the cruelest aspect of assimilative racism is that it gives an image of itself of better sociability when, in fact, it disarms the black in the struggle against poverty which is imposed on them, and dissimulates the conditions of terrible violence to which they are submitted. It is worth mentioning, however, that the assimilative ideology of the so called racial democracy affects mainly the Black intellectuals.'
- [28] Freyre, 'O que é Museu do Homem? Um Exemplo'.
- [29] Freyre, *Interpretação do Brasil*, 182–4.
- [30] Leônidas da Silva, mostly known as 'The Black Diamond', was born on 6 September 1913 in Rio de Janeiro (RJ). He was one of the most extraordinary players of all times. Fast attacker, skilful and opportunist, he gained fame in the 1930s and 1940s. He played for the Brazilian national team and for football clubs like São Cristóvão, Sírio Libanês, Bonsucesso, Peñarol (Uruguay), Vasco da Gama, Botafogo, Flamengo and São Paulo. He won the following titles: Carioca Championship for Vasco da Gama in 1934; Carioca Championship for Botafogo (1935); Carioca Championship (1939) and Rio-São Paulo Tournament (1940) for Flamengo; Paulista Championship for São Paulo Football Club (1943, 1945, 1946, 1948 and 1949); Rio Branco Cup (1932), 3rd place in the World Cup (1938) and Copa Roca (1945) for the Brazilian National Team. In Brazil, he is known as the inventor of the 'bicycle kick'.
- [31] Domingos António da Guia was born on 19 November 1912, in Rio de Janeiro, and died on 18 May 2000. He used to play looking ahead, and had a perfect notion of passes and remarkable anticipation of shots. Due to his almost perfect football, he was nicknamed 'Divine'. He wore the shirt of the Brazilian National Team in 30 matches. He disputed various South-American championships, without winning any of them. He played in the World Cup 1938 along with Leônidas. He started playing for Bangu (Rio de Janeiro) in 1929. Then, he was transferred to Nacional de Montevideo and won the title of Uruguayan champion of 1933. He returned to Brazil to play for Vasco da Gama (RJ) and won the Carioca championship in

1934. He was also Argentinean champion in 1935, playing for Boca Juniors (Buenos Aires). He was part of the team of Flamengo (RJ) and won the state tournament in 1939, 1942 and 1943. He was already a veteran when he played for the Corinthians (São Paulo) and decided his career had come to an end when he started playing for Bangú.
- [32] Freyre, preface written in Recife, in 1947, for the first edition of *O Negro no Futebol Brasileiro* (The Black in Brazilian Football) by Mário Filho.
- [33] Hobsbawm, *Nation and Nationalism since 1780*, 9–10.
- [34] See Anderson, *Comunidades Imaginadas*.
- [35] Freyre, 'Ingleses no Brasil'. Author's note in the 2nd edition. The second edition dates from 1977 and the note was written in 1976. It is worth reproducing here an excerpt about the changes of football players in Brazil: 'at first, anglicized Brazilians and the natives with some Britishness in the look and behavior (...); after, increasingly, the different degrees of dark-skinned until the de-anglicization culminating in the amazing Pelé, after having shone in Leônidas'. It is curious that the described process is the opposite of the proposed eugenic theory of 'whitening'.
- [36] Orlandi, *Terra à Vista. Discurso do confronto*, 52.
- [37] Freyre, 'Futebol desbrasileirado?', 6.
- [38] Freyre, *Interpretação do Brasil.*, 182–4.
- [39] Freyre, 'Ainda a propósito de futebol brasileiro', 3.
- [40] See Freyre, preface of Filho, *O Negro no Futebol Brasileiro*.
- [41] Skidmore, *Black into White. Race and Nationality in Brazilian Thought*, 239.
- [42] Schwarcz, *The Spectacle of the Races*.
- [43] Brookshaw, *Raça e Cor na Literatura Brasileira*, 149.
- [44] After the elimination of the Brazilian team in World Cup 1990 (defeated by Argentina), the so called 'Dunga Age' was fiercely criticized. (Dunga played for Brazil in 1990 and was the image of the 'European style'. Four years later, he raised the cup as the captain of the team). 'The attempt to organize Brazilian football failed, leaving the natural talent and improvising skills, in favor of a more rigid standard of defensive play, that of the European style. Brazil was eliminated (...) The "Dunga Age" hasn't come (...) The advantage of the defeat is the necessity to re-evaluate those concepts of tough football.' *O Dia*, 25 June 1990, 3.
- [45] Rosenfeld, *Negro, Macumba e Futebol*, 99.
- [46] See Wahl, *Historia del fútbol: del juego al deporte*.
- [47] Figueiroa, 'A Invenção do Futebol-Arte', 3.
- [48] Orlandi, *Terra à Vista. Discurso do confronto: velho e novo mundo*, 50.
- [49] See Hobsbawm and Ranger, *The Invention of Tradition*, 137.
- [50] See Johan Huizinga, *Homo Ludens: the Study of the Play-element in Culture*; Pierre Bourdieu, *Programa para uma sociologia do esporte*; Norbert Elias and Eric Dunning, *Deporte y ocio en el proceso de la civilización*.

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