

The construction of soccer stories in Brazil (1922 to 2000): some remarks

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Abstract

There are few studies on the historiography of Brazilian soccer. This article aimed at performing a necessary critical reflection about some of the most important works of soccer history in Brazil, not only in order to evaluate the state of art production on the theme, but also to stimulate methodological and conceptual reflections. We also sought to perceive how the memory pertaining Brazilian soccer was elaborated by those who wrote its histories.

Keywords: historiography; football; memory.

A construção de histórias do futebol no Brasil (1922 a 2000): reflexões

Resumo

São poucos os balanços da historiografia do futebol brasileiro. Este artigo procurou realizar um necessário levantamento crítico de algumas das principais obras da história do futebol no Brasil, não apenas para avaliar o estado da arte da produção sobre o tema, mas também a fim de estimular reflexões metodológicas e conceituais. Buscou-se perceber como sua memória foi elaborada por aqueles que escreveram suas histórias.

Palavras-chave: historiografia; futebol; memória.

La construcción de historias del fútbol en el Brasil (1922 a 2000): reflexiones

Resumen

No hay muchos estudios acerca de la historiografía del fútbol brasileño. En este artículo se pretende realizar un estudio crítico de algunas obras importantes en la historia del fútbol en Brasil, no sólo para evaluar el estado de la producción sobre el tema, sino también para estimular reflexiones metodológicas y conceptuales. Hemos tratado de entender cómo la memoria del fútbol brasileño ha sido elaborada por los que escribieron sus historias.

Palabras clave: historiografía; fútbol; memoria.

La construction d'histoires du football au Brésil (1922-2000): réflexions

Résumé

Il ya peu d'études sur l'historiographie du football brésilien. Cet article vise à effectuer une réflexion critique nécessaire sur quelques-unes des oeuvres les plus importantes produites de l'histoire du football au Brésil, non seulement pour évaluer l'état de l'art de notre production historiographique sur le thème, mais aussi de stimuler la réflexion méthodologique et conceptuel. Il vise également à souligner la façon dont la mémoire sur le football brésilien a été développé par ceux qui ont écrit ses histoires.

Mots-clés: historiographie; football; mémoire.

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On the eve of the Brazilian soccer team's debut in the 2011 South American championship, reporter Tino Marcos, employed by the most known television channel in the country, elaborated a news report in which he recalled, one by one, the victories of the national team in this tournament. On the first day, the report was about the first Brazilian victory, in 1919. With images of dribbles, juggles, and goals of players wearing the team's uniform in different generations, the text, read as a background, highlighted the importance of the topic:

Where does this particular Brazilian way of moving in front of a ball come from? It comes from the mixture. From a mixed country that knew as no other how to transfer European and African heritages to soccer. Garrincha, Ronaldo, Romário. Geniuses of mixed blood. Descendants of a certain Arthur.

The slavery abolition, in 1888, caused a crisis in part of the country's southern farms. Many of the Germans who lived there came to try their luck in São Paulo. Among them, Oscar Friedenreich. There, he met a former slave who, according to historians, was of such a beauty worthy of the shattering of a preconception.¹

The text mentions the "descendants of a certain Arthur" as an allusion to Arthur Friedenreich, the mulatto player who scored the goal that brought the Brazilian team's first South American title against Uruguay in 1919. Considering that his father was German and his mother a former slave, European and African heritages were in his blood. The news report was broadcast in the *Jornal Nacional (National News)*, and achieved the largest audience in the country. Marques sought to touch the spectators' feelings, to toss "capsules of history" that were full of emotional potential, decisively assisting the creation of a social memory regarding the theme and increasing the audience drawn away from other channels.

In this scenario, one must ask: where does the idea that there is a particular Brazilian way of moving with the ball, consequential of the mixing of blacks and Europeans, come from? This question is directly related to the elaboration of a memory that has crystalized itself in Brazilian society for decades. Other myths are created and insistently repeated by the media or even by some authors who propose to write a history of Brazilian soccer; statements such as Charles Miller's fatherhood to soccer, and of its invention and transfer to the masses by the elite, among many others known by those who follow the sport in the country through the media.

In spite of the significant advancements towards in-depth research on the problems related to soccer's past in Brazil over the last years, there are few considerations on its historiography. Therefore, a critical assessment of some of the main works produced with the intention of approaching issues on this sport's history is necessary, not only to evaluate the state of our historiographical art production on the topic, but also to stimulate methodological and conceptual reflections.²

¹Tino Marques, *Jornal Nacional*, 28 de junho 2011.

²Fernando Novais, *Aproximações: estudos de história e historiografia*, São Paulo, Cosac Naify, 2005.

Since the works analyzed here concern a particular historical dimension, two essential aspects inherent to the reflection proposed must be taken into consideration: the specific time frame with a focus on the production elaborated in the 20th century, more precisely between 1922 and 2000, and the space limit imposed on academic articles. Because of these two points, it is impossible to exhaust all investigations on the history of soccer in Brazil. Therefore, we selected the texts that we considered the most significant to their time, in regards to their function of creators of a social memory to future generations. The works that have not been analyzed are not necessarily less important than the ones chosen here, which simply seem to have a greater analytical potential in our view.

Secondly, we centered on the production from the axis Rio-São Paulo, once again due to the space limits of this article, and because of the greater reach and influence that the works from these centers had over the historiography of soccer in Brazil. Although the analysis presented here is focused on the academic output from these two cities, and not on the national produc-

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tion on the topic, our work is conducted in a conscious manner due to the reasons shown, while several other studies propose the same under the illusion of portraying the whole country.

We opted for the chronological analysis of the texts, contextualizing them and observing the methodological tools used by each author, as well as their main contributions and gaps. Until the end of the 1970s, the histories of Brazilian soccer were basically written outside of academia, mainly by journalists and former athletes. After this period, the topic incited interest in the fields of social and human sciences, firstly attracting the attention of sociologists and anthropologists, and, later, of historians. The aim of the present article surpasses the critical analysis of the works, as we also sought to perceive how the memory created by those who wrote histories of Brazilian soccer has been elaborated. Having explained that, we hope to point a few paths that may assist in the discussion of soccer's history, and to incite the continuation of in-depth research.

First generation: the 1920s and 1930s

The text chosen to launch this study does not deal with soccer exclusively, but with sports. However, the importance of its content and the relevance of its publication medium demanded its insertion here. Written by Roberto Trampowski Junior and Francisco Calmon, two texts composed the entry "Sports" in the *Diccionario Histórico, Ehtnographico e Geographico do Brasil* (*Brazil's Historical, Ethnographic, and Geographic Dictionary*), organized

by the Instituto Histórico e Geográfico Brasileiro (Brazilian Historical and Geographic Institute - IHGB). It was published in 1922, the year of the celebration of the hundredth anniversary of the country's independence.

In the first text, Trampowsky defended the idea that it was only in 1894 that the "sports formula capable of performing the miracle of a necessary and profound transformation of habits in youth's education" presented itself, "with the introduction of *foot-ball*": "the leading sport".³ Soccer was "the most assimilable and adaptable sport to the innate physical and psychic characteristics of Brazilian youth, among which Latin nervousness and indigenous combativeness loom".⁴

In the ensuing text, Francisco Calmon highlighted the formation of the main power structures of sport in Brazil, transpiring typical characteristics of the French methodical school⁵. The author exalts the "admirable effort and tenacity" shown by the Confederação Brasileira de Desportos (Brazilian Confederation of Sports - CBD), "the maximal sports entity in Brazil".⁶ Next, he presents the names of all Brazilian soccer leagues affiliated with CBD and its main clubs, emphasizing the role of clubs directed by important figures of Brazilian elite, such as Fluminense, presided by Arnaldo Guinle. While Trampowsky reinforces IHGB's discourse on the mixed formation of Brazilian people, Calmon's text results in a descriptive, factual, chronological, and un-problematizing production about the sport in question.

In the following decade, another relevant work headed in the opposite direction. It was written by former player Floriano Peixoto Correia in 1933, when the official professionalization of a portion of the soccer players happened in a political context of democratization due to the election of a new Constituent Assembly and the draft of a new Constitution, in addition to the return of a lawful state. In the book, the author adopts a denouncing tone to discuss the questions related to soccer, especially in Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo. Correia's work uses history as a means to understand the problems concerning *Grandezas e misérias do futebol brasileiro* (*The Greatness and Miseries of Brazilian Soccer*), the book's title.

I dedicate this book to the memory of my soccer companions who died in poverty after contributing to the glorification of national soccer - humble operators who, at the cost of great sacrifices, including their own lives, bequeathed to the clubs the stadiums of reinforced concrete that they display nowadays in the several aristocratic neighborhoods of the country's main cities, with golden rooms and dance floors for the exclusive enjoyment of directors and rich members. [...] I dedicate it, finally, to the mutilated companions that today drag their physical misery of invalid men towards other activities, begging for their daily bread, forgotten and despised by those who explored their vigor and youth.⁷

³Roberto Trampowsky Junior; Francisco Calmon, "Desportes", *In: Dicionário histórico, ethnographico e geographico do Brasil*, Rio de Janeiro, Instituto Histórico e Geográfico Brasileiro, vol. 2, 1922, p. 412-418.

⁴*Ibidem*, p. 413.

⁵For more information on the methodical school, see Guy Bourdê; Hervén Martin, *As escolas históricas*, Lisboa, Europa-América, 1983.

⁶Roberto Trampowsky Junior; Francisco Calmon, *op. cit.*, p. 414.

⁷Floriano Peixoto Correia, *Grandezas e misérias do nosso futebol*, Rio de Janeiro, Flores e Mano Editores, 1933, p. 14.

Max Valentim and Paulo Várzea, sports journalists at the carioca newspaper *O Imparcial* (*The Impartial*) and authors of historical works on sport, contributed to the book's foreword. Valentim asked Correia not to hide "anyone's figure, however important or powerful this anyone is"⁸ Paulo Varzea, in turn, mentioned that Floriano's book exposed:

[...] the greatness and miseries of a time that still cries out, up to this day, against the caste of feudal barons, vain, authoritarian, parading with their vassals at the board of directors of the clubs and at the gates, a caste always ready to suck a soccer player's blood, to devour his health, and to scrape off the money generously left by the public at the ticket counter in exchange for the pleasure provided by the ball worker – the only loyal character in this singularly popular spectacle that was transformed, 20 years ago, in an inexhaustible source of money to the syndicates of barely honorable gentlemen.⁹

The book *Grandezas e misérias do futebol brasileiro* (*The Greatness and Miseries of Brazilian Soccer*) inserted sport into the broader political and social discussions happening in Brazilian society; for this reason, it is a fundamental work. In summary, the texts of the first generation greatly influenced subsequent works, either by pointing the importance of race mixtures in the national soccer players' formation, by reinforcing the roles of the elite and the political structures in the country's soccer, or by denouncing the maladies of this sport.

Second generation: the 1940s and 1950s

In 1950, Brazil hosted the 4th men's soccer World Cup. When the championship started, on June 24, two of the most influential works about the history of soccer in Brazil had already been published.

Released in 1947, the first of them is Mario Filho's *O negro no futebol brasileiro* (*Blacks in Brazilian soccer*)¹⁰, a book that probably exercises the greatest influence over the creation of an imagination that shapes the identity of Brazilian soccer up to this day. In regards to this text, the author claimed to have produced a work that "defies contestation".¹¹ His point of view has been shared by many intellectuals of future generations who used this book as the primary (and not problematized) source for their studies.¹²

⁸Floriano Peixoto Correia, *Grandezas e misérias do nosso futebol*, Rio de Janeiro, Flores e Mano Editores, 1933, p. 16.

⁹*Ibidem*, p. 21.

¹⁰Mario Filho, *O negro no futebol brasileiro*, 4 ed., Rio de Janeiro, Mauad, 2003.

¹¹*Ibidem*, p. 23.

¹²On the question of the uses of Mario Filho's work in Brazilian historiography, see the crucial debate among the following authors: Antônio Jorge Soares, "História e invenção de tradições no campo do futebol", *Estudos Históricos*, vol. 13, n. 23, Rio de Janeiro, 1999, p. 119-146 (<http://bibliotecadigital.fgv.br/ojs/index.php/reh/article/view/2087/1226>); Ronaldo Helal, Cesar Gordon Júnior, "Sociologia, história e romance na construção da identidade nacional através do futebol", *Estudos Históricos*, vol. 13, n. 23, Rio de Janeiro, 1999, p. 147-165 (<http://bibliotecadigital.fgv.br/ojs/index.php/reh/article/view/2092/1231>); Antônio Jorge Soares, "A modo de resposta", *Estudos Históricos*, vol. 13, n. 23, 1999, p. 166-173 (<http://bibliotecadigital.fgv.br/ojs/index.php/reh/article/view/2091/1230>); Maurício Murad, "Considerações possíveis de uma resposta necessária", *Estudos Históricos*, vol. 13, n. 24, Rio de Janeiro, 1999, p. 431-446 (<http://bibliotecadigital.fgv.br/ojs/index.php/reh/article/view/2094/1233>); Carlos Leonardo Bahiense Da Silva, "Sobre o negro no futebol brasileiro, de Mario Filho", *In: Francisco Carlos Teixeira Da Silva; Ricardo Pinto Dos Santos (orgs), Memória social dos esportes: futebol e política: a construção de uma identidade nacional*, Rio de Janeiro, Mauad, 2006, p. 287-312.

Filho's central thesis reverberated sociologist Gilberto Freyre's ideas in his belief in the benefits of miscegenation, not indigenous' and white people's, as IHGB's publications professed, but on the role of blacks and their descendants in the formation of a peculiar way of playing soccer. Influenced by the sociologist's ideas and methods, Filho affirmed at the end of the book that "Soccer erased the line of color. The club forgot that there were blacks in the team, and the blacks forgot, really could not remember, that they were black".¹³ In turn, Freyre attested Filho's conclusion:

By sublimating much of what is most primitive, young and elementary in our culture, it was natural that soccer, in Brazil, upon being aggrandized to the level of national institution, also aggrandized blacks, blacks' descendants, mulattos, cafuzos, mestizos. And among the most recent means – that is, over the last 20 or 30 years – of social ascension of blacks, mulattos or cafuzos in Brazil, none exceeds soccer in importance.¹⁴

*The book *Grandezas e misérias do futebol brasileiro* inserted sport into the broader political and social discussions happening in Brazilian society*

However, it is necessary to carefully observe the method used by the journalist to reach such conclusions. Mario Filho's main source was oral accounts; he drew fundamentally on interviews with players and sports directors conducted for the column *Na Primeira Fila (In the Front Row)*, written for the newspaper *O Globo (The Globe)* since 1942. Although he confirmed the use of other sources, such as newspapers and magazines, Filho wrote in the "note to the reader" of the first edition that "the conversations with the characters of the history of Brazilian soccer themselves were what would enrich my essay".¹⁵

The same author approximated his study to investigations conducted in other social sciences that also used oral accounts as sources, especially Sociology. According to him, the voice of the excluded group, whose history was not featured on minutes and other documents, could only be found through oral accounts.

Interestingly, the soccer clubs' minutes and other documents do not discourse about blacks. The laws of sports organizations did not mention, not even briefly, the questions of race, especially blacks. These laws were limited to raising social banners, forbidding handymen, subordinate employees, continuers, waiters, barbers, etc. to play soccer in affiliated clubs. "Little by little, I lifted the veil, listening here and there, reconstituting the oral tradition, which was much richer, much more alive than the one written in official, solemn, and circumspect documents, in newspapers that do not tell everything".¹⁶

¹³Mario Filho, *O negro no futebol brasileiro*, 4 ed., Rio de Janeiro, Mauad, 2003, p. 342.

¹⁴Gilberto Freyre, "Prefácio à 1ª Edição", *In: Mario Filho, op. cit.*, p. 25.

¹⁵Mario Filho, *idem*, p. 20.

¹⁶*Ibidem*, p. 22.

In the note to the reader published in the first edition, Mario Filho displayed a long list with the names of those who were interviewed for his work. He disclosed 58 interviewees, the majority of them soccer players and directors of the big clubs of Rio de Janeiro, out of which only six (slightly over 10%) were black.

Therefore, in light of this and despite the methodological care with which the author claims to have proceeded in his investigation, it is possible to observe the reproduction of several anecdotes that were possibly rooted in the memory of his interviewees throughout the book. As an example, we mention Robson's case. When receiving a ride from Orlando, his companion at Fluminense, Robson would have reprehended his friend when he offended a couple of black people who almost involved them in an accident. According to Mario Filho, Robson said: "Don't do that, Orlando. I was black once, and I know how it feels".¹⁷

For Filho, who sought to portray the past of Brazilian soccer supposedly as it happened, Robson's affirmation, as well as several other episodes registered in the book, were beyond doubt and thus presented as irrefutable truths:

Did I rely on my imagination of a novelist who hasn't yet published a novel? No, I didn't use imagination. No historian would have had more care than I in selecting data and verifying their veracity by means of exhaustive inquiries. At times, a simple question made me discard a chapter, which forced me into more work and research.¹⁸

Could the author have "verified the veracity" of Robson's story "by means of exhaustive inquiries"? Even though it is not possible to determine to what extent he effectively eliminated the accounts that generated doubt or how many chapters he discarded because of them — which is highly improbable — we see an effort, even if merely rhetorical, to point a methodology. This, in turn, elicited a choice for the most reliable declaration in his hands, in pursuit of his vision of what History's work should be: "the truth, pure and simple".¹⁹

It is pertinent to highlight that the Brazilian historiography of the 1940s was still strongly marked by the 19th century French methodical school's ideals, which postulated scientific truth in History through the scrupulous analysis of documents. The manual produced by Langlois and Seignobos, *Introdução aos estudos históricos (Introduction to Historical Studies)*,²⁰ had its Brazilian translation released a year before the publication of the first edition of *O negro no futebol brasileiro (Blacks in Brazilian soccer)*. Thus, Mario Filho was in consonance with a historiographical model that believed in the production of unmistakable truth through the analysis of documents.

Writing in the same period as Filho, and apparently based on the same pre-suppositions, journalist Thomás Mazzoni published another important book on the historiography of soccer in Brazil, *História do futebol no Brasil 1894-1950 (History of Soccer in Brazil 1894 - 1950)*, released months before the beginning of the World Cup. Mazzoni thoroughly studied the great championships and clubs duly following the historiographical propositions of his time period:

¹⁷Mario Filho, *O negro no futebol brasileiro*, 4 ed., Rio de Janeiro, Mauad, 2003, p. 308.

¹⁸*Ibidem*, p. 23.

¹⁹*Ibidem*.

²⁰Originally published in 1898, the book was a manual that "precisely expresses the point of view of the 'methodical school' that dominated French production between 1880 and 1930" - Guy Bourd , Herv  Martin, *As escolas hist ricas*, Lisboa, Europa-Am rica, 1983, p. 102; see also Charles-Victor Langlois; Charles Seignobos, *Introdu o aos estudos hist ricos*, S o Paulo, Renascen a, 1946.

[...] by history, we must consider, in the first place, Brazil's participation in international championships, the competition in national championships, the games between Brazilian and foreign clubs, etc.; the implantation of soccer in the main States, the foundation of clubs of greater national projection, the episodes and occurrences that had repercussion, and incited interest and general movement in the life of soccer in the country".²¹

In an attempt to distance his work from the book recently published by Mario Filho, the author sought to differentiate the method he used from that employed by the carioca journalist by emphasizing in the introduction that "It is not, then, a history produced by the 'we heard' method, or 'it was told to us in this or that way'".²² He claims to have drawn on documents that seemed "more reliable", such as newspaper articles collected in a personal archive and a "specialized library".²³

Mazzoni's work is also the main source for many studies on soccer, and his affirmations are unquestionable. After dating the introduction of soccer in Brazil to 1894 and pointing Charles Miller as the "father" of soccer in the

The soccer clubs' minutes and other documents do not discourse about blacks. The laws of sports organizations did not mention, not even briefly, the questions of race, especially blacks

country, followed by the mention of previous sporadic moments of the practice of this sport on national territory,²⁴ he declared:

Considering those indications mere conjunctures, perfectly framed in the chapter on "the origin of our soccer", but without providing sufficient documentation, we have gone further for this reason, and decided to harvest with the contemporaries of the past, whose names are linked to the origin, foundation, and propagation of our soccer, the elements that inescapably authorize us to affirm that São Paulo is the pioneering city of our national soccer.²⁵

The affirmation of São Paulo as the originating city of national soccer was not casual either. In a period of great rivalry between the two largest sports centers in the country, when sports columnists and directors of Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo competed for soccer's symbolic primacy, both authors contributed to the dispute. If, on one hand, Mario Filho's book hardly discourses about soccer in São Paulo, focusing exclusively on the city of Rio de Janeiro, on the other hand Mazzoni's work adopts a viewpoint and a rhetoric that repeatedly privilege São Paulo, even if surreptitiously.

²¹Thomás Mazzoni, *História do futebol no Brasil 1895-1950*, São Paulo, Edições Leia, 1950, p. 11.

²²*Ibidem*.

²³*Ibidem*.

²⁴The author mentions that, in Brazil, the sport "was also brought by British sailors, who had their first practices in the desert grass fields of the country's northern and southern coast, in colonial times, from the end of the Empire to the war of Paraguay". Thomás Mazzoni, *História do futebol no Brasil 1895-1950*, São Paulo, Edições Leia, 1950, p. 17.

²⁵*Ibidem*, our emphasis.

The histories created by the first generation had great influence over the future of Brazilian soccer. For this reason, writers, journalists, and other intellectuals searched for a tale that they could retell in the works from the second generation without venturing into the exhausting work of researching primary sources, which is essential to historical work.

Third generation: 1970s and 1980s

Brazilian academia first encountered the study of soccer at the end of the 1970s.²⁶ Among historians, Joel Rufino Santos published an article in the magazine *Encontros com a Civilização Brasileira* (*Encounters with Brazilian Civilization*) in 1978, entitled “Na CBD até o papagaio bate continência” (“At CBD [Brazilian Confederation of Sports] even the parrot salutes [in a military way]”).²⁷ The article, extremely pamphlet-like, presented Brazilian soccer as in a state of decay, pointing the military regime and the absence of black people as the causes of the supposed crisis.

The same tone is observed in a book published a few years later, *História Política do Futebol Brasileiro* (*Political History of Brazilian Soccer*),²⁸ a work of essayistic features released as part of a collection that aimed at explicating works of history to a non-specialized public.

In this book, Santos offered an almost uncritical reading of Mario Filho’s work, portraying how Brazilian soccer would have supposedly developed with the growing participation of workers, and how the crisis that was established at the end of the 1970s was the result of the latter’s coercion by national public forces. Around this time, a process of political opening and the end of the Military Dictatorship regime were unrolling. At the end of the book, Joel Rufino made his hypothesis clear by crediting a good portion of the maladies of sport exclusively to the authoritarian regime, while the approaching democracy was saluted as the moment in which all these problems would be solved.

With (re)democratization, technocrats will be moved away from the ministries, such as the CBF [Brazilian Soccer Confederation] (They resemble the vampires of Hollywood: if they catch sun, they melt). A new economic and social model of development will be proposed and discussed, not with the executives of the multinational companies, but with the workers. What looked like rocket science – a better way of splitting the cake – will be done. Living better, the people will play more soccer and will

²⁶The Master’s dissertation by Simone Guedes, *O futebol brasileiro: instituição zero* (*Brazilian Soccer: Zero Institution*), was defended at the Museu Nacional da Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro (National Museum of the Rio de Janeiro Federal University) in 1977. In the same year, Muniz Sodré, in his book *O monopólio da fala* (*The Monopoly of Speech*), worked with the sport in question in his last chapter, “Futebol, teatro ou televisão?” (“Soccer, Theater or Television?”). Simoni Lahud Guedes, *O futebol brasileiro: instituição zero – Dissertação de mestrado*, Rio de Janeiro, Programa de Pós-Graduação em Antropologia Social, Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro, 1977; Muniz Sodré, “Futebol, teatro ou televisão?”, In: _____, *O monopólio da fala*, Petrópolis, Vozes, 1977, p. 133-155.

²⁷It is important to highlight that the work was produced during the distension period of the Military Dictatorship, when it was possible to weave open criticism to the regime, which could also be seen in other works. Moreover, Joel Rufino dos Santos opposed the dictatorial regime, was exiled and, after his return to the country, was imprisoned and tortured. Joel Rufino Dos Santos, “Na CBD até o papagaio bate continência”, *Encontros com a Civilização Brasileira*, Rio de Janeiro, n. 5, 1978, p. 119-129; *Assim foi (se me parece)*, Rio de Janeiro, Rocco, 2008.

²⁸Joel Rufino Dos Santos, *História política do futebol brasileiro*, Coleção Tudo é História, São Paulo, Brasiliense, 1981.

compose finer samba – even at Marquês de Sapucaí [parade area where samba schools compete each year during Rio's Carnival]. The delfins and coutinhos (directors and State ministers) will be forgotten. The frieds, faustos, leônidas, zizinhos, gasolinas, and garrinchas (legendary players from low social strata) will be remembered.²⁹

In 1982, the publication of two compilations of articles occurred, one in Rio de Janeiro and the other in São Paulo, possibly taking advantage of the euphoria caused by the Brazilian soccer team's competition in the World Cup.

In Rio de Janeiro, Roberto DaMatta directed the team of anthropologists of the Museu Nacional da Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro (National Museum of the Rio de Janeiro Federal University - UFRJ) in *Universo do futebol: esporte e sociedade brasileira* (*Soccer's Universe: sport and Brazilian society*).³⁰ In São Paulo, the Secretaria de Estado de Cultura [State Secretariat for Culture] sponsored the work organized by José Carlos Sebe Bom Meihy and José Sebastião Witter, *Futebol e cultura: coletânea de estudos* (*Soccer and Culture: a Collection of Studies*). The latter is perhaps the first in which soccer was approached by academics in the History field. It includes important inquiries, such as the one posed by Matthew G. Shirts, who presents one of the first contestations to Charles Miller's fatherhood to our soccer by weaving comments about discourses on the sport in Brazil. Nevertheless, re-readings of Mario Filho's theses persist. Robert Levine, who extends Filho's hypotheses to the days of Military Dictatorship, is one example.³¹

One of the fundamental texts of this collection is the introduction by José Carlos Sebe Bom Meihy, "Para que serve o futebol?" ("What is the use of soccer?"). The author affirms that soccer is a complex historical phenomenon that "requires an analytical care that exceeds the limits of a chronicle or repeated re-elaborations of ideological presuppositions by authors such as Gilberto Freyre".³² He proceeds to weave harsh criticism on those who sought to use soccer, in the course of history, to portray Brazilian people as "bloodless, rascals, witty, and democrat", and therefore indecisive.

The people who are players, supporters, dribblers, depoliticized, and, for this reason, "right". Authors of this type of analysis are elite intellectuals concerned with showing "democracies". Our adoration of prayers, music and soccer is our attribute as a people, according to some, but soccer undoubtedly deserves other explanations.³³

At a moment of intense political debates about democracy in the country, Meihy finished his introduction dialoguing with its context and demanding better explanations for soccer, a stance that increasingly began to characterize the historiographical production that followed.

²⁹Joel Rufino Dos Santos, *História política do futebol brasileiro*, Coleção Tudo é História, São Paulo, Brasiliense, 1981, p. 93.

³⁰Roberto Damatta, Luiz Felipe B. Neves, Simoni L. Guedes, Arno Vogel, *Universo do futebol: esporte e sociedade brasileira*, Rio de Janeiro, Pinakothek, 1982.

³¹José Carlos Sebe Bom Meihy, José Sebastião Witter (orgs.), *Futebol e cultura: coletânea de estudos*, São Paulo, Imprensa Oficial, Arquivo do Estado, 1982.

³²José Carlos Sebe Bom Meihy, "Para que serve o Futebol?", In: José Carlos Sebe Bom Meihy, José Sebastião Witter (orgs.), *Futebol e cultura: coletânea de estudos*, São Paulo, Imprensa Oficial, Arquivo do Estado, 1982, p. 12.

³³*Ibidem*, p. 19.

Fourth generation: the 1990s and 2000s

Once again in time for the Soccer World Cup, one of the most important works of the history of this sport appeared in the 1990s, and became reference for many subsequent studies: *Pontapé inicial: memória do futebol brasileiro* (*Kick Start: Memory of Brazilian Soccer*).³⁴ In this book, Caldas searches for a critical conception of such history. From a sociological perspective, he draws on empirical data “considering the political, social, economic, and cultural aspects that so moved the Brazilian society of the so-called Old Republic”³⁵

Caldas made a few basic methodological mistakes by affirming that the goal of his work was “to offer a thorough vision of what Brazilian soccer was,” and by using “mainly the carioca morning papers microfilmed at the National Library, newspapers from São Paulo, and, exceptionally, a few books that deal with the topic” as empirical material.³⁶ This attitude contributed to the repeated reproduction of traditional discourses such as that of the origin of soccer in 1894, “when Charles Miller arrived in Brazil with a soccer ball”³⁷ Nevertheless, this book is important for the debate about the history of Brazilian for its sociological stance, and because it served as a reference to many subsequent studies on the topic.

*He proceeds to weave harsh criticism
on those who sought to use soccer,
in the course of history, to portray Brazilian
people as “incruento, malandrinho,
gracioso e democrata”*

The 1994 World Cup was also the reason for a meeting of academic intellectuals who gathered together with the purpose of analyzing the most popular sport in the country. In São Paulo, the 22nd issue of *Revista USP* (*University of São Paulo Review*) was dedicated to the topic. It showcased articles by renowned researchers, such as Nicolau Sevcenko, Roberto DaMatta, Waldenyr Caldas, among others. Besides Sevcenko’s article, “Futebol, metrópoles e desatinos” (“Soccer, metropolises, and folly”) – which would become a classic in the field – it is worth highlighting José Sergio Leite Lopes’ “A vitória do futebol que incorporou a pelada” (“The victory of the soccer that incorporated *pelada* [informal soccer matches]”), where Mario Filho’s theses were re-read and presented as a political project.³⁸

The first issue (in fact, issue zero) of the review *Pesquisa de Campo* (*Field Research*) was also published in 1994. Edited at the Department of

³⁴Waldenyr Caldas, *O pontapé inicial: memória do futebol brasileiro*, São Paulo, Ibasa, 1990.

³⁵*Ibidem*, p. 18.

³⁶*Ibidem*.

³⁷*Ibidem*.

³⁸Nicolau Sevcenko, “Futebol, metrópoles e desatinos”, *Revista USP*, n. 22, São Paulo, 1994, p. 30-37 (<http://www.usp.br/revistausp/22/04-nicolau.pdf>); José Sergio Leite Lopes, “A vitória do futebol que incorporou a pelada”, *Revista USP*, n. 22, São Paulo, 1994, p. 64-83 (<http://www.usp.br/revistausp/22/08-josesergio.pdf>).

Social Sciences of the Rio de Janeiro State University by the extinct Núcleo Permanente de Estudos de Sociologia do Futebol (Permanent Center for the Study of Soccer's Sociology), this publication was interdisciplinary and displayed contributions by researchers in several areas.

Undoubtedly, the book that has been used as a reference in the current studies on the history of soccer in Brazil is Leonardo Pereira's *Footballmania*. Published in 2000, it is the last work to be analyzed in the present article. The book has positive aspects and undeniable methodological improvements, such as the use of several types of source that go beyond periodicals. A few examples are the minutes of different clubs and soccer leagues, legislation and police documentation, memoirs, theater plays, and abundant iconography. Pereira also unveiled an enormous collection of documents about clubs and leagues of lesser expression in Rio de Janeiro, valuing the soccer practiced in small groups for the first time. The contribution and, especially, the stimulus brought by the publication of this work are responsible for its being considered one of the most important in recent historiography.

Despite advanced research, Pereira still reproduces the discourse of soccer "brought by European immigrants and by young people who carried the novelties of modern sport from Europe"³⁹. This transfer, in turn, marked soccer as an elite practice in historiography. The first part of his analysis goes over, once again, stories about Charles Miller in São Paulo and Oscar Cox in Rio de Janeiro, names that "would be immortalized as the great initiators of soccer in Brazil, seeking the reasons for their devotion to the game and the meaning of their enterprise"⁴⁰.

Based on these works, new perspectives are shaping the history of soccer in Brazil through new questions about the elements that influence the making of histories about the sport. Is it important to investigate the reasons for Oscar Cox's and Charles Miller's devotion to soccer "in trying to understand the movement that nourished the country's consolidation"?⁴¹ Were these "young sportsmen" involved in an enterprise?⁴² Is soccer really an "aristocrat" game or have the popular strata been practicing it since their arrival in the country?⁴³

³⁹Leonardo Pereira, *Footballmania: uma história social do futebol no Rio de Janeiro, 1902-1938*, Rio de Janeiro, Nova Fronteira, 2000, p. 16.

⁴⁰*Ibidem*.

⁴¹*Ibidem*, p. 14.

⁴²As a contraposition to Charles Miller's role, we have as an example the study by geographer Gilmar Mascarenhas de Jesus, who considers the country's territory as an active factor in social dynamics. In this way, the rhythm of evolution, the meaning and reach of soccer in each of the main Brazilian cities, in the beginning of the 20th century, varied according to local conditions. The author's thesis links the insertion of soccer in the southern part of the country to the German colonies and to the connection of Rio Grande do Sul with countries that already practiced soccer since the beginning of the second half of the 19th century, such as Uruguay and Argentina. Mascarenhas De Jesus, *A bola nas redes e o enredo do lugar: uma geografia do futebol e de seu advento no Rio Grande do Sul*, Tese (Doutorado em Geografia), Programa de pós-graduação em Geografia Humana, Universidade de São Paulo, 2001, 269 p.

⁴³Recently, some works have contested the elite's role in the popularization of soccer. In 2010, João Manuel Casquinha Malaia Santos pointed a strong culture of formation of modest clubs as the engine of popularization of the modality among the less wealthy strata. João Manuel Casquinha Malaia Santos, *Revolução Vascaína: a profissionalização do futebol e inserção socioeconômica de negros e portugueses na cidade do Rio de Janeiro (1915-1934)*. Tese (Doutorado em História Econômica), Faculdade de Filosofia, Letras e Ciências Humanas, Universidade de São Paulo, São Paulo, 2010, 489 p. (<http://www.teses.usp.br/teses/disponiveis/8/8137/tde-26102010-115906/pt-br.php>).

Conclusion

Over the last years, soccer has been the object of reflection in many graduate programs throughout the country, in scientific publications, and in symposia, seminars and conferences.⁴⁴ Such prominence in production has a debt to the works analyzed here. Each of them, with its advancements and gaps, has contributed and continues to contribute to the possibility of reflecting critically about the soccer practiced, watched, and remembered in Brazil.

Therefore, one must seek not only to understand the history of soccer in Brazil, but also to comprehend Brazilian history as a whole by critically reflecting about such a popular sport. A historian cannot be a chronicler, he cannot seek refuge in the narrative “as a subterfuge to not have to explain or solve, therefore, the impasses of explanation. Nevertheless, they are present in his account and, in times of crisis, he forces them to come to the surface.”⁴⁵

Arguably, the works of fundamental importance to the analysis of the history of soccer practiced in Brazil must be called to attention. However, we can also point the repeated myths, the analysis models that are constantly reused without deeper theoretical reflection, and the temptation of rendering what happened in São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro an expression of events that occurred throughout the country, a generalization that the authors of these studies could not resist. Avoiding these lapses, it is possible to assist the production of studies on soccer that surpass the limits of narration.

⁴⁴Sérgio Setani Giglio and Enrico Spaggiari presented a panorama of the production in *Ciências Humanas sobre futebol de 1990 a 2009*. Sérgio Setani Giglio, Enrico Spaggiari, “A produção das ciências humanas sobre futebol no Brasil: um panorama (1990-2009)”, *Revista de História*, n. 163, São Paulo, 2010, p. 293-350 (http://revhistoria.usp.br/images/stories/revistas/163/RH_163_-_13_-_Sergio_Giglio_e_Enrico_Spaggiari.pdf).

⁴⁵Jorge Grenspan, “O lugar da história em tempos de crise”, *Revista de História*, vol. 2, n. 151, São Paulo, 2004, p. 09-27 (http://revhistoria.usp.br/images/stories/revistas/151/RH_151_-_Jorge_Grespan.pdf).

