



SPORTS AND HUMAN SCIENCES

Organizing a thematic dossier in an academic journal is no simple task. In addition to defining a theme capable of mobilizing authors and readers, one must believe that such mobilization will actually materialize in the production of a set of works that quantitatively and qualitatively justify the existence of a dossier. Certain factors, such as the commemoration of so-called “round-number anniversaries”, the selection of themes that, for various reasons, resonate more strongly within a given context, or even the preference for subjects deemed “classical”, tend to increase the likelihood of success. In contrast, topics falling outside these parameters are often categorized as “gamblers” when it comes to organizing a volume that brings together researchers and their work.

It can be stated with some confidence that, outside periods of heightened visibility such as the Olympic Games or the FIFA World Cup (specifically regarding soccer), the history of sports remains one such “risk.” Fortunately, however, the days when this subject was met with surprise or skepticism by peers questioning its seriousness or legitimacy are long gone. Benefiting from well-established symposia at national conferences of the National History Association (ANPUH) and many of its regional branches, the history of sports is increasingly consolidated as a fruitful field within Brazilian historiography. It also continues to establish connections with other topics, such as sociability, labor, economics, urbanization, and gender.

The lens through which sports are studied is not, however, the exclusive domain of historiography. One of the field’s great virtues lies in its interdisciplinary potential, bringing together researchers with diverse academic backgrounds: history, sociology, anthropology, physical education, journalism, literature, and international relations, among others. Sports, thus, affirm themselves as a legitimate object of study within various institutions and departments,

fostering research groups that produce, publish, and interact, creating teams and networks with their own dynamic.

In this context, we were delighted to take on the task of organizing this special issue of *História: Debates e Tendências* dedicated to the history of sports. The dossier presents a set of eleven articles authored by scholars affiliated with diverse institutions spanning all regions of Brazil, with some thematic focuses extending beyond national borders. This affirms our perception of the vitality of this subject and highlights the interdisciplinary potential of these studies—not only through the diverse academic backgrounds of the researchers featured but also in the methodologies employed in their work. See it.

The opening article of this dossier is *Sports associations in Rio Grande do Sul (1867-1918): outlining relations between gymnastics societies*, authored by **Ester Liberato Pereira, Janice Zarpellon Mazo, and Tuany Defaveri Begossi**. In their work, the authors highlight how gymnastics societies were central to the formation of a German-origin elite in Rio Grande do Sul. Through the practice of *Turnen*, these spaces established a social order in which ethnicity as a criterion yielded only to financial capital. This underscores the early links between class distinctions and the notion of amateurism in sports practices in the region. At the same time, highly specific sports such as *punhobol*, *bolão*, or *Tamburinball* were incorporated without undermining the importance of gymnastics as a distinctive element of the “German spirit” that guided these societies.

Amateurism is also a central element in the text by **Fausto Amaro Monteiro Picoreli Montanha**, titled *Between amateurs and professionals: origins and transformations of amateurism in the Olympic Movement*. Focusing his discussion on the historical role played by the International Olympic Committee and, in particular, on the figures of Baron de Coubertin and Avery Brundage, the author presents the debates and tensions surrounding the relationship between the notions of amateurism and professionalism, as well as the significance of the economic aspect in the transition to this regime. It is worth noting how, throughout the text, one can observe the intersections between the discussion on amateurism/professionalism and other issues, such as racism, nationalism, or even the ideological superiority of one bloc over another – a specific case of the Olympic Games during the Cold War.

The political uses of sports are the central theme of *Sport and foreign policy in Cuba in the 1970s and 1980s* by **Renato Beschizza Valentin**. Drawing on primary documents declassified by the U.S. government, Valentin demonstrates how sports in Cuba were closely monitored by the United States, as the island’s sports relations mirrored its international relations. In this context, Cuba’s reception or dispatch of coaches, specialists, or delegations were

movements closely tracked by U.S. intelligence agencies, as they reflected the country's solidarity with the Third World. Following the dynamics of the Cold War, such ties could potentially serve as a powerful ideological propaganda tool for anti-capitalism, a point reinforced by the strong performance of Cuban athletes in international competitions.

Football experiences in the southern borders at the beginning of the 20th century, by **João Manuel Casquinha Malaia Santos**, offers a different perspective on the relationship between sports practices and national territories. Drawing on the theoretical framework developed by geographer Gilmar Mascarenhas de Jesus—who argued that football entered southern Brazil through networks connecting the region to the Río de la Plata—and focusing on the cities of Sant’Anna do Livramento/Rivera and Quaraí/Artigas as the setting, João Malaia provides practical examples of how economic activities, particularly those of the *Saladeros* along the Brazil-Uruguay border, and the development of a railway network in Uruguay funded by European investments, contributed to the growth of football in the region. This development even enabled Brazilian border clubs to participate in the founding of football leagues in Uruguay.

The border also plays a key role in *“GRE-NAL is GRENAL!” : football and political rivalities in border area (Rio Grande do Sul, c.1941-c.2014)* by **Cesar Augusto Barcellos Guazzelli**. Using the greatest football rivalry in Rio Grande do Sul as a starting point, Guazzelli explores the concept of what defines a derby, examining the impact of the “Gre-Nal” rivalry beyond the state’s borders. However, the strength of this rivalry is understood within a historical explanatory framework, shaped by the political traditions of a borderland where bipolarity left no room for neutrality or “third ways”. In this same vein, the very “style of football” in Rio Grande do Sul is portrayed as embodying an idealized past, one of men confronting the harshness of nature and their enemies with bravery and physical dominance.

The attribution of meanings to sports practices is, in turn, one of the layers explored in the article *Sport and modernity: a comparative analysis of the sporting experience in Rio de Janeiro by Pereira Passos (1902-1906) and in Salvador by J. J. Seabra (1912-1916)*. In this work, Professor **Coriolano Pereira da Rocha Junior** presents a comparative analysis of the two capitals and their urban modernization projects in the early 20th century. Despite differing in political significance, both cities sought, through spatial reorganization, a pathway to join the select group of modern Brazilian cities. This approach, however, was not devoid of socially exclusionary objectives, aiming to remove the “undesirables” from central areas and replace “old habits” associated with rural life with new practices of European origin, such as sports.

Our focus remains on Salvador through the text by **Aline Gomes Machado**, entitled *Bahia Medical Gazette: body, modernity and body practices (1866-1934)*, where the author refers

us to the relationships between medical discourse, the desire for modernity and the diversity of bodily practices. Taking as a fundamental premise Roger Chartier's concept of "representation" and the object of analysis the *Bahia Medical Gazette*, Aline points us to the relationships between discourse, sports practices and the reality of a society that claims to be modern. Thus, by combating old practices, such as drinking and gambling, modernity makes room for new habits, endorsed by medical discourse as "healthier", such as rowing and dancing. Therefore, a link between body and modernity is reinforced, which is not always so explicit, but sometimes exclusive.

The city is also the focus of *The creation of the Goiás Sports Association and the institutionalization of sports in the new capital*. In this article, Jean Carlo Ribeiro explores how the desire for modernity in Brazil's interior led not only to the construction of a new state capital for Goiás but also to the establishment of an entity to regulate sports, modeled after its counterparts in the country's political and economic centers. Through Ribeiro's text, we see how the inauguration of Goiânia paradoxically served as a project to include the region in a narrative of modernity while simultaneously excluding nearby areas from that same discourse. Sports in the new capital thus became part of a modernity narrative that took its models not from Europe but from Brazil's main urban centers. This underscores the symbolic importance of Goiás' participation in the national state championship as a representation of integration into the national collective.

The pursuit of modernity, however, brings tensions when confronted with elements that can elevate the essence of a given community. This is evident in *From the "discipline" to the "art" of mulatto football: the anthropophagy of Leônidas' technocracy against Adhemar Pimenta*, by Filipe Fernandes Ribeiro Mostaro and Ronaldo George Helal. Through the analysis of three periodicals, Mostaro illustrates how the Brazilian press sought to construct an image of Adhemar Pimenta, coach of Brazil's national team in the 1938 FIFA World Cup, highlighting supposed traits such as being a "disciplinarian" and a "technocrat" devoted to "scientific football". This image, however, was overshadowed by the Dionysian celebration of Leônidas da Silva, hailed as the best player of the 1938 World Cup. With his dribbling, improvisation, and fluid style of play, Leônidas embodied the antithesis of the coach's proposed style, prefiguring, in a way, the themes explored by Gilberto Freyre in the famous preface to *The Black Man in Brazilian Football*.

Any notion of "cordiality", however, is dismantled in *Violence in brazilian football: an analysis of cases registered in 2023*, authored by Nicolás Eduardo Cabrera Duran and Raquel de Oliveira Sousa. Drawing on research conducted by the Social Football Observatory

at the Rio de Janeiro State University (UERJ), the authors delve into official statistics that position football as more than just a sport—it becomes a symbol of a society scarred by violence. Avoiding simplistic narratives that solely blame organized fan groups, the study provides data such as the involvement of security forces in fatalities, the distance from stadiums where incidents occur, and, notably, the age of the victims. This last point challenges the common assumption that such violence is exclusively associated with younger fans.

The dossier concludes with the article by professors **Geovane Ferreira Gomes and Marsiel Pacífico**, titled *7 - 1: A decade later, what have we learned about Brazil?* Using Norbert Elias's configurational sociology as a theoretical foundation, alongside other guiding frameworks, the authors pose an essay-like question: "Can this event (the fateful 2014 defeat to Germany) be used to better understand Brazil itself?" In their text, they highlight elements such as the rationalization of the state in contrast to the Brazilian "national soul" and the juxtaposition of "creativity and improvisation" with scientific rigor and prior organization. Drawing on established theoretical frameworks in the sociology of sports, the authors offer an analysis of contemporary Brazil that extends beyond the football field, exposing a certain misalignment in the management of Brazilian football compared to other nations.

Finally, we express our confidence that these ten texts, with their diverse focuses, theories, and approaches, provide a solid glimpse into the current state of research on the History of Sports in Brazil. May our contribution be received with the joy and lightness of a child playing with their first ball.

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