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**ARTICLE:** King Pele: Race, Professionalism And Football In Brazil

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**SUMMARY:**

... The present article is a meditation on the history of the consolidation of football as the national sport of Brazil; investigating the relationship this history has maintained with that of one of Brazil's greatest icons: Edson Arantes do Nascimento, better known as Pele. ... The sport was quickly adopted by the elite clubs of Rio de Janeiro and Sao Paulo, taking its place alongside cricket, another "English" sport which was also widely played by wealthy Brazilians. ... Pele's career as a player and his subsequent public life, as well as the praise and criticisms which he has garnished, are directly linked to the social struggles which have played themselves out during the history of football's adoption as Brazil's premier national sport. ... Sport, modernity and "uplifting the race" Like Samba, football provided a convenient stage for the dramatization of the Estado Novo's national ideology of miscegenation, with ethnically and regionally rooted cultures supposedly losing their specificities and being absorbed within the Brazilian cultural whole. ... Theories of racially-based inferiority were thus inverted and transformed into theories of biological superiority, with black and mixed players being seen as football stars par excellence, masters of a deeply different, quasi-mystical and extremely competent form of the game known as futebol-arte. ... Shortly after his arrival in Santos and following excellent play on the junior teams, the club's sports director offered Pele a full-time professional contract. ... After a visit to Bauru to convince Dona Celeste, Pele and Waldemar de Brito returned to Santos to sign the deal and, following a month of training with the main team, the fifteen-year-old Pele officially debuted as a professional football player on the 7th of September, 1956.

**HIGHLIGHT: Abstract**

The subject of the present article is Edson Arantes do Nascimento, better known to the world as Pele. Here, I offer a brief biography of the man, attempting to see how the concepts of race and modernity in Brazil have influenced Pele's life and his trajectory as Brazil's most well-known black professional. Though Pele is widely considered to be "the athlete of the 20th century," he remains a controversial figure in today's Brazil. The controversies involving and surrounding Pele gain further significance when we pause to reflect that he, is the most famous Brazilian in the world, internationally recognized for being the best football player of the 20th century. My objective here is to break apart and analyze some of the many meanings surrounding Pele as a public figure in Brazil and to respond to a few of what I consider to be the main questions regarding this man and his history as a football star. The following article, which is part of my doctoral dissertation, undertakes a preliminary exposition and analysis of these questions which, in spite of Pele's international fame, are little known and rarely explored outside of Brazil.

**TEXT:**

## [\*1] Introduction

Brazil's most popular sport is football, a fact that foreign visitors can confirm by observing the passion with which Brazilians discuss their country's national team, particularly during the World Cup n1. Watching a World Cup match, in fact, is an excellent way to understand the impact football has on Brazilian culture and society. The dates on which the national team confronts its rivals in the Cup are effectively considered to be federal holidays; schools let out, stores close, basic urban services grind to a halt and even those people who detest sports have their daily routines inevitably altered as the rest of the citizenry tunes their radios and televisions to the game.

Football has had such a deep and abiding impact upon the Brazilian imagination, that in the 1970s, social scientists such as Roberto DaMatta and Ricardo Benzaquen de Araujo (among many others) began to produce analyses of the sport and its social manifestations. These works have been largely responsible for the foundation of sports anthropology and sociology in Brazil and one of the principal questions they discuss is the role that football has played in the formation of Brazil's political, economic and social life. More recent social scientific investigations analyze sports (and especially football) as a metaphoric key for understanding the larger and more enduring structures of Brazilian society itself.

As DaMatta remarks, football is "*a metaphor for life*" in Brazil and the sport often reproduces the country's socio-political dilemmas on and around the playing field. I very much agree with DaMatta's observation: to critically analyze football is to shed light on various aspects of Brazilian social life. In short, football is "good to think" Brazil. Even so, it is difficult to explain to non-Brazilian audiences the socio-political and economic issues which are routinely put on public display by the sport. Foreigners, ironically enough, automatically accept DaMatta's metaphor, seeing football as an innate expression of the "Brazilian spirit" without perceiving how the links between *football*, *nation*, *race*, and (particularly) *modernism* in Brazil have, in fact, been carefully cultivated by close to three generations of the country's political and cultural actors. In short, football does not *express* the "Brazilian spirit," it is actively used to create that spirit and propagate certain attitudes and policies.

The present article is a meditation on the history of the consolidation of football as the national sport of Brazil; investigating the relationship this history has maintained with that of one of Brazil's greatest icons: Edson Arantes do Nascimento, better known as Pele. Worldwide, Pele is considered to be the sport's greatest player; the athlete of the century. In popular texts regarding the man and his career, his abilities with a ball are often naturalized, expressed as the workings of an innate -- perhaps even genetic -- talent. No one doubts, however, Pele's status as the most famous and respected Brazilian in the world. Pele's reputation has been so closely associated with that of his native land that he has been declared a national treasure by the Brazilian government (a status generally reserved for inanimate objects).

Given this, it would seem odd that few people in Brazil really *like* Edson Arantes do Nascimento. Many of his statements -- from political opinions to sports analysis -- are [\*2] contested and dismissed by athletes, commentators, journalists, black activists and the public in general. As Romario, one of Brazil's most famous contemporary football stars succinctly put it, "Pele's a poet when he shuts his mouth." n2 Studying public appraisals of the man, I have often been struck by the fact that there are apparently two people occupying the same body. On the one hand, we have Edson, the womanizing, self-hating black who supported the military dictatorship and refused to acknowledge his out-of-wedlock daughter; on the other, we have Pele, the unanimously acclaimed black King of Football whose reputation as the sport's greatest player is, apparently, untouchable and whose name is internationally synonymous with that of Brazil.

Edson Arantes do Nascimento became a sports star within the context and history of football's rise to popularity and its enthronement as a symbol of "Brazilianess." Thus, Pele's career was a logical consequence of the historical development of the sport within Brazil's national scene. Primarily, it was a reflection of a very particular Brazilian discourse n3, one which used sports (and, again, football in particular) as a means of solidifying a national project of modernity. This is based upon professionalizing and "disciplining" a Brazilian population which has historically been understood as non-white and inferior to its European counterparts. Pele's career also served to showcase elements of "genuine national culture" through its linkage to the concept of *futebol-arte* (literally "art football"). As defined by the anthropologist Luis Henrique Toledo in his article "Pele: os mil corpos de um rei", this supposedly "quintessentially Brazilian" form of play emphasizes athletes' capacities for improvisation and *ginga* n4. *Futebol-arte* is generally set in opposition to so-called *futebol-forca*, ("force football") and is understood to be based upon "technique" rather than brute strength. n5 It must be remembered, in this context, that football was originally a sport imported by Brazil from England. One of the principal representatives and proponents of the transformation of English *futebol-forca* n6 [\*3] into Brazilian *futebol-arte* was Pele, who has often been declared responsible for the "Brazilianization" that the "British sport" underwent in the second half of the 20th century. In this sense, Pele can be and is often seen as the most typical Brazilian practitio-

ner -- indeed, the creator -- of the most Brazilian sport. He is, in fact, often seen as the ultimate expression of "Brazilianess".

The appearance of Pele as a football star and his rise to the position of national icon, however, cannot not be properly understood outside the context of a series of ideas and concepts that were linked to, and made football a sport synonymous with Brazil. The concept of "Brazilianess", which Pele seems to embody, has been defined as the naturalization of certain symbols and ideas present in Brazilian culture, which are then appropriated by Brazilians as quintessential representations of themselves and their society. n7 Historically, what is "truly Brazilian" has been a question of extreme importance in Brazilian public discourse and appropriate icons of "national culture" are selected through politicized public debate, a process which Hermano Vianna has painstakingly documented in the case of Samba. n8 However, when one discusses what is "truly Brazilian", questions of race, class and modernity are never far away from the center of the debate.

### **White or *Mestico* n9 Brazil? The Ideology of Race-Mixing in Football**

Supposedly, football began its Brazilian existence as an upper-class white man's sport. Scholars such as Antonio Jorge Soares indicate Mario Filho's seminal work, *O Negro no Futebol Brasileiro (The Negro in Football* - first released in 1947) as the main vector for the propagation of the "official" story of football's arrival and popularization in our country. This myth of the origins of football in Brazil makes an interesting counterpart to the myth of the origins of Samba, another "essentially" Brazilian cultural artifact which supposedly has its roots in lower class, black Brazilian culture.

According to Hermano Vianna, n10 Samba is largely considered to have been "stolen" from its poor (and mostly black) creators by the Brazilian upper classes while Mario Filho recounts a diametrically opposite story in the case of football. According to this myth of origins, "the British sport" was originally brought to Brazil by the Europeanized, white upper classes and only incorporated lower class and black players and spectators after much struggle. This myth relates that football was brought to Brazil at the end of the 19th century by Charles Miller, an Anglo-Brazilian n11 returning home [\*4] from his stay at an English boarding school. The sport was quickly adopted by the elite clubs of Rio de Janeiro and Sao Paulo, taking its place alongside cricket, another "English" sport which was also widely played by wealthy Brazilians. A visit to the sports museum maintained by the Fluminense Football Club in Rio de Janeiro supports the notion that football was very much an aristocratic -- and white -- game at the beginning of the 20th century. The Club's main buildings were designed and built by the Guinles -- at that point one of Rio de Janeiro's wealthiest families -- and the Fluminense's records read like a veritable "who's who" of the *carioca* high society.

The story of Charles Miller's "invention" of football is still widely believed in Brazil and, given this consensus, certain questions are rarely asked regarding the sport's origins. For example, if it's true that football began with Miller, how did one man, on his own, manage to popularize the game across the vast expanse of Brazil? Another rarely asked question is whether or not it is true that no one played "the British sport" in Brazil before Miller had his stroke of genius. Few scholars have followed the path blazed by Simoni Guedes and Jose Sergio Leite Lopes in investigating football's existence in *terras brasiliis* outside of the Rio-Sao Paulo axis prior to Miller's "invention". Finally, there's the big question which hardly anyone asks: if football was indeed a sport which was only played and watched by the elite, why did the Brazilian government spend so much energy in nationalizing it during the period stretching from the 1930s to the 1950s?

These questions are the pieces of the puzzle which are generally ignored by those who attempt to reconstruct the history of football in Brazil. By incorporating them, we gain a vision of the sport's social dynamics in the country and can begin to understand how certain individuals rose to prominence within the sport itself. Pele's career as a player and his subsequent public life, as well as the praise and criticisms which he has garnished, are directly linked to the social struggles which have played themselves out during the history of football's adoption as Brazil's premier national sport. Pele used the game as a means of getting ahead in what was (and is) a society divided by enormous cleavages of race and class and his choice of career reflects this social panorama. As I shall describe below, the professional trajectory of Edson Arantes do Nascimento is intimately related to the ways in which football was produced and legitimized in Brazil during the first half of the 20th century as a means of educating, eugenizing and ultimately civilizing the country's racially-mixed population.

Football, samba and the invention of Brazilian culture

Football first became a popular sport among the Brazilian masses during Getulio Vargas' *Estado Novo* n12 of the 1930s and 1940s. According to Pereira, n13 the birth of widespread radio broadcasting and the centralization of State power during this period, especially in the areas of culture and entertainment, gave rise to the nationalization of Brazil's football leagues. These came under direct government regulation and supervision [\*5] and this change, in turn, caused the sport's subsequent professionalization.

What was the significance of this professionalization process? If football really was a sport which had, up until the 1930s, been restricted to the urban elites of Rio and Sao Paulo, why nationalize it? Once again, Vianna's thoughts regarding Samba offer us some valuable clues. A similar process of nationalization which occurred in the musical world at the same time resulted in the homogenization of Samba and the ordering and structuring of the populations which produced and consumed the music. In other words, during the *Estado Novo*, the Brazilian federal government appears to have felt the need to begin to consciously create popular national traditions, using both, Samba and football (as well as other cultural forms) as gist for the production of a mass national popular culture.

The Vargas junta passed laws which attempted to harness cultural power for the use of the Brazilian federal government, creating organs for the oversight and censorship of culture at different points and various levels of society. One of the most important of these institutions was the *Departamento de Imprensa e Propaganda* (DIP: Propaganda and Press Department), whose main function was to play up the positive effects of the Vargas regime. The DIP decisively influenced several sectors of Brazilian cultural production, such as radio broadcasts, newspapers, sports leagues and so on. Several historians make the claim that many of what are today understood to be Brazil's "timeless" national symbols were in fact forged during this period. Described very broadly, the intent of the *Estado Novo* and the DIP was to construct a modern, socio-politically homogenized nation whose popular cultural would supposedly be rooted in "eternal" and/or quintessential national characteristics. The nationalization and professionalization of football was part of this greater process of modernization, in which new national traditions were invented and systematically popularized in the name of progress. n14

Crucially, unlike Samba, football offered the opportunity to compete within an international arena according to a fixed set of universal rules. It could not be considered a form of Brazilian folk culture. However, if Brazil's national teams were to symbolically reflect upon the nation's competence as a whole, they could not be understood as being representative of one small segment of the national population, they needed to be seen as representative of the entire people. This, then, is the backdrop against which the accusations of football's "elite" roots, so prevalent during the *Estado Novo* period, need to be understood.

A handful of scholars have begun to systematically criticize Mario Filho's vision of pre-1930s football as an exclusively rich white sport, found only in certain urban areas. According to geographer Gilmar Mascarenhas, it is impossible to establish with any degree of exactitude where or when football began in Brazil. Its foundation and subsequent development depended upon a wide variety of social actors, many of whom were located outside of the cities of Rio de Janeiro and Sao Paulo. In particular, Mascarenhas cites the south of Brazil as a region in which the origins of football were not [\*6] linked to the British or to members of the Brazilian elite, but rather to a wider process of social, economic and political development then occurring in the Platte River basin:

[...The state of] Rio Grande do Sul... is situated in the extreme south of Brazil and, from 1900 to 1920, it played a very active role in the expansion of football as a sport. In the Brazilian context, it was one of the first states to adopt and organize the sport and today still possesses the country's oldest functioning football club: the *Sport Clube*, founded in July 1900. More: in 1922, Rio Grande do Sul (RS) organized a championship which brought together clubs from cities all across the state. During the first decades of the 20th century, the cities of the *Campanha Gaucha* (a region in the mid-southwest of the state with traditional ties to the Platte River basin) dominated the state championships. It's worth remembering that during the period in question, most state football championships in Brazil were effectively restricted to teams from the capital regions and the immediately surrounding areas. The widespread and early success of football in Rio Grande do Sul can be attributed to the influence of the cities of the Platte basin and, in particular, to Montevideo (2005: 1, 2).

The results of Mascarenhas' research doesn't fit into the official story of the birth of Brazilian football as an elite, white and British sport, given that it proves that other classes and regions were intimately involved in the initial popularization of the sport.

As in the case of Samba, football passed through a process of popularization which involved disputes among different classes, regions and color groups. In both cases, however, the "official" myth of origins situates Samba and football as cultural practices which were effectively removed from the hands of the groups which practiced them, creating the belief that both samba and football were "stolen" from given communities. In the case of football, this myth of transformation is clearly enunciated by Mario Filho, who contrasts "the white player of the great clubs and fields, with his team captain screaming orders in English" with "the black player of the pick-up games, of the streets, who had no one to teach him and had nothing to aid him but his intuition; the certainty of his vocation which led him to make his own ball out of old socks." It was precisely the black player's "cultural larceny" which would, in Mario Filho's myth, transform the game into an essentially Brazilian sport: "[The black player] sought to play, to learn, to remember what he had seen. Imitating the mirror of memory, which often betrayed him, transformed him into another kind of player." n15

Here, then, a given cultural characteristic is understood as having been "robbed," leaving the control of one class/color group and passing into the hands of the nation as a whole. In this myth, the black man, barred from the great fields and clubs, snuck into games and furtively observed them, memorizing how they were played in order to set up his own improvised matches in back lots and, in doing so, irredeemably changing the game and "Brazilianizing" it. Further along in his book, Filho even goes so far as to claim that these changes caused by early black players were, in fact, the true origin of "*futebol-arte*."

As we've seen above, by the 1930s, football was already being played in a wide variety of regions in Brazil by a diverse group of people from different class, color and ethnic backgrounds, and only after this had occurred, did it become a nationalized and [\*7] homogenized sport. Antonio Jorge Soares claims that the "official history" of "black expropriation of football" was actually constructed based upon the discourses of modernism that were prevalent in Brazil during the late 1930s and 1940s, the period in which Mario Filho was writing. As Soares points out, during this period, miscegenation was understood by the Brazilian intellectual elite to be one of the fundamental bases for the nation's new modernism. n16 Once again, returning to the history of Samba during this era, we find Hermano Vianna affirming that the transformation of Samba into a national popular culture "was also a victory for the project of nationalizing and modernizing Brazilian society:

Brazil came out of the *Estado Novo* praising (at least in ideological terms) the national habit of miscegenation, the National Steel Company, the National Petroleum Council, the national political parties [and] a national rhythm. In terms of popular music, Brazil has ever since been known as the Kingdom of Samba.  
n17

#### Sport, modernity and "uplifting the race"

Like Samba, football provided a convenient stage for the dramatization of the *Estado Novo*'s national ideology of miscegenation, with ethnically and regionally rooted cultures supposedly losing their specificities and being absorbed within the Brazilian cultural whole. Within this ideology, the sport needed to have an origin myth, wherein it clearly moved from what was supposedly the realm of one class, color and region into the realm of national culture. This myth nicely dovetailed with the "Fable of the Three Races," understood by anthropologist Roberto DaMatta as a foundational component of Brazilian nationalism. According to DaMatta, the ideology of miscegenation expressed by this fable produces the notion of a Brazilian nation constructed through contributions by each part of society to a common milieu, creating a victorious racial and cultural mixture which has in turn produced a modern *mestizo* people. n18 In this national mythological view of things, football is simply the photo-negative counterpart of Samba. Whereas Samba was supposedly originally poor and black and became Brazilian and mixed, football joined the great racial admixture by leaving behind its supposed lily white, elitist origins. These ideologies of miscegenation, in their positive and negative aspects, would reach their apex in the social and cultural field of football during the World Cup matches of the 1950s.

The Brazilian racial and national ideologies of this period are often understood to be a form of *racial democracy*. However, to the degree that the term *democracy* is understood as being congruent with *pluralism* -- i.e. the concept of a whole made up by multiple discreet groups -- such a term misconstrues the ideological content of traditional Brazilian racialist thought and its variants during the *Estado Novo* period. Racialist nationalist ideology in Brazil did not so much preach the acceptance of black and *mestizo* Brazilians as it proposed the active social engineering of these groups and their eugenic absorption into an indistinguishable whole understood to be the Brazilian people.

[\*8] As a country populated by a majority of black and mixed people, Brazil could not simply ignore race as an element which could be separated from the constitution of the "true nation", as was the case in the United States during the period stretching from the end of Reconstruction to the early Civil Rights era. Whether white Brazilians liked it or not, in the words of the (white) Brazilian abolitionist Joaquim Nabuco (1849-1910), "the black race is a permanent element of our population. . . it has given us a people. . . and has built our country." n19

One must recall, however, that white nationalists such as Nabuco considered themselves to be the caretakers of a nation in formation and, in the quote above, Nabuco uses "country" and "population" instead of "nation" quite consciously and advisedly. Black and mixed Brazilians were to provide the raw material for the nation-to-be, but they were not its end point -- at least not in their then-current form. Nabuco felt that "the main effect of slavery on our population was to Africanize it, saturate it with black blood. . . and in this fashion, the vices of African blood have entered into general circulation throughout the land." n20 Such vices included, supposedly, an inherent indolence and ignorance which retarded Brazil's development and progress. As a remedy for this situation, Nabuco counseled Brazil to "reject the curse of color" and "do everything to forget it" for "color in Brazil is not, as it is in the United States, a social prejudice against which character, talent and merit can do nothing." n21

The main currents of social darwinistic eugenic thought to which significant portions of the Brazilian elite ascribed in the late 19th and early 20th century postulated a clear hierarchy of the world's peoples with, of course, white Europeans situated at the top. What is often forgotten today, however, is that within this model, eugenic superiority was not based upon ancestry alone. Environment and education were also seen as being important in determining the health of a given people - a presumption which was often used to explain the "degeneracy" of certain whites (such as the Irish or poor rural Americans) or the "superiority" of certain individuals of color.

European and North American social darwinists such as Gobineau, Le Bon and Agassiz proclaimed that Brazil's "racial disparities" condemned the nation to eternal backwardness. Faced with this belief, late 19th and early 20th century Brazilian elites took eugenics to heart in their project to create a modern nation out of a diverse and mainly non-white population. One of the best known results of this preoccupation was Brazil's attempts to "whiten" its population through the importation of European immigrants. Less well recognized (at least outside of Brazil) were the early Republican "sanitization" and "hygienization" movements which, according to Nisia T. Lima and Gilberto Hochman, promoted significant changes in behavior in order to "improve" the already existing Brazilian population.

Within this context, the promotion of sports in Brazil became a fundamental component of hygienization discourse. According to Leonardo A. de M. Pereira (op cit), the cult of the body and its improvement through ritualized competition gained importance during this period as one of the key means of promoting health. Brazilian eugenicists increasingly began to see sports as a powerful means for the improvement of "Brazilian race" through the dissemination of disciplining practices regarding the body. [\*9] In particular, sports were thought to combat what Lima and Hochman have identified as one of hygienists' key concerns: *ancilostomosis*, the so-called "laziness disease" which was supposedly infected some 70% of the Brazilian population and was understood to be a direct result of "biological degeneration" brought about by miscegenation.

According to this traditional formulation of Brazilian race ideology, disciplining practices were to reinforce "character, talent and merit" and thus sweep out the "vices of African blood" by integrating black and mixed Brazilians into the nation-in-formation. This integration would be both biological (through miscegenation with whites) as well as social. This formulation of race and nation has some congruencies with that of the "uplift the race" ideology espoused by abolitionists in the U.S. and, most importantly, by black educator Booker T. Washington, except that it crucially does not seek to maintain blacks as a discreet people within the Republic. In fact, it sought to subsume them as part of a hybrid whole. The difference between these two positions can be best illustrated by the comments of a later white Brazilian racialist nationalist, Oliveira Vianna, that Washington himself was an excellent example of an "authentic mulatto, whose superiority probably originates in his Aryan blood", proof of the ultimate efficacy of a "melting pot" which embraced racial amalgamation. n22

The variant of this ideology which moved into the forefront of Brazilian thinking with the *Estado Novo* added discipline and modernity to the list of characteristics that would, together with "character, talent and merit", free Brazil from "the vices of African blood", situating the nation and its people as full-fledged members of the West. Within this ideology, sports were to assume the role of a disciplining influence which would mold Brazilian's minds and bodies, transforming them into a people capable of dominating the rigors of modern life and competing on equal terms with the nations of the metropolitan West. n23

In an urbanizing and industrializing Brazil, sports and physical exercise became seen as a means of purging many of the supposedly negative qualities of the already existing "national biological type", understood as black or mixed. According to the hygienists, sports would help civilize the Brazilian man and would also ensure that he wouldn't contaminate with sloth the white European immigrants who were to be the country's eventual saviors from savagery. Sports thus became linked with modernity and eugenics in elite discourse and, over time, this discourse was to spread throughout all of Brazilian society.

One immediate consequence of the hygienic and sanitizing policy was the creation of a "sports fever" in early twentieth century Rio de Janeiro, with clubs and associations spreading throughout the city. Though often represented by today's analysts as an elite sport, football in fact quickly began to conquer a privileged position as a preferred sport among all levels of *carrioca* society. As early as 1908 Rio possessed several large stadiums dedicated to the sport and early 20th century football matches were followed by a very diverse public. Nor were the early teams "whites only" affairs: the sport quickly spread throughout Rio's working class and largely black and brown suburbs and several clubs and associations were founded in these neighborhoods. As a [\*10] mark of the sport's popularity, as early as 1919, on the occasion of the South American Football Championship hosted by Brazil, stores closed by noon and a holiday was declared for government workers. The city stopped and a multitude gathered outside the championship stadium to cheer on the Brazilian national team. n24

Despite the sport's wide-spread popularity, all the members of Brazil's early national teams were white and upper class. One must take care, however, in confidently ascribing to the sport the adjectives "white" and "rich". In spite of Mario Filho's affirmations, a formal, clear-cut and rigorously maintained color line does not appear to have existed in early 20th century football. Pereira, for example, records several instances of matches between elite (and presumably white) and racially-mixed working class teams. One cannot thus clearly divide Brazilian football into a "pre-black" and "post-black" era as Brazilians of color were always present in the sport, at some level, as spectators and players. What we can say with some degree of certainty is that it was indeed a struggle to incorporate greater numbers of black and brown players into the sport and especially into its upper echelons, but this struggle - as so often is the case in the history of Brazilian racism - was never against a formal, legal decree excluding non-white players, as was the case in many U.S. American sports.

As Jose Jairo Vieira outlines in his thesis, n25 the three World Cups between 1950 and 1958 marked the definitive consolidation of the popular images associated with blacks and *mesticos* in Brazilian football. The first two of these championships was marked by a resurgence of 19th century racist theories regarding the general incapacity of the Brazilian people due to the country's "mixed" and black ancestry. The 1950 World Cup featured Uruguay's stunning defeat of Brazil in the newly constructed Maracana stadium in Rio de Janeiro, then the largest in the world. The final game was marked by a last minute goal against black Brazilian goalkeeper Barbosa. In *Brasil no Campo de Futebol* Simone Guedes, relates that the Brazilian team's trainer, Joao Lyra Filho, attributed the loss to the degenerative effects of race-mixing and the incorporation of African cultural elements (such as *capoeiragem*) into Brazilian football; two factors that he claimed fatally weakened the national team's ability to compete against white European opponents.

The 1958 World Cup, however, marked a sort of "black racial redemption" in football, according to Vieira. Brazil's victory in this Cup consolidated the place of black and *mestico* players on the national team and, once again, changed the paradigm of race in popular perceptions of the sport. This time, the earlier argument was turned on its head; responsibility for the victory was laid at the feet of the Brazilian national team's racially mixed heritage, which supposedly had allowed it to incorporate African cultural characteristics (*ginga*, in particular) into its style of play. Theories of racially-based inferiority were thus inverted and transformed into theories of biological superiority, with black and mixed players being seen as football stars *par excellence*, masters of a deeply different, quasi-mystical and extremely competent form of the game known as *futebol-arte*. Pele -- black -- and Garrincha -- mixed -- were the two main stars of the 1958 World's Cup and their success further reinforced the image of football as a sport dominated by non-whites. Pele's success, in particular, wiped Barbosa's "sin" from the ledger books and legitimated the presence of black players in the sport, consolidating a [\*11] popular belief that blacks had a "natural" aptitude for football. As Vieira remarks, "[t]he fact is that . . . Pele contributed enormously to the self-esteem of the black man and his greater acceptance by Brazilian society, both on and off the playing field." n26

Vieira's words confirm Pele's importance in the social changes which occurred within Brazilian football after the 1958 World Cup and which enhanced the value of black and mixed players within the sport. But aside from being a historical mark in the evolution of Brazilian football, the '58 Cup also brought Pele into the national limelight. This process which was further established in 1970 when he helped the country win its third World Cup victory and became known as "the athlete of the century".

Brazil's organized black movements, however, were among those praising the young sports star in the 1950s. Oswaldo de Camargo, writing for the black newspaper *Niger* in 1960 in Sao Paulo, for example, did not hesitate to elevate Pele as a paradigm of black progress:

In the sports arena, the black man has taken advantage of his privileged physical qualities and his capacities to reach the heights of glory and to impose himself upon the eyes of the world, destroying for once and for all the myth of negro inferiority... The famous Pele has achieved on the European playing fields the utmost that a human being can with a football: he is the King of Football. And in like fashion, many other [black] sportsmen have given us examples of how individual efforts can uplift the race (Camargo, 1960: 8).

To Camargo and other black activists of the late 1950s and early 1960s, Pele's personal triumphs on the football field were also triumphs for black Brazilians. Camargo's concern was how such individual victories could best be harnessed for collective progress and, to this end, the journalist suggested the organization of black sports teams. But the reasons he cites for this are revealing of the underlying attitudes of many black Brazilian activists of the day:

Naturally, we do not propose this in the sense of encouraging segregation or separation, but solely in the sense of conquering victories in the great struggle in which the black man is involved in uplifting himself. Sports, after all, is a form of culture and we need culture in every sense of the word. . . . It is time for us to struggle in this direction and when we have achieved all that we can in the field of team sports, we will have laid a heavy stone of the foundation for negro self-improvement.(ibid, idem).

Camargo's words reveal interesting congruities with the earlier eugenics-based model of black improvement, discussed above. Presumptive black inferiority was to be challenged through cultural improvement. This articulation of *culture* in this sense being understood as a more-or-less cohesive and coherent set of universalized values whose successful incorporation and domination all men - white and black - strove for. The black man's victories on the sports field could perhaps be partially understood as proof of his "privileged" physique, but - as Camargo was quick to point out - *team sports*, unlike simple physical competition, was a mark of *culture* and implied internal discipline and training. In this sense, Pele became a black Brazilian version of Sidney Poitier's character in *Guess Who's Coming to Dinner?*; proof incarnate that the black man could literally beat the white man at his own game.

[\*12] We must now turn to the story of Edson Arantes do Nascimento and his rise to fame as a football celebrity. As we shall see, though often presented as a "natural born athlete," Pele was in fact a poster child for the modernization and nationalization process realized by the *Estado Novo* and which we have described above.

### **A Star is "Born": Pele's Origins**

Edson Arantes do Nascimento was born in the small town of Tres Coracoes in the state of Minas Gerais on October 23, 1940 to Celeste Alves do Nascimento, a housewife, and her husband Joao, "Dondinho", a professional football player.

In his official autobiography, Pele describes his childhood as simple and poor. His father lived his life waiting to break into professional football. His mother was disappointed with his father's career choice because it did not pay enough to support the family. Dondinho finally got his big break and was contracted to the Atletico Mineiro Club, but his career came to a tragic end shortly afterwards. In a friendly game between Atletico and Sao Cristovao in Rio de Janeiro, Dondinho collided with a defensive player (Augusto, who was later called up to play on the 1950 Brazilian national team) and suffered a massive knee injury. From that day forward, Dondinho would only play for second-class teams from the interior. He would never reach the fame he desired.

In 1944, Dondinho accepted a contract with a football club in Bauru, a small city in northeast Sao Paulo. Bauru at this time had great importance for the Northwestern Brazilian Railway (Estrada de Ferro Noroeste do Brasil: NOB). In 1904, this company was created to implement a development project linking Mato Grosso state and the Brazilian coast. This project was postponed until the latter part of the 19th century because of several unsuccessful attempts to build the railroad. Prior to this project all transportation to Mato Grosso needed to travel up the Platte River, potentially taking months to arrive. The war with Paraguay (1865-70) forced the Brazilian government to investigate possible alternatives to the Platte route, as Mato Grosso was considered a strategic part of the country's western frontier.

In 1904, the Northwestern Railway was finally constructed. The new project was supposed to link the western border region to Rio de Janeiro, passing through Minas Gerais and Sao Paulo. However, this plan would have had a negative impact upon the economy of Sao Paulo, and the Paulista Rail Company successfully applied pressure to the federal government to cut out the Rio de Janeiro leg of the route. In 1905, construction of a trunk line finally began in Bauru, linking the city to Corumba on the Bolivian border (see map below).

[\*13] Image from <http://www.transportes.gov.br>. The black line indicates the Northwestern Railway linking Bauru to the border city of Corumba.

The railroad took close to fifty years to build, with the final stretch into Corumba being completed in 1953. The project turned Bauru into a developed town attracting people and businesses. During the *Estado Novo* period, the railroad also gained importance in national politics, being used to transport people (both foreign and domestic) into Brazil's unsettled interior. For the federal government, the route represented the definitive solution to securing the country's western border regions and the policy known as "The March to the West." At the time, this movement was compared to the settlement of the United States' prairies and similar to this development scheme, Bauru was seen as the Saint Louis of the 19th century American west.

The Arantes do Nascimento family arrived in Bauru as the city was reaching its peak as a transportation hub and a key component of Brazil's plans to settle its western frontier. To supplement his income as a football player, Edson's father was employed by the city government. In his autobiography, Pele recalls his family's move:

[...]Bauru seemed to me to be the biggest city in the world: bigger than any other place I had lived in up until then. It had everything I imagined that a city should have: stores, cinemas, hotels. At that time, it was one of the largest cities in the Brazilian interior, being a transport axis serving three of the country's main railways. It seemed like a new beginning; a place where one could make one's fortune. (Arantes do Nascimento, 2006: 20)

We can't say for sure if Pele's father understood the economic and political significance [\*14] of Bauru when they moved, yet in comparison with the town of Tres Coracoes and the other places in Minas Gerais where the family lived, it was an apparent improvement. For one thing, the booming city created a football league in Sao Paulo and Dondinho played for *Bauru Atletico Clube* (BAC), a fairly well known team on the Sao Paulo circuit. BAC even won the Hinterlands Tournament of 1946, where several of the best second-division teams in the state competed. Dondinho became popular in the city and region for being a good football player, but his weak knee made it impossible for him to expand this fame to the national arena.

#### Bauru and the birth of professional sports in Brazil

Looking back at the history of football in Brazil, Dondinho seems to have made the right choice. The development of the game and its later professionalization was intimately related to the growth and modernization of Brazil's industrial centers. In his article, "A capital irradiante: tecnica, ritmos e ritos do Rio," Nicolau Sevcenko, discusses the growth of professional sports in the early 20th century. He links the "fever for sports" to the cultural transformations of societies transitioning from rural to urban, industrial economies. For Sevcenko, the advent of electrical energy created new ways of relating the body to the world:

[...] Electricity passed through bodies, imprinting upon them the compulsion to move and act -- mechanically, spontaneously, en masse. Physical education suddenly became a required class in public and private schools and people began to voluntarily exercise in gymnasiums, athletic associations and even in their own homes (1998: 569).

New technologies demanded that new bodies be in tune with modernity. Discourses preaching a healthy life and an athletic body sought to use organized sports as a means of disciplining and hygienizing national populations to be in tune with the fast pace of modern life.

It is no wonder then that Bauru, the modern hub of the new Brazilian west, would also develop into a regional sports mecca during the first half of the 20th century. The city's growth and its trans-regional railway connections were

imbued with the same spirit of modernity that was present in the country's great metropolitan centers of Rio de Janeiro and Sao Paulo. Organized sports were simply another element of this modernization process and in 1931, the *Federacao Bauruense de Esportes* was founded -- years before similar organizations were created in other areas of Brazil.

Pele lived in Bauru until he signed with *Santos Futebol Clube* in 1956. According to his autobiography, he played football in and around the city during his youth. Before becoming involved with *Bauru Atletico Clube* in the early 1950s, Pele played on several hinterlands teams, dedicating himself wholeheartedly to the sport, to the point of ignoring his studies. Much to his mother's despair, he told her that he wanted to be a football player like his father.

A major turning point in Pele's life was Waldemar de Brito's appointment as coach of the BAC junior team. Brito was well known in the Brazilian sports world, having been a member of Brazil's 1934 World Cup team. He was the *Sao Paulo Futebol Clube's* main striker in 1933, the year the club won the state championship. Additionally, he played in Argentina (along with his brother Petronilho) on the San Lorenzo team. Dondinho knew Waldemar and convinced Pele to sign with the BAC juniors based on the [\*15] qualities of its new coach. Waldemar de Brito was to teach the young Pele much, beginning with discipline and technique. The coach introduced new plays and maneuvers to the junior team, who quickly became the regional champions of their age division. As a result, Pele quit playing for hinterland teams and began to devote himself exclusively to the Bauru club while working part-time as a food vendor on the railway. In 1954, the BAC juniors were officially registered in the national league and the newspaper *Jornal Diario de Bauru*, together with Sao Paulo's *Gazeta Esportiva*, organized a junior championship, which Bauru won handily with Pele as lead striker, marking 148 goals in thirty three games. The future "King of Football" was fourteen-years-old at the time.

#### The move to Santos

Larger and more famous clubs soon took note of the young striker. In 1955, an ex-player for Rio de Janeiro's *Bangu Atletico Clube*, Elba de Padua Lima, recruited three BAC junior players and wanted to recruit Pele as well, but his mother, Dona Celeste, would not let him participate in fear of losing him in the metropolis. By this time, however, Waldemar de Brito had left Bauru to return to Sao Paulo, where he coached professional teams. On a visit back to Pele's hometown, Brito discussed the young man's future with Dondinho and Celeste. The coach wanted Pele to sign a contract with the current state champions, *Santos Futebol Clube*. Brito assured the boy's parents that their son would start in the juniors and quickly move to the main team. Brito, conscious of Dona Celeste's fear of city life, convinced her that Santos was a viable option because it was a mid-sized town, located far from Rio de Janeiro.

Dona Celeste agreed to the deal and, in 1955, Pele moved to Santos. According to Pele, on the way to Santos, Brito gave him advice, which the young striker would use throughout his career. Waldemar told Pele to not drink or smoke because a professional athlete had to be in top physical form. Additionally, he advised Pele not to worry about the media, especially before a game. Finally, he told Pele to continue playing exactly as if he were still with BAC juniors, even if he shared the field with national soccer stars.

Pele was initially housed on the club grounds, where he was the team's youngest player. At this time, Santos was considered to be one of Brazil's top teams, with several members, such as Jair da Rosa Pinto, Helio, Formiga and Pepe, having played on the World Cup national team. Though Pele was authorized to play professionally, he continued to work out with the club's under twenty-year-old and under eighteen-year-old teams, often training on his own. As he relates in his autobiography:

[...] I also trained alone, sometimes for hours on end. I knew that I really had to apply myself if I was going to go anywhere. I wasn't just playing for the crowds, but also to realize my own ambitions. I couldn't let myself fail. (Arrantes de Nascimento, 2006: 71)

This illustrates how Pele saw his move to Santos: as a crucial first step of a successful football career. It also demonstrates how he faithfully followed the advice given to him by his father and his first coach. Shortly after his arrival in Santos and following excellent play on the junior teams, the club's sports director offered Pele a full-time professional contract. Once again, Waldemar de Brito helped the young player hammer out the particulars of the deal. Pele would receive a total of 6,000 cruzeiros a month, plus room and board. After a visit to Bauru to convince Dona Celeste, Pele and [\*16] Waldemar de Brito returned to Santos to sign the deal and, following a month of training with the main team, the fifteen-year-old Pele officially debuted as a professional football player on the 7th of September, 1956. In 1957, his contract was increased by eighteen months and 1,000 cruzeiros. Pele scored seventeen goals in his first season and his physical conditioning improved through a healthy diet and non-stop training. As he recalls in his autobiography:

[...] I trained a lot. I was always a perfectionist -- still am. I trained more with my left foot, which was weaker than my right. I trained headers. At that time, there was this piece of equipment consisting of a ball hanging from a rod and you had to jump up and hit it with your head... Santos also had a gymnasium and, for an entire year, I took karate lessons. This was important as it taught me how to jump and fall. After that, I learned judo, which helped improve my balance and agility. When I'd dribble past my adversaries, I'd rarely fall. (Arrantes do Nascimento, 2006: 81)

Pele made use of the club's facilities to learn other sports and improve his overall physical conditioning.

In 1958, Pele was drafted for Brazil's World Cup national team, which was the best team fielded by the nation to date. The "Paulo Machado de Carvalho Plan" mandated drafting only the best trained and most physically prepared players as the ideology of the times stated that only a modern and professional stance towards football would allow Brazil to beat its European World Cup adversaries. As I've mentioned above, by this time football had become a modernized, nationalized, professionalized sport in Brazil and it was this ethos that defined the national team's strategy for the 1958 World Cup. Coach Paulo Machado de Carvalho hand-picked the members of the team according to this ethos.

Within this context, it must be remembered that Pele had almost been living and breathing football since childhood under the tutelage of his father and Waldemar de Brito, both former professional players. Additionally, he had been fortunate enough to spend his youth in Bauru, a modernizing city which was wholly integrated into the professional sports network. According to Jose Sergio Leite Lopes, Pele could usefully be contrasted in this sense with his "co-star" of the 1958 World's Cup, Garrincha. Due to his long years training as a full-time player, the young Santos striker had acquired the cultural capital necessary to have a long-term, successful career in the newly professionalized "Brazilian sport" of football:

[...] Discipline, the internalization of his father's frustrations and the social capital legated to him by Dondinho in the world of football favored the development of Pele's professional skills. . . . While Garrincha's talents were essentially the fruit of amateur sports, Pele's talents were developed within the field of professional football. (Lopes, 1992: 130)

According to Lopes, Dondinho's failed professional career was redeemed by his son's career and the father's professional contacts guaranteed Pele's rapid and safe ascension in the sport. Furthermore, Pele was fortunate to have been in the right place at the right time which placed him on the road to a career as professional soccer star. His father's sudden [\*17] move to Bauru at the height of the "March to the West" situated the young Pele in a network of youth sports training programs which would have been unavailable to him in the backlands of Minas Gerais. Pele was able to play for the region's semi-professional and young professional teams from the age of ten because the ideology of sports in Brazil was intimately interlinked with the industrial urban development and modernization since the early 20th century. Bauru and the surrounding regions, showcases for the *Estado Novo's* modernization and development plans, created the environment that provided a young man with advanced training in sports and connections to professional leagues.

The career choices offered to and made by Pele in his youth were influenced by the current conventions, in particular organized sports were a tool used to forge a modern nationalism in Brazil. Bauru, in particular, was a focal point for this ideology during Pele's childhood, with jobs and settlement opportunities created by the establishment of the North-western Railway and trumpeted to the nation through the propaganda channels of the *Estado Novo*. The Arantes family absorbed these norms -- most particularly the modern work ethic -- and reproduced them in their lives.

The path which Pele followed as a young man was thus in perfect harmony with the views of life which were taught to him as a child. From Waldemar de Brito's advice on the bus ride down to the coast to the constant solitary training in the Santos club gymnasium, Pele's early career epitomized the vision of professionalism, individualism, perfection, competition and self-improvement which urban industrial capitalism demanded and which organized sports in Brazil were supposed to simultaneously represent. These notions could be found in ever-increasing intensity throughout the country from the end of the 19th century on, but they can be said to have reached their peak in 1958, the year when Pele led Brazil to its first world championship. Obviously, the context in which Pele was raised was not the only one capable of producing a successful football player, but it is also very clear that it heavily influenced -- perhaps even de-

terminated -- his life trajectory. At the moment when Pele made his World Cup debut, Brazil's modernism and the young black football star's professional attitude would quickly come to epitomize the nation's belief in itself as "the country of the future."

It is within this context, that popular Brazilian understandings of Pele's race and color must be read. It is not surprising that eight years after Barbosa's historic error "proved" the "innate incapacity" of a black and *mestico* people when confronted with European opponents; Pele's sterling performance on the international playing field reaffirmed the Brazilian national project. With the country's first World's Cup victory in 1958, football became the key field through which Brazilians could prove their worth in the international arena. Pele's color became subsumed within a more general and hegemonic national narrative. It represented yet another race-specific element which, when popularized, was understood to describe Brazilians as a homogenous people.

#### [\*18] Conclusion

Since his retirement from professional football in the 1970s, Pele has increasingly become the focus of criticism in Brazil, especially by members of the country's black political, social, and cultural movements. A recent issue of *Afro-Press*, n27 for example, claims that "Pele has said that he isn't black, but that Edson is. But given the fact that no one knows who Edson is, little at all is known about Edson's political activities regarding the race question". Another typical comment can be found in the pages of *Veja* magazine: "When asked about racism, [Pele] shakes his head and says that, in his case at least, it doesn't exist". n28 Comments like these are regularly trotted out in order to describe Pele as a racial "sell-out" or "traitor", but they obfuscate what the man has, in fact, been saying for decades.

In the first place, given the ideological foundations of Brazilian racial and national thought, Pele's comments can be seen as being literally true. For Pele, the symbol of Brazilian dominance on the international athletic stage, racism *cannot* exist. To the degree that Edson is recognized as Pele, he immediately becomes a stand-in for the Brazilian common man, whose "vices of African blood" have been cleansed by professionalism, talent, and merit. He is black only to the degree that all Brazilians are supposedly construed as not white. To recognize him specifically as a black man would destroy his worth as the symbol of a nation which still largely understands itself to be a hybrid whole. The situation leads one to wonder, in fact, what would occur if Edson ever did try to publicly remake Pele into a black man. I suspect that this would be interpreted by the Brazilian public in general as yet another instance of Edson "mouthing off" about something which he has little understanding about and which he would do better to remain "poetically" silent.

However, Pele seems to believe that professionalism trumps race in Brazil. In several interviews over the decades, Pele has made it clear that he feels his capacity for work and his professional attitude have allowed him to beat all obstacles in his life, including racism. According to the football star, hard work is the most propitious path towards black social inclusion in Brazil.

Given the facts presented above, one can see how and why Pele would find this to be a logical position to hold and why, after all, shouldn't it be? Brazil's five World Cup victories have enshrined the sport as a sterling example of "the Brazil that works" (in both senses of the word) and, consequently, football has become synonymous with the professionalism which Pele actively incorporated during his career. Seen from this angle, Pele's comments reflect the ideologies which surrounded and formed his personality in his youth and which were actively cultivated by the *Estado Novo* and its immediate successors. Black and *mestico* Brazil had "Brazilianized" football and, in so doing beat white Europe at its own game, and also proved that Brazil was ready to take its place among those nations as a fully modern, westernized peer. These ideologies have apparently been borne out by Pele's life itself in his rise to stardom as one of the greatest athlete's of the century. Given this, why should Edson Arantes de Nascimento be expected to feel any differently about himself and about race?

[\*19] Today, the discourses of modernization and professionalism which created Pele's ethos and which situate hard work as the key to reducing social inequalities and racism are passing through a profound crisis throughout the black Diaspora. Since the 1970s, many black activists have increasingly been asking, not how blacks can beat the white man at his own game, but why are they bothering to play this game under its established rules. In this context, Pele's paeans to professionalism and hard work sound like the self-deluded blathering of an exceptionally lucky individual who has little sense of the difficulties faced by most black people in the post-modern world.

The aging celebrity, however, has not changed his views of the world and his place in it. For this reason, he has increasingly become the target of criticism, particularly those leveled by today's up-and-coming young black professionals. In this sense, Pele can be compared to another black man who used sports and entertainment as a stepping stone to professionalism and fame: American comedian Bill Cosby. Cosby, too, has recently come under fire for making what

are considered by many to be rather unfortunate public statements regarding race and self-improvement. It is interesting to note that both Pele and Cosby have affirmed throughout their careers that education, professionalization and hard work offer a road for black upward mobility in racist societies. Although their views have not changed over the last half century, views of the respective black political movements have. In so doing, these heroes of yesteryear have become disquieting reminders that racial ideologies, generally portrayed as constant and fixed, do in fact change with the times. It would be good for scholars of comparative race studies to remember this fact.

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### **Legal Topics:**

For related research and practice materials, see the following legal topics:  
Family Law Parental Duties & Rights Nonmarital Children General Overview

### **FOOTNOTES:**

n1 The World Cup of Football is held once every four years, bringing together the national teams of the Americas, Europe and -- more recently -- Africa and Asia in order to determine the world champion. For most of humanity outside of the United States, it is an event on par with the Olympics in terms of visibility and social impact.

n2 Interview with Romario. Programa Globo Esporte, Rede Globo de Televisao 14/01/2005, *available at* [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Po3wM6oE\\_rk](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Po3wM6oE_rk).

n3 I use *discourse* in the sense pioneered by Michel Foucault (1988), as a set of ideas, symbols and practices which form a complex of rules and relationships within a given society at a given moment in its history. In the case of the national and racial discourses which have appeared in the Brazilian context over the last 100 or so years, these can be understood as a set of concepts, laws and practices which create a series of physical and cultural ideals, generally understood, according to Giralda Seyferth (1996: 41-58), as a vision of an acceptable national "type" which Brazilians are encouraged to incorporate and internalize.

n4 A form of body play, understood to be Southeastern African in origin and which may possibly come from the same Wolof root word which possibly gave rise to the American "jive"  
<http://www.etymonline.com/index.php?search=jive&searchmode=none>. *Ginga* emphasizes constant dancing movement, feints and the masking of one's true intentions.

n5 A huge debate exists in Brazilian sports anthropology and sociology regarding "*futebol-arte*" and "*futebol-forca*". According to Toledo, these concepts are related to the wider symbolical contexts (including questions of racial, class, politics and history) of the countries which adopt these modes of play. Suffice it to say that the contrast between the two is not simply technical in nature, but has historically been connected to eugenicist and racist manners of thinking about the body as a nationally identifiable product.

n6 During the first few decades of the 20th century, prominent Brazilians often accused football of being a foreign sport which was subverting the "true" culture of the country. Many intellectuals rejected it in much the same way that today's intellectuals reject McDonalds and Coca-Cola, considering the "British sport" to be a pernicious foreign imposition which diluted authentic Brazilian culture. In the 1920s, in fact, these individuals organized a movement which attempted to popularize *Zinucati*, a sport practiced by the Pareci Indians and discovered by the Brazilian explorer Candido Rondon. Supposedly, this sport was superior to football as it represented "our true national culture". With Brazil's first World's Cup victory in 1958, however, football began to be seen by the nation's intellectuals as a representative element of "genuine" Brazilianess. According to this new generation of nationalist scholars, the sport allied European techniques with "typically Brazilian" body play, as seen in capoeira and samba. For more on this topic, see: Leonardo Affonso de Miranda Pereira, *Footballmania: Uma Historia Social do Futebol no Rio de Janeiro*, (Nova Fronteira, Brochura 2000).

n7 Blanchette, 2001.

n8 Vianna, 2002.

n9 Translator's note: *mestico* means "mixed" in Portuguese and largely corresponds to the Spanish concept of *mestizo*.

n10 2002: 19-20.

n11 As Blanchette points out in *Gringos* (2001:66), today's descriptions of Miller betray a certain unease with the man's ethnic identity. Miller, who was the son of a British engineer and Scotch-Brazilian woman, educated almost exclusively in English and very much a member of the late 19th century British colony in Brazil, is often today portrayed as unambiguously "Brazilian". Depending upon a given author's nationalist political orientation, he is variously described in modern sports literature as "English", "a descendent of English and Brazilian ancestors", a "Brazilian with an Anglo-Saxon name" and even a "*paulista* [resident of Sao Paulo state] descended from the English". As time has gone by and football has become more "Brazilianized", Miller, too, has thus lost his status as a "gringo", being described variously as an ethnic Brazilian and, finally, as simply Brazilian with a funny last name.

n12 The period in Brazilian history known as the *Estado Novo* (1937-1945: literally the "New State") began with a military coup which put Getulio Vargas into the presidency.

n13 2000: 107.

n14 For more on this topic in a Brazilian context, see Fausto, Boris: *Historia do Brasil*, Edusp, SP, 2004; Skidmore, Thomas: *Uma Historia do Brasil*, Paz e Terra, SP, 2003. For a better understanding of the invention of national traditions in general, see Hobsbawm, E.J. 1984. "A Producao em Massa de Tradicoes: Europa 1879 a 1914." In: Hobsbawm, E.J. & Ranger, T. *A Invencao de Tradicoes*. Rio de Janeiro, Paz e Terra.

n15 Mario Filho: 73-74.

n16 2001: 13-50)

n17 Vianna: 127.

n18 1991: 58-85.

n19 Nabuco, 68-69.

n20 Ibid, 136.

n21 Ibid, 70.

n22 Oliveira Vianna, 1938: 155.

n23 The essentials of this ideology are still very much alive in today's Brazil, where free sports programs are routinely touted as a means of "instilling discipline" among the country's largely black and brown impoverished populations.

n24 Pereira, op cit: 148-154.

n25 2003: 81-95.

n26 op cit: 95.

n27 "As Estrelas da Aracruz Celulose - Quando se juntam burrice, ma fe e desinformacao." *In*:AfroPress -- Agencia Afro-Etnica de Noticias. 6/24/2006.

n28 "A sombra das chuteiras milionarias," Revista 12/22/1993.