

**SOCCER FROM AN INTELLECTUAL POINT OF VIEW: GILBERTO FREYRE AND
THE IDEAL OF RACIAL INTEGRATION**

**O FUTEBOL NA OBRA DE UM ENSAÍSTA: GILBERTO FREYRE E O IDEAL DA
INTEGRAÇÃO RACIAL**

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ABSTRACT

This paper analyses Gilberto Freyre's texts regarding soccer. It is noted that the writer used this cultural element to reinforce his thesis on the perfect racial integration model in Brazil. Because Freyre did not have enough knowledge about soccer, he recruited several intellectuals – such as José Lins do Rego and, specially, Mario Filho – to write about this sport in Brazil and therefore confirm his theoretical model.

Keywords: Soccer. Gilberto Freyre. Brazilianness.

INTRODUCTION

I

Gilberto Freyre's production is vast, comprised of dozens of books and prefaces, hundreds of essays, articles and newspaper stories. Therefore, in this article, we do not have the (daring) purpose of debating Paulo Freyre's general theory, but simply explain the central thesis of Freyre's work, with a view, primordially, to understand how soccer was conceived by the author, to, at the end, understand how it was assimilated by columnists who were close to the essayist.

Gilberto Freyre was born in Recife, in 1900. As a teacher's son, Gilberto was stimulated to study early on, and he also learned Latin and English. After concluding his basic studies in Recife, he went to the United States, where he studied Political and Social Sciences. At Columbia (NY) he had classes with Giddings and Alfred Zimmerman and with renowned anthropologist Franz Boas (FREYRE, 1999, p. xi). In 1933 Freyre published his most widely known book, *The Masters and the Slaves*. The work featured a strong essayistic character, because, in spite of being fruit of a discerning research of sources and a consistent bibliography, the author's concern with literary aesthetics was well-known - differing considerably from scientific-academic writings -, in addition to the evocative tone, from the author's own reminiscence (FREYRE, 1999, p. xixii).

Most significant is that the work presented an unpublished sociological thesis, thwarting the eugenic theories preached by some intellectuals of Southeastern Brazil, such as Oliveira Vianna and Sílvio Romero, strongly influenced by European theorists - like Francis Galton and José Ingenieros - predominant at that time (SCHWARCZ, 2002). Freyre used to say that Brazil was the ideal example with regard to race, because in the country there was complete (and relatively peaceful) racial integration, initiated with the typical patriarchal system of the Brazilian rural space of the 18th century.

In the master's house it was, [1930s] and still is where the Brazilian character was best expressed: our social continuity. In the study of our intimate history everything that the political and military history offers as exciting is traded for an almost life routine: but inside of that routine is where the character of a people is better felt. Studying the ancestors'

domestic life we, little by little, feel a sense of: it is another way of seeking for the "lost time". Another way we can feel ourselves in the other's place – in the place others lived before us; and in whose life was before ours. It is a past that one studies by hitting nerves; a past that connects with the life of each one; an adventure of sensibility, not just an effort of research through the files (FREYRE, 1999, p. ixv).

Thus, for the essayist, the three racial components of the colonial society - the Portuguese, Indian and Black - in the conviviality inside of the rural space of the master's house and the slave quarters, established their own forms of socialization. Of the benevolence and organization of the Portuguese, in the strong sexuality and submission of the Black, and in the amicability and ingenuousness of the Indian would emerge the "true" Brazilian individual: the mestizo. With him would also appear the main characteristic that formed the national identity: the mulatto – the "play it somehow" behavior, the roguery, the impulsiveness and affection.

The sociological macro model formulated by Freyre was controversial, in that it gained (and still gains) a lot of critics - although all of his works, mainly *The Masters and the Slaves*, soon after its release, were very well received by literary critics all over Brazil (MARANHÃO, 2004).

The largest debate was (and is) concerning the academic and, above all, historical and sociological value of his works. The author of *The Masters and the Slaves* established a narrative, with few direct citations and, mainly, full of judgments of valuations (several critics affirmed that Freyre spoke from within the master's house), with little adaptation to the historiographical model that was predominant in Brazil during the first decades of the century (MALERBA, 1996). On the other hand, the essay tone, which would become more and more common in the following decades, did not invalidate its condition as a work belonging to the academic field (VELOSO; MADEIRA, 1999, p. 148-161). The discussion was established exactly because Freyre, intentionally, broke away with the rigidity of academic writings, following the tenuous road between literature (fiction) and Sociology and History. Thus, his work is a frontier genre, consisting, in its majority, of essays of sociological character.

Proof includes this interesting comparative analysis between Freyre and Holanda's (1995) work.

[...] we could say that Sérgio Buarque de Holanda does, in his work, a history without a "different" doubt for his time. A social history, in which the culture is the entrance window, which weaves forms of being, sensibilities, world visions, mentalities.

*[...] Since *The Masters and the Slaves*, published in 1936, Freyre had established a type of mark regarding the interpretation of Brazil when subscribing to the mixed heritage that blemished the national identity. On the other hand, as it is affirmed in the preface of *Interpretation of Brazil*, in 1947, Freyre not only came "to widen the history in sociology, as well as to more humanly sensitize sociology in the direct and constant contact of history". A sociologist who becomes a historian, a historian who turns into a sociologist, both are discussing Brazilian culture. Borders that are exempted, ready to open the possibility of dialogue of the two histories on nationalism (PESAVENTO, 2002 apud CHIAPPINI; BRESCIANI, 2002, p. 32-33).*

Despite being defined and accepted as an essay of sociological character, Freyre's theory also suffered severe criticisms with regard to the content and formulation of ideas. The

most evident was that the Freyre's explanatory model had a well-defined space delimitation: the Northeastern region, and as such, they could not be generalized to all of Brazil (BRESCIANI, 2002 apud CHIAPPINI; BRESCIANI, 2002, p. 48).

Another subject little evidenced in Freyre's production - especially because it was not so accentuated in the Northeast - was immigration. From the mid-19th century to the first decades of the 20th century, several groups of immigrants settled in Brazil (OLIVEIRA, 2001), but Freyre mentioned little about these ethnic communities, established mainly in the South and Southeast regions, which reinforces the critics that his explanatory model was a reference only for the sociological understanding of the Northeast region: "One cannot ignore the criticisms made of Gilberto Freyre, the most common being regarding his narcissism, in perpetual identification with his own ancestors, besides a certain nationalistic boasting idealizing Brazil as a harmonious society" (VELOSO; MADEIRA, 1999, p. 157).

Even regarding the Northeast region, Freyre was accused of ignoring a very important phenomenon that was predominant from the end of the 19th century to the 20th century: the vertiginous urbanization process, a phenomenon that was happening in domestically (PESAVENTO, 2002; OLIVEIRA, 2002) and worldwide (SENNETT, 2001; SEVCENKO, 2001). This criticism was accepted by Freyre and lessened starting from the publication of the second book of the trilogy, *Sobrados & Mocambos*, published in 1936, a work that expanded his central thesis, the one of the idealism of racial integration in Brazil, changing the focus of analysis from the rural space to the urban space and the time frame to the 19th century. The last work of the trilogy was *Order and Progress*, published only in 1959. In it Freyre tried to associate the transition of the patriarchal society to the system of free work (VELOSO; MADEIRA, 1999, p. 146). Even trying to fill out this gap, Freyre, on the other hand, could not separate the delimited space, the Northeast Region, since the two-story houses and mocambos were typical homes in Northeastern cities.

It is pointed out, above all, that, despite being constantly criticized and generating controversy, Gilberto Freyre's theory should be valued as a diffuser of an interpretative model, and as such he is the core of a thoroughly accepted ideal, which contributed to the construction of a national identity:

Anyway, as heir of an elitist tradition that searched in the miscegenation for the identity of the Brazilian man and nation, Freyre was one of the main builders of the collective imagination that legitimated and preserved a conservative modernization, founded in a patriarchal and enslaving past (RIBEIRO, 2003, p. 6).

In the present research, the major interest was to understand how the ideas of Freyre were understood and subsequently spread using soccer as an empirical reference. Next, a suggestion given by two researchers of Freyre's work:

A last point refers to certain criticisms addressed to Gilberto Freyre, especially those that consider him conservative for having proposed a view of continuity of Brazilian society, represented by the patriarchal family that maintains the ability to deter changes that are more structural. We should carry on a critical and contemporary reading of Gilberto Freyre's work and look to remove recurring prejudices. The most appropriate attitude, facing such a classic work, is to problematize, to reconstruct and deconstruct the theoretical and empirical courses that are present (VELOSO; MADEIRA, 1999, p. 160).

Then, it is not a case of overvaluing the object (soccer) or the author (Freyre), but, of explaining the essayist's importance as a promoter in Brazil's intellectual and artistic field, an importance that made him capable of aiding in reorienting the functionality of soccer, adapting it to the effective representation of nationality in his time. Thus, the writings of Freyre are understood, more than anything else, as an important chapter of history, or in other words, a group of rich and complex historical sources, "ready" to be analyzed.

As one can see next, soccer gradually becomes one of the fundamental empirical elements to prove Freyre's theory of racial integration in Brazil and, consequently, for the creation of a Brazilian identity based on roguery and the "play it somehow" game. If we think about the work as a whole, soccer was little approached by Freyre, however his theory was well accepted in the literary/intellectual environment, mainly among writers of Northeastern origin who worked directly with the sport, like José Lins do Rego and Mario Filho, the ones who became diffusers of these ideas manifested in Gilberto Freyre's works.

II

If Gilberto Freyre's classic works are discussed thoroughly in the academic environment, due to his controversial interpretative position regarding the Brazilian people, the scarce presence of soccer in these writings follows the rule, and thus, it is subjected to a multiplicity of analyses, in agreement with the historical-sociological conceptions established in different historical contexts - from the Marxists' severe critics in the 1980s, which considered soccer an object of alienation, up to the form how it has been used - as a primary source - by researchers of the area of Human Sciences, the most current debate (HELAL; SOARES; LOVISOLO, 2001).

If the complexity of Gilberto Freyre's works allows his readers - academic or not - to interpret them in strongly different ways, it is questioned: how did Gilberto Freyre perceive soccer, and did he mention it in his writings? What was his experience with the sport? Consequently, how, in this case, should we think about the relationship between text, context and reading? (WHITE, 2000).

It was then decided to tackle the first and more direct issue - to evaluate what was the function of soccer in Gilberto Freyre's theory - to next diagnose how this positioning is understood by some soccer researchers.

Firstly, it is worth again emphasizing that soccer is present in a subtle way - not using the term *secondary* - if one considers the whole of Gilberto Freyre's works. They are brief essays, fast comments in books (FREYRE, 1947; FREYRE, 1967; FREYRE, 1968), chronicles published in newspapers (most in the *Diário de Pernambuco*), interviews and prefaces, as in the work *The Black in Brazilian Soccer* (RODRIGUES FILHO, 1964) which, even when used as historiographical reference (SOARES, 2001 apud HELAL; SOARES; LOVISOLO, 2001), does not exceed the limit of four pages. Thus, roughly, if the production of Freyre concerning soccer was thought quantitatively, it could be considered irrelevant, since the author produced more than seventy literary works.

Apparently, paradoxically, mentions of the only work of Freyre specifically written about soccer are very rare: *Sociological Focus of soccer*, published in 1945. Moreover, mentions of this book were only found in a few electronic addresses (URL), including the actual Gilberto Freyre Virtual Library (<http://prossiga.bvgf.fgf.org.br/>), linked to the Gilberto Freyre Foundation, and none of these sites mentioned the complete bibliographical reference. Thus, its existence can only be in the realm of speculation.

These excerpts, although small, deserve attention, because they will serve as basis for the conception that other population segments (including other intellectuals and/or writers)

would have in relation to soccer, becoming, in this sense, more than an explanatory macro model, a historical source loaded with symbolisms and - why not? – Ideologies. As a source, a metaphorical dialogue is evidenced with Freyre's writings, in the search of indications that would prove that Freyre had an indirect, however incisive role, in the establishment of a national identity, between the decades of 1940 and 1970, in which soccer, along with carnival and *capoeira*, was a primordial element, as the essayist directly states:

The development of soccer, not into a sport like the other ones, but into a true Brazilian institution, made possible the sublimation of several of those irrational elements of our cultural and social formation. Capoeira and samba, for instance, are present in such a way in the Brazilian style of playing soccer [...] (FREYRE, 2003 apud RODRIGUES FILHO, 2003, p. 25).

To compose that identity, it was necessary for Freyre to juxtapose the model that he considered "genuinely national" to the "other one". Thus, he looked for in European soccer, specifically in soccer practiced by Englishmen, at the same time, the core of the sports practiced in Brazil and the counterpoint to the Brazilian style of playing soccer.

The great explanation is that the Brazilians received the English game called 'football' and all the terminology in the English language. Later, Brazilians made them "Brazilian terms". But Brazilians did not only turn the terminology into a Brazilian way. They recreated soccer, and by doing so, they turned the game - which for the English was rigid and straight - into a dance. Brazilian soccer is really a dance, with great influence of the samba. You see its beauty, because it is a game that exercises a lot the player's capacity to improvise. Several specialists who sometimes dominated Brazilian soccer and who wish to make it a European game again criticize its style. For me it is a virtue. Brazilians adapted soccer to their own vocation for dance, for the ball, for the agility in the feet and legs (FREYRE, 1983, [2 ff]).

Thus, decades after writing his first opinions on soccer, Freyre still reiterated his thesis that, metaphorically, the football of English origin, inserted in Brazil at the beginning of the 20th century and strictly ruled with a highly civilizatory load – had quickly adapted to Brazilian culture and transformed into soccer, that amalgam of competitive activity of the post-industrial revolution period with the typical Brazilian samba and *capoeira*.

In this sense, Freyre launches two polar categories of the cultural anthropology, the Apollonian and the Dionysian, to explain the transformations in Brazilian soccer. The categories were not original. Gilberto Freyre based it on the structuralist system of American anthropologist Ruth Benedict, conveying the rigid style of English playing to the Apollonian category, and the swinging Brazilian game, consequently, to the Dionysian one.

What happens now with the English soccer is that, as I stressed in an attempt to interpret the Brazilian soul, when played by Brazilians, and especially by Brazilians of African Black origin, as Pelé and other colored boys, soccer is more like a dance where the dancer feels free to improvise, alone or in groups of two or three players, the conventional steps, and not only the systematic and uniform game of the Nordic people. Or, if we use Ruth Benedict's anthropological terminology, it became a Dionysian game, and non-Apollonian, as was its original or orthodox European form. It became

Brazilian and consequently tropical. We should not forget, in this context, that the first Catholic missionaries in Brazil adapted some games from the Amerindians, including the use of rubber balls (FREYRE, 1967, p. 218)

These categories, used initially in the preface of Blacks in Brazilian Soccer, permeated all the texts and depositions of Gilberto Freyre regarding soccer until the 1980s; in other words, the writer stayed faithful to the explanatory model based in Ruth Benedict's theory until the end of his life.

The same can be said of what became characteristically a Brazilian way of playing soccer: a way influenced by the Dionysian, dancing, and festive vitality of the afro-black that, in Brazil, it can be said, has thwarted the British Apollonian vitality. He is a kind of ballet dancer with the ball that the Brazilian is creating an already universally famous soccer. It is nationally Brazilian (FREYRE, 1980, [1 ff]).

Usually, Gilberto Freyre used an athlete as an example of this Apollonian/Dionysian style of game. It was like that in the preface of Mario Filho's work, where the references were Domingos da Guia – who was compared to Machado de Assis in his "almost" English style – as the Apollonian example, although in the comparison Freyre has seen in the athlete "an impassibility that perhaps accuses suggestions or Amerindian influences on his personality or his upbringing" (FREYRE, 2003 apud RODRIGUES FILHO, 2003, p. 25); and also Leônidas, the Dionysian: "The dance danced like Bahia by Leônidas" [...] (FREYRE, 2003 apud RODRIGUES FILHO, 2003, p. 25). In another circumstance, a coach was attributed the Apollonian condition:

[it is a mistake the desire for] a Brazil that is all logical, rational, scientific in its religious, political, artistic, and culinary manners. And, even, in its soccer: the mistake, in my opinion, under several aspects – the one of being a disciplinarian, for instance – is by the admirable manager Cláudio Coutinho (FREYRE, 1978, [1 ff]).

In the use of such categories, Freyre made more daring associations, as can be noticed, for instance, in the space below, where the author mentions Sérgio Buarque de Holanda, associating in only one paragraph the theory of the author of Roots of Brazil, soccer and the anthropological categories – without the least concern with the temporality of such different objects (proof of the accentuated essayist degree of his texts).

It is mentioned in part of the History of Brazilian Civilization, coordinated by the Master Sérgio Buarque de Holanda, dedicated to the Dutch occupation of Brazil, that the pre-Brazilian guerrillas banished the invader, and were distinguished for their spontaneity, ability and agility. That is where the comment comes that, in those characteristics, anticipation was noticed to a choreographically Dionysian style, instead of a British Apollonian way of the Brazilian to play soccer. This is according to observations I myself gave years ago, a sociological or anthropo-cultural quality: an observation that coincides with the one made by Waldo Frank of Brazilian soccer having some samba thing, some afro-Brazilian dance. (FREYRE, 1980, [2 F]).

But Freyre, to define what a Dionysian was, used as example an athlete with special predilection: Garrincha. With that he contributed to the emergence of imagery concerning the player: Garrincha would be the live incorporation of the character Macunaíma by Mario of Andrade - the Brazilian anti-hero mestizo who found his social space through malevolence, swing and roguery (CASTRO, 1995).

Someone I have faith it was a great acrobat, which is a paradox, since he was almost crippled, was Garrincha. You see that Garrincha had moments when he danced more than Pelé. And he danced with crooked legs. He had ballet dancer moves. I think there has not been a fair evaluation of Garrincha yet. I think a great history of Brazilian soccer is necessary, written by somebody who knows how to write it, who understands the game and who is informed about historical facts, above all, about that transition. A game that started off elitist. The rich boys who went to Europe brought the innovation and only knew how to play by imitating the English, those elitists. Then, the game in a magnificent transition that honors Brazil, becomes a game almost contrary to the originally English game. It becomes a game of great mobility. The English game is almost, paradoxically, stationary. It lives so many combinations, that it is a cooperation game. It hardly admits competition, while the Brazilian soccer is competitive and open, allowing improvisations. With that transformation, the victorious, the great winner was Brazil, it was the Brazilian people. It is a popular game. Everything is well contained in the character, in the temper, in the vocations of Brazilians (FREYRE, 1983, [2 ff]).

Freyre's thesis of the cultural transformation of soccer denied that the speed of the sport had accentuated from the technique of the pass created by the Scottish, because the English, in the earliest stages, used only dribbles to reach the opposing goal (MURRAY, 2000). Besides, he manifested a certain "forgetfulness" (ORLANDI, 2001): one year before, Italy became the world champion with a Dionysian performance by Paolo Rossi – not to mention the players who won fame presenting exactly the same game style, like Puskas, Cruyff, Beckenbauer and Maradona, among several others.

Thus, decades after the publication of his first writings on soccer, Freyre maintained the same initial position, highlighting:

[...] the presence of Blacks in Brazilian soccer is an outstanding thing. You see that several talent modalities were led by Brazilians of black origin. Everything was settled by Pelé, but before Pelé there were really several outstanding players (FREYRE, 1983, [2 ff]).

In the 1982 Spain World Cup, one year before, the Brazilian team was very admired (SALDANHA, 2002). There were Black players like Luizinho, Paulo Isidoro, Serginho, but the prominence was the midfield composed by Cerezo, Falcão, Zico and Sócrates - all white players. It proves that Gilberto Freyre thought timelessly when explaining his thesis centered in Pelé's image.

In the same 1983 statement, when questioned about the work Blacks in Brazilian Soccer by Mario Filho, Freyre (1983, [2 ff]) discussed:

Yes, I wanted a lot for him [Mário Filho] to write that history. I told him I would write the preface - as I really wrote -, it will be a book, I am sure of that, a real bomb. But it

had to be well written, literarily well written, with facts that would not be objected because in the history of any sport there is always doubt on who was the greatest in this or that game. The work has to be selective and not moved by enthusiasm for anyone, nor by a hero. It is a book that should be part of a great history of Brazilian soccer.

The hypothesis is reinforced that the sociologist maintained his thoughts in an timeless way, in the period when his theory regarding soccer was formulated - the decades between 1940 and 1960. Two other details on this statement by Freyre are important: 1) the work *Blacks in Brazilian Soccer* was written after Freyre's request to Mário Filho, who indirectly admitted his lack of empirical knowledge on the subject. 2) Strangely, the work is characterized as historical. Thus, Freyre reinforced a not very orthodox conception for that time, about what History and the Sociology were (SOARES, 2001 apud HELAL; SOARES; LOVISOLO, 2001).

From this previous analysis, it can be deduced that for Freyre, soccer did not go through a reformulation process in a period over 30 years - which, definitively, does not match the remarks of several specialists on the subject (PRONI, 2000). It is also evident that the use of soccer as an element to reinforce the thesis of racial integration in Brazil was performed in an urgent manner, expressed through Freyre's request to Mario Filho. The incidence on the theme "soccer" was directly linked to the empiric demonstration of the so called mulatism (also called Brazilianness by the author) – a concept valued in Freyre's writings.

In the preface to *Blacks in the Brazilian Soccer*, Freyre gives more support for the understanding of his theoretical formulation concerning soccer:

Soccer would have in a society like Brazil, largely formed by primitive elements in its culture, a great importance that only now has been studied under a sociological or parapsychological criterion. And it was natural to gain the particularly Brazilian character that it took. It became the means of expression, moral and socially approved by our people – by the Church, Public Opinion, Women, the Press - of psychic energies and of irrational pulses that without the development of soccer - or of some equivalent of soccer - in the true national institution that it is today, among us, would probably have assumed violent forms of expression contrary to the dominant morality in our society. The cangaceirismo would probably have developed into an urban gangsterism, with São Paulo degraded to an Italianized-Brazilian sub-Chicago of Al Capones. The free capoeira of Sampaio Ferraz would have probably faced the police in the cities under form of more serious conflicts than the old ones between toughs in the hills policemen in the avenues, now asphalted. The samba would have remained so particularly primitive, African, irrational, that its modern style would be ignored, with damage to our culture and for its hybrid vigor. Roguery would also have been preserved as entirely malefic or an inconvenience (FREYRE, 2003 apud RODRIGUES FILHO, 2003, p. 24-25).

To Freyre, soccer, even with its Brazilian characteristics, was already one of the responsible elements for social self-control and for the refinement of certain cultural conducts as *the cangaço*, *capoeira*, samba and the dances - obviously taking into account, the use of the hyperbole on the part of the author.

In another text Freyre supplements (1955, [1 f]):

Sociologists say that games - or game styles - can be classified, in a general way, as "individualist" (the one of the Greeks Athenians, for instance), "cooperative" (the British and Anglo-Saxons) and "militarist" (the Prussians, Nazis, Fascists). So that, if Brazilians, in their way of playing soccer, tend to be individualists rather than cooperative, they are in good company: they are with the Greeks. [...] with the most civilized, most polished, most aesthetic individuals who ever existed. Is it true that for practical effects of victories in the international tournaments nowadays, characterized by a clear predominance of Anglo-Saxon patterns [...] what does it mean for a game to be predominantly individualist in its style? Pure anarchy? The entire sacrifice of the group made for the individuals' caprices? Of course not. It means constant interaction between the collective effort of the group, and the feats, the initiatives, the surprises by individuals who, acting this way, stand out as heroes, are shown as ballet dancer-masters, add to the routine of the game, not only in self-benefit but in benefit of the group. It is what players like Leônidas do in soccer. They act under the impact of the African culture inheritance that tends to turn games into dances and even ballets; but they do not stop acting as a sport tradition marked in its origins by the Greek-Athenian paradigm. That paradigm in which the individual is not dissolved within the whole group, but maintains a certain and essential heroic freedom of expression and dramatic exhibition. Thus, Brazilians have nothing to be embarrassed about, when people say that our style of soccer gives too much expression to the feats of the heroes or individual ballet dancers. What we do need is to integrate that individualism with the discipline, without which the effort of a group is degraded, after all, into anarchical hysteria.

The extensive citation is necessary to assure the general understanding of Freyre's thought. It shows in a structural way the categories of individual, militarist and cooperative sports practices, and it highlights that the Brazilian style is the individualist kind. At the end of the text, he tries to articulate both categories - the individualist and the cooperative - not taking into account that each would opposed to the other.

After understanding that Freyre conceived soccer within his theoretical proposal, we continue, then, to diagnose which were the readings and interpretations of his work and its reflexes on sporting chronicle and, later in the academic environment.

III

Freyre made clear in his works, without a doubt, the presence of the mestizo (mulatto) as justification/solution for Brazilian society. Readings that several intellectuals - like José Lins do Rego and Mario Filho - and, later researchers made (and still do) regarding Freyre's writings about soccer, are similar to what is done with the theories made explicit in his most classic works: that the author was projecting on racial integration and the present ethnos in Brazil the alternative for the prosperity of the Country and its positioning in the international scenario. For that, the mulatto's insertion into society, conquering his space, and the introduction of elements of slave culture, would be the indication of the formation of the new model of Brazil - following that continuous timeline (initiated during the distant colonial period), a formulation that a steep price for the author of *Sobrados & Mocambos* (VELOSO; MADEIRA, 1999, p. 155).

Thus, the history of soccer can be regarded as a metaphor for the lineal explanatory model of Freyre, as well as the rural space of the master's house and the urban space of the

sobrado: a central idea imposed by the advanced settler - in the case of soccer, the English (an analogy to the patriarch) -, assimilated by the other races, black and Indian, gaining its own characteristics (swing and roguery), to, finally, starting from this hybridism, become another symbol that represented national success. This issue becomes perpetual, because, concluding the integration cycle and the mestizo's ascension in Brazilian soccer, Freyre's theory denies any type of tension, crisis or questioning regarding Brazilian players and their own - Dionysian - style of playing soccer.

Nonetheless, other researchers of the social sciences, such as Luiz Carlos Ribeiro (2002), Antonio Jorge Soares (2004), Fábio Franzini (2003) and Ricardo Lucena (2001), have emphasized that the previous affirmative – the one that, through soccer, there was inter-racial integration, ruled, mainly, by the incorporation of elements of the black, Portuguese and indigenous culture, and that this phenomenon happened in a continuous and practically peaceful and spontaneous way, starting in the 1930s, reaching an “utopian” apogee in the late 1950s and early 1960s - is a simplistic (if not mistaken) interpretation of Freyre's theoretical reference.

The analysis by such sports researchers, in synthesis, points out the validity of Freyre's work when it comes to socioethnographic reference produced mainly from his background in Cultural Anthropology. Thus, it is through Freyre that a new sociological model appears in Brazil, redirected, in methodological terms, to a quotidian perspective of the habits and, especially, centered in the subjects related to the formation and characterization of the Brazilian nationality - in Freyre's own words: *Brazilianness*. It is in this context that the author manifests:

In the "house" compound is where the basis of the biosocial complex that being Brazilian is: the Man who is nationally, telluric, expressively Brazilian, who already is distinguished for his manners of speaking, walking, smiling, loving, eating, feeling, thinking, playing soccer, of dancing samba or other dances (FREYRE, 1979, [1 ff]).

It is as part of this *Brazilianness* that soccer appears as object of study by followers of Gilberto Freyre's theory, even if, in a lot of opportunities, merely as an example.

IV

It seems that after the formulation of his central thesis and the intellectual debate between 1930 and 1950, Freyre stopped using soccer as a reference. It is enough to remind that, in a 1983 interview, he still used Garrincha, Pelé and Mario Filho's book *Blacks in Brazilian Soccer* as examples. Perhaps the most popular sport in Brazil has been used to exemplify and reinforce the so-called *Brazilianness* - the national identity based on miscegenation - having, after the successes in the World cups of 1958 and 1962, reached the apex, definitively consolidating Gilberto Freyre's thesis.

A reflection that is restricted only to the hypothetical field: why would sociologist Gilberto Freyre have prefaced Mario Filho's literary work (1947) explaining the presence of Blacks in Brazilian soccer as an essential condition to the game's development? Some researchers suggest that was clearly a racial issue (HELAL, 2001, apud HELAL; SOARES; LOVISOLO, 2001; DAMATTA, 1982) – an interpretation contradicted by Antonio Jorge Soares, who considered racism to be a secondary problem, stating that the main issue was the construction of a typically Brazilian identity (SOARES, 2001, apud HELAL; SOARES; LOVISOLO, 2001).

In spite of having confirmed that the purpose of the work *Blacks in Brazilian soccer* could have been an explicit way of attributing a degree of importance to those who, for decades, stayed at the fringes of football practice, implicitly, at the margins of the national ideals, and that there was an intrinsic need to form a new identity, only years later, at the end of the 1950 World Cup, black athletes would be accused by sporting chroniclers as the ones largely responsible for the Brazilian defeat. That included some journalists and columnists who had been somewhat influenced by Freyre's theory of racial integration (MUYLAERT, 2000). That means that Gilberto Freyre's theoretical formulation had not yet been incorporated by the writers in his circle, and that the idea that Europe was an example of civilization still prevailed. So much so that, in the case of the World cup, in those writers' opinion, Uruguay won because it was more advanced in this process of appropriation of the cultural values of the most civilized countries.

The merit, then, appears only after the conquests of 1958 and 1962, turning Mario Filho and, consequently, Gilberto Freyre, into icons of Brazilian intellectuality. The theory of racial integration, reinforced by the presence of athletes such as Pelé, Garrincha and Didi, gained a prophetic tone.

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Received in 24/07/2009

Revised in 11/02/2010

Accepted in 20/03/2010

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