

‘Deliver us from *foot-ball*, Amen’: a view of the sport by the *Lar Catholico*, in Juiz de Fora – MG (1920-1940)

‘Livrai-nos do *foot-ball*, amém’: o esporte visto pelo *Lar Catholico*, em Juiz de Fora – MG (1920-1940)

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Abstract

Although football was often seen as a symbol of modernity, progress, and civility, it also generated suspicions and rejections. In this text, we intend to shed light on little-known criticisms of the history of sport. We address the critique published in *Lar Catholico*, a Catholic weekly newsletter created by the Congregation of the Divine Word in 1919, in Juiz de Fora-MG. Our goal is to rescue the newsletter’s position in the 1920s and 1930s, identify the axis of its criticisms of football, and locate them in the context of disputes and trends that marked the period. In general, the criticisms of football and popular culture found in the newspaper reflected the fear of the Catholic elite regarding secular modernity. Football was seen as wild, dangerous, a moral threat capable of encouraging the profanation of Sunday, diverting young people from their virtues, and leading them to frivolous behavior. The defense of the faith and Christian values was, for the Congregation of the Divine Word, a way of resisting the secular project of modernization and continuing to exert influence on Brazilian families. Finally, we believe that our

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study indicates the existence of dissonant voices and nuances in the process of football dissemination in the interior of the country that cannot be ignored.

Keywords: Football; modernity; *Lar Catholico*; Juiz de Fora.

Resumo

O futebol, embora fosse tomado muitas vezes como símbolo de modernidade, progresso e civilidade, também gerou desconfianças e rejeições. Neste texto, pretendemos lançar luz sobre críticas pouco conhecidas pela história do esporte. Trata-se daquelas publicadas no *Lar Catholico*, semanário da Igreja Católica criado pela Congregação do Verbo Divino em 1919, em Juiz de Fora-MG. Nosso objetivo é resgatar o posicionamento do jornal nas décadas de 1920 e 1930, identificar o eixo de suas críticas ao futebol, e localizá-las no contexto de disputas e tendências que marcaram o período. De forma geral, as críticas ao futebol e a cultura popular presentes no jornal, refletem o medo da elite católica em relação à modernidade secular. O futebol era visto como selvagem, perigoso, uma ameaça moral, capaz de incentivar a profanação do domingo, desviar os jovens de suas virtudes, além de levá-los a comportamentos frívolos. A defesa da fé e dos valores cristãos era para a congregação do verbo divino, uma maneira de resistir ao projeto secular de modernização e continuar exercendo influência nas famílias brasileiras. Por fim, acreditamos que nosso estudo indica a existência de vozes dissonantes e nuances no processo de difusão do futebol pelo interior do país, que não podem ser ignoradas.

Palavras-chave: Futebol; Modernidade; *Lar Catholico*, Juiz de Fora.

How does football resemble God? In the devotion it provokes in many believers and in the suspicion it raises in many intellectuals.

(Eduardo Galeano)

Once a week, the football supporter leaves home and goes the stadium. The city disappears, the routine is forgotten, there is only the temple. Within that sacred space, the only religion that has no atheists showcases its divinities.

(Eduardo Galeano)

Football arrived in Brazil in the late 19th century, and in the first two decades of the 20th century it abandoned the status of a practice limited to wealthier classes and became popular, creating a new trend in the country. About the football initial trajectory in Brazil, there are several interesting

studies such as Pereira¹, Santos,² and Souza Neto³. It is also certain that the media played an important role in this process, by advertising and broadcasting the matches, feeding polemic debates and rivalry, spreading the specific vocabulary, creating competitions and prizes (see, for example: MELO⁴ and SILVA⁵).

However, despite being considered many times as a symbol of modernity, progress, and civility, football also generated suspicion and rejection. The most famous case might be that of the writer Lima Barreto, who described football as a segregating and futile practice, the expression of an excluding modernity project⁶. Graciliano Ramos was another writer who despised football, considering it a “short-lived” trend, and electing, ironically, kicking someone’s leg as the national sport. Other authors such as Oswald de Andrade, Mário de Andrade, and Antônio de Alcântara Machado had an ambiguous relation with the British sport. In the beginning, silence prevailed, maybe due to the fact that the sport did not fit the national authenticity ideal pursued by modernists. Soon after, however, the foreign element was placed in the background and the football transformed into a popular practice, “really Brazilian” – and started to be explored as the synthesis between local and global⁷.

In this text, we intend to shed some light on the less known and not completely explored criticism in the history of this sport. We refer to the

¹ PEREIRA, Leonardo Affonso de Miranda. *Footballmania: uma história social do futebol no Rio de Janeiro*. Rio de Janeiro: Nova Fronteira, 2000.

² SANTOS, João Manuel Casquinha Malaia. *Revolução vascaína: a profissionalização do futebol e a inserção sócio-econômica de negros e portugueses na cidade do Rio de Janeiro (1915-1934)*. Thesis (Economic History Doctoral Program). São Paulo: Universidade de São Paulo, 2010.

³ SOUZA NETO, Georgino Jorge de. *A invenção do torcer em Belo Horizonte: da assistência ao pertencimento clubístico (1904-1930)*. Dissertation (Leisure studies), Belo Horizonte: Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais, 2010.

⁴ MELO, Victor Andrade de. *Causa e consequência: esporte e imprensa no Rio de Janeiro no século XIX e década inicial do século XX*. In: HOLLANDA, Bernardo B.; MELO, Victor A. (org.). *O esporte na imprensa e a imprensa esportiva no Brasil*. Rio de Janeiro: 7Letras, 2012.

⁵ SILVA, Marcílio Rodrigues. *Futebol Brasileiro, invenção modernista*. In: CORNELSEN, Elcio Loureiro; AUGUSTIN, Günther Herwig; SILVA, Silvio Ricardo da (org.). *Futebol, linguagem, artes, cultura e lazer*. Rio de Janeiro: Jaguatirica, 2015.

⁶ CORREIA, Carlus Augustus J.; SOARES, Antônio Jorge G. *Lima Barreto e o futebol: as críticas de um literato ao jogo de bolapé*. Rio de Janeiro: Revista do Arquivo Geral da Cidade do Rio de Janeiro, n. 18, p. 149-171, 2020.

⁷ HOLLANDA, Bernardo Borges Buarque de. *Ecossistema da arte moderna? A recepção ao futebol em São Paulo e o movimento modernista nas décadas de 1920 e 1930*. In: CORNELSEN, Elcio Loureiro; AUGUSTIN, Günther Herwig; SILVA, Silvio Ricardo da (org.). *Futebol, linguagem, artes, cultura e lazer*. Rio de Janeiro: Jaguatirica, 2015.

publications of *Lar Catholico*, a weekly newsletter by the Catholic church created in 1919, in Juiz de Fora-MG. Our aim is to rescue the position of that newsletter in the 1920s and 1930s, identifying the axes of their critique to football, and locating them in the context of disputes and trends that marked that period. Inspired by the work put forward by the English historian Edward P. Thompson^{8,9}, we sought to approach this history in a top-down perspective, valuing the popular everyday life themes, as well as sources and places that usually are left out of the official historiography such as the football practice in the interior of the state of Minas Gerais.

Our first contact with the newsletter *Lar Catholico* occurred via the Brazilian digital library of periodicals (HDB - Hemeroteca Digital Brasileira), which shelters a collection of Brazilian newspapers/periodicals. The use of platforms such as this library has been an invaluable resource for researchers and historians for facilitating the access and exploration of such material. Despite that, and in agreement with Brasil and Nascimento¹⁰, we recognize that this digital tool presents limitations and challenges, which require methodological rigor during the reading, contextualization, and data interpretation. After having read some material (which was the source of another work), we observed that the popularization of leisure practices considered “modern”, mainly football and cinema, caused discomfort to those responsible for the newsletter from Juiz de Fora. For this reason, and for having noticed that studies on the football critique were scarce, we decided to investigate the topic.

Due to the large number of issues and pages, we opted for working with a search using descriptors. We recognize that this choice presents risks since although this is a facilitating and useful tool, some occurrences might not be identified by the search system or might even hamper the perception of the whole. To minimize these risks, we sought to read complete editions distributed along the time cut, seeking to identify the most used lexical items to refer to the British sport (which resulted in the terms foot-ball, football, and *futebol*), and better understand the context of their use. After completing this first task, we crossed the information found in the newsletter with the

⁸ THOMPSON, Edward Palmer. *Costumes em comum: estudos sobre a cultura popular tradicional*. São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 1998.

⁹ THOMPSON, Edward Palmer. *As peculiaridades dos ingleses e outros artigos*. Organizadores: Antonio Luigi Negro e Sergio Silva. 2ª ed. Campinas, SP: Editora da Unicamp, 2012.

¹⁰ BRASIL, Eric; NASCIMENTO, Leonardo Fernandes. *História Digital: Reflexões a partir da Hemeroteca Digital Brasileira e do uso de CAQDAS na reelaboração da pesquisa histórica*. Rio de Janeiro, Estudos Históricos. v. 33, n. 69, p. 196-219, 2020.

bibliography to reflect upon how the statements regarding the sport related to broader processes that were in development in the Catholic church and the dispute for religious hegemony in the region.

The scenery: Juiz de Fora in the early 20th century

“Manchester mineira”, “Farol de Minas”, “Atenas de Minas”, “Barcelona de Minas”, are some of the nicknames Juiz de Fora received throughout its history¹¹. Manuel Bandeira, in his poem *Declaração de amor* (love statement), called it “Primeiro sorriso de Minas Gerais” (Minas Gerais’ first smile). And the first stanza of the city anthem reads: “Viva a Princesa de Minas, Viva a bela Juiz de Fora! Que caminha na vanguarda Do progresso estrada a fora!” (Hurrah to the Minas’ Princess, hurrah to the Juiz de Fora beauty! That who walks at the forefront of progress along the way!). This city was born along the New Way, a road opened by the Portuguese to transport the gold found in Minas Gerais, and is marked by certain cultural hybridity. The prosperity of coffee production, and the early industrial development allied to its proximity to Rio de Janeiro, favored its urban dynamics, which located it midway between the baroque style of Minas and the lifestyle of the capital of the country.

In the passage from the 19th century to the 20th century, the ideals of modernity, hygiene, and education, which were highly valued in Rio de Janeiro, were also observed in Juiz de Fora¹². A highlight of that time was the opening of the Hydroelectric Power Plant in Marmelos in 1889, which made Juiz de Fora the first city in Latin America to have hydroelectric public illumination. The creation of the Medicine and Surgery Society of Juiz de Fora (SMCJF - Sociedade de Medicina e Cirurgia de Juiz de Fora) occurred in the same year, along with several urban improvements such as the implementation of horsecar drawn trams (1881), telephone (1883), telegraph (1884), and households with piped water (1885). In the economic area, financial institutions were founded such as the Banco Territorial e Mercantil de Minas Gerais (1887) and the Banco de Crédito Real de Minas Gerais (1889). Industries also appeared at the time such as the Companhia de Fiação e Tecelagem Industrial Mineira (1883) and the Companhia Têxtil Bernardo Mascarenhas (1888). Regarding education, schools run by congregations outstood at the

¹¹ TOMAZ, Vanderlei. Porque “Manchester Mineira”? *Diário Regional Digital*. 25th March 2017. Retrieved from: <<https://diarioregionaldigital.com.br/?p=71370>>. Accessed on: 24 Oct. 2023.

¹² SOARES, Priscila Gonçalves; MORORO, Anderson. Futebol e práticas corporais no final do século XIX e início do XX em Juiz de Fora/ MG. *Rio de Janeiro: Recorde: Revista de História do Esporte*. v.4, p. 1-17, 2011.

time with the foundation of the Juiz de Fora High School and Seminary, linked to the Methodist Church, created in 1889 and renamed in the following year Colégio Americano Granbery (American Granbery School); and the Academia de Comércio, first commerce high education institute in Brazil, founded in 1891 and transformed in a basic education school in 1901, when it started to be administered by the Divine Word Catholic Congregation; the Stella Matutina School, founded by the Servants of the Holy Spirit Congregation in 1902; and the Santa Catarina School, founded in 1909 by the Sisters of Santa Catarina Congregation.

In the leisure area, in the early 20th century, the city had some theaters such as the Juiz de Fora Theater (1889), the first Minas Museum, the Mariano Procópio Museum (1915), and the Clube Ginástico de Juiz de Fora (1909). In addition, the city might have staged one of the first football matches played in the country, more precisely at the American Granbery School, in 1893 (thus, a year before the arrival of Charles Miller at the Santos Harbour):

The Foot-ball and Tennis was inaugurated. The first field Day was held on 24th June 1893, with jumping, races, indianclubs, tennis, football among Greeks and Trojans. This sentence was found in the first book of minutes of the Granbery School. This seems to have been a simple statement by the first rector, John McPhearson Lander, but it gains importance if we remember that the first football match in Brazil was played on 15th April 1895 by workers of the English companies that were established in the state of São Paulo. This might mean that based on the historical documents kept until today, the first football match in Brazil was actually played at the Granbery School, in 1893 [...] And, if we do not consider this first football match played in 1893, at least the first match played in the state of Minas Gerais occurred here: in 1894, between two teams of students of this institution¹³.

The closeness with Rio de Janeiro, the Granbery's pioneer spirit, and the significant presence of German immigrants who arrived with the construction of the União Indústria road, in the mid-19th century, contributed to the development of an intense relationship with football in Juiz de Fora. Carlos Fernando Cunha Júnior¹⁴ identified several articles describing matches in the

¹³ O GRANBERIENSE. Granberriense, Juiz de Fora, ano 76, n.1, abr. 2007.

¹⁴ CUNHA JUNIOR, C. F. F. Práticas corporais em Juiz de Fora (1876-1915). Campinas, SP: Pro-Posições, v. 22, n. 3, p. 51-65, 2016.

city in the newspaper *O Pharol*, in the first decade of the 20th century, which indicate the growing popularity of the sport. Reports of matches played in the city¹⁵, the foundation of clubs such as Athletic Club Juiz de Fora (1904), Tupynambás (1911), Tupi (1912), and Sport Club Juiz de Fora (1916), along with the organization of the first football championship of that city (1918) indicate the consolidation of the sport in the local preference.

However, not all newspapers and institutions were in favor of this process of football dissemination in the city. This seems to be the case of the Divine Word Congregation, the publisher of the *Lar Catholico* newsletter. The congregation was formed by German priests who arrived in the city in 1899, invited by Dom Silvério Gomes Pimenta, archbishop of the Mariana Diocese, aiming to develop the Romanization process and Ultramontane Reform started in the city in the 1890s.

For centuries, the Catholic church in Brazil was subordinated to the '*benepiacito regio*' ruling, which determined the emperor as their maximum authority, with the power of limiting even the application of Papal encyclical and letters within the Brazilian territory. A popular, devotional, and superstitious Catholicism was practiced in the country, it was organized in lay associations, many times marginal to the Official Church, and characterized by rituals and celebrations that were very close to paganism. Those practices were marked by the excessive consumption of beverages and food, singing, drumming, dancing, and moments of "carnival like celebrations". Along with the weakening of the link between the throne and the altar, worsened by the "religious issue"¹⁶ in 1872, and mainly with the Republic Proclamation in 1889 (when the Catholic Church lost its status of official religion of the State), the movement of "romanization" was strengthened inside the church. It sought to "recover the Catholicism" in the country, confirming the authority

¹⁵ DIAS, Cleber; COUTO, Euclides de Freitas; CUNHA JÚNIOR, Carlos Fernando da; SILVA, Luciano Pereira; SOUZA NETO, Georgino Jorge de. Esportes nos sertões das Gerais. In: DIAS, Cleber; ROSA, Maria Cristina. História do lazer nas Gerais. Belo Horizonte: Editora UFMG, 2019.

¹⁶ This was a polemic issue between the Church and the Empire, due to the punishment imposed by the bishop D. Pedro Maria de Lacerda to the priest José Luís de Almeida Martins, for having given a speech in an event organized by the Masonic Lodge Grande Oriente do Lavradio, paying homage to the Viscount of Rio Branco, a Masonic Grand Master and President of the Council of Ministers of the Empire. The Pope had condemned the Masonry as well as other secret societies, and the punishment to the priest José Luís Martins was supported by the bishop of Pará (D. Macedo Costa) and the Diocese of Pernambuco (D. Vital). Confraternities that wished to keep their masonic members, however, presented an "appeal" to the Crown, which was accepted by the emperor and resulted in the conviction and prison of the bishops listed above (who were only forgiven and freed in 1875). The episode weakened even more the relationship between the throne and sectors of the church in Brazil.

of Rome over the Brazilian church (and its consequent separation from the local power), and its subordination to foreign missions and congregations, sent to control the doctrine, the faith, and the education of local priests and lay individuals^{17 18 19}. The term “ultramontanism” designates a reaction movement occurred in the Catholic church to face political changes created by revolutionary processes led by some liberal groups, mainly in Europe. Ultramontanism is understood as a conservative Catholicism, promoted by the Popes Gregório XVI (1831-1846), Pio IX (1846-1848), Leão XIII (1878-1903), Pio X (1903-1914), and Pio XI (1922-1939), through Papal encyclicals. This corpus of theses presents a medieval nostalgia, which blames the secular modernity that despises the Church authority for the stability, peace, and justice crises. Therefore, that movement is a set of theoretical and practical measures seeking to reestablish the orthodoxy of liturgy and the catholic doctrine, and reinforce the Pope’s authority over the Church (the principle of Papal infallibility, for example, was established in that context, after the Vatican I Council, in 1870), and the Church’s authority over society as a whole²⁰. According to Ana Rosa Silva and Thaís Carvalho²¹, the Catholic Church was not against modernity, but tried to influence the public opinion based on a project of modernity founded on the defense of the catholic religion as the “only truth”. The Pope was presented as the greatest enemy of Revolution and support of the true progress and the true civilization, that is, while refusing liberalism, enlightenment, and the social transformations that marked that moment, the Church claimed for modernity icons and took advantage of “modern” tools such as the written press.

In the early 1920s, this reform process was still in development. Although the Catholic Church was no longer the State Official religion since the Republic Proclamation, it still sought to keep its privileges, influencing the ruling elite, and imposing their guidelines on the Brazilian population.

¹⁷ OLIVEIRA, Anderson José Machado de. Os bispos e os leigos: reforma católica e irmandades no Rio de Janeiro imperial. Juiz de Fora: Locus: Revista De História , 2002.

¹⁸ ZULIAN, Rosângela, PEREIRA, Denise. Ponta Grossa: rumo aos pressupostos da romanização. Ponta Grossa: Revista de História Regional, vol. 11, n. 2, p. 71-92, inverno, 2006.

¹⁹ MARTINS, Karla Denise. “Dai a César o que é de César e a Deus o que é de Deus”: relações entre a Igreja e o Estado no Pará oitocentista. Ponta Grossa: Revista de História Regional, v. 13, n. 2, p. 70-103, Inverno, 2008.

²⁰ NEVES, Fernando Arthur de Freitas; ANDRADE, Allan Azevedo. Discursos ultramontanos de D. Macedo Costa sobre o papel da mulher na sociedade. Maringá: Revista Brasileira de História das Religiões, ANPUH, Ano XIV, n. 41, p. 205-225, set/dez, 2021.

²¹ SILVA, Ana Rosa Clochet da; CARVALHO, Thaís da Rocha. A cruzada ultramontana contra os erros da modernidade. Maringá: Revista Brasileira de História das Religiões, ANPUH, Ano XII, n. 35, p. 09-45, set/dez 2019.

The foundation of the magazine *A Ordem*, in 1921, and the Center Dom Vital, in the following year, were important events in the organization of the Catholic intellectuals, aiming at promoting political, education, mediatic, and cultural actions to fight the advancement of secularization in social life. Initiatives such as the construction of the Christ the Redeemer statue (inaugurated in 1931), and the country's consecration to Our Lady of Aparecida (in the same year) were measures that sought to confirm the Brazilian "catholic roots".²²

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Within such context, in Juiz de Fora, the Divine Word congregation took over the Mother Church of Santo Antônio and the Academia de Comércio school, in 1901, transforming it in an important education center for the elite based on catholic and conservative principles²⁵. Also guided by this pedagogical and conservative spirit, it created the newsletter *Lar Catholico* in 1919. This was a weekly newsletter with 4 to 8 pages associated with the idea of Good Press²⁶, aimed at defending values that agreed with catholic principles such as the defense of family, moral, and good habits. The creation of the Juiz de Fora diocese, separated from the Mariana archbishop, in 1924, also suggests the Catholic Church intention of broadening their presence in Juiz de Fora²⁷. By creating the newsletter, the members of the Divine Word Congregation followed instructions received from the Brazilian Episcopate, defending the Roman Catholic religion doctrine and opposing everything that was seen as a Church enemy such as communism, films and books that were not aligned with Catholic standards and some sports such as boxing and football²⁸. Next, we analyze in detail the newsletter and its posture regarding football.

²² LEITE, Edgard. Jackson de Figueiredo e o problema da ordem moral. Maringá: Revista Brasileira de História das Religiões, ANPUH, Ano IX, n. p26, p. 31-42, set/dez, 2016.

²³ GODOY, João Miguel Teixeira; MIGUEL, Bruna Aparecida. O Centro Dom Vital nos tempos de Alceu Amoroso Lima (1928-1950). Maringá: Revista Brasileira de História das Religiões, ANPUH, Ano X, n. 28, p. 193-218, mai/set, 2017.

²⁴ PINHEIRO FILHO, Fernando Antonio. A invenção da ordem: intelectuais católicos no Brasil. São Paulo: Tempo Social, Revista de sociologia da USP, v. 19, n. 1, p. 33-49, junho de 2007.

²⁵ PEREIRA, Mabel Salgado. Romanização e Reforma Católica Ultramontana da Igreja de Juiz de Fora: projeto e limites (1890-1924). Dissertation (Master's in History), Rio de Janeiro: Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro, 2002.

²⁶ The Good Press, for the Catholic Church, was a way of disseminating news, opinions, and views according to the Catholic doctrine and moral, as opposed to the bad press, which according to the Brazilian Episcopate's ideas miseducated and poisoned individuals' thoughts (Pereira, op. cit, 2002).

²⁷ ALMEIDA, Rosiléa Archanjo de. O primeiro bispado de Juiz de Fora diante aspectos seculares no início do século XX. Balneário Camboriú: Revista Científica Sophia, v. 14, n. 1, 2023.

²⁸ Paradoxically, there is evidence that some of the first initiatives to introduce this sport here were of priests who taught in religious schools, as indicated by José Moraes dos Santos Neto in *Visão do jogo*:

Football in the Catholic Home

We found a text entitled *Sincera camaradagem* (Sincere Comradeship) from 1921, which tells Herberto's history.

Herberto always concerned his parents and siblings with his impossible mischiefs. He was rather naughty, almost setting the house in fire or upside down. His life, after finishing homework (since he was a hardworking student and always got good grades) was playing football, the blindman's buff game in the living room, among porcelain vases and statues, pranking the employees and many other <tricks> that the readers know well and I do not have to specify them as if they were technical terms. Well, one afternoon in May, while playing his beloved foot-ball, Herberto broke his left leg when defending a goal for his team²⁹.

After characterizing Herberto as a naughty rebel, the narrative follows to a moment of more seriousness, describing the accident suffered by the boy during the football match. The excerpt is concluded with a catechesis lesson, in which the vicar reminds the readers of the commandment that says that "abstaining from everything that is a servant's job is the main order by God; since the profanation of Sunday is a serious offence and we should sanctify the Lord's Day at least by going to the mass"³⁰.

The short story told indicates one important characteristic of that newsletter and suggests the first axis in its critique of football. Firstly, it allows the identification of whom it aims at. Short stories as this one referring to Herberto, always finished with a moral lesson following the Catholic doctrine, are common on the pages of *Lar Catholico*. The theme of the stories told shows some concern of that publication with family themes, mainly the guidance of youngsters and children according to Christian principles. Women, for their central role in a traditional configuration of Catholic family, as wives, mothers, or grandmothers became the main target audience of that publication. Lucena³¹ stated that women were seen by the Church as its main allies, since they mentored their children's religious education. Neves

primórdios do futebol no Brasil (Game view: the beginning of football in Brazil). São Paulo: Cosac Naify, 2002.

²⁹ SINCERA CAMARADAGEM. *Lar Catholico*, Juiz de Fora, n.26, 1921, p.8

³⁰ SINCERA CAMARADAGEM. *Lar Catholico*, Juiz de Fora, n.26, 1921, p.8

³¹ LUCENA, Lili Paola. "Nenhum Lar sem o Lar Católico!": Discursos e vivências sobre gênero, família e sexualidade no jornal *Lar Católico* (1954- 1986). Dissertation (master's in History). Universidade Federal de Juiz de Fora, Juiz de Fora, 2011.

and Andrade³² also identified this as the main role of the women in society, according to the Catholic ultramontane discourse.

The mother was responsible for the religious education of her children, explaining the dogmas, teaching prayers, and the Christian moral. The ultramontane campaign sought to value the mother's role to bring believers back to Church, ascribing to the Christian mother the role model, the guardianship, and educator whenever needed, disciplining their children so that they would not give in to temptations of modern society, and helping her husband in whatever might be necessary (p. 220).

Herberto's short story also indicates one of the publication motivations to oppose to football since that sport favored the profanation of Sunday. This critique reappears in other moments on the pages of *Lar Catholico*.

Sunday might become and is many times the day of devil. It sounds like a paradox to say that, while it is not more than the truth. The day that should be devoted to the exercise of virtue by Christians, became an instrument of sin for many. There are Christians, and they are not few, who forget their most sacred duties. They do not go to the mass on Sunday, do not hear God's Word. Sunday has been used by many only for leisure, churches are empty, while cinemas, circuses, and theaters are crowded. They do not go to the mass because they organized a picnic, arranged some hunting or a foot-ball match. (...) Sunday profanation is a crime that provokes extraordinarily God's punishment. (...) The Lord's justice shall not be long and the punishments shall follow uninterruptedly including plant and animal diseases, revolutions, epidemics, war, and etc³³.

In the text, entitled *Evangelho* (the Gospel), published by *Lar Catholico* in 1926, we observed the concern with Sunday profanation. The author even affirmed that the neglect with the sacred rest on that day can cause *plant and animal diseases, revolutions, epidemics, and war*. This kind of arguments seek to convince the believers to change their behavior, by means of fear of the divine punishment. In the excerpt, leisure and entertainment practices such as the infamous Sunday football, are practices that deviate from Christian values.

³² NEVES, Fernando Arthur de Freitas; ANDRADE, Allan Azevedo. Discursos ultramontanos de D. Macedo Costa sobre o papel da mulher na sociedade. Maringá: Revista Brasileira de História das Religiões, ANPUH, Ano XIV, n. 41, p. 205-225, set/dez, 2021.

³³ EVANGELHO. *Lar Catholico*. Juiz de Fora, n.37, 1926, p.290.

The beginning of the 1920s was marked by great workers' unrest in the city. Increased cost of living (mainly rent and food) degraded even more the precarious survival conditions of the local workers³⁴. Supported by organizations such as the Sociedade Beneficente Operária de Juiz de Fora (Workers' Charity society of Juiz de Fora), founded in 1918 and later transformed into the Federação Operária Mineira (Workers' Federation of Minas Gerais), the workers of the city organized great demonstrations and two strikes, in 1920 and 1924. The agenda of such demonstrations demanded pay rise and the creation of open markets (selling cheaper food to the population), fought for an 8-hour limit in the daily workload, and the right of paid rest on Sunday³⁵. The Church was worried with the social and political movements of the time, the conquered time off work, and the growing diversification in the offer of entertainment.

Rio de Janeiro has just witnessed a movement of opinion and feelings towards the weekly rest, or more specifically, the Sunday rest. I do not know which results will follow this movement, but one thing is certain, that is, the fight for life, and the concern with earnings and pursuit of pleasure, wreck the body. Because the rest I refer to is not only for body relaxation, it is the spirit rest. Spending Sundays eating too much, going to theaters, foot-ball matches, cinemas in the evening, etc. etc., might be whatever you readers want it to be, but it is not a rest at all, not here, not anywhere else³⁶.

Sunday was considered a day for relaxation and reflection by the Catholic principles, and it was continuously threatened by a growing variety of entertainment options and distractions, typical of urban life, which were more attractive than the mass and took believers away from the strict religious doctrine. The *Lar Catholico* spared no efforts to alert its readers of the dangers that underlay such modernity.

Foot-ball made another victim. The former mayor D. Carlos Sampaio's son, a 20-year-old lad, died as a consequence of a strong hit of the ball in his kidneys' region³⁷.

³⁴ OLIVEIRA, Luís Eduardo de. Os trabalhadores e a cidade: a formação do proletariado de Juiz de Fora e suas lutas por direitos (1877-1920). 1. ed. Rio de Janeiro: Editora FGV, 2010.

³⁵ DUTRA, Eliana Regina de Freitas. Apontamentos sobre uma experiência de luta operária na Zona da Mata de Minas Gerais. São Paulo: Revista Brasileira de História. v. 5, n. 10, p. 54-98, mar/ago de 1985.

³⁶ OUTROS ESTADOS. *Lar Catholico*. Juiz de Fora, n.37, 1926, p.290.

³⁷ OUTROS ESTADOS. *Lar Catholico*. Juiz de Fora, 1923, p. 7.

Once more, the strategy used was to promote fear. When addressing the death of the young man, son of the former mayor of Rio de Janeiro, the publication suggested that the tragedy was supposedly just *one more* caused by football. Even when not killing, the football practice could have serious consequences:

- Dear Vicar!
- What do you need, D. Fifina?
- I'm bringing my Chiquinho, who almost kills me every day...
- How does it happen?
- He fights, steals, and seems to have the devil in him.
- (...)
- And what does he do on Sundays?
- What, on Sundays?
- Don't you send him to the mass?
- I do, but he doesn't go, he doesn't want it.
- Ah! Doesn't he want it? And do you accept that? How about catechesis, don't you send him?
- At the time of the catechesis, my Chiquinho goes to the cinema, or to the foot-ball. My husband is good friends with the sport and wants to see his children educated in the American style.
- Ah! American style? Just like Chiquinho, isn't it, D. Fifina?
- (...)
- What kind of advice can you give me, dear Vicar?
- My advice is one only, D. Fifina: go and book a place for your beloved child in the correction home.
- Correction home?
- Or in jail; It will also do.
- In jail?
- Yes, Madam. Because earlier or later, Chiquinho, Chico, Chicão, will end up in one of these places with this miseducation. The child shall send his parents to the cemetery and the parents shall send their child to prison. Where there is no religion, there is no awareness, where there is lack of moral, there is no respect, there is no order, no discipline – it is hell in life, do you understand, D. Fifina?³⁸.

In this case, the dispute between the Academia de Comércio and the American Granbery school (linked to the Methodist church) by the direction of the education of the elite of Juiz de Fora becomes evident. The newsletter direct critique of the liberal and sports driven “American style education”

³⁸ AH!... Lar Catholico. Juiz de Fora, n.43, 1933, p.340-341

proposed by its competitor intended to associate it to an unruly lifestyle, where there was no order, discipline, or respect to hierarchy. Another text published warned the readers about the consequences of a non-religious education, narrating the story of a family who opted for enrolling their child in a school that did not require catechesis from its students.

In the school without God, the brat swallowed and assimilated reading, arithmetic, writing, grammar, and every night said the lessons to his parents. (...)

In addition to such deep knowledge, the young man acquired many arts, in his comings and goings from and to school. He became an expert in kicking a leather ball represented by an orange, on a foot-ball pitch represented by the sidewalk. For looking at the cinema posters, he memorized the names of the “stars” of his time. Assimilated from the English language enough to talk about goals, shoots, offside, back, and other sublime expressions. He also memorized the sequence of twenty-five animals from the gambling game and always put his money on one of them, every time he could steal a tostão (Brazilian currency at the time) from home. He played truant very often, wandering in the suburbs accompanied by other naughty guys, looking for fun pranks. When he was twelve, the student was advanced in many matters, but not in the love of God (...)

Can you see the chain effect? The boy, exempted from divine moral, developed gradually human moral, without any basis when separated from the celestial law. Lust arrived, followed by stealing habits, and disrespect for his parents came next! (...) My God – exclaimed the mother, what have we done to have such a soulless child?

What have you done to God, madam? This is a good one! You instructed – if this can be called to instruct – educated your child away from Christianity. The boy started as a pagan, studied in a pagan school, became a teenager as a pagan, and now treats his parents in a pagan way. “For they have sown the wind, and they shall reap the whirlwind”. This is what you wanted, madam, thus this is what you get. The person that is not governed up to twelve years old shall live an unruly life up to their death³⁹.

It seems relevant to highlight a bit of the education context at the time. New pedagogical ideas were gaining force in the national scenery, those would be synthesized in 1932, in the Manifesto dos Pioneiros da Educação (Manifest

³⁹ ESCOLHERÁ MAIS TARDE. *Lar Catholico*. Juiz de Fora, n.50, 1938, p.398.

of the Pioneers of the New Education). Among other issues, Anísio Teixeira, Afrânio Peixoto, Fernando de Azevedo, and other intellectuals who signed that document defended the state, mandatory, free of charge and lay school. The Catholic Church was a strong opposer to the ideas of the Manifest, explaining that a lay school would miseducate, without religion there would be no moral education^{40 41}. In 1931, the Frères Theodore Dumont – FTD publisher (owned by the Maristas Priests Congregation), released the Foreign Language Teaching Manual, a collective publication that presented the Church's assessment of foreign writers, poets, philosophers, and historians and which many times described them as immoral, perverts, bohemian, and astray, among other unfriendly adjectives⁴².

From the Church's view, religious neutrality, secularism, and pluralism of beliefs was the same as religious indifference, or even, anti-Christianity. Football was associated with this modern education, in the "American style", "Godless", and without authority, which was being strengthened:

A free thinker, a showoff, said he had a son that despite not being baptized, was strong and robust, played foot-ball very well, and got good marks at school. A serious man remarked: "I have a rooster at home, which takes care of the yard perfectly, fights a lot with the other rooster, sings many times a day, and will not be baptized either!..."⁴³.

In addition to contributing to the profanation of Sunday, football was also related to a "modern" lifestyle seen as unruly and immoral, which was not guided by the traditional values and codes of that time. "If you want to shine in society, do not dust yourself at the library, nor defend honesty, you should rather ornament yourself, show worldliness in writing and speaking, and memorize some *foot-ball terms*"⁴⁴. For *Lar Catholico*, that sport was a symbol of an easy and vulgar life.

⁴⁰ Among the three "education agencies", family, Church, and the State, the priority should be, according to the Catholics borne by the two former ones, considered "natural". Thus, secularism and the education state monopoly were against the natural and divine order. Likewise, the Church was against the compulsory requirement of education, stating that the mass of illiterate individuals kept the purest virtues of the Brazilian soul, and called "Marxist" the proposal of free education for all (SAVIANI, 2013).

⁴¹ SAVIANI, Dermeval. *História das ideias pedagógicas no Brasil*. 4 ed. Campinas, SP: Autores Associados, 2013

⁴² SOARES, Maria Lucia de Amorim; NOGUEIRA, Eliete Jussara; GOMES, Luiz Fernando; PETARNELLA, Leandro. Manifesto dos Pioneiros versus Manual Didático de Literaturas estrangeiras: Igreja Católica frente à Revolução escolanovista. *Campinas: Revista HISTEDBR On-Line*, n. 42, p. 133-142, jun/2011.

⁴³ SEMENTES. *Lar Catholico*. Juiz de Fora, n.44, 1934, p.346

⁴⁴ PINGOS. *Lar Catholico*. Juiz de Fora, n.37, 1926, p.290.

Another short story, published in 1928, depicted a grandmother and granddaughter talking about the differences between their times. The grandmother disapproved of the young ladies because they had no domestic virtues, they wore short clothes, and were more interested in cinema than in boys. And the granddaughter reacted by saying: And the boys? Look who speaks! Almost all of them are useless, neurasthenic, only thinking about morphine and cabarets, or are not more than wild beasts with their *football* and other games like this”⁴⁵. More than confirming the popularity of football among young lads, the excerpt classifies the practice of this sport as “wild”, therefore, incompatible with the civility expected from well-behaved youngsters of the elite of Juiz de Fora.

Modernism is sometimes quite rude, ruthless, and soulless. Since this materialism wave has invaded the world, the Christian meaning of life has disappeared gradually. This fact is very sad, but unfortunately, it is true. The modern citizen living in the era of the radio and the Zepellin, does not know the kindness of feelings, this fine sensitiveness that only noble minds possess. The ideal today is to show muscles, to kick, and as the slang says “pose as an athlete”. The black American who is a boxing champion is one of the greatest idols of many people. Yankee movies, foot-ball, boxing and the Far-West spoiled the good taste of our boys and girls⁴⁶.

This excerpt shows a critique of modernism, suggesting that it contributes to the loss of the Christian meaning of life. That author criticized the American popular culture, here represented by the cinema, boxing, and football, which, according to him, corrupted young individuals, their sensitiveness, and the Christian meaning of life.

Football gained its modern format in the elite English schools, as a teaching practice that sought to educate young individuals according to the values required for the defense of British imperialist interests. Such sport, according to the *Lar Catholico*, was a dangerous, mind numbing, and frivolous practice that deviated them from the things that were really important for their education.

Can you see that weak being that goes over there, with her thin legs, like the stork's legs, barely touching the avenue ground

⁴⁵ HONTEM E HOJE. *Lar Catholico*. Juiz de Fora, n.41, 1928, p.326.

⁴⁶ PREGANDO. *Lar Catholico*. Juiz de Fora, n.47, 1937, p.320.

with fast and restless feet? Can you see? Notice... see how thin the cloth covering her body is... that is Lili Palhares, the sensitive type: fragile, frivolous, ignorant. There is one thing certain in her: unawareness of her own condition. (...)

And this frivolity, she gained from her education. Lili is unable to present a syllogism and is found with her cold hands in the foot-ball tournaments. Between Dickens and Chateaubriand, she prefers Ramon Novarro. Knows nothing about Zélia's life and has never heard of Mme. Curie; but can imitate, in celluloid what is in marble, any of these pretentious universal calamities, called North American cinema. (...)

Lili goes to the beach almost naked, showing her body, and relates with her male acquaintances in a quite consenting manner, a dangerous generosity of prejudice, which quite often results in the last collapse of the natural decency. Her closest friends are those guys as soft as a lettuce, whose brain is only different from a carrot for not being edible...

In such environment of dense mental opacity where sideburns are cared of, prince-styled flares are worn, and the eyes seek foot-ball-related stuff – Lili's ignorance is stratified and consolidated⁴⁷.

According to the publishers of *Lar Catholico*, catholic women should focus their attention on intrafamily relationships, limiting themselves to the private space and devoting their time to take care of their children and husband. In such perspective, Lili Palhares, the character in the short story above, synthesizes several behaviors that shocked the Catholic Church at the time which include going to the beach in bathing clothes, being friends with men, liking fashion and cinema, and being nervous, with cold hands, when cheering in a football match. Such image was not in accordance with the standard of a beautiful, modest woman that would dedicate her life to her family and household chores. Lili was a *modern woman*, who challenged conservative values. Football along with other entertainments, transformed the everyday life of the city introducing young individuals to new interests and habits. The newsletter's target audience was the women of that time, therefore, it saw in this kind of behavior a serious threat to the order it sought to keep, and this had to be fought.

⁴⁷ LILI PALHARES. *Lar Catholico*. Juiz de Fora, n.35, 1929, p.278.

Concluding Remarks

During the period in which the *Lar Catholico* published their critique of football in Juiz de Fora, the little Karol Józef Wojtyła played as a goalkeeper in football matches in Poland. At the same time, in Argentina, Jorge Mario Bergoglio was born and soon became a well-known and passionate supporter of the San Lorenzo de Almagro team. After some decades, both would become, respectively, Pope John Paul II and Pope Francis, and the Catholic Church would change their view of football.

In the early 20th century, Juiz de Fora outstood as the most important industrial center of Minas Gerais. The dynamism of its economy, and the closeness with the capital of the newly installed Republic, favored the circulation of ideas and practices. Taking care of the education of young people and children, either via formal education, as offered by the Academia de Comércio School, or by disseminating ideas through their newsletter *Lar Catholico*, was part of the strategy of the Divine Word Congregation, aligned with the Catholic Church, to keep their influence over the local elite.

Between the 1920s and 1930s, which is the period under analysis in this study, football was cited in the Catholic newsletter several times, as a Symbol of a *modern* lifestyle that was against the Church values. The British sport spoiled Sunday relaxation, desecrating the holy day and deviating young people from the mass. In addition, it was associated with a pagan type of education, which led to an unruly, stupid, and frivolous life, incompatible with the order, moral, and civility standards proposed by the Church.

Rescuing the texts found in *Lar Catholico* helped us to better understand how football spread in the interior of the Brazilian territory. When analyzing these excerpts, we can get some tips about the popularity of this sport among young people in the city in the 1920s. At the same time, they evidenced that the practice was not well-accepted by the country's elite, who considered it incompatible with their values and beliefs. Likewise, it is common in the historiography of football in Brazil that the media role is emphasized as a relevant disseminating agent advertising the practice. Even if this is not enough to invalidate this whole thesis, our study indicated that there are shades and dissident voices, which cannot be ignored.

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