

BETWEEN TRACKS AND TRYSS: RUGBY, MODERNITY, AND DEPENDENCY IN NINETEENTH-CENTURY BRAZIL AND ARGENTINA

ENTRE TRILHOS E TRYSS: RÚGBI, MODERNIDADE E DEPENDÊNCIA NO BRASIL E NA ARGENTINA DO SÉCULO XIX 

ENTRE RIELES Y TRYSS: RUGBY, MODERNIDAD Y DEPENDENCIA EN EL BRASIL Y ARGENTINA DEL SIGLO XIX 

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Abstract: The aim of this study was to analyze the economic forces that enabled the introduction of rugby in Brazil and Argentina in the mid-19th century. Based on a critique grounded in the Marxist tradition, Grounded in the Marxist tradition, this study moves beyond interpretations focused on surface-level aspects such as English immigration and foundational myths surrounding key sports figures. Using the category pattern of capital reproduction, the article identified the material structures that conditioned the inclusion of this sport as part of the process of expansion of the capitalist mode of production. The analysis demonstrated that the dynamics of capital accumulation and reproduction — marked by capital exports, infrastructure control, and economic subordination of peripheral countries — were decisive for the formation of a new cultural framework in Latin American urban centers, within which rugby emerged as an expression of modernity and of British domination.

Keywords: Pattern of Capital Reproduction. Rugby. Brazil. Argentina.

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1 INTRODUCTION

The introduction of Modern English Sport into certain South American countries was rooted in the strong British presence across the economic, political, and cultural landscape of the nineteenth century and the early decades of the twentieth century. Sporting modalities such as football, rugby, cricket, tennis, horse racing, and boxing are concrete examples of English sports manifestations that crossed the Atlantic and took hold in countries such as Brazil and Argentina (Antonio, 2017; Melo, 2010; Melo; Gonçalves, 2019).

Thus, Modern Sport is understood through a reading of rupture that positions it as a product of contemporaneity, directly associated with the emergence and operational logic of bourgeois liberal society (Bourdieu, 2019; Brohm, 1982; Guttmann, 1978). Accordingly, it is possible to observe that the conception of this phenomenon—of a historical-social nature—reveals an objective relationship among the economic, political, and cultural dimensions that became intertwined in these specific geographic spaces during the period indicated above (Schwarcz, 2012). Several authors have addressed this issue by examining the specific material elements involved in the introduction and consolidation of these sporting practices originating in the British Isles.

Antonio (2017) sheds light on this line of investigation by noting that much of the historiography on the introduction of rugby in Brazil has privileged the presence of specific figures responsible for fostering the first “steps of the ball thrown backward” in the country. Such an emphasis provides relevant insights into understanding the role played by particular social actors linked to the early development of rugby in the nations that adopted this sport.

Another significant aspect that can be observed in this research context concerns the analysis of European migratory processes that reached South America and their direct relationship with the promotion of modern sport modalities in the countries of this continent. Araújo (1996) and Streapco (2016) demonstrated how this migratory phenomenon constituted a fundamental conditioning factor for the formation of a specific sporting culture in Brazil.

Within this same analytical framework, Araújo and Giglio (2022) observed the relevance of rugby in the shaping of national identity in Argentina. In this case, one may highlight the connection between rugby practice and the constitution of class identities in Argentine society during the first decades of the twentieth century. In the Brazilian context, Gutierrez (2016) argues that the introduction of rugby during this same period enabled the construction of a sporting identity around the modality, facilitating processes of incorporation and inclusion of immigrants directly involved with the practice.

The delimitation of these relationships emerges as a datum that reflects the appearance of the problem and thus manifests a certain objectivity regarding the occurrences that immediately affect the reality under consideration. This apparent diagnosis initially provides important information; however, it does not encompass the

structures and dynamics that essentially sustain the object, nor does it contain within itself its full constitutive determinations.

In this sense, to grasp the real movement underlying the full materiality of this historical process—beyond the immediate appearance of the phenomenon—it is necessary to develop an analysis grounded in the category of totality as its theoretical framework, thereby identifying the elementary categories that confirm its essence. What justifies the adoption of this theoretical-methodological procedure is the intention to seek an interpretation of this research agenda that avoids the mystification often found in analyses of this theme, thereby identifying the concrete foundations that radically confirm the advent of English sports modalities and their development process in the countries where they were introduced.

To this end, it is established that this categorization takes the Capitalist Mode of Production as its foundational element, the latter structuring the productive bases as the determining dimension of the political, social, cultural, and technical processes that originate from it (Althusser, 1985; Lukács, 2012; Marx, 1982, 2008, 2009; Marx; Engels, 2019; Mazzeo, 2015; Netto; Braz, 2012; Pinto, 2020; Silva, 2017).

This understanding is guided by the premise that the socio-economic formation organized because of the productive processes that enable the domination of this mode of production is the constitution of Bourgeois Liberal Society which, through its continuous development, advances and remains expressed in contemporaneity. Thus, the concrete shaping of this reality—as it exists, in its totality—is the operational logic historically and socially determined by the general laws governing its mode of material production (Marx, 2008, 2009).

Considering this perspective, the objective of the present study is to analyze the economic determinations that made possible the arrival of rugby in Brazil and Argentina in the mid-nineteenth century. To this end, the understanding of the proposed phenomenon stems from the analysis of the economic-material roots that manifested at the core of the respective historical conjunctures. Consequently, the category of the pattern of capital reproduction is adopted as a theoretical-methodological tool, insofar as this categorization makes it possible to concretely elucidate “how capital reproduces itself in specific historical periods and within determined geo-territorial spaces” (Osorio, 2012, p. 40).

2 RESEARCH METHOD

To apprehend the objectified phenomenon as it essentially is, the study adopts the Marxist tradition as its theoretical-methodological framework. Accordingly, the critique is guided by a rigorous examination of the problem’s underlying foundations (Marx, 1982, 2008, 2009; Netto, 2011). By delimiting this theoretical field as the central foundation that analytically supports the investigation, it is affirmed that the perspective adopted is structured around historical-dialectical materialism. This implies recognizing Marxian dialectics as the methodological basis for the process

of abstraction, in accordance with the methodological requirement of carrying out a “concrete analysis of each particular historical situation” (Lênin, 2021, p. 177).

As a result, the categorical architecture mobilized here assigns a determinant role to the methodological control of the investigative process (Konder, 2009; Lênin, 2021; Lukács, 2012; Marini, 2005; Marx, 1982, 2008, 2009; Netto, 2011). The epistemological trajectory of the study follows, in an orthodox manner, the writings of Marx (1982, p. 104), particularly in recognizing that “the method is the absolute, unique, supreme, infinite force, to which no object could resist.”

According to Marx (1982), this absolute force resides in the method’s capacity to operate through abstraction—a process that captures the structural materiality of the object under analysis. The “absolute method” corresponds, as the author states, to the “abstraction of movement,” insofar as movement presents itself “in an abstract state,” as a “purely logical formula of movement” or “movement of pure reason” (Marx, 1982, p. 104–105). This theoretical-methodological approach enables the formulation of categories that, although constructed in the realm of ideas, reflect the real and concrete movements of reality, revealing its essential structure.

This type of theoretical treatment relies on methods like the axis sustaining the construction of abstract categories whose material expressions correspond to the determinations underlying the understanding of the historical process in question. The consolidation of this theoretical field results in the formation of a robust categorical body, capable of scientifically guiding the analysis of the essence of specific historical phenomena. Concepts such as the Capitalist Mode of Production, Socio-Economic Formation, Conjuncture, World-System, Imperialism, Colonial Slavery, the Colonial Path of Capitalist Development, and Dependency are paradigmatic examples formulated through the rigorous application of this methodological framework (Gorender, 2016; Lênin, 2021; Marini, 2005; Marx, 2008, 2009; Mazzeo, 2015; Osorio, 2012; Santos, 2023).

Based on this instrumental foundation, the category of the pattern of capital reproduction is adopted as the analytical framework for examining the objective structures and dynamics that conditioned the arrival and development of rugby in Brazil and Argentina. This choice is justified insofar as the category enables the ideal reproduction of the abstract structural relations that underline the phenomenon under investigation (Osorio, 2012).

The present article does not provide an exhaustive description of the determinations of the capital cycle as presented by Marx (C1 – P – C2), given the theoretical density involved. However, it is pertinent to briefly summarize that this abstract categorical expression represents the three phases of the cycle: the initial phase of commodity circulation (C1 – capital, in the form of money, acquires means of production and labor power), the production phase (P – capital is valorized through its transformation into commodities by means of an exploitation process whose foundation lies in the generation of surplus value—productive capital), and the final phase of realization (C2 – capital, in the form of commodities, is sold on the market and converted back into money). This process is synthesized in the formula M – C

– $C' - M^1$, which represents the rotation of capital and its process of valorization (Amaral; Carcanholo, 2012; Marini, 2012; Marx, 2008, 2009; Osorio, 2012).

In summary, the abstract formulation advanced by Marx (2008, 2009) and widely incorporated by the Marxist tradition serves as the categorical-analytical support enabling the use of the category of the pattern of capital reproduction and confirming its methodological legitimacy. The categorical rigor embedded in this methodological instrument rendered its adoption methodologically feasible.

The choice for this perspective stems from its theoretical-analytical capacity to apprehend the essential movements that fundamentally constitute the cycles of accumulation and reproduction of capital within specific historical contexts and determined geo-economic territories (Amaral; Carcanholo, 2012; Ferreira; Osorio; Luce, 2012; Marini, 2012; Osorio, 2012).

This methodological choice also entails incorporating the principle of historicity as a guiding element of the theoretical approach. This is because the process of abstraction sustaining this methodological apparatus requires, as a condition, the apprehension of the concrete historical process in which the phenomenon under analysis is situated. Thus, working with the category of the pattern of capital reproduction makes it possible to identify the reorganization of material production into “new axes of accumulation,” whose configuration occurs in specific historical periods (Osorio, 2012, p. 41).

Osorio (2012) legitimizes this perspective by asserting that capital assumes distinct historical forms of reproduction, which are conditioned by structural transformations that modify the totality of the capitalist mode of production. The importance of endorsing this theoretical foundation lies in recognizing the capitalist mode of production as a historically universal form whose productive processes became a structuring reference for the constitution of multiple socio-economic formations across the globe (Althusser, 1985; Lukács, 2012; Marini, 2017; Marx, 2008, 2009; Mazzeo, 2015; Osorio, 2012):

From the dawn of capitalist development onward, history becomes universal history, and the most diverse corners of the planet are integrated—at varying degrees of intensity—into a worldwide system, giving rise to the capitalist world-system. At this level are located problems such as the world market, the international division of labor, imperialism, dependency, unequal exchange, and the cyclical movements of capital, with their long waves and their phases of expansion and contraction (Osorio, 2012, p. 39).

Anchored in the writings of Marini (2005), Osorio (2012) argues that this development occurs in a heterogeneous manner, resulting in the constitution of spheres of influence that present distinct profiles regarding the configuration of productive forces and the specific dynamics of reproduction, realization, and accumulation of capital within each formation. What confirms this system’s configuration is the existence of a structural division between central regions (central countries) and peripheral regions (peripheral countries), whose articulation is sustained by structural

¹ In the scheme proposed by Marx (2008, 2009) M – Money – C – Commodity – C' – Produced Commodity – M' – Money plus profit.

laws derived from the economic contradictions inherent to the process of value transfer from the periphery to the center (Bambirra, 2019; Carcanholo, 2005; Marini, 2005, 2017; Osorio, 2012; Santos, 2018, 2023).

It thus becomes evident that a World-System exists, whose operational logic is anchored in the capitalist mode of production, which globally articulates the processes of circulation and accumulation of capital. This system manifests itself in an unequal and combined manner, generating political, social, and cultural implications (Bambirra, 2019; Lênin, 2021; Marini, 2005, 2017; Osorio, 2012; Santos, 2018, 2023). This understanding is synthesized by Marini (2017, p. 47), who asserts that throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, Latin American underdevelopment cannot be understood except as an expression of the development of the global capitalist system: “The history of Latin American underdevelopment is the history of the development of the world capitalist system.”

Thus, the category of the pattern of capital reproduction provides the theoretical foundations necessary for the exercise of abstraction of the concrete and totalizing determinations that enabled the insertion of rugby in Brazil and Argentina during the period under analysis. To this end, secondary sources (books) were used to collect the material data corresponding to this historical process, thereby supporting the methodological requirement. The critical engagement with authors who analyzed the mediations and contradictions inherent to the developmental phase of the capitalist mode of production on a global scale—relative to the period in question—marked this theoretical stage of the study.

3 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The literature concerning the introduction of English sporting modalities into different regions of the world in the mid-nineteenth century brings together a significant body of studies whose central focus is an analysis of the immediate elements that materialized throughout this historical process. A brief review of this theme confirms such a tendency insofar as partial and superficial elements are often treated as constitutive factors underlying this phenomenon.

The construction of railways, the specific nature of English immigration and its consequent cultural influence, as well as the creation of founding myths around individuals who played key roles in the emergence of these sporting practices, are examples of interpretations that address only the phenomenon’s apparent character (Almeida, 2017; Antonio, 2017; Araujo; Giglio, 2022). The abstraction undertaken here, therefore, seeks move beyond this logic and identify the structural pattern underlying its material form. By abstracting the empirical reality, the category of totality imposes itself as a fundamental theoretical-methodological basis, enabling access to the real movement corresponding to the introduction of rugby into Brazilian and Argentine societies. This methodological choice is justified insofar as it locates the productive structure as a central element capable of conditioning the political, social, and cultural processes that constituted this historical trajectory.

The period in question marks a specific stage in the development of the capitalist mode of production² during its historical advancement between the second half of the nineteenth century and the early twentieth century. The material interpretation of this stage is crucial for understanding the phenomenon, given that grasping the dynamics of global capital reproduction and accumulation allows one to identify the cultural, social, and political processes conditioned by this structure.

To apprehend the legalities that sustain the essential movements of this historical process, the analytical category pattern of capital reproduction is adopted. The theoretical-methodological strength of this category lies in its capacity to analyze the mediations between the world system of capital reproduction and accumulation and its reproduction and accumulation within specific socio-economic formations (Mazzeo, 2015; Osorio, 2012). The theoretical contribution offered by this categorization makes it possible to observe the existence of concrete relations mediated by the global dynamic of accumulation, which objectively conditions the processes analogous to the internal functioning of the capitalist mode of production that are inherent to the logic of local economies. This analytical comprehension further contributes to diagnosing how capital historically adopts different reproduction patterns, subordinated to transformations in the international division of labor that structures the global accumulation regime (Osorio, 2012).

Osorio (2012) thus confirms the importance of determining the historical conditioning element as a decisive component of the abstraction process necessary for apprehending the effective movements of capital responsible for cycles of global reproduction and accumulation. By provoking this type of theoretical action, one apprehends that “to historicize the reproduction of capital implies understanding the conditions that make possible the rise and the peak of a pattern, as well as its decline and crisis,” which requires considering “the moments of transition in which an old pattern has not fully disappeared or become a subordinated pattern, and a new one has not yet matured or converted into a dominant pattern” (Osorio, 2012, p. 41).

During the mid-nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the dynamics of capital reproduction and accumulation intrinsic to the reproduction pattern then in force exhibited features grounded in a logic of expanded reproduction of capital based on the export of capital. This configuration materialized in the presence of foreign investments that marked the specificity of that historical moment (Lênin, 2021).

Table 1 - Capital invested abroad by England, France and Germany during the 1910s (billions of German Marks³)

	ENGLAND	FRANCE	GERMANY
EUROPE	4	23	18
AMERICA	37	4	10
ASIA – AFRICA AUSTRALIA	29	8	7
TOTAL	70	35	35

Source: adapted from LENIN (2021, p. 87).

² Lenin defines this historical phase as Imperialism. See more about this period of development of the capitalist mode of production in his book “Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism” (LENIN, 2021).

³ The German Mark was the currency of Germany in 1910. In 2025, the value of 1 German Mark corresponds to R\$ 3.27. See: Currency Converter. Available at: <https://www.ifcmarkets.com.br/currency-converter/dem-brl>. Accessed on: March 15, 2025.

In this context, England stands out as a hegemonic power regarding the structural dynamics associated with the functioning of the reproduction pattern of capital then consolidating itself. Its hegemony rested on its economic supremacy, which enabled the expansion of its interests beyond its territorial borders. In 1910, for instance, England, together with the United States, France, and Germany, concentrated approximately “80% of the world’s financial capital,” with the British leading, at around 142 billion francs⁴ (Lênin, 2021, p. 83).

This hegemony materialized through the export of surplus capital in the form of investments, which enabled England to penetrate numerous economies around the world, turning it into a central agent of political, economic, and cultural control. Latin America, for instance, was an important destination for these capital flows. In the final decades of the nineteenth century and the early twentieth century, England and Germany invested in Argentina, Brazil, and Uruguay amounts totaling approximately 4 billion dollars (Ortiz, 2014).

Table 2 - English investment in other countries

YEAR	Billions in Francs
1862	3,6
1872	15
1882	22
1893	42
1902	62
1914	75-100

Source: adapted from Lênin (2021, pp. 87).

According to Lênin (2021, p. 87), around the decade of 1910, the British had invested approximately 37 billion marks in the Americas. Basbaum (1962, p. 194) adds that, in 1913, English investments in South and Central America totaled around 5 billion dollars. This scenario enabled a policy of economic penetration into Brazilian and Argentine structures, consolidating a structural subordination of these economies to English capital (Bambirra, 2019; Marini, 2005, 2017; Santos, 2018, 2021, 2023). Santos (2021) demonstrates that this dependency began with British loans to the Brazilian government, which later expanded into sectors such as transportation, energy, and telecommunications. Basbaum (1976, p. 176) confirms this trajectory by noting that, by the end of the Empire, Brazil had contracted 32 million pounds from England, which, when added to financial charges, totaled 68 million.

The English capital, which in the first half of the nineteenth century sought to control the country through loans to the government and to individuals intended to cover the balance-of-trade deficits, changed its relationship with Brazil in the second half of the century, entering sectors such as transportation, public services, electric power, communications, etc., seeking to take advantage of the country’s financial reserves generated by the trade balance surplus, which enabled Brazil to purchase railroads, steel, and machinery from England in addition to the classic importation of luxury goods (Santos, 2021, p. 44).

⁴ The French Franc was the official currency of France until the country joined the Eurozone in 2002. The value of 1 French Franc in 2025 corresponds to R\$ 0.97. See: Currency Converter. Available at: <https://www.ifcmarkets.com.br/currency-converter/frf-brl>. Accessed on: March 15, 2025.

Basbaum (1976, p. 176) confirms that “by the end of the Empire, Brazil had taken from England 32 million pounds which, according to Amaro Cavalcanti, had cost it, when added to interest, amortizations, expenses, and commissions, 68 million pounds.” Between 1893 and 1927, Brazil borrowed more than 103 million pounds from the English (Basbaum, 1962).

Table 3 - Loans from England to Brazil

YEAR	LIBRAS
1893	3.170.000
1895	7.442.000
1895	37.735.820
1914	14.502.396

Source: adapted from Basbaum (1962, p. 194-196).

Ortiz (2014) details how loans constituted an important instrument used by English capital to reproduce itself. Throughout the 1820s, the Spanish colonies contracted about 7 million pounds, generating liabilities of nearly 20 million. Argentina, in turn, contracted its first loan in 1824 — 1 million pounds at 6% annual interest and a 40-year term — which initiated a long period of financial dependency on England. This circumstance is clearly outlined by L  nin (2021, p. 110), who describes a relation of “financial and diplomatic dependency” that became structural between these two countries during this historical period:

“South America, and particularly Argentina,” says Schulze-Gaevernitz in his book on British imperialism, “is in such financial dependency on London that we may almost classify it as a commercial English colony.” According to Schilder, the capital invested by England in Argentina, based on the data provided in 1909 by the Austro-Hungarian consul in Buenos Aires, reached 8.75 billion francs. (L  nin, 2021, p. 110-111).

The prevailing form of capital reproduction led capital flows to specific productive structures considered strategic within the accumulation regime. Osorio (2012) argues that capital historically adopts different forms for its reproduction, selecting branches of production according to technical development and available means of production. In this light, loans not only financed the payment of other loans — their interest and amortizations — but also served as investments in specific sectors that, within the period under examination, constituted important spheres of reproduction. This historical condition allowed English capital to penetrate productive structures developing in Brazil and Argentina, granting the English productive control that subordinated the relations of production emerging in these countries (Basbaum, 1962, 1976; L  nin, 2021; Marini, 2005, 2017; Ortiz, 2014; Santos, 2021).

British investments in productive sectors of Brazil and Argentina followed a logical pattern, concretely determining English capital as a crucial agent in the region’s economic modernization, especially in infrastructure construction and the establishment of early industrial units. The example of the railways — designed, financed, and controlled by the English — clearly illustrates this productive insertion oriented toward capital reproduction. Additionally, England sought to dominate foreign trade, positioning itself as the principal destination for raw-material exports and the

primary supplier of manufactured goods. This dominance manifested itself in the control of domestic markets, foreign trade, critical infrastructures, and the subordination of local productive forces (Almeida, 2017; Basbaum, 1962, 1976; L  nin, 2021; Ortiz, 2014; Santos, 2021).

Ortiz (2014, p. 46) reveals, based on official reports, that, by 1930, the British controlled 71% of the nominal capital of the agricultural-products industry in Argentina. Moreover, four English firms dominated 81% of grain commercialization in the country. The same domination pattern repeated itself in railways and port logistics. Freyre (2011) demonstrates that, in the nineteenth century, English goods dominated Brazilian internal trade. This observation is reinforced by Basbaum (1976), who describes Brazil's productive and commercial dependency on England as total: from shipbuilding to clothing, including lighting, transportation, mining, and urban infrastructure.

England supplies all the capital necessary for internal improvements in Brazil and manufactures all household utensils, from the hoe upward, and almost all luxury or essential items, from the pin to the most expensive dress [...] Great Britain supplies Brazil with its steam and sailing ships, paves and drains its streets, illuminates its cities with gas, builds its railways, exploits its mines, acts as its banker, constructs its telegraph lines, transports its mail, builds its docks, engines, and rail cars — in short, clothes and makes almost everything, except feeding the Brazilian people. (Basbaum, 1976, p. 175).

The presentation of these data reveals the central axes structuring the pattern of capital reproduction in operation at the time. Understanding this structural logic allows one to materially explain the processes that financed the introduction of rugby in Brazil and Argentina. The productive structure, as an “element shaping the totality,” provides an explanatory key for the political, social, and cultural dimensions present in this historical process (Mazzeo, 2015, p. 22).

This analysis points to a material foundation that helps explain why British influence became so deeply embedded in Brazilian and Argentine socio-economic development. This condition shaped local societies and contributed to the emergence of a new cultural framework in major urban centers, such as S  o Paulo, Rio de Janeiro, and Buenos Aires. The incorporation of modern habits materialized in the creation of social and cultural institutions of British inspiration: schools, churches, clubs, and sporting practices. These places fostered the conception of practices that symbolized the modernity that culturally impacted these nations (Antonio, 2017; Araujo; Giglio, 2022; Basbaum, 1962; Freyre, 2011; Melo; Gon  alves, 2019).

A sport-related cultural life thus emerged, aligned with the promotion of sporting practices consistent with this historical context. The introduction of English sporting modalities, such as rugby, stands as a concrete example that effectively shaped the corresponding contexts. Thus, the formation of institutions linked to this practice symbolically materializes this process. Its presence among urban elites and English-origin clubs — such as S  o Paulo Athletic Club, S  o Paulo Railway Cricket Club, and the River Plate Rugby Football Union — attests to its role as a hallmark

of cultural modernity and British domination in the Latin American sporting sphere (Antonio, 2017; Araujo; Giglio, 2022; Melo; Gonçalves, 2019).

In this way, the movements that traversed the development of rugby present their own determinations, which comprise its historical specificity. For instance, when analyzing the processes of popularization of rugby and football in Argentina and Brazil, one notes particularities that marked their respective trajectories. Football quickly shifted from a practice restricted to the British community, middle classes, and dominant class to being incorporated as a working-class recreational and sporting practice, becoming a foundational element of popular culture in both countries. Rugby, although it shared similar concrete roots in these locations, did not reach the same degree of popular maturity. Several hypotheses attempt to explain the material factors shaping this trajectory, involving practical characteristics and cultural preferences (Almeida, 2023; Antonio, 2017; Araujo; Giglio, 2022; Caldas, 1990; Guterman, 2009; Gutierrez, 2016; Hall; Reis, 2019; Melo; Gonçalves, 2019).

Although it remained largely restricted to the English colony, its descendants, and part of the middle classes, rugby in Argentina assumed a more prominent and prestigious role compared to rugby in Brazil. This can be explained by the fact that Argentina was the Latin American country exhibiting the highest degree of economic dependency on England. This aspect manifested concretely in its social context through the presence of more than 30,000 British settlers in the 1910s. This factor may help explain the stronger presence of rugby in that country (Antonio, 2017; Araujo; Giglio, 2022; Basbaum, 1962; Gutierrez, 2016; Hall; Reis, 2019; Melo; Gonçalves, 2019; Ortiz, 2014).

Consequently, the class character that rugby as a sporting practice assumed in this historical period within these two socio-economic formations becomes evident, shedding light on the ideological dynamics that may be understood as responsible for financing numerous determining processes of inclusion and exclusion within this particular sport (Araujo; Giglio, 2022; Bourdieu, 2019; Brohm, 1982; Marx, 2008; Marx; Engels, 2019).

4 FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The introduction of rugby in Brazil and Argentina reveals a set of aspects linked to political, social, and cultural dimensions that played a relevant role in shaping this process. However, the exposition of these perspectives points only to the immediacy of the empirical data and, thus, does not reach its essential determinations. In this sense, such diagnoses concretely describe only the immediate appearance of the problem, based on the recognition of some elements that operated significantly within it. This observation confirms, therefore, that such descriptions recognize merely a few mediations that touch upon the object without penetrating its totality.

It is therefore understood that this immediacy translates into the exposition of concrete properties that express certain historical particularities, but that remain situated solely within the phenomenal plane. Hence, even if such conceptual

apprehension provides subsidies for understanding this emerging evidence—and thus demonstrates its importance, it expresses its theoretical limit by mystifying the real, failing to sustain, in a radical manner, an abstraction capable of theoretically grounding the material expression of reality in its totalizing form.

Given this, the present study proposed a critique grounded in the search for the material structures and dynamics that objectively sustained the historical process of rugby's insertion in Brazil and Argentina. To this end, the standard category of capital reproduction was employed, offering the adequate theoretical instruments to identify the constitutive movements that conditioned this event. The analysis then made it possible to demonstrate that the dynamics of capital reproduction and accumulation prevailing in the period under examination were determining elements for the arrival and subsequent development of rugby in both national conjunctures. The confirmation of this structural determination inscribes the sporting phenomenon within a broader logic of economic and cultural domination, articulated with the expansion of the capitalist mode of production and the consolidation of a world-system of dependency.

Ultimately, this investigation sought to reach the roots that synthesize the essence of the phenomenon, by interpreting how, in a specific historical moment, the development of capitalism conditioned the mediations and determinations particular to one of its social structures. In doing so, it reaffirms the centrality of theoretical critique in elucidating historical processes and the relevance of a totalizing perspective for understanding complex social phenomena, such as the diffusion of modern sport in peripheral countries.

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Resumo: O objetivo deste estudo foi analisar as determinações econômicas que possibilitaram a introdução do rúgbi no Brasil e na Argentina em meados do século XIX. A partir de uma crítica fundamentada na tradição marxista, buscou-se ultrapassar leituras que permanecem na esfera da aparência, ao focalizarem apenas aspectos imediatos, como a imigração inglesa e os mitos fundadores em torno de figuras esportivas. Com base na categoria padrão de reprodução do capital, o artigo identificou as estruturas materiais que condicionaram a inserção dessa prática esportiva como parte do processo de expansão do modo de produção capitalista. A análise evidenciou que a dinâmica de acumulação e reprodução do capital — marcada pela exportação de capitais, domínio das infraestruturas e subordinação econômica dos países periféricos — foi determinante para a constituição de um novo ideário cultural nos centros urbanos latino-americanos, no qual o rúgbi emergiu como expressão da modernidade e da dominação britânica.

Palavras-chave: Padrão de Reprodução do Capital. Rúgbi. Brasil. Argentina.

Resumen: El objetivo de este estudio fue analizar las determinaciones económicas que posibilitaron la introducción del rugby en Brasil y Argentina a mediados del siglo XIX. A partir de una crítica fundamentada en la tradición marxista, se buscó transcender las interpretaciones centradas en aspectos inmediatos, como la inmigración inglesa y los mitos fundacionales en torno a figuras deportivas. Com base en la categoría patrón de reproducción del capital, el artículo identificó las estructuras materiales que condicionaron la inserción de esta práctica deportiva como parte del proceso de expansión del modo de producción capitalista. El análisis evidenció que la dinámica de acumulación y reproducción del capital — marcada por la exportación de capitales, el control de infraestructuras y la subordinación económica de los países periféricos — fue determinante para la constitución de una nueva arquitectura cultural en los centros urbanos latinoamericanos, en la cual el rugby surgió como expresión de la modernidad y la dominación británica.

Palabras clave: Patrón de reproducción del capital. Rugby. Brasil. Argentina.

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CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

The authors declare that this work involves no conflict of interest.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

Danilo Lutiano Valerio: Conceptualization; Investigation; Methodology; Writing (original draft).

Ary José Rocco Júnior: Supervision; Conceptualization; Methodology; Writing (text review).

Marco Bettine: Methodology; Validation; Writing (final review and editing).

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