

# Grêmio de Regatas Almirante Tamandaré: a threat to the German-Brazilian identity empire in Porto Alegre's rowing scene

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**Abstract:** The foundation of the Grêmio de Regatas Almirante Tamandaré threatened the hegemony of rowing associations with German-Brazilian cultural identities in Porto Alegre, Brazil. This association was founded by Portuguese-Brazilians who sought to build new identity representations around that sport, changing the city's rowing landscape. Grêmio de Regatas Almirante Tamandaré triggered a new era for sports in Porto Alegre. In addition to gaining more space in the press, it consolidated an association that approached a Brazilian cultural identity in Porto Alegre sports scene, thus providing an opportunity for identity disputes in the rowing associations' scene.

**Keywords:** Rowing. History of Sport. Clubs.

## 1 OPENING REMARKS

Representations of German-Brazilian cultural identity prevailed in the scene of Porto Alegre's rowing associations until the early twentieth century. This situation began to change

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after other associations were founded by Portuguese immigrants and their Portuguese-Brazilian descendants. Grêmio de Regatas Almirante Tamandaré, founded in January 18, 1903, played a strong role in constructing Brazilian identity representations<sup>1</sup> in the rowing arena.

Prior to its foundation, rowing clubs in Porto Alegre were mostly organized by German-Brazilians, linking that sports practice to that specific group. The establishment of Grêmio de Regatas Almirante Tamandaré was a reaction to German-Brazilian identities formed around rowing and it aimed to build a club characterized as Brazilian, where it was possible to speak only Portuguese (SILVA, 2011). Until the foundation of Grêmio de Regatas Almirante Tamandaré, Portuguese-Brazilians used to attend preferably horse race venues. Those were places for sociability, where families established their social representation in the second half of the nineteenth century (HISTÓRIA..., 1997, p. 103). Porto Alegre's Portuguese-Brazilian elite used horse race courses as community aggregation environments (PEREIRA, 2008). Horse races thus served as a symbolic boundary distinguishing Portuguese-Brazilians from other ethnic groups that had gymnastics and shooting societies as their unifying space, as well as rowing clubs. Horse racing reached in Porto Alegre its peak around 1880-1894, with four venues operating in the city (HISTÓRIA..., 1997). It began to weaken together with the transition to a new socio-cultural model. Porto Alegre's major socioeconomic changes, highlighted by Franco (1998) and marked by population growth, urbanization and modernization processes, are the proper context to introduce new sports practices and organize associations. At this juncture, Portuguese-Brazilians choose a sport that used to be surrounded

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<sup>1</sup>According to Cuche (1999), cultural identity expresses the result of several interactions between individuals and their social environments – whether close or distant. Such cultural identity can be reconstructed, for example, by re-signifying sports as cultural representations of an ethnic community. Re-signification of cultural representation is a way of reconstructing identities, understanding that in de Certeau's (2008) perspective, re-signification of cultural practices and representations are the practices by which users appropriate the space organized by techniques of socio-cultural production. Therefore, cultural identity can be understood as representation, as imaginary meaning making. Thus, it produces social cohesion and organizes a comprehensive system based on the idea of belonging (PESAVENTO, 2008).

by representations of German-Brazilian cultural identities: rowing. Then organization of their sports associations starts.

Distinction between groups takes place by production of identification between individuals of the same origin, while that group establishes symbolic social boundaries toward others (SILVA; PEREIRA; MAZO, 2012). This process of “identity boundary demarcation” (CUCHE, 1999) involves the clash of cultural identities through production of representations and cultural practices. According to Burke (2005), cultural representations can be expressed in distinct ways, including sports practices.

Identity construction is a dynamic phenomenon, just like memory, and new meanings are constantly ascribed to that identity. Renewing remembrance, even when we receive new meanings, updates cultural memory. According to Pollak (1992), memory is a constructed phenomenon at all levels and there is a very close phenomenological link between memory and the sense of identity.

In addition, according to Le Goff (2003), memory has the property of retaining certain pieces of information that speak of the past, i. e., a certain way of appropriating time. Thus, memory is an ideological operation while history is an intellectual form of knowledge – a cognitive operation. Based on these assumptions, we believe that the clubs were constituted as “places of memory” of sports and social groups linked to body and sports practices. The social space of the clubs is related to the subjects and times of social memory.

In this study, we intend to reconsider the traces that have been captured about the association that produced strong identity representations of a social group, which confronted German-Brazilians in the sports field in a given historical period. What is the importance of recording such events of a rowing club? We believe that it is a way to keep the club’s history always present. Furthermore, re-establishing memory and disseminating knowledge beyond a circumscribed space makes people recognize and identify with the place they live in.

Therefore, the study starts from the following question: How did Grêmio de Regatas Almirante Tamandaré establish new representations of cultural identities in Porto Alegre's rowing scene since its foundation in 1903 until 1923? In 1923, the association celebrated its 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary and representations of Brazilian cultural identity were highlighted.

This historical study was based on printed sources. We examined notes and articles of newspapers *A Federação* and *O Independente* – of high circulation in Porto Alegre in the period defined for the study. The “Commemorative Album 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Grêmio de Regatas Almirante Tamandaré”, published in 1923 was also consulted, as well as the album “Rio Grande do Sul Sportivo”,<sup>2</sup> of 1919. The result of the analysis of information collected from the sources is presented next.

## **2 A ROWING CLUB IDENTIFIED WITH BRAZILIANS**

With the foundation of Grêmio de Regatas Almirante Tamandaré, the rowing scene, surrounded by German-Brazilian identity representations, changes and gains new representations of a Brazilian cultural identity. Since the mid-nineteenth century, rowing contributed to fix and establish social groups in Porto Alegre. The first club was founded in the city on November 21, 1888 (MAZO; GAYA, 2006) and named Ruder-Club Porto Alegre. Together with another club organized in the city of Pelotas, it was among the rowing pioneers in the state.

The foundation of Ruder-Club Porto Alegre was the first initiative to institutionalize rowing in the state. Its founders were German-Brazilians and the club used the German language for its internal communication, restricting access of people who could not speak that language. Such a requirement can be seen in the

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<sup>2</sup> These commemorative albums included minutes, records of competitions, testimonials and the trajectory of Grêmio de Regatas Almirante Tamandaré during its first years, as well as data from other rowing clubs founded in the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century.

newspaper *Gazetinha*, whose owner and editor was Portuguese-Brazilian Octaviano Manuel de Oliveira. On September 8, 1895, it harshly criticized the Germanization of Ruder Club Porto Alegre, referred to in text as Club de Regatas Porto-Alegrense – a translation into Portuguese that was a protest in itself (CLUB..., 1895, p. 1).

The publication voices ideas of reaction to German-Brazilians, since it judges that nationalization was “a challenge thrown at Brazilians, it was a real provocation that is actually asking for complete and severe ‘payback’, and produced the effect of a slap” (CLUB..., 1895, p. 1). The article adds that “it is painful for us native Brazilians to appreciate [...] the rudeness with which certain poorly educated foreigners pay the useful hospitality they find in our beloved Motherland” (CLUB..., 1895, p. 1). The newspaper editor’s discourse records the offense as an insult to the nation and attempts to report the same feeling in other people who recognize they have a Brazilian cultural identity.

Oliveira’s article on *Gazetinha* described the search for a Brazilian cultural identity. He characterizes Brazilians as good hosts who provide “friendly welcome found here by immigrants who come to work” (CLUB..., 1895, p. 1), and Germans as ungrateful people who “instead of thanking this [Brazilian] people for the favors they received from them, throw offenses at them” (CLUB..., 1895, p. 1). He also denounced Brazilians who supported the club’s nationalization. That discourse was probably driven by the hegemony of the German-Brazilian space in Porto Alegre’s sports scene.

On October 29, 1892, the second rowing club with German-Brazilian identity is founded in Porto Alegre: Ruder-Verein Germania. Two years later, the two clubs joined to found Comitê de Regatas, in order to encourage the development of rowing. Just as the clubs mentioned above, it also used the German language in its bylaws, minutes, awards and internal communication.

The first regatta organized by the club offered the Herausforderungpreis prize (LICHT, 1986) – or the Challenge Award. The newspaper *A Federação* (REGATA, 1895, p. 3), whose owner was Portuguese-Brazilian, covered the regatta and appealed to Portuguese-Brazilians: “That our brethren know how to imitate the clubs mentioned, founding others and elevating them through stimulus and competition”. It encourages the establishment of a club with Portuguese-Brazilian cultural identity, taking identity disputes existing in other fields to the sports domain.

Driven by previous stories, the newspaper *A Federação* (REGATAS, 1903a) reported on the foundation of Grêmio de Regatas Almirante Tamandaré with three days in advance. However, it not only informed the time and place of the club’s first meeting but also conveyed a positive view of the association that was to be born by underscoring that over 160 members were enrolled. The association came officially into being on January 18, 1903. According to the newspaper, in addition to rowing, it would encompass other practices such as swimming, target shooting and gymnastics: “We know that, in addition the sport of rowing, the new regatta club to be founded in this capital will also dedicate itself to swimming, target shooting and gymnastics, etc”. (REGATAS, 1903a, p. 2).

The news of the foundation of a rowing association conceived by Portuguese-Brazilians was welcomed by newspapers of the time such as: *A Federação* and *O Independente*.<sup>3</sup> These newspapers shared the view that a new rowing association should be established with other identity representations. They were edited by Portuguese-Brazilians and, prior to foundation of Grêmio de Regatas Almirante Tamandaré, they made it clear that they wanted another rowing association identified with Portuguese-Brazilians in Porto Alegre. That justifies the large space devoted to news of that new rowing association, including the results of its first meeting. So much so that, from that moment on, the regattas received more

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<sup>3</sup>The editor of the latter paper was Octaviano M. de Oliveira, the same editor of *Gazetinha*, which closed in 1900, the year when *O Independente* was founded.

attention from those papers. Thus, identity disputes made sports practice gain space in the local press.

At the time, in the early twentieth century, rowing was the main sport in Porto Alegre, although there were already some sports associations in the city that offered horse racing, tennis, cycling, football, as well as the traditional gymnastics society currently known as SOGIPA. Rowing clubs appeared in the sports landscape since the second half of the nineteenth century and had multiplied by the end of the first decade of the twentieth century (RIO GRANDE DO SUL SPORTIVO, 1919; PIMENTEL, 1945; DAUDT, 1952). Those associations gathered different groups: German-Brazilians, Portuguese-Brazilians and Italian-Brazilians.

On January 19, 1903, readers of *O Independente* (PRIMEIRA..., 1903) and *A Federação* (REGATAS, 1903b) saw the results of the founding meeting of Porto Alegre's new rowing association. *A Federação* stressed that the club's name was suggested by one of its founding partners, Miguel Macalão, as a tribute to "a great figure of the National Navy" (REGATAS, 1903b, p. 2), Admiral Tamandaré. Both newspapers said that the president and the vice-president would be Portuguese-Brazilians Gaspar Fróes and Ricardo Machado (NOVO..., 1903).

The group of Portuguese-Brazilian founders was headed by the association's creator Gaspar Fróes de Azevedo, who was lieutenant commander of the Maritime Administration, that is, a senior officer in the naval forces. Fróes was known in the city as a nationalist. *O Independente* called him a "brave and noble Navy officer who provided many services to our Motherland" (GASPAR..., 1908, p. 1). The lieutenant commander presided over the meeting in which the sports association's name and organizing committee were defined.

This association was established in a barrack at General Portinho Street, almost on the corner with Andradas Street, next to General Osório Square. The building was lent by the Maritime Administration probably under Fróes's influence, which

demonstrates his commitment to the establishment (RIO GRANDE DO SUL SPORTIVO, 1919). Grêmio de Regatas Almirante Tamandaré was established far from the city's two other rowing associations, away from the German-Brazilian environment in which they were located and where the regattas took place. From that, it is possible to trace the ways in which the club seeks to demarcate identity boundaries: one is the distance established, differentiating the association even for its location. General Portinho Street is located in central Porto Alegre (FRANCO, 1998). The Maritime Administration is still located at the place where the barrack was. This organ of the Brazilian Navy has local responsibility over navigation safety, so it is an agency of national security whose building is identified as a representative of the Brazilian government in Porto Alegre. Thus, it also represents the fact that the city belongs to the Brazilian nation. According to Thiesse (2000, p. 229), belonging to the nation means being one of the heirs of its common and indivisible heritage, knowing it and revering it.

The building of the Maritime Administration was part of the national heritage as a cultural monument, and it revered official representations: the Flag and the National Anthem. In addition to following its laws and enforcing them, the agency keeps one of the country's main national symbols high on a mast on the main facade of the building: the Brazilian flag. The value of national symbols was highly praised as demonstrated in a note on *O Independente* (COUSAS..., 1903, p. 1.) that says: "The National Anthem and the Homeland's Flag summarize our veneration of hero ancestors, our devotion to freedom, our patriotism". Again, the feeling of belonging to a collective cultural identity is expressed through the repetitive use of the possessive pronoun in first person plural (THIESSE, 2000).

Another representation of that differentiation was the adoption of the Portuguese language, used as a symbolic distinction from other clubs using German. Hobsbawm (1990, p. 33) explains that "language became a more deliberate exercise in social engineering



in that its symbolic meaning came to take precedence over its actual use”, so that regulars at rowing clubs used the languages of their countries of origin primarily to assert their cultural identities, maintain their cultural memories, recognize each other and distinguish themselves from other immigrants and their descendants. Directing them to the construction of a Brazilian cultural identity and reinforcing the understanding that citizenship and nationality are defined by country of birth, “Portuguese-Brazilians considered themselves Brazilian citizens of Brazilian nationality” (MAZO; FROSI, 2008 p. 58). This thought went against the German-Brazilian view that established citizenship based on political and economic participation in the country and linked nationality to cultural affiliation.

The choice of the association’s name was also directed to a Brazilian cultural identity, since Admiral Tamandaré, besides being a hero of the Brazilian Navy, was born in the village of São José do Norte, Rio Grande do Sul. Reportedly, according to the first official minutes of the foundation, that choice of the name of the admiral “would be in honor of the glorious deeds of that illustrious man from Rio Grande” (CASTELLO, 1923, p. 5). Thus, the goal was not merely to assert Brazilian cultural identity, but also to remember that the Brazilian admiral, a symbol of heroism, was from Rio Grande do Sul, just as the club was. Developing that link with Admiral Tamandaré was a strategy to point that, similarly to the life story of its patron, the Rio Grande do Sul-based rowing association would stand out on the national scene for its achievements.

Besides the name of Admiral Tamandaré in the title of the association, its founders used the word “*grêmio*” – a Portuguese term for club and close to the German word *Verein*. The use of the term in Brazil’s language served to enhance the distinction from the associations of German-Brazilians. An essential element of the nation is its language, according to Thiesse (2000); the nation exists because it has a language.

That association, as the previous ones, did not established in its bylaws that members should have a specific nationality – in that case, Brazilian – but rather that foreigners understood Portuguese. So much so that the commemorative book *Rio Grande do Sul Sportivo* (1919)<sup>4</sup> advocates that knowledge of Portuguese should be required from foreigners. It was a strategy for maintaining a Brazilian cultural identity. For the organizers of the work, it imposes “the respect due to our land and to our flag – respect to which we are entitled as the emancipated people we are” (*RIO GRANDE DO SUL SPORTIVO*, 1919, p. 162). In this statement, the cultural identity of the organizers is revealed, since they define themselves as Brazilians by using the pronoun “we” and express their nationalist sentiment. According to Thiesse (2000), citizens saw speaking the nation’s language as a duty; all members must understand it and use it.

Another representation of the Brazilian cultural identity used were words in the language of the first Brazilian inhabitants: the indigenous tribes who populated the country. The founders of the club re-signified that trait in all their boats. The creators possibly intended only to remember indigenous peoples as Brazilian symbols, but were concerned about the reliability of the words in tupi-guarani dialect.<sup>5</sup> Indigenous tribes that inhabited the Brazilian coast when the Portuguese arrived in Brazil in the 1500 are called Tupi-Guarani. Still, as Boudin (1963, p 22.) says: “The Tupi-Guarani form one nation, using preferably the guarani language for tribes in the south – in addition to Paraguay, Argentina, Uruguay – and tupi for elements in the center and north of the country”. Renewing the memory that founding ancestors were indigenous peoples is part of the movement to build a Brazilian cultural identity, which was starting at the time.

The basic elements cited by Thiesse (2000) to build an identity for the nation come mostly from cultural memory, such as founding

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<sup>4</sup>It is about the several rowing associations, but it sets more space for two associations with names of Brazilian heroes.

<sup>5</sup>Indigenous language.

ancestors, history, heroes, folklore, language, monuments and certain landscapes. Thus, we find elements of Brazilian cultural memory in the representations of Brazilian cultural identity built by the founders of the Grêmio de Regatas Almirante Tamandaré, such as the founding ancestors who were represented on the boats in their own language.

Boats participating in the club's opening regatta were Tocantins, Tramandahy and Teffé (REGATAS, 1903c). All boats were given indigenous names beginning with "T" because, through repetition, a symbolic construction is made in the collective imagination. Since the very name of the association – Tamandaré – starts with a T, it became a symbolic reproduction that Portuguese-Brazilians re-signified in order to set a link to the institution in collective memory. Grêmio de Regatas Almirante Tamandaré had a large fleet until 1919. The table below lists the boats, their types, their builders and the country where they were made (RIO GRANDE DO SUL SPORTIVO, 1919, CASTELLO, 1923).

Table 1 – Fleet of Grêmio de Regatas Almirante Tamandaré until 1919.

<b>Name</b>	<b>Model</b>	<b>Builder</b>	<b>Origin</b>	<b>Godmother</b>
Tory	Skiff	F. Leux	Information not found	Gilda Totta
Tieté	gig, two oars	Max Yanke	Rio de Janeiro – Brazil	Lola Weyrauch
Tamoyo	gig, four oars	Telliers Fils	Paris	Ophelia Pinto Bento
Tapajoz	gig, four oars	F. Leux	Information not found	Julianna Ribeiro
Toropy	gig, four oars	Max Yanke	Rio de Janeiro – Brazil	Gentila Santos
Tabajara	gig, four oars	Telliers Fils	Paris	Célia Viana Ahrends
Tyapyra	y o l e , four oars	Max Yanke	Rio de Janeiro – Brazil	Olga Marcher

Toryba	gig, four oars	Max Yanke	Rio de Janeiro – Brazil	Luiza Azevedo Bastian
Tibagy	gig, four oars	Carlos Remedi	São Paulo – Brazil	Edith Jacobus
Tapuya	gig, six oars	Max Yanke	Rio de Janeiro – Brazil	Emira Ferreira de Almeida
Tijuca	gig, six oars	F. Leux	Information not found	Helenita Mostardeiro
Tupynambá	out-rigger, eight oars	Telliers Fils	Paris	Esther Gomes

Source: Table organized by the authors with information found on albums *Rio Grande do Sul Sportivo* (1919) and *Álbum comemorativo ao 20º aniversário do Gremio de Regatas Almirante Tamandaré 1903-1923* (CASTELLO, 1923).

Castello (1923, p. 39) refers to the relationship established by the club with the Tupi name on one of its boats: “The tabajaras, who were part of the tupi tribe, used to inhabit the coast of Pernambuco, Rio Grande do Norte, having greatly helped the Portuguese to fight the caetés”. From Ortiz’s (1994, p. 8) assertion that “all identity is a symbolic construction”, one realizes that a tradition was created by using the names in tupi-guarani language that begin with a “T” in all boats that were part of the Grêmio de Regatas Almirante Tamandaré. Oliven (1992, p. 20) states that “collective memory is connected to a relatively small group, bearer of a tradition, approaching the myth and expressing itself through the ritualization of that tradition”. The creation of identity of the Grêmio de Regatas Almirante Tamandaré aimed to develop an association where the constituent elements of Brazilian representation in the sport of rowing had an environment where they could cultivate a Brazilian cultural identity. The boats were made in different locations. In those cities and countries, rowing was probably a well-developed sport because there was demand for products specific for its practice and markets for specialized builders. Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo were already references for that sport in Brazil. In those states, it had been practiced since the 1870s. In view of the expanding market, the need emerged for manufacturers of rowing boats. Maranhão is also one of the Brazilian states where

there was an attempt to introduce rowing in the early twentieth century. However, its development was the opposite of the states mentioned above.

In the state of Maranhão, in a period contemporary to the foundation of Grêmio de Regatas Almirante Tamandaré, the intention was to introduce rowing using the Anil and Bacanga rivers, and Clube de Regatas Maranhense was created with that purpose. However, the idea did not consolidate since there were no funds for the purchase of appropriate boats or support by traders and authorities. Another attempt took place on September 13, 1908. Implementation of rowing in the state was considered again, and even a competition was organized; however, the club was re-established only in 1909 (VAZ, 2005). The practice was organized in clubs late, in comparison to the states of Rio de Janeiro, São Paulo and Rio Grande do Sul. Note that Rio Grande do Sul's rowing clubs differed from others because there were people who mastered the technique for making boats for that sport.

Most godmothers of "Tamandarist" boats had Portuguese-Brazilian surnames or one Portuguese-Brazilian and one German-Brazilian surname. So they were supposedly born in Brazilian soil. However, there were godmothers with family names of German ethnic origin, such as Lola Weyrauch and Olga Marcher. That is, the association accepted members of other ethnicities among its associates. This evidence is also seen in the names of the members of the teams who competed at the time.

### **3 GRÊMIO TAMANDARÉ TURNS 20: REASSERTING AN IDENTITY**

Grêmio de Regatas Almirante Tamandaré was a space for sports practices mostly for Portuguese-Brazilians. In the 1920s, when the association completed two decades of existence, the movement to construct a Brazilian cultural identity was strengthening in the country. Therefore, there was a search for representations that rekindled cultural memory (ASSMANN, 1995), considered as Brazilian.

In that direction, the rowers' association also reported representations of Brazilian cultural memory. At its 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 1923, Castello organized a commemorative book in its honor, edited in a post-War period when Brazilian nationalism was on the rise. At the time, adopting representations of a Brazilian cultural identity was appreciated by the social context. Castello (1923) shows indications that some Brazilian identity representations adopted by the association were strengthening. Despite the emphasis given by the author, this commemorative book allows identifying identity representations that the club's creators wanted to build: "They understood Sports as a means to develop the body and to complete the formation of Nationality. Thus, they imagined a system to regain the bonds of nationality in the far south of the Motherland" (CASTELLO, 1923).

According to Melo (2006), rowing was seen as the sport of "physical exercise" – and that was used to defend and propagate the benefits of that practice. The same author mentions that the sport was seen as that of health, of challenge, which educates muscle and morale, "a practice adequate to a proud, strong youth with enough 'freedom of spirit' to lead the nation to the necessary progress" (MELO, 2006, p. 8). Rowing was chosen to establish the first association with representations of a Brazilian cultural identity in Porto Alegre probably because of its characterization as a sport that strengthens muscles and morale (MELO, 2006) and inspired the sentiment of nationality.

Such ideas were expressed at the association's headquarters during the meeting for solemn installation and inauguration of Admiral Tamandaré's portrait, on September 7, 1903, as speaker Arthur Pinto da Rocha said to a large audience. In his speech, he used past narrative to strengthen the patron's deeds and glories over and over again. While building the hero in collective imagination, he aimed at a process of social change towards the association's nationalism, in order to attract a larger number of participants. To do so, he sought to build collective memory, making a "symbolic constitution, which involves several symbolic battles to appropriate

events from the past that should be remembered and demarcate those to be forgotten” (OLIVEIRA, 2003, p 68).

According to Carvalho (1990), the hero must have the face of the nation. In his speech, Arthur Pinto da Rocha seeks to build that symbolism by often addressing the youth and instill the idea of nationality in them through the heroic example of the figure of Admiral Tamandaré in Brazil’s history. To do so, he lists the Admiral’s deeds in national defense events between 1823 and 1867, mentioning facts linked to Brazilian memory such as Brazil’s Independence, the Battle of Riachuelo and the Paraguayan War: “In 1823, he connected his name as a brave to the history of our independence, [...] and from 1865 to 1867, he engraved his heroic and strong name in the slopes of Paraguay” (CASTELLO, 1923, p. 11).

That is how the hero was constructed, an omnipotent being who goes through a time of trial, at the limits of his strength, when he is bound to wage a lone battle with evil until the final triumph. According to Araújo, quoted by Oliveira (2003, p. 67), that construction “means the coming of a time of glorification based on demonstrations of pride and pity; that is the basic profile of the hero who confirms his exceptionality”. At another point in his speech, Rocha urges the youth of the time, present at the celebration, to “shape their soul according to that great Brazilian’s soul” (CASTELLO, 1923, p. 11). By making them establish a commitment to the nation, he reinforces an association of those young people with a Brazilian cultural identity, to which the club was linked: “You who will prepare yourselves for the command of the Brazilian Motherland in its very bright future, you who have the sacred reverence of national glories, you who have chosen that name of war and honor as the symbol of your ideals” (CASTELLO, 1923, p. 11).

Transforming Admiral Tamandaré into a hero in the eyes of club members is a tactic to “reach citizens’ minds and hearts” (CARVALHO, 1990, p. 55) and thus legitimize a form

of identification. According to Carvalho (1990, p 55), “heroes are powerful symbols, incarnations of ideas and aspirations, reference points, fulcrums of collective identification”; hence they are effective instruments for reuse as representations of cultural identity.

In disputes, Grêmio de Regatas Almirante Tamandaré distinguished itself by the colors of its uniform – navy blue and white (REGATAS, 1911) – with the emblem represented by an anchor and two crossed oars. The anchor in the club’s emblem represents safety during a storm, sailors’ refuge, and it links with the club with naval symbols. The crossed oars assert the club’s devotion to that sport. Rowers’ costumes were a novelty at the time, as well as changes in the male body aesthetics (SILVA, 2011).

The foundation of the new association in accordance with the commemorative book Rio Grande do Sul Sportivo (1919, p. 161) was pointed out as a “beneficial reaction against the foreign element, which prevailed in local nautical sports at the time”. Thus, Grêmio de Regatas Almirante Tamandaré sets a Brazilian cultural identity in Porto Alegre’s rowing scene; it modifies and encourages competition between associations by developing boundaries of cultural identities.

#### **4 FINAL REMARKS**

Grêmio de Regatas Almirante Tamandaré introduced new identity representations in the rowing scene in response to the German-Brazilian hegemony. The association became a relational space for struggles between representations of cultural identities, where regattas used to be disputes going beyond the sports competition: their deeds symbolized changes in hierarchical positions between cultural identities in their quest for supremacy in rowing. That association sought to approach a Brazilian cultural identity; for that, it adopted measures such as: Portuguese became its official language; its was named after the Brazilian Navy admiral born in Rio Grande do Sul; the boats of the flotilla were given



names in the tupi-guarani language; and its building symbolized the defense of national seas and the organization of maritime traffic in Porto Alegre.

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