

Lulism and football: speeches of a president-fan

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Abstract: This paper discusses mediations of Lulism with football (soccer), arguing that the sport was strongly associated with popular symbolism and Lula's charismatic power. Thus, we analyze football's place in the President's speeches. After document review and collection, 309 reports were analyzed. As a result, we identified three discursive matrices: the metaphorical one, in which the language of football is used as a resource for identification and projection; the one related to Sport Club Corinthians Paulista, where the fan and opinionative discourse prevails; and the pragmatic one, which follows the modernizing agenda for the implementation of the 2014 FIFA World Cup.

Key words: Football. Lulism. Sports. Policy.

1 INTRODUCTION

Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva left Brazil's presidency enjoying huge popularity. His success and approval rates were justified, on the one hand, by the adoption of policies and a political stance that, without challenging the established order and without carrying out effective rupture with the previous government's macroeconomic policies, radicalized fiscal and monetary orthodoxy of neoliberalism, and, on the other hand, implemented a policy of poverty alleviation including measures to enhance the domestic market and protect the

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underprivileged portion of the population. As a result, he seems to have ruled in favor of everyone, guaranteeing the privileges and profits of the most powerful and bringing tens of millions of Brazilians into the sphere of consumption.

Thus, Lula replaced the programmatic debate and gave rise to Lulism. According to Singer (2009), it was a rupture-free and “pluriclassist” project combining redistributive efforts and popular symbolism, supported by strong ties to the poor. However, as noted by Ab’Sáber (2011), although it was real and sound, the project was also the result of marketing and propaganda. In the “Little Lula peace and love”¹ style, Lula played weekend football matches and spoke about politics using football terms, turning his identification with that sport into political capital and reinforcing his charismatic style based on direct relationship with voters.

In Brazil, it seems fair to say that speaking about football is a way of speaking about the country.² Lula, who was often criticized for his low education and for not speaking foreign languages, was eloquent in “footballese” – the language of football. Therefore, we must question: how does football relate to Lulism? What was the place of the subject in Lula’s speeches? Therefore, the aim of this study is to identify and characterize Lula’s discursive matrices about football.

2 STUDY DESIGN

This study relied on documentary survey built from an

¹The image of “Little Lula peace and love”, giving him the symbolic possibility to lead the changes that the country needed through negotiation, was built by marketing guru Duda Mendonça during the 2002 presidential election. The following expedients played a core role in that strategy: moderate discourse; acceptance of commitments made by the previous Cardoso government; ceasing attacks on the other candidates; and intensive use of jingles and songs as an electoral marketing strategy (RUBIM, 2003).

²A summary of the history of academic studies on Brazilian football – especially those addressing its relationship with identity issues and the field of communication – can be found in Helal (2011). In that trajectory, the work “Universo do futebol: esporte e sociedade brasileira”, edited by Damatta (1982), opens up a perspective where the phenomenon of football is understood as a drama of social life, a privileged way to situate and express significant problems in Brazilian society, i.e., a way of speaking about the country.

institutional repository and primary sources, namely: President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva's speeches transcribed and available on the electronic portal of the Presidency of the Republic's Library.³ The survey was conducted from January 1, 2003 to December 31, 2010, corresponding to Lula's two terms in office. According to search using the descriptors keywords "*discurso*" (speech), "Lula" and "*futebol*" (football), 420 speeches were selected, which correspond to 16.27% of 2,582 speeches available in the database.

As for the treatment of that material, the method of content analysis was used in order to get to its meanings and significances, (BARDIN, 2010). Thus, pre-analysis based on "floating reading" of 420 initially selected speeches enabled us to define a corpus of analysis comprised of 309 speeches.⁴ Considering the frequency of topics observed, all those speeches were grouped into three thematic units, as shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Distribution of speeches grouped according to thematic unit

Units	Speeches
Speeches containing football metaphors	101
Speeches mentioning or praising Sport Club Corinthians Paulista	70
Discourses on government actions in the sports sector	70
Other speeches with isolated references to football	68
Total	309

The analysis itself, which involved reading the entire content, was based on a theoretical framework built through review of the literature on Lula's life history, the Lula Administration, Lulism and football. From this organization, we now present research results, whose analyses were conducted according to themes guiding the

³All presidential speeches at events or official ceremonies are available in their entirety and can be found on the electronic portal of the Press Secretary for the Presidency. See: <http://www2.planalto.gov.br/imprensa/discursos>. With the end of Brazilian presidents' terms, their speeches are transferred to the Library of the Presidency. Available at: <http://www.biblioteca.presidencia.gov.br>. Accessed on March 7-25, 2011.

⁴After the first reading of 420 speeches initially selected, 111 records were discarded – 49 for being duplicated speeches, 7 for being the Vice-president José Alencar's speeches, and 55 for not being exactly speeches – 30 interviews and 25 records of annual events.

grouping of speeches, preceded by a brief discussion on Lulism.

3 THE BASIS OF LULISM

Behind the apparent similarity of election results in 2002 and 2006 and the 20+ percentage points separating Lula from Serra and Alckmin,⁵ there is a major movement by voters, with the change in social strata that gave victory to Lula and PT in each election. According to Singer (2009), the phenomenon of Lulism emerges from that realignment. While PT used to be supported by a progressive middle class, by voters with high education living mostly in Brazil's South-Southeast regions and in large urban centers, the nature of his constituency – until then with strong ideological characteristics – changes from 2002 on.

Although PT's emergence was associated with interests organized around the capital-labor contradiction, the figures on Lula's 2006 election,⁶ whose trend is repeated in Dilma Rousseff's 2010 election, show that electoral polarization took place beyond the core classes – bourgeoisie versus proletariat. This is because PT came to represent more the subproletariat and less the proletariat⁷ in the political arena. Supported by low and very low income population, it acquired the features of a "Party of the poor" and even though it appealed to an active and organized segment of civil society, Lulism caused re-polarization of partisan dispute in Brazil based on the rich-poor conflict (SINGER, 2012).

However, subproletarians happen to be a class fraction that

⁵According to data from Supreme Electoral Court, Lula was elected in 2002 with 61.27% of votes against 38.72% obtained by his opponent José Serra, and he was re-elected in 2006 with 60.83% against 39.17% of Geraldo Alckmin – both PSDB members. Available at: <http://www.tse.jus.br/eleicoes/eleicoes-antteriores>. Accessed on May 5, 2011.

⁶The votes that elected Lula in the 2002 election were still not clearly defined. They had no link with any particular social stratum, but indicated a process of change. However, in the 2006 election, Lula and PT acquire popular resonance, receiving a flood of votes from people with low and very low income, low education, from the North and Northeast regions, and living in the outskirts of metropolises.

⁷In Marxist jargon, subproletarians are those socially located below the proletariat regarding living and working conditions. They are the poorest of the poor, the fraction of the class represented by very low income voters.

struggles to organize. Fragmented in the productive system and deprived of the possibility of building their autonomous self-organization from below, they present themselves in the political arena as masses. As such, they tend to identify with a leader who, working from the top, puts the State to their favor. This political behavior upon which Lulism rests resembles what Marx ([1852]) called Bonapartism – a model according to which a government centered on the figure of a leader can muster enough power to arbitrate clashes between conflicting classes. Therefore, Lulism's Bonapartist dimension can be characterized from a government that, while backed by the poorest, stood above the struggle between traditional classes and kept the demands of workers and businesses in balance.

Therefore, Lulism was not an ideology, but rather de-ideologization of politics (OLIVEIRA, 2010). The subproletariat, seeing it as the platform to alleviate poverty without confronting the order – through vote – granted Lula the power of arbitration between fundamental classes.⁸ In that scenario, Lula's option for the poorest did not trigger anti-capitalist reforms. Order and change – that was the tone of his government that, sustained on some sort of weak reformism, promoted a shy reduction of inequality. The material basis for adherence to Lulism lied precisely there, in a reform project designed to fight poverty through policies for income-transfer, credit expansion, increase the minimum wage and formal employment, as well as integration of the poorest via consumption and credit (SINGER, 2012).

However, beyond redistributive efforts, we must consider that Lulism also had a strong symbolic support, enhancing the poor's mechanisms of identification with Lula's figure. Remember that he was the first Brazilian president to have experienced misery and poverty, and it resonated with poorer voters' self-image. They saw Lula as a loving and charismatic president, someone who projected

⁸The success of the arbitration solution – a Gramscian category – depends on the poles it balances not having force to impose their own solutions. Thus, conflicting interests and proposals are resolved based on arbitration by an Executive that places itself above classes (SINGER, 2012).

their aspirations, and they raised him to the status of condottiere and myth (OLIVEIRA, 2010). In this sense, without disregarding its material and economic base, Lulism must also be understood in light of Lula's popular symbolism and charismatic power.

Ab'Sáber (2011) resorts to the intersection between politics and culture to sustain that Lula himself is the embodiment of the social pact which sustained his government. By proposing a government for everyone that absorbs the corporative representations of workers and employers, he managed to unify the country around the consumption and market ideal that would allow access to its gains. When the international crisis emerged, jeopardizing Brazil's GDP growth, he even went to TV to urge people to continue consuming. To the tune of his new developmentalism,⁹ he was "the man"¹⁰ who turned – in discourse – misery into poverty, poverty in middle class and made wealth disappear as rhetorical effect.

Lula also continued, in a symbolic, much clearer way, to signal openly to the poor, with his former class habitus, at Brazil's June festivals, barbecues with football and beer coolers at the Presidency's private beach, as well as his famous "footballese" as political language and general metaphor, and therefore easily convincing them through charismatic identification (AB'SÁBER, 2011, p. 26).

Paraná (2008) studied the life history of the boy from Pernambuco backlands who came to Sao Paulo on the back of a truck, who lived in the poor outskirts and used to shine shoes, who loved to play ball as a child, who even played for the São Caetano Football Club in his teenage and loved Physical Education classes at SENAI, the metalworker who played football with

⁹A critical analysis of new developmentalism as a political-ideological formulation for economic development can be found in Gonçalves (2012).

¹⁰At a meeting of leaders of G20 – group of developed and developing countries – in April 2009 in London, England, US President Barack Obama said that Lula was "my man", identifying him as the "most popular politician on Earth". According to Ab'Sáber (2011), it was Lula's unique rhetoric and symbolic pop potential that made him Obama's "man". At the time, Obama was a president in search of a reference given the US economic and social crisis.

mates at lunchtime and who lost a finger in a factory accident, the union leader from the ABC region who used to go to the beach at Praia Grande, who was widowed, remarried and always rooted for Corinthians, the political leader who became the country's first working class president. The author reveals how Lula, a representative of the culture of poverty,¹¹ joined a different social group but did not forget his origin and former class habitus.

4 THE CONQUEST METAPHOR

The rhetorical ability of Lula, who is able to captivate the most distinct actors but with greater resonance among the poorest, is largely justified by the use of metaphors. To Daltoé (2011), Lula's language represents a particular way of expressing politics, since it includes the people as a new interlocutor in the discursive scene of Brazilian politics, establishing a better dialogue as he shares with the people the sayings of popular culture without necessarily sharing the same physical space. Understandably, "footballese", which is intelligible to virtually every Brazilian, including the richer and more sophisticated ones, was a language used to talk closely to the poorest people.

As the President's term approaches its end, we get the feeling that we were watching a football match, and I'll talk about football because the most humble people understand it better if I philosophize football. So in this football match, I have no doubt that we're winning the game 4-0, 5-0 ... So we have three types of football fans: we have that very optimistic fan who thinks it was impossible to do more, that we did it all, that we scored the most beautiful goals were ever seen at the Maracanã Stadium. Then we have the pessimistic one who goes "Gee, only 5-0! Why did they not score 10? Why not 15? They could've done more". That will also not happen. And there's the one who is a bit like you all:

¹¹The notion of culture of poverty serves to identify a particular lifestyle and pattern, and behavior that emerges and lasts through generations belonging to the same social and economic group, including the poor's adaptation and reaction to their marginal position in capitalist society (PARANÁ, 2008).

emotionally a strong supporter but also rationally strong; you are happy with the 5-0 but at the same time you found some goals beautiful, others were more or less, other were ugly, and you think the team could have done more if they had not lost the ball so much, if passes had not been missed. Politics is a bit like that. I know we did a lot, but I also know how much remains to be done in this country.¹²

According to Sardinha (2008, p. 98), metaphors can be understood as representations of concepts and, as such, “they reside in the minds of individuals and are shared by people of the same culture. The concepts represented by metaphors are called metaphorical because they combine two different domains”. In the excerpt cited as the source domain, football joins the target domain of politics, lending a narrative and references to the evaluation of Lula’s government. And while in this example the football metaphor appears in an end-of-term speech, it is important to note that the same resource has been present in Lula’s trajectory since the first metalworkers’ strike in 1978.

When the leadership of the Metalworkers Union conducted the first picket after the 1964 military coup, they called the movement a “chain forward”. They were under the impact of the 1970 World Cup victory, and the motto “a chain forward” – strongly linked to the military dictatorship, was ironically chosen to fight it. Pickets? No, picketing is banned; all we do is a “chain forward” to see if the boss gives us a raise (PARANÁ, 2008, p. 434-435)

Since then, “Footballese” was already present in Lula’s oratory. Sometimes it was used consciously and sometimes it was almost unnoticed in the interaction of his speeches. In the presidential rhetoric, football was mainly associated to the concept of government.

¹²Address at the National Human Rights Award ceremony, when he signed the bill establishing the International Convention for the protection of human rights of migrant workers.

Once again I want to thank Minister Tarso Genro and his team, wishing our dear Fernando Haddad full success and that he keeps doing the good things they have been doing, because we learned from football that we don't change a winning team, we just let it keep winning.¹³

Here, the association between football and government compares Lula's government team to a football team. This metaphor was indeed present in every speech Lula made involving the inauguration of ministers, which, for us, can be compared to the coach's speech to his players before they enter the field. However, the target domain of Lula's metaphors was not only restricted to the concept of government. Lula deliberately used metaphors when he needed to speak of critical and complex issues, translating them into a common cognitive base.

It would be almost unnecessary for me to speak about the crisis after listening to the President of the Central Bank, the Minister of Finance, the Chief of Staff and nine of our comrade councilors talking. First, because there is an agreement, I would say, from what we know of the crisis, on the diagnosis of this crisis. [...] The second thing is that I have this... everyone knows that I like football, I follow football, I have even played football – I was not good, but I used to play it – and I use a lot of football when I speak because the truth is that at least 90% of Brazilians understand or think they understand. I have always worked with the following idea: attack is the best form of defense. And everyone also knows that when a team is winning, if it retreats, it might allow the other team to win the game. Football history is full of examples. A team scores 1-0, everybody retreats, the opponent beats, beats, beats, and “water dropping day by day wears the hardest rock away”. The same happens in football, so many corners, so many kicks, and the ball eventually enters. Now we decided not to allow the crisis to

¹³Speech at the ceremony of presentation of the proposed Bill on Higher Education and inauguration of Minister of Education Fernando Haddad. Brasília, DF, July 7, 2005.

have in Brazil, first, the effects that some would like it to have, because panic is a problem in a crisis [...] If we allow people to stop buying out of fear [...] people to cease to take loans for their magical dream of having a car out of fear... If we let panic take over society, what will happen? [...] It seems that some people are rooting for that to happen. And it is precisely against those people that I rise every single day and sell optimism.¹⁴

The language of football, related to the economy here, translates a message of coalition and optimism in face of the beginning of the international financial crisis. According to Sardinha (2008), Lula's metaphors gained prominence through the use of narrative, diverging from the rest of his speech, and by evoking a remarkable topic in the lives of Brazilians. Thus, the power of that metaphor lies in the fact that in addition to diverging from the economic debate, it allied football – that is, a remarkable topic – to common proverbs. One of them was popular – “water dropping day by day wears the hardest rock away” – and another one typical of “footballese” – attack is the best form of defense. In other words, what he said was: “Our economy is doing well, but we can't lower our guard to the crisis, so consumption is the best defense.

There are several other recurring metaphors in Lula's discourse, although not always supported on a word and a domain of high metaphorical use such as football. Using linguistics' tools, Sardinha (2008) showed that conquest is a key metaphor in Lula's rhetoric, generating a wide variety of metaphors by combining with other metaphors and fields.

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Let us return to the first discourse quoted, in which Lula uses the domain of football and the narrative of a match won by 5-0 to establish positive references for the evaluation of his government.

¹⁴Speech at the plenary meeting of the Council for Economic and Social Development, CDES.

In the same speech, taken as a whole, the word football appears four times while the word conquest and its derivations appear 14 times. We conquered citizenship rights, democracy, credibility, respect, trust, freedom etc., that is, a 14-0 win, but according to Lula, more could have been done.

To reinforce the cliché that Brazil is the country of futebol,¹⁵ the President overused the association that if we are good at football, we can also be good in other areas.

We thought we would graduate ten thousand doctors, but we have already reached 10,500 doctors and we want to create a brand, that Brazil will never retract in doctors' training, because that will be Brazil's charm from now on, that is, it won't be street children, it won't be slums or stilt houses anymore, it won't be only carnival or football anymore.¹⁶

Drawing on his life story as a person who suffered, but who knew how to fight hardship and win until he reached the country's highest office, conquest is the very metaphor of Lula's life, as Sardinha (2008) sees it. His political conduct, according to Paraná (2008), was forged on the idea of emancipating Brazilians from the culture of poverty – which corresponds to conquest embodied as himself and his family – and connecting with the future for economic mobility of people and the nation.

5 A PASSION FOR CORINTHIANS

Lula has liked soccer since his childhood and, as an adult, besides being a weekend street player, he used to go to stadiums

¹⁵According to Helal (2011, p. 29), “the country of football is not a natural reality but rather a construction made by actors – from the press, academia and politics – in a particular historical moment [from the 1930s on]. We say we are the ‘country of football’ as a way to feel different, unique, singular”. To learn more about the “invention” of the country of football, see Soares and Lovisolo (2001).

¹⁶Speech on a visit to the Ford Industrial Complex in Brazil's Northeastern Region, Camaçari, BA, April 5, 2006.

until he became president. His passion for football, together with the rhetoric, can be seen in the frequent use of the football metaphor. It is important to note, however, that football was in his speeches not only as metaphor. Driven by passion, Lula often dropped previously prepared speeches to give his opinion and testimony as a fan.

I wanted to finish by reading just two pages of what was written here, because otherwise the people who wrote this speech will be upset. I think if we treat Brazilian football as national heritage, I'll give an example here to the president of Sport Club International, I like the club, I am a fan of International in Rio Grande do Sul, although I love Grêmio Footbal Porto-Alegrense, because I saw Grêmio play against Cruzeiro and Grêmio was losing, I was with Tarso Genro, and what I saw those fans do and what I saw those players do on the field! Only self-esteem leads a team to do that.¹⁷

The president made a point to express his preferences for one team or another. We could even say that he was a real “turncoat” for saying he was a fan of different teams, depending on where and to whom he spoke. But his declaration of love and promises of fidelity to his favorite team used to mark his speeches. When referring to football, Lula made his team preference clear.¹⁸ Sympathy and comments on the history and deeds of other times, often present in his speeches, are explained by his involvement and experience with football, but his passion for Corinthians is unquestionable.

I didn't even know what football was, because I came from Pernambuco when I was 7 years old, in 1952; in 1954 Corinthians was the champion and, because of everything that happened, I used to live in Itapema, now Vicente de Carvalho, in Santos, and I didn't become a Santos fan or a Jabaquara fan; I became a Corinthians fan in

¹⁷Speech at the sanction ceremony of Timemania Law. Brasília, DF, September 14, 2006.

¹⁸Team preference is the basis for rooting in Brazil's football and it consists of affective bonds borrowed from relatives and interwoven with elements of economic, social, and cultural order and with local, regional and national values and identities (DAMO, 2001; 2008).

1954. Well, since then Corinthians is part of my joys and sorrows. Marcelinho, you don't know how much you made me suffer when you missed that penalty kick against Palmeiras in the Libertadores' final match. I'm 60 years old, and that was the only time I thought I'd have a heart attack because I couldn't believe it had happened, but it had.¹⁹

According to Lula, Corinthians gave him many joys and sorrows – feelings that, as a fan, he could experience several times when following his team, regardless of where it was playing. In this sense, the memory of Corinthians integrates the narrative that tells his own life story.

Hey, Zagallo, I was 13 years old in 1958. I remember the Brazilian national squad playing against Corinthians, and I remember that since Gilmar played for Brazil, Corinthians's goalkeeper was Cabeção. I remember the anger I felt when I left the Pacaembu stadium in 1957, when De Sordi and his gang took the title from Corinthians. I remember when Djalma Santos, almost an anonymous hero at Portuguesa de Desportos, before going to Palmeiras, used to put on such spectacles playing on the right. I won't even speak of Pelé, because my relationship with Pelé is a love-and-hate relationship. It is a relationship of admiration as the most important thing that happened in world football, but at the same time it meant 15 years of suffering during my teenage. You don't know what you could have done with your gang, with Zito, with Pepe, a young hopeful, for defeating Corinthians so many times.²⁰

The use of metaphors also connected Lula the football fan to the domain of politics, associating the joys and sorrows provided by Corinthians to his ability to overcome election defeats he suffered in 1989, 1994 and 1998.

But look, I'll tell you one thing: it was the moment,

¹⁹Speech at the inauguration of the Corinthians Memorial. São Paulo, SP, January 27, 2006.

²⁰Speech at the ceremony to award the "Heroes from 1958" medal to players of the 1958 Brazilian national squad. Brasília, DF, June 26, 2008.

it was the moment... I have experienced many joys, I have experienced many sorrows. I root for a team in Brazil, called Corinthians, which went 23 years without winning a championship, and I suffered a lot. I lost, Zuma, three elections, I lost three elections. Each one I lost, I came home and my wife said: "Hey Lula, don't you think it's time to stop, son, don't you think so?" And I noticed that my friends would also like me to stop, you see, Zuma? I kept thinking that my comrades also wanted me to stop. But I used to lose elections in October, lick the wounds between November and December, and when January arrived, I had to start traveling all over Brazil again to raise the morale of the troops, because if we don't raise the morale people get discouraged.²¹

Therefore, it can be said that Lula's passion for Corinthians made his speech about football one opinionative speech that could be expressed by any Corinthians fan. However, even with no ties to his field of action, his speeches enjoyed very high representativeness. But although he was a political actor, Lula was authorized to give speeches about football because of his institutional authority – he was a football fan invested of power (CAVALCANTI; CAPRARO, 2012). Thus, at least regarding soccer, he presented himself more as a fan than a president.²² Besides having created popular identification, this type of opinionative and passionate discourse had implications for the sphere of political action, especially when we look at his government's programs and actions for sports.

6 POLITICAL PRAGMATISM

It was with the determination of a passionate fan that Lula guided the actions of his government for sports, with emphasis on

²¹Speech at the closure of the Brazil-South Africa Business Forum. Johannesburg-South Africa, July 9, 2010.

²²"Before being the President, I'm Brazilian. Before becoming President of the Republic, I'm a sport fanatical and, within sports, a football fan". Speech at the sanction ceremony of Timemania Law. Brasília, DF, September 14, 2006.

making the State the main partner of the country's football management entities. This partnership was evident mainly from the resumption of dialogue with CBF (Brazil's Football Association) at the organization of the Brazilian national team's friendly match in Haiti in 2004, and the decision to host the FIFA World Cup 2014,²³ announced in 2007.

I wanted to tell FIFA's president, President Blatter, about the joy of seeing Brazil's name appear on that ballot. I want to thank the whole FIFA Executive Committee, the presidents of federations, and thank [CBF President] Ricardo Teixeira for his effort – actually, not to thank, to congratulate him for his effort. I want to reassure FIFA officials. This is not a responsibility of the current president; we are here taking responsibility as a nation, as the Brazilian State, to prove to the world that we have a growing economy.²⁴

In hindsight, we should remember that early in his term, Lula created an exclusive Ministry to deal with sports²⁵ and already in 2005, at the launch of the National Sports Policy, he expressed his political will to see Brazil as the host of the Olympics and the World Cup.

If one day we want to dream of having the Olympics here in Brazil or if we have the right to host a World Cup again, we have to be professional and get things done with great competence so that we can show the world that we are not only good at football, volleyball, swimming, that we are good at organizing international events to which we are committed.²⁶

Since then, mega-events' space has been expanding in the government's agenda. An instrumental use of sports towards

²³For the sake of simplicity, when referring to FIFA World Cup 2014, we will say only "World Cup". The same goes for the 2016 Olympic and Paralympic Games, heretofore translated as "Olympics".

²⁴Speech at the ceremony to announce Brazil as the host of the 2014 World Cup, Zurich, Switzerland, October 30, 2007.

²⁵Through Provisional Measure 103/2003, later turned into Law 10683/2003, the then Ministry of Sports and Tourism was separated into two ministries, and sports got their own ministry.

²⁶Speech at the launching ceremony of the National Sports Policy. São Paulo, August 19, 2005.

repositioning the country in world geopolitics and national economic development was at stake.²⁷ And while at the more general level Lulism suppressed the programmatic debate on the future of the nation in behalf of a development project without ruptures and pluriclassist, what happened in football was not different: a conservative pact to recover clubs, modernize stadiums and update the legal framework inherent to the sector, all in behalf of the preparation for the World Cup.

...just to show my concerns with sports, which is the greatest passion in this country. I think we need to take great care of it. It's very easy for the government to say that clubs are the problem, it's very easy to say that the problem is to turn clubs into businesses, it's very easy to say many things. The truth is that we have a problem at hand, which is no one's individual problem; it belongs to all of us, and we must take responsibility together to save this heritage of Brazil called football.²⁸

While on the one hand Lula spoke of the need for a wider debate about the problems faced by the country's football clubs, such as their financial crisis and lack of professional management, he also advocated state intervention in order to pay their debts. With arguments sustained by Brazilians' passion for football and its potential to generate employment and income, he advocated financial support to clubs.

Few things are as important to our people as football. And everyone knows that several professional clubs in our country have been undergoing a deep financial and administrative crisis for a long time, with hard, I would say, even unpayable debts. We are here today to help solve this problem. If it were not for the importance of our national passion, it would also be because football is an industry of great potential for employment and resource creation

²⁷For more on the relations of hegemony and the coalition of interests involving the organization of mega sporting events in Brazil, see Mascarenhas et al (2012).

²⁸Speech at the ceremony when government guarantees were presented to CBF and the government declaration in support of the football World Cup 2014 in Brazil was signed. Brasília, June 15, 2007.

for our people and our country. Football will not survive or develop anywhere in the world without strong, financially healthy and professionally managed clubs. By creating Timemania, we are strengthening football in general in our country. We are making Brazilian football clubs – undoubtedly the most significant sports reference for the country – able to face their problems and continue progressing in their historical trajectory of success. That's what we all want.²⁹

For Lula, taking the clubs from their pre-bankruptcy situation was the State's responsibility because football is part of Brazilian cultural heritage. But this would not be achieved only based on new funding sources. Management of Brazilian football was expected to modernize, which meant professionalizing it. Therefore, even before the launch of Timemania,³⁰ the President had sanctioned the Football Modernization Law,³¹ adopting measures aimed at its moralization, pointing at turning clubs into businesses, requiring them to account for their financial statements and defining the responsibility of their leaders.

Many people think that turning a club into a business is to get [Brazil's aviation agency] Infraero and put its name on the club's jersey. That's not turning a club into a business. Turning a club into a business is turning our club officials into football businesspeople because many of them are businesspeople in their private activities. So someone is a successful businessman outside football, and in football they are only an official for the team and not the businessman. And they need to treat the club as a business. That club has

²⁹Speech at the sanction ceremony of Timemania Law. Brasília, DF, September 14, 20

³⁰Lottery created by Law 11345/2006 in order to finance the tax debt of professional football clubs. It later proved to be inefficient because clubs' debts grew more than their revenues. In any case, Timemania can be considered as one of the key initiatives by the Lula government in terms of funding football.

³¹Provisional Measure 079/2003 later converted into Law 10672/2003, known as the Football Modernization Law, through changes in the Pelé Law (9615/1998), established new principles for sports management as an economic activity, namely financial and administrative transparency, morality in sports management, social responsibility of club officials and differential treatment regarding non-professional sports.

to generate money, it has to generate wealth, it has to generate a positive budget, some revenue.³²

Recovering Brazilian football, keeping superstars of the ball in the country and preserving football as Brazil's cultural heritage and as a feature of national identity are recurrent in President Lula's speeches, but he stresses the need for and importance of adjusting our football to the demands of globalized sports. From this perspective, there was also concern about security in stadiums. Along with the Football Modernization Law, Lula also signed the Fan Defense Statute,³³ establishing a set of rules for the organization of sports events, from the sale of numbered tickets to quality inspection of food sold at stadiums, to allocation of responsibilities to organizers, to the establishment of safety plans, to registration of members of so-called "organized supporter groups" and criminalization and violence in stadiums.

Other speeches associated with government actions in sports stand out, such as the reference to football that Lula insisted on even when his agenda involved activities of other government programs or even an agenda involving Olympic sports – usually activities associated to the Olympics. However, when the matter directly involved football, Lula's speeches turned to their primary target: modernization of football aimed at organizing and hosting the World Cup in Brazil.

Now, here in Brazil, the people do not have enough purchasing power and neither do we have this habit – we need to develop it – of gradually structure clubs, because we are candidates to hold the World Cup 2014. You all know that for us to have the World Cup 2014 here – FIFA's President is coming to Brazil now, on the 28th of September – according to FIFA's criteria, we have no stadium able to host World Cup matches. That means that if we want it – and I've made sure to publicize the Brazilian government's will

³²Speech at the sanction ceremony of Timemania Law. Brasilia, DF, September 14, 20

³³Law 10671/2003.

to have the World Cup here in 2014 – that means we'll have to think about building at least 12 new stadiums in this country. And it is not just the clubs' of the Confederation's responsibility, it's the responsibility of the federal government, state governments and mayors, it's the responsibility of our Development Bank, it's the responsibility of our public banks, Caixa and Banco do Brazil, because a World Cup will give Brazil a level of visibility that we have no idea of.³⁴

Modernizing the political and administrative structure of football to adopt businesslike management, which reflects the process of professionalization of sports, is a trend that can be seen since 1970s. It has gained momentum with the 1988 Federal Constitution and the liberalizing legal framework of the Zico Law and the Pelé Law³⁵ (PRONI, 2000, FRANCO JÚNIOR, 2007, RODRIGUES, 2007). The Lula government's novelty, considering the organization and holding of the World Cup, was the strengthening of measures to support the activity under a business logic, reflecting a new stage in the process of modernizing football in our country. However, it further reinforced conservatism in the State's relationship with managing organizations – clubs, federations, CBF and FIFA.

7 FINAL REMARKS

Lulism is a recent phenomenon and its historical meaning has not been completely established yet. Full of ambiguity and contradiction, it combined change and conservatism, overcoming and reproduction, hope and disappointment – all in one movement. As can be understood from Singer (2012) and Ab'Sáber (2011), the government of Lula and PT brought no novelties and was far from carrying out any anti-capitalist reform. On the contrary, it promoted a conservative pact and ruled with the rich and powerful.

³⁴Speech at the sanction ceremony of Timemania Law. Brasília, DF, September 14, 20

³⁵Respectively, Law 8672/1993 and Law 9615/1998.

But it is also true that, from the material and economic standpoint, it made redistributive efforts, which, together with Lula's popular symbolism and charismatic power, secured sympathy and adherence by the poor and the very poor.

We attempted to explore the symbolic dimension of Lulism, particularly its mediations with football. Yes, the presence of football in Lula's discourse was remarkable – something that reflects his cultural background. No president had ever spoken so much about football, even because, unlike his predecessors, he mastered its codes. Lula used and abused its language to communicate, cultivating the feeling of the popular, the national and the modern. It was under those meanings that he spoke through football and about football, whether using metaphors, his passion for Corinthians, translating a fan and opinionative discourse or pointing out his actions involving that sport. In Gramscian terms, Lula led a huge organic advancement of consent – in the words of Ab'Sáber (2011), of pop charisma and anti-critical culture, and his “Footballese” helped it.

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