

“Recreate, educate and advocate suburban interests”: stances towards football in the newspapers *Gazeta Suburbana* and *Bangú-Jornal* (1918-1920)

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Abstract: This study aims to discuss the stances on football published on two suburban newspapers from Rio de Janeiro: *Gazeta Suburbana* and *Bangú-Journal*. It covers the years of 1918-1920 – a time when tension grew in the city’s football arena, notably due to the higher transfer of players between clubs of two major leagues: the Suburban and Metropolitan leagues. We think that such investigation can expand our perspective on football by exploring the views of those who defended the interests of an outskirts area of the city.

Keywords: Football. History of Sport. Press.

1 INTRODUCTION

Sports have been present in the press of the state of Rio de Janeiro since the turn from the 1840s to the 1850s. *Jornal do Commercio*, one of the most important newspapers of the Imperial period, already used to publish information on horse racing and

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rowing – pioneering sports in Brazil. During the nineteenth century, a two-way relationship was established between sports clubs and newspapers. For the former, newspapers and magazines were essential to publicize their initiatives as well as to shape a good image of sports practice. For the latter, that relationship was a way to relate to what was new in society – a novelty that was connected to the idea of progress and “civilization” (MELO, 2012).

Furthermore, over time, as sports gained social value, publishing news about them helped boost the profits of news companies, especially when the population was gradually consuming products linked to them (MELO, 2012).

Due to this strong relationship, the press is an important source to investigate tensions surrounding the shaping of the sports field. More than a forum echoing certain understandings about sports practice, it is also necessary to consider the press as an agent that influenced the consolidation of the phenomenon, even because it mediated distinct interests.

Most newspapers favored a point of view more in synch with the interests of the elite, although sometimes from a critical perspective. Even with that bias in newspapers and magazines, “according to their ambiguity typical of their mediating function, it is possible to capture different and conflicting views on sports practice, whose shaping helps us to understand the context of a changing society” (MELO, 2012, p. 47).

In any case, it would be interesting to diversify that view, not only to explore other stances on sports practice, but also to see the diversity of influences in designing the sports field. Therefore, working with publications of different nature can be an opportunity to broaden our perspective on the subject. This is the case of newspapers with a narrower circulation in the poor outskirts of the city of Rio de Janeiro – the so-called the suburban press.

The initiative to produce a newspaper intended to “recreate, instruct and advocate suburban interests” (COM licença, 1883,

p. 1) is an expression of the desire of some individuals who lived away from elite neighborhoods to engage in the struggle for better living, work and leisure conditions. This intention, present in most newspapers published in the area, was common among some leaders who were devoted “body and soul to the cause of improving quality of life in suburbs” (COM licença, 1883, p. 1) by denouncing authorities’ omission toward the situation of abandonment experienced by areas more distant from the City Center.¹

Even though they were aware of the difficulties to be successful in their claims, editors and columnists of those newspapers – usually locals – envisioned the possibility that their articles could encourage different forms of reaction by the local population against the neglect of public institutions. They used their modest publications as tools to be seen and listened to in the rapidly growing city (MENDONÇA, 2011).

The way this effort was carried out and solutions were presented to the problems allows us to perceive part of suburban residents’ multiple experiences. In fact, those newspapers were shaped by a suburban experience, but they also helped to shape it.

However, since the suburbs were not monolithic, one-dimensional or homogeneous places, it is not surprising that even among newspapers with similar goals it is possible to find significant differences in perceptions about the society of the time. These peculiarities are related to the audience for which they were intended, which could be the entire suburban area (always a highly vague concept) or a specific neighborhood, as well as the content that was considered of interest to the population.

Some of those newspapers saw sports, especially football, as an important object for building sociability links as well as an interest for their potential buyers. So they regularly reported the results of championship matches and schedules of local clubs, especially those who played in the Suburban League.

¹ Mendonça’s (2011) study shows an overview of the performance of those suburban newspapers. See also Abreu (1987).

Founded “by a group of distinguished sportsmen” (FOOTBALL ..., 1907, p. 4), in April 1907, the Suburban Football League congregated clubs that failed to meet the costs to join the Metropolitan League, such as Mangueira, Nacional, Riachuelo, Sampaio, Pedregulho, among others – all based in the suburbs of Rio de Janeiro.

The Metropolitan League, in turn, was founded in July 1905 by representatives of América, Bangu, Botafogo, Fluminense and the Foot-Ball and Athletic Club. It was the pioneering entity to organize football in Rio de Janeiro, promoting the city’s first championships. It was more elitist and demanded high membership costs from candidates.

Some years later, however, the Metropolitan League created the 2nd and the 3rd divisions, seeking to increase the number of members and attract key Suburban League clubs. That league was weakened and only returned more effectively in 1916, motivated by a newspaper, the *Gazeta Suburbana*.

In the second half of the 1900s, football was already an important element in building identity bonds. As that sport was spreading throughout the city, symbolic conflicts grew around it – something that was encouraged by newspapers.

The mainstream press, that with higher circulation in the city (*Correio da Manhã*, *O Imparcial*, *Gazeta de Notícias*, *O Paiz*, among others), usually considered suburban teams and their fans as impertinent and rude, responsible for the increasing number of disturbances in football fields. For example, in the words of *Correio da Manhã* columnist Mario Pollo (1916, p. 9), those clubs would be responsible for the driving “Rio’s good families” away from stadiums, tired as they were of the “absolutely uncomfortable and unpleasant” situation generated by the violence of which the clubs would be the main cause. In general, even if not openly, the newspapers advocated the interests of the Metropolitan League (SANTOS JUNIOR, 2012; SANTOS JUNIOR, MELO, 2013).

What would have been suburban newspapers’ approach to the tensions that existed in Rio de Janeiro’s football world? Considering their specific interests and goals, how would they have reacted to mainstream media stances? Given these issues, this study aims to discuss the stances taken on football by two major newspapers of Rio de Janeiro suburbs: *Gazeta Suburbana* and *Bangu-Jornal*.

The timeframe chosen was 1918-1920, since it was a time when tension grew in Rio de Janeiro’s football arena, mainly due to increased transfer of players between clubs of the Suburban and Metropolitan Leagues, triggering widespread criticism (PEREIRA, 2000; SANTOS JUNIOR, 2012).

In order to analyze and interpret the press’s stances, we took into account suggestions made by Luca (2005) and Melo et al. (2013). We explored the newspapers based on their materiality, intent and target audience, always treating stances not as an expression of truth, but rather as a specific, targeted and possible point of view on the topic being investigated.

“*Gazeta Suburbana*: recreational, news and general interest newspaper” was one of the newspapers paying strong attention to problems of Rio de Janeiro’s suburbs. Founded in 1883, it claimed to struggle for the interests of the area, in order to be “residents’ instrument of protest against authorities’ lack of attention to the problems afflicting that society, which were common to other neighborhoods far from the city center” (COM licença, 1883, p. 1).

In its first phase, the newspaper did not last long; its last issue was released in February 1885. Only in September 1910, *Gazeta* was re-launched, run by a different group of publishers, this time with the subtitle: “Critical, literary, news weekly, committed to the interests of the suburban area”. Just as the previous one, it assumed the commitment of “working for the suburbs” (NOSSO..., 1910, p. 1) in order bring “improvements and the necessary reforms” to the place.

The “Complaints and Grievances” section was the main space to criticize the situation of the suburbs, but the newspaper’s pages also covered social life. The “Sports Life” section reported results of matches and activities of local football clubs. Its authors and columnists usually challenged the discourse of refinement and nobility built by sportsmen from Southern Rio de Janeiro (where the elite lived), distancing themselves from representations of the major newspapers of the time and reacting to attempts at stigmatization.

Besides exalting the performance and achievements of local clubs, *Gazeta Suburbana’s* columnists used to denounce the recruiting of local players, which, according to the newspaper, would be evidence that the best football in the city was not played in the fields of South Rio; so much so that elite clubs tried to buy suburban superstars at all costs.

With an even more local approach, *Bangú-Jornal’s* section “Sports Life” also denounced the stigmas and arbitrary actions involving suburban clubs, highlighting everything that was related to the neighborhood club connected to the Metropolitan League, the Bangu Athletic Club.

Founded in July 1918, the newspaper published its purpose on its first issue: “To advocate local interests with sincerity, without any sort of passion” (VIDA..., 1918a, p. 3). Publishers assumed the commitment of “impartially reflecting all manifestations of its great public”, making the newspaper a “legitimate representative before public administrations” (VIDA..., 1918a, p. 3).

Producing a newspaper in the suburbs of the city was a real “mission”. Funding difficulty were constant. In addition, competition with other media outlets made the task even harder. Major newspaper companies were increasing their market, making it almost impossible for suburban newspapers to survive for long.

Still, we can say that those experiences help us understand a historical moment marked by a considerable expansion of the

press’s social and spatial place in the city. Stances expressed in that scenario can be very useful for us to capture other viewpoints on metropolitan problems, including those surrounding the old beautiful game.

2 SUBURBAN FOOTBALL: A FACTORY OF CRACKS

In the first week of April 1919, *Gazeta Suburbana* published a series of articles about problems plaguing local clubs. Among them, it pointed out the formation of a market for football players, which the journalist saw as a worrying situation that directly reached local clubs.

To the columnist, that would be the explanation for the movement to hire players from the suburbs: “Good games only happen in the Suburban League, because things do not get going among folks at the Metropolitan league...” (DIZEM..., 1919, p. 3). Despite the typical exaggerations of a self-assertion exercise, the view reflected what would frustrate in practice the idea of social distinction so coveted by sportsmen in South Rio clubs. Whether in factories’ yards or in modest fields spread across the area, football was gaining more and more ground in the city’s outskirts, being practiced in over 200 associations divided into six leagues.² In those spaces, men of distinct profiles, participating in increasingly competitive games and championships, progressively gained prominence for their skills with a ball at their feet.

Those were players from the less affluent strata practicing a sport of English origin that was already acquiring Rio-like features: football of whites and blacks, nationals and immigrants, illiterate and literate – a mosaic of people wearing uniforms which colored the city and highlighted its diversity. This is the scenario where elite associations began seeking players to complete their squads.

²According to Malaia (2010), during the 1910s and much of the 1920s, there were at least six leagues gathering local teams: Liga Sportiva Suburbana, or “Suburbana”, (including about 25 clubs), Associação Athletica Suburbana (20 clubs), Aliança Sportiva Municipal (always over ten clubs), Liga Rodrigo de Freitas (which did not exceed 10 clubs), Liga Sportiva de Futebol (about 10 clubs) and Associação Brasileira de Sports Terrestres (which rarely reached ten clubs).

Increase in transfer of players was related not only to symbolic expansion of the meanings of the game. Above all, it was an expression of a new economic dynamic that induced greater appreciation of the results. With that, the downplayed Suburban League was becoming an attraction since it was considered a “factory” of good footballers.

As a result of this trend, in 1917 the Metropolitan League overhauled its bylaws and created a code to limit players’ transfers. The aim was to preserve the elite character or at least to exert strong control over the practice. At first, exchanges between clubs affiliated to the entity were restricted. Later, it also applied to transfers between leagues. It provided that: “No player can play championship or tournament matches for another club before a one-year probation period from the date of the last match of the sport in which he has taken part” (ESTATUTOS... , 1917, p. 13577). It was the so-called the “Law of Probation.”

However, some clubs in the Metropolitan League soon bypassed the rule, notably to hire players from suburban teams. The formula was simple. Those who excelled in fields were offered money or a good job, sometimes both, in order to be transferred. Those who accepted were included as members of the new club. With dual membership, players had thirty days to choose which one they would play for (they would obviously choose the new team).

As can be seen, that was also forbidden, but since regulations were not clear, there was always trading of influences and the Metropolitan League looked the other way. Sometimes registration was denied, but the strategy was generally successful.

The mainstream media soon reacted to these events. Some newspapers questioned the validity of so many regulations to preserve amateurism, but most of them criticized the opportunism of those who saw football as a way to earn a good salary. As noted by a columnist of *O Imparcial*:

For sportsmen who understand that suburban associations do not meet the progressive purposes

of our land’ sports development, as from time to time it is said in sports circles, we tell those who are actually interested in the progress of football, the scandalous case of bribery, advantageous promises of good jobs, high tips that are being implemented for suburban players to join several clubs from the three divisions of the Metropolitan league.

[...] And then they say that the Suburban league is not the fabric for the Metropolitan league (A SUBURBANA... 1919, p. 9).

Challenges and limitations were not sufficient to prevent player transfers. During the 1919 season only, the Metropolitan League approved about 45 transfers, including to teams from the 2nd division, as was the case with Mangueira and Carioca, which together acquired nine players from suburban associations (SANTOS JUNIOR, 2012). On the press, criticism escalated both from advocates of a more elitist view of football and from those defending the principles of the suburb.

Periodicals published on the outskirts of the city soon mobilized. *Gazeta Suburbana* started to forcefully denounce the dismantling of local teams:

THEY SAY ...

that Vasco intends to buy over Engenho de Dentro. That Mr. Almeida Marques will appoint a committee to apprehend the “player [of suburban] hunters” (OS QUE desertam..., 1919, p. 3).

The newspaper demanded action from the Suburban League’s board, understanding that the maintenance of those players would be of paramount importance for the survival of the championship promoted by the entity. For the newspaper, moreover, defending local clubs was not only about football. It went further by directly involving the struggle for the interests of the suburbs; dissemination, maintenance and appreciation of local principles and habits.

The mission, however, was complex, and not only because of the most traditional clubs. The rise of Vasco da Gama, for example, made suburban resistance difficult: Portuguese traders were willing to make the association one of the great enterprises of their community in Rio de Janeiro and were not “very keen to have players identified with those from big aristocrat clubs” (MALAIA, 2010, p. 136).

Without looking at players’ skin color or social standing, Vasco da Gama started focusing only on winning. Its leaders hired six players at once from the two best teams in the city’s outskirts. At Engenho de Dentro, three-time Suburban League champion, they went for Nelson da Conceição (known as Chauffeur³), Alberto Quintanilha, Aquiles Pederneiras e Aristides Baptista (known as Lefty). Two of the best players from the Mavilles Factory were also recruited: defender Lamego and striker Leon.

Upon entering the field for the 1919 “Initium Tournament”, Vasco’s squad caught the attention of *Gazeta Suburbana*’s columnists. Surprised by the selection of a team with the presence of “several elements of Engenho de Dentro”, including three-time suburban champions, the columnist asked: “But is it really possible that these players abandon their glorious club to play for a club that is strange to them like Vasco?” Amazed, he answers: “We do not want to believe, but... anyway... let us wait for the events” (OS QUE desertam..., 1919, p. 3).

For the journalist, who understood that football could be important for the suburbs’ identity and values, it seemed unbelievable that financial interests were determinant in the decision of players who, according to him, should not abandon the cause of defending the area since they represented it. In that same issue, in the “On the wireless” section, the case was treated ironically, creating a possible dialogue between Mascate, a player who had remained at Engenho de Dentro, and Chauffeur, Pederneiras and Quintanilha, who had left the club:

³About this player, Santana’s (2013) study helps to better understand the conflicts surrounding the transfer of footballers at the time.

Quintanilla,

That’s not serious, you don’t do that. You’ll feel remorse and then when you come... the door will be closed! [Signed] Mascate.

Mascate,

I won’t keep playing for your team because now I’ll be a professional. [signed] Quintanilla.

Mascate,

Want to play for Vasco? If you do, write me at the club’s headquarters, I’ll register you, you’ll come to every practice, you’ll have a job, a gold medal and you’ll be the champion at the next championship. [signed] Pederneiras.

Chauffer [Nelson da Conceição]

Beware, wheel. Your left tire is flat and the steering wheel will not move ... [signed] Mascate

(PELO..., 1919, p. 3).

The same section published a letter signed by “reader M. P. A.” in which he requested urgent measures to Engenho de Dentro’s board so that Pederneiras would not take “everyone to Vasco”, blaming the player for Vasco’s scams. For the author, the footballer should be ashamed of “enticing players” of Engenho de Dentro, “promising what he of course has no competence to provide, and even if he had, his role would still be evident” (PELO..., 1919, p. 3). That was one more person who thought that financial interests interfering in the game was absurd.

This discussion went on for several days. In the following week, possible contract values were published in an attempt to reveal the amount to be divided among the players who Pederneiras took to Vasco. Even though the amounts did not correspond to anything possible, they are clues as to how the market issue bothered not only South Rio elites, but also the leaders of the suburb.

It is worth noting that even with this “foot drain”, football remained vigorous in Rio’s outskirts. The suburban press, where

possible, highlighted the achievements of local clubs, which further fueled the market. Attentive to those changes, *Gazeta Suburbana* kept monitoring player transfers, always criticizing transactions involving locals.

These actions, however, would be in vain. The permanence of those players on suburban teams became difficult as a result of a new condition: the emergence of workers-players – poor men who sought the opportunity of a formal job and started seeing football as a possibility for financial improvement.

3 THE SUBURBAN ETHOS 3: A LOCAL PERSPECTIVE

The second Sunday of July 1918 was marked by revolt in Rio's outskirts. After long hours of meeting, the board of the Metropolitan League made a controversial decision: to suspend matches at the stadium of Bangu Athletic Club.

According to a statement issued by the entity, the interdiction was motivated by the constant cases of violence during the club's matches. For a columnist of *Bangu-Jornal*, the decision was clearly "arbitrary". Outraged by the measure, the person in charge of the "Sports Life" section emphatically expressed his dissatisfaction on the newspaper's pages, questioning its possible reasons and speculating about the consequences of the suspension:

The interesting issue which concerns the unfair measure by which the field of our worthy club was arbitrarily interdicted will have a truly disastrous outcome for the Metropolitan League. It will cause huge material losses, beyond the insult received on a passionate report on the worthy members of the club's board (VIDA..., 1918, p. 3).

The news of the interdiction was met with indignation and apprehension by members of association.⁴ The subject was discussed

⁴Book of minutes of the meetings of the board of Bangu Athletic Club, June 12, 1918.

at several board meetings, which sought solutions to problem.⁵ The local press expected a firm reaction by the club’s leaders. For many, the honor of the suburb was at stake.

Indeed it was not a totally extemporaneous decision. Before that, several official letters criticizing the constant cases of violence during Bangu matches were sent to the club’s officials. In any case, local columnists did not accept it and expected a more drastic measure: “To our knowledge, the League’s responsibilities have been well defined by Justice and a lawsuit will be soon started against it calling for high compensation for damages” (VIDA ..., 1918, p. 3).

In the words of the columnist, suing would be “a good and quite useful lesson to the League’s contempt and a stupendous moral victory for our beloved club” (LIFE..., 1918, p. 3). Such a stance was seen as a demonstration that the suburb should be respected.

Given the news that Bangu would sue, *Correio da Manhã* commented on the “petulant nerve of disturbing the sweet peace of our friends at the Metropolitan League” (A REUNIÃO..., 1918, p. 5). *A Época*, in turn informed (and threatened) that:

Bangu’s representative categorically denied that his club intended to sue the Metropolitan League to be compensated for losses resulting from damages caused by the interdiction of the club’s field. Good to hear... (O TÓPICO..., 1918, p. 9).

In response, *Bangu-Jornal* provoked: “Definitely, it has barely seen the light of day and it is already on the focus of our modest weekly” (VIDA..., 1918b, p. 3). Regarding the story published by *A Época*, the columnist retorts: “Readers know well the significant value of ‘ellipsis’, which always imply doubt, irony, malice... etc” (VIDA..., 1918b, p. 3). Reiterating the newspaper’s point of view, he reaffirms that the club was being harassed and clarifies two points he felt as deserving attention:

⁵Book of minutes of the meetings of the board of Bangu Athletic Club, June 25, 1918.

a) Under regular procedures and before competent authorities, qualified persons testified in order to establish responsibilities of the referee who presided over the match and presented to the League the report that gave rise to the field's interdiction.

b) The referee was called to testify, and he defended himself by denying the main fact: Then... he threw "the responsibilities" on the League, paying a sincere tribute; will our illustrious contradictor be able to deny, or otherwise, to belie the above?

We do not believe that, but if it is so, we'll speak out even clearer ...

(VIDA..., 1918b, p. 3).

With irony, the columnist repeats his demands and questions the shy role of Bangu's board. For him, "our valiant local club" could not be proud if

in a worthy and noble gesture and having an honorable president (all peace and love), it subjects itself to all losses suffered, simply accepting the retaliation that its haughty board was able to get in regular procedures and giving up challenging the League (VIDA..., 1918b, p. 3).

The local periodical extolled and defended the club, but it also demanded actions. Retreating, in the columnist's view, did not dignify the "club's brave boys"; on the contrary, it would allow the League to keep using gimmicks to neutralize suburban associations, so that "its injustices (hopefully they will not reproduce – it is always better) get the same condescendence..." (VIDA..., 1918b, p. 3). Once again we see that what was at stake went beyond the boundaries of football, touching the city's divides.

Bangu-Jornal never concealed that it defended the club, literally taking on the stance of "legitimate representative of the area, following only the intention to provide a relevant service to our readers" (VIDA..., 1918 p. 3). Let us see another example of criticism along the lines of football then practiced and directed by elites.

After a 4-2 Bangu win over Flamengo, the “Sports Life” section quipped about the aggression committed by a red-black (Flamengo’s) player. During the match, he slapped a player of the suburban team. Reminding that the fact was widely discussed by other newspapers, the columnist says that he could not afford to omit what happened:

Daily newspapers have already commented a lot on the events, but we will still record in this quick note our strongest protests, showing the great contrast just provided by a club of workers in their absolute majority, to a club of well-bred people! (VIDA..., 1918c, p. 3).

On purpose, the journalist resumes and reverses a discussion created by Rio’s mainstream press: the lack of politeness in the fields and violence observable in football matches. Ironically, he notes that misbehavior started with Flamengo, a club of “well-bred people”.

Victory in a situation of social antagonism was explicitly exposed by the journalist – an association of proletarians and suburban dwellers versus another one that gathered affluent youth. At *Bangu-Jornal*, it gained a tone of pride, a sort of satisfaction with the very value of being suburban. The columnist goes on teasing by saying that such improper procedure by the red-black player “can never correspond to the good reputation that has hitherto been the main feature of that club”, since South Rio associations had the complacency of the city’s mainstream press columnists (VIDA..., 1918c, p. 3).

A person who saw that differential treatment given by the press was Lima Barreto (1921, p. 5). The renowned writer questioned an article published by newspaper *A Noite* on December 13, 1920, which exposed a conflict between the clubs Mangueira and Fluminense. To the columnist, such scenes did not take place only at “third class” clubs’ fields; elite associations “have also shown such disrespect to spectators, not even considering the presence of ladies, who are run over during stampedes and even beaten up as a result of confusion”.

To Lima Barreto (1921, p. 5), “leaps and kicks” were typical of

the sports. Therefore he asked: For what reasons would “aristocrat and pure clubs” be distinct from “suburban little ones? Football is one and the same everywhere!”.

In any case, that mainstream press showed suburban club prejudice, displeasing those who fought for the city’s outskirts and reacted by using the weapons they had, albeit modest: ink and paper.

4 CONCLUSION

Newspapers were important agencies in building representations of suburban clubs. The mainstream press portrayed them stereotypically, highlighting their alleged constant violence, considered a disservice to football. The same procedure, however, was not adopted towards elite clubs, often “forgiven” by their “lapses” (SANTOS JUNIOR, MELO, 2013).

It was in fact a biased notion about the suburbs, marked by stigmas attached to the city’s social and spatial stratification. Not only its fans and players were often looked down upon, but also of suburban neighborhoods as a whole. These occurrences were signs of conflict that lasted for years in Rio’s football, to the same extent that they showed the strong relationship between that sport and the conflicting ethos.

Suburban newspapers were not passive against the stigmatization process. Their stance, unlike what was announced in the mainstream press’s discourse, clearly expressed intimate connection with local clubs. They sought not only to challenge the unjust and unequal treatment given to the suburbs, but also to denounce what they saw as elite associations’ “artifices” to harm local football, which included hiring players. While they did not have the same power of major newspapers, they undoubtedly enjoyed some legitimacy, even causing some discomfort with their “impertinent” behavior.

Anyway, we should keep in mind that part of the process they tried to “fight” – the transfer of players – would be rather irreversible.

Professionalization of football would still trigger several tensions and debates, but it would eventually prevail, even contributing to increased transit of different social strata within the old beautiful game.

Interestingly, sometimes there were commonalities in approaches. The two groups conveyed stances contrary to player transfers, albeit for different reasons. Incidentally, it is interesting to see how criticism towards Vasco da Gama's actions came not only from the mainstream press. Suburban periodicals also did not like the player hunt carried out by Vasco da Gama's members. Exploring such stance allows us to challenge the myth according to which Vasco was the first club to come close to the suburbs.

We believe that a better understanding the consolidation of football in Rio de Janeiro should imply a deeper knowledge of what happened in the suburban area, from sources that may allow us to access local leaders' everyday life and views. Local newspapers and minutes of club meetings, for example, can provide important clues about the strategies of those actors.

This approach, in sum, can contribute to make our understandings of Brazilian football more multiple and diverse. It was not only a work of the elites, but also a construction in which the outskirts actively participated.

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