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**GERMAN BRAZILIAN ROWING ASSOCIATIONS IN PORTO ALEGRE (1917):  
IDENTITY REARRANGEMENTS IN A BELLICOSE CONFLICT****ASSOCIAÇÕES DE REMADORES TEUTO-BRASILEIROS EM PORTO ALEGRE (1917):  
RECOMPOSIÇÕES IDENTITÁRIAS EM UM CONFLITO BÉLICO**

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**RESUMO**

Este estudo busca interpretar as recomposições identitárias nas associações de remadores teuto-brasileiros Porto-Alegrenses, principalmente no ano de 1917, durante um conflito bélico. Para a construção do corpus documental da pesquisa foram analisadas atas de clubes e jornais. As fontes revelaram que, até 1917, nas associações de remo, espaços de lazer e sociabilidades de teuto-brasileiros, eram cultivadas práticas e representações de identidades culturais teuto-brasileiras como, por exemplo, o uso da língua alemã. Com a inserção do Brasil na Primeira Guerra Mundial (1914-1918), essas associações foram pressionadas ao abasileiramento, ocorrendo negociações identitárias no cenário esportivo. A adoção do português na comunicação interna, bem como no nome original de associações são exemplos de mudanças.

**Palavras-chave:** Remo. História do esporte. Clubes. Identidades culturais.

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**ABSTRACT**

This study aims to interpret the identity rearrangements in the German-Brazilian rowers associations in Porto Alegre, which happened in 1917, during a bellicose conflict. To the documental corpus, minutes from rowing clubs and information from the newspaper A Federação were used. The sources revealed that, until 1917, in these rowing associations, spaces of leisure and sociability for German Brazilians, were cultivated practices and representations of German Brazilian cultural identities, for example, like the use of the German Language. When Brazil entered World War I (1914-1918), these associations were pressed to the “Brazilianization”, occurring identity negotiations on the sport scene. The adoption of the Portuguese language in the internal communication and also in the original name of the associations are examples of changes.

**Keywords:** Rowing. History of sport. Clubs. Cultural identities.

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**Introduction**

As in the practice of the gym<sup>1-3</sup> and shooting<sup>4-5</sup>, the German-Brazilians were pioneers in the rowing in Porto Alegre. The first sports associations directed to this sport were organized by the Germans and their descendants as spaces of sociability and leisure, as well as a representation of their cultural identities<sup>6</sup>. The research of Silva<sup>7</sup> corroborated that the first rowing clubs were formed in order to preserve the cultural memory of the German-Brazilians. It is worth mentioning that the German-Brazilian term, derived from the second half of the nineteenth century, is defined by double belonging - the ethnic German and the Brazilian State as a citizen<sup>8</sup>.

The *Ruder Club Porto Alegre* (Porto Alegre Rowing Club) was the first rowing association organized in Porto Alegre city, in 1888. Four years after its foundation, a group of young German-Brazilians joined to the foundation of the *Ruder-Verein Germania* – Germania Rowing Club<sup>9-11</sup>. Years after that, in February 17 of 1894, the two rowing clubs founded the *Comitê de Regatas* (Regattas Committee), sporting entity responsible for the organization of rowing competitions: the regattas. In this period, the regattas were already established as

leisure spectacles in the state, with manifestations in Porto Alegre, Rio Grande and Pelotas. However, it was with the establishment of these German-Brazilians' clubs that this practice has earned elements of modern sport, according to the characteristics referred by Guttman<sup>12</sup>.

The regattas have multiplied in the city and, probably, the competitions between the associations have contributed for the foundation of two new rowing clubs in the mid of the first decade of the twentieth century: the *Grêmio de Regatas Almirante Tamandaré* (1903) – Almirante Tamandaré Regattas Club – and the *Club de Regatas Almirante Barroso* (1905) – Almirante Barroso Regattas Club. With founders of Portuguese ascendancy and descent, these clubs have signed the disruption of the German-Brazilian supremacy in the rowing scenery. Nevertheless, in 1906 there was the foundation of *Ruder Verein Freundschaft's* (Friendship Rowing Club), an association dedicated to the practice of youth rowing, toning the German-Brazilian<sup>7</sup> cultural identity.

The institutionalization of the rowing practice in Porto Alegre by different ethnic groups reveals the construction of cultural frontiers in the sporting field, as well as demonstrate that cultural contacts occurred in this sports scene. According to Barth<sup>13</sup>, the borders that delimit the "we" of "them" are crucial in identifying an ethnic group. The group itself is the definer of valuation criteria, signification and manifestation. The maintenance of these borders implies the marking of persistent cultural differences. However, in border limits, there are delineations and demarcations of differences, as well as there are cultural exchanges, that provide the construction of new representations.

In the case of Porto Alegre, the German immigrants and their descendants pointed out these distinctions through the preservation of the German language – basic element of German-Brazilian<sup>14</sup> identity, but also through cultural and religious manifestations, festivities, and other homeland traditions from Germany. It is important to point out that only in 1871 the German states were unified. This way, it was in Brazil that European immigrants of a determined geographical area, are called Germans through a rhetoric of common origin<sup>15</sup>. This way, these immigrants and descendants built elements that identified them as belonging to the same nation, but set in a distant location, giving new meanings to their practices and traditions.

The rowing associations were places where the German-Brazilians could exercise representations that identified them, highlighting the use of the German language which was the main differentiation of this group, in relation to others, such as Portuguese, Italian and French immigrants. Besides the language, sports activities were also appropriated as identifiers. Shooting<sup>16</sup>, gymnastics<sup>17</sup>, rowing<sup>7</sup> are examples of the use of practices to the identity constructions in this ethnic group for a long period.

In the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, however, it was characterized by the search for identity definitions by countries that aimed the building of national identities. This global tendency has its repercussions in Brazil. During this period, borders were being violated and there was a nationalist exacerbation, caused by World War I (1914-1918)<sup>18</sup>. In this study, we highlight especially the events that occurred in 1917, because of the significant events in the sports field, which were the target of nationalization actions.

In the Brazilian case, the election of a national cultural identity is closely linked to the representations of Luso-Brazilian identities, by the fact that Brazil was a Portuguese colony and hence it has considerably absorbed fragments of their culture. With the Proclamation of the Republic (1889), the search for a Brazilian national identity was assumed by intellectuals of the country. The Brazilian culture was under construction, being negotiated at different times since the Independence Proclamation (1822), through the definition of a distant

language from Portugal, the Brazilian Portuguese - with some different words -, beyond the definition of a past, with heroes and battles. The national identity is a discourse and, like any other speech, it is consisted dialogically<sup>19-21</sup>.

Until the events of World War I radiate to Brazilian lands, among the German-Brazilians predominated the cultural practices that seek to preserve their original identity. Nonetheless, with the current political situation, the need of building symbols and conventions that represented a Brazilian cultural identity was imposed. Faced with this situation, sports associations could serve as one of nationalism devices, manipulated in order to build another identity. However, although in face of the charges for changes of identity representations, toward a Brazilianization, the German-Brazilian associations exerted resistance. This movement meets Burke's<sup>22</sup> thoughts, where cultural exchanges can generate resistance reactions and cultural segregation, as defenses of cultural boundaries against an invasion, because cultural identity is often defined by contrast, so that look for a differentiation to be determined.

Based on the scenario presented, this study aims to interpret the identity rearrangements in the German-Brazilian rowers associations in Porto Alegre, Rio Grande do Sul, which happened in 1917. The theoretical contribution of sociocultural history guide the construction of this historical narrative which addresses the cultural practices and representations<sup>23</sup> actioned in the production of ethnic identities of social groups that circulate around the rowing associations. These and other sporting associations brought by the German-Brazilian, were affected and suffered great pressure to nationalize. They were viewed with suspicion as their true function, because the affirmation of the German cultural memory was recurrent in their practices<sup>24</sup>.

In order to address the proposed objective, a documentary analysis was done, according to Bacellar<sup>25</sup>, analyzing the meeting minutes of rowing clubs and the newspaper '*A Federação*' during the study period. As well as commemorative books of rowing clubs, magazines, articles, dissertations, monographs and theses were consulted looking for a literature review on the subject. At first, the set of documents has been subjected to a 'suitability analysis'<sup>26</sup>, in order to verify if the sources proposed are really in tune with the proposed historical problem and if it is understood in a totality of idea, where there may not be historical gaps. Then, from documentary analysis emerged the following categories of analysis: rowing clubs and cultural identity. From the analysis, the documental corpus was subject to an appreciation in order to provide evidence, information and materials capable of historiographical interpretation. Listed the evidences, the sources were confronted by comparing with other sources, or through its examination against other data sets and evidences related to the historical context. It should be noted that, in direct quotes, derived from sources surveyed, it has preserved the original spelling of the same.

### *An emblematic event for rowing associations*

Brazil has taken a contrary position against Germany in World War I in 1917. This episode had repercussions in several areas of the city of Porto Alegre including the rowing clubs identified with foreigners, in other words, those who were not seen as Brazilians. This fact interfered with social relations between social groups circulating in the sports field.

News of World War came to Porto Alegre by local newspapers, who divulged daily news from other countries<sup>27</sup>. In World War I, Germany was ahead of the attacks and invasions, assuming a representation commander. By the beginning of the year of 1917, the Brazilian government had not manifested itself officially on which position Brazil would take

before the conflict, in other words, it kept in neutrality. In the same year, the news about the breakup relations between Brazil and Germany was reported by Borges de Medeiros, intendant of the State of Rio Grande do Sul at that time<sup>28</sup>. With the bombing of the Brazilian steamboat, Paraná, on the coast of Germany, there is the disruption of diplomatic and trade relations between the two countries, which peacekeeping depends on not any Brazilian ship being torpedoed<sup>28</sup>.

The telegram was sent to Borges de Medeiros because there was a large number of German immigrants and descendants in Rio Grande do Sul. Such preventive measures could be of contention, or even reaction to a German-Brazilian rebellion against the new position of the Brazilian government. In fact, such measures were mobilized not only in Rio Grande do Sul, but nationwide, because the states of Santa Catarina and Paraná, also had a strong presence of German immigrants and descendants. These facts generated movements against the German-Brazilian manifestations, both of governmental and social origin.

Following the news that Brazil was positioning itself against Germany in WWII, the first German-Brazilian association that suffered retaliation was *Turnerbund* – Society of Gymnastics (actual SOGIPA). Five days after the official announcement, the newspaper ‘*A Federação*’ reported a threatening manifestation in front of the building of the Society of Gymnastics<sup>29</sup>, where many people reacted to the cultural manifestation of this entity in a very intimidating way. The *Turnerbund* was the "mother cell" in the sportive, cultural and social scope of the German-Brazilian elite in Porto-Alegre, as well as to the gymnastics society located in other cities of the state<sup>30</sup>. Besides that, it had leaders in common with other rowing clubs. The situation caused fear in the other associations, including in rowing: *Ruder Club Porto Alegre*, *Ruder Verein Germania* e *Ruder Verein Freundschaft*.

The manifestations where people were hooting in front of *Turnerbund* was unleashed by a rumor disseminated in the city, that the associations had torn a Brazilian flag in the interior of the German-Brazilian gymnast's society. The group left from Andradas street, in the centre of Porto-Alegre, at the time a place of crowding, and headed to *Turnerbund*, also in the central region, on Alberto Bins Avenue. There they stayed until the arrival of the presidential picket, a small troop composed by elite guards and were ready of urgent cases, just in time to stop any attempt<sup>29</sup>.

After this fact, the newspaper ‘*A Federação*’ published an interview with Aloys Friederichs, one of the main leaders of *Turnerbund*. According to Silva<sup>30</sup>, the first 50 years of *Turnerbund*'s existence, more than 30 of them had J. Aloys Friederichs as the central figure. In the interview he defended the gymnastics society and revealed that, contrary to what was thought of the protesters, the society performed an act with nationalist intentions. Therefore, they flew the flag of Brazil, which was then lowered for fear the action had been misinterpreted by Brazilians. In the version of Aloys Friederichs: as the society was composed mostly by Germans and his descendants, some associated decided as a way of precaution, put that flag down, not putting any other in its place<sup>29</sup>. This testimony shows that the behavior of immigrants and descendants changed after the Brazilian government assumed its position in the armed conflict, with the fear of reprimands present in their attitudes, feeling justified by the events that followed.

Other hostile manifestations professed in other areas. The next day of the event happened in *Turnerbund*, the same newspaper reported attacks on German-Brazilian homes, gathering about 200 protesters<sup>31</sup>. The hotel owned by a German-Brazilian, Mr. Schmith, was set on fire. Business houses of German-Brazilians were stoned amid cries of die Germany and below the Kaizer<sup>31</sup>. *Kaizer* in German language translation into Portuguese means emperor.

The protesters refers to Emperor Wilhelm II, who ruled Germany until 1918, the year that the war was over and Germany was not an empire anymore.

Possibly, these attacks occurred in several countries of the world, scaring the German immigrants, especially in the United States, the main rival of Germany in the war. The newspaper '*A Federação*' reported that the Supreme Court of the United States of America reported that there was a large influx of requests of German origin citizens who wished to change their family surnames<sup>32</sup>. In the same direction, this fear made the German-Brazilians living in Porto Alegre also sought to obscure their cultural identities, appearing not as Willy, but as Guilherme, for example.

The government of the United States sounded out the Rio Grande do Sul government's behavior about the German-Brazilians who inhabited the State. So, they sent an announcement to the Ambassador of Brazil resident in Washington, the US capital, because of suspicions about some difficulties created to the government by the residents of Brazilian South States<sup>32</sup>. The response waved that these individuals constituted a peaceful element and in no way constituted a danger to the Brazilian national unity, despite political and social persecution to their representations was a reality.

This position must have been manifested with a purpose: to keep the ports open for both countries keep trade relations, as well as diplomatic relations, because of the symbolic and economic power of this country. Thus, there were interests defining the connivance of the Brazilian government with the United States. According to the newspaper '*A Federação*', it was possible to feel the pan-american mood of the Brazilian government about the entrance of an american nation in the war<sup>33</sup>. This discourse reveals the Brazilian inclination to support the Americans during the war, anticipating a possible insertion of Brazil. It is noteworthy that the said newspaper supported the government and, under the title, professed: '*Jornal do Partido Republicano*' (Journal of the Republican Party); then the party of the President.

However, the number of German-Brazilians in the south of the country, mainly in the states of Parana, Santa Catarina and Rio Grande do Sul, was also a concern for the Brazilian government because it could affect the relations with the United States. As a measure of caution, the Brazilian government sought information on the situation of German-Brazilians in the country. For this, it requested to the Statistical Office the organization of a statistical survey of the German population in Brazil, which revealed the following results: more of 32.314 since 1908 to 1915. In 1916 entered in Brazilian docks 364 Germans, which makes a total of 124.653<sup>34</sup>.

Information about the number of German immigrants and their descendants in Brazil would serve to maintain control over this social group and develop strategies for the untying of the representation of the southern states, that this region could be a piece of Germany in Brazil. According to the newspaper '*A Federação*', it was forming an atmosphere that could be the occupation of Brazil by Germany through the south of the country, being a region where, perhaps, there would not be protests. The report asserted that even German leaders stimulated this representation because they insinuated that the south should move to German rule<sup>35</sup>. Such journalistic manifestations built a counter atmosphere to the German-Brazilians and their associations, triggering means of segregation as a form of protection.

The newspaper reports suggest that at any time the German-Brazilian could join the war in favor of their country of origin, being against the position of the Brazilian government and being a foreign weapon inside the country<sup>36</sup>. The newspaper "*A Federação*" argued that

these ideas contributed to maintaining prejudice against such individuals, a belief that was stressed at the time that Brazil joined the war, supporting the United States.

This scenario boosted reactions. Facing this situation, 'A Federação' starred in a movement called '*Lenda*' (legend) by the newspaper, so texts were divulged in order to reduce hostility toward German-Brazilians to undo the possible conspiracy theory. The talks sought to spread to the southern states of the country representations of ethnic miscegenation, so that the Brazilian cultural identity would be constructed. The Newspaper texts asserted that in the south there were not only German colonies, but also Italian and Polish. Therefore, according to it, there wasn't an Estate of Germans, the predominance of the national element was complete in all southern Brazil, the Estates were Brazilian and the people were Brazilian<sup>35</sup>.

The newspaper tried to show that there was a unit, even with the presence of different ethnic groups. Oliven<sup>37</sup>, referred that the process of national unification and centralizes power it is historically opposed to the maintenance of regional and cultural diversities. Thus, the unification around a Brazilian cultural identity passed the dilution of cultural differences in all areas, including in the sports field.

#### *Trading of Brazilian cultural identity in rowing*

Faced the panorama presented above, sports associations with German-Brazilian cultural identities are forced to transform their identity representations to prove their nationalism towards the Brazilian nation and its solidarity with the Brazilian government. Since they did not do that, they would be subjects to reprisals coming from the government or social manifestations, based on the charge of treason, because Germany had become a national enemy, from the moment that Brazil joined the war. As the nationalist ideology is an exclusionary ideology of cultural differences<sup>38</sup>, cultural diversity came to be controlled and monitored through the nationalist campaign. The government sought to maintain its rule and ensure global representation of unification around a Brazilian cultural identity.

Therefore, the rulers sought to classify, which sought the reproduction of relations of domination, as the project submitted by Mr Mello Franco<sup>39</sup> that limited the action of possible war spies. However, this project contained articles that established distrust of the German-Brazilian associations and prevented the display of their cultural manifestations. Hence, one of the first government initiatives was to determine the prohibition of newspapers and magazines in German, with the justification to avoid the inclusion of news or information that could undermine public safety and the position taken by the country. The German-Brazilian identity began to have negative connotations due to the government imposed an only legitimate identity as the dominant group. Thus, German-Brazilian associative entities, such as sports clubs where they exercised their practices, habits and customs arising with German immigrants, were observed and their representations mistrusted.

Consequently, with the development of military events, laws against German-Brazilian manifestations were more severe, to the point of reaching associations. The associations of the German-Brazilian could work since they satisfied the following restrictions: a visit from the police, day or night in its facilities; to communicate the police the day, time and purpose of any session; absolute prohibition of any secret session; the examination on any day and time of their documents and any meeting of German-Brazilian outdoors wasn't allowed<sup>39</sup>.

This last restriction directly affected rowing, because the regattas took place outdoors and a significant group of individuals was necessary to organize them. Besides that, the regattas promoted by the German-Brazilian associations grouped a large number of German-Brazilian spectators. Thus, this sporting event was contained to the German-Brazilian while they were allowed to associations with Brazilian representation.

The *Grêmio de Regatas Almirante Tamandaré*, founded in 1903, on the stage of Porto Alegre was the rowing association that came closest to the Brazilian cultural identity. There were Luso-Brazilians in its membership being accepted by the Estate in a period in which nationalist sentiment was exacerbated in Brazil. The association sought to further strengthen Brazilian cultural identity<sup>40</sup>. In this period, the cultural manifestations of German-Brazilian associations were restricted, the *Grêmio de Regatas Almirante Tamandaré* was in a progressing process, participating in international regattas and taking the rowing scene<sup>41</sup>.

Faced with this situation, the leaders of the German-Brazilian rowing associations looked for ways to survive, opting to perform identity negotiations and suit the situation. However, they failed to ward off the crisis that settled in these spaces, because not everyone agreed with the proposals. Tensions worsened when members expressed their disagreement, some favorable to the changes while others resistant to them. Still, the identity changes happened.

The first association of German-Brazilian rowing preceding changes was the *Ruder Club Porto Alegre*, when it changed its original name in German language to Portuguese and was renamed *Club de Regatas Porto Alegre*, on April 16, 1917<sup>42</sup>. Evidences of this are raised from the titles and dates of the newspaper '*A Federação*', February 26, 1917, previous period of movement club nationalization, and the newspaper '*Correio do Povo*' from January first of 1918, after the nationalization. In '*A Federação*', it used the old German name in the title of the note about the association<sup>43</sup>, while '*Correio do Povo*' used, as a title, the change in nomenclature, but maintained the figure of the club's official flag, which has not been modified, identifying as the same association<sup>44</sup>.

In the same direction, the *Ruder Verein Freundschaft* also adopted identity transformation measures, taking care that the association was not segregated or suffered other reprimands. At the meeting for the proposed combination of nationalization, the president Carlos S. Arnt had a speech directed to safeguard friendship (in German *freundschaft*) and union group. Carlos Arnt feared for partners attitude to approach the association with a Brazilian cultural identity, as well as he was apprehensive to maintain an identity of its precursors, since there was disagreement among members on what actions to take regarding the identity of the club.

In the speech recorded in the minutes of the meeting, Carlos Arnt stated that the severance of diplomatic relations between Brazil and Germany was a blow to him and his German-Brazilian confreres. While declaring his love for Brazilian homeland, he confessed that he could not forget the country of origin of their parents and grandparents. He emphasized that he had a German origin, but his country was Brazil and proposed that if they were Brazilian, they also should give to the society a Brazilian name, statutes in the official country language, and register the Board of Trade, to be juridic people<sup>45</sup>.

The vote on the proposal was not without protests and resistance, so that the victory of the change was tight, because the vote was 11 votes in favor and nine votes against. With this result, the new association name became *Grêmio Náutico União* (GNU), as well as its official language became Portuguese. The option of adopting the term *Grêmio* instead of *club* happened because of the English language<sup>6</sup>. Members claimed the name should be in

Portuguese since the reasons for the change were the Brazilian members or because they adopted Brazil as their second homeland. Perhaps another reason for the resistance to the term in the English language was that this was the language used in the United States of America, main opponent of Germany in war.

These alterations were published on purpose on the newspaper called "*A Federação*"<sup>46</sup>, as a mean to disseminate the news. This publication was a way to make sure changes were gradually absorbed by the associates, as well as to reach the Porto-Alegrian imaginary. The divulgation in this newspaper was intended to socially transform the *Ruder Verein Freundschaft*, having as a weapon all its representations in the Brazilian culture, and transform it into the new Grêmio Náutico União. According to Cuche<sup>38:192</sup>, it is a characteristic of identity its floating aspect that is subject to a wide range of interpretations and manipulations, always in accordance to the related situation.

Another nationalized association in this period was *Ruder Verein Germania* that since its foundation perpetuated the German-Brazilians's representations. This association was nationalized on 17th of November 1942, almost six years after the previous one, and was called *Club de Regatas Guahyba*. Most of its associates were from *Turnerbund*; including Aloys Friederichs, president of *Turnerbund* and who also frequented *Ruder Verein Germania*.

The *Turnerbund* was an association that resisted the nationalization until a group of sportsmen that played football in the interior of the society, *Fuss Ball Mannschaft Frisch auf* (Football Time Always Forward) were pressured by the *Federação Sportiva Rio-Grandense* (Rio-Grandense Sportive Federation) to accede to the movement established by their fellow associations. This resistance suffered harsh critics, like the speech published by the newspaper '*A Federação*' directed at *Turnerbund* as a 'bold club' whose associates repelled its nationalization<sup>47:5</sup>. This newspaper, declared as representing the president's political party, was against Germany's war movements and contempt the attitude the German-Brazilians had in persistently trying to maintain their representations and, by means of that, feeding the Porto-Alegrian imagination that Germans were present in Brazilian territory<sup>48</sup>.

As a result, the year of 1917 ended with strong shock to the German-Brazilians associations. It was an evidenced that, from the seven rowing clubs that existed in the city, six clubs were using the Portuguese language in their denominations and in internal documents. For example: *Grêmio de Regatas Almirante Tamandaré*, *Club de Regatas Almirante Barroso*, *Club de Regatas Porto Alegre*, *Club de Regatas Guahyba*, *Grêmio Náutico União* and *Club de Regatas Vasco da Gama*. The only club that was using another language was *Canottieri Ducca degli Abruzzi*. Although, nationalization did not spare not even the only Italian-Brazilian rowing association, which resisted until the Estado Novo (1937-1945), when a new movement surprised the sports associations.

## Final Considerations

The rowing associations in Porto Alegre went through a period of changes in the first decades of the XX century. These changes took place from the actions of the Brazilian state, the one which desired to build a Brazilian nation. In this context, the sports associations considered as foreign, including the German-Brazilians, suffered enormous pressure aimed at making them more "Brazilian". The rupture in diplomatic and commercial relations between Brazil and Germany, in the year of 1917, allied with the presence of German immigrants and descendants in the South, incited retaliations and changes in the sports associations.



The events happening around the world exited national events. Social mobilizations and governmental laws coerced in the way to oppress the practicing and representations of the German-Brazilian culture. Meanwhile, the nationalist sentiment was taking power, more people adopted representations that were identified as belonging to the Brazilian nation, for the fear of been persecuted and accused of treason. With regards to the associations of Porto-alegrian rowers, they were not affected by the conjuncture, due to the fact that they were, in their majority, formed by associates who identified themselves with the German-Brazilian community. Confronted with this situation they started to assimilate representations of the Brazilian identity as it was common in other sportive spheres.

The changes in the spoken and written language in official documents, like records and statutes, were strategies used in order to approximate them to a more Brazilian ideal. Despite the resistance from some associates, the Portuguese language was incorporated by the associations. In this situation, the *Ruder Club Porto Alegre* changed its name to *Club de Regatas Porto Alegre*, the *Ruder Verein Germania* was changed into *Club de Regatas Guahyba*, while the *Ruder Verein Freundschaft* became *Grêmio Náutico União*. Changing the name of the associations was an important step in the process for more changes, due to the fact that it is its first identity reference. In this way, the Portuguesation of these names, detaching them from the German- Brazilian identity, could be considered the most significant one.

Transforming all the sport associations' representation of identity, like the ones in Rowing, was a way for the government to develop, in the imagination, the Brazilian entrance to the war against Germany, as well as to continue the Brazilian representation of identity. The continuation of the historical memory of a country is the base for the formulation of an identity. Due to this, at the same time as the German-Brazilian's representation of identity was obscure, the associations that had Brazilian representations were evidenced.

The evidence points to elements of identity rearrangements resulted from a historical process that is constantly changed and rebuilt according to time and space. However, such rearrangements, especially the ones that refer to the German-Brazilian sense of identity, can also suggest a way in which to adjust to the imposed system, in the sense of maintaining their usual social activities and their practice alive in the sportive scene in Porto Alegre. In the end, it is expected that this study will contribute to the understanding of the processes of dissemination of sportive practices by means of cultural contact in the beginning of the XX century.

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