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Football UN-ited: From the Game of War to the War of the Game*

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This study presents the UN's narrative in the construction of the post-war world. Spanning a period of more than 70 years, this narrative is described through the parallel narrative of football as the game that everyone can play and win, regardless of size, attributes and abilities. Using the language of football through the words of Eduardo Galeano, the paper reveals a common history with different aspects, which is read largely in the light of Michel Foucault's thinking. In this respect, the UN is approached as fully adapted to a sovereign rationalism that organises reality by ordering each category of (international) political practice and discourse in terms of surveillance and suppression, while at the same time wielding, through its choice of strategies and techniques, a power that has a reformative and productive side. The basic aim of this study is to demonstrate, through the analogy with football, the dual nature of the UN through its application of technologies of power over the course of its lifelong operation.

Keywords: United Nations; international relations; football; war; biopolitics.

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> "The World Cup makes us at the UN green with envy. As the pinnacle of the only truly global game, played in every country by every race and religion, it is one of the few phenomena as universal as the UN. You could say it's more universal" (UNITED NATIONS, SECRETARY-GENERAL, 2006).

In 2010, news flashes informed the world that a ship with 10 football stars on board had gone missing the day before they were due to play in a UN-sponsored match. They turned up on an island, playing football. The adventure was over in the time it takes to read a comic book, this one published by the UN to make children aware of its Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)[1] through the values of tolerance, respect for others and team spirit.

On November 13, 2015, news flashes informed the world of the terrorist attacks in Paris, centred on the Stade de France. Just days earlier, monuments around the world had been lit up to mark the 70th anniversary of the founding of the UN, which took place on October 24, 1945 (WEISS and DAWS, 2008). On October 23, the event had been celebrated in Togo with a football tournament at Lomé University, where six teams of teachers, students, and UN, local government, media and security forces personnel donned blue and white kits with the UN70 logo and played 'the beautiful game' on a pitch decorated with slogans against violence and promoting peace and solidarity. After the terrorist strikes, public buildings, monuments and football stadiums in Paris were illuminated in honour of the victims, while football matches were cancelled for fear of new strikes. The end of 2015 is when the world should have been lit up anew to mark the completion of the UN's MDGs[2]!

Article 02 (01) of the United Nations Charter describes the organisation as based on the principle of the sovereign equality of all its members. Its narrative thus opens with words that run parallel to that of football, the game that offers everyone an opportunity to play and to win, regardless of size, attributes and abilities. The particular structure of the Security Council, with its functions and powers, creates profound asymmetries within the UN, but does not invalidate its mission. Football teams have a rigidly hierarchical structure (management, coach, players), but all share the same joy in the game. To help in the understanding of the interplay between politics and football using the example of the UN, this study will be based mainly on the writings of Michel Foucault and Eduardo Galeano. The main criterion guiding this choice is their exhaustive critical analysis of the mechanisms of bureaucratic and institutional power. Essentially, the UN and football share a common history, although one with different facets, which we read largely in the light of

[1] In September 2000 these targeted eight key areas: poverty, education, gender equality, child mortality, maternal health, disease, the environment, and global partnership.

[2] On 25 September 2015, the UN General Assembly adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, along with a set of 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) and 169 associated targets. Compared to the vaguer, more general MDGs, the SDGs cover more fields, with global targets for all countries; they are more comprehensive, and have stable funding, monitoring and accountability. One of the SDG Advocates is Lionel Messi, as Unicef Goodwill Ambassador.

the thinking of Foucault, the charismatic 'athlete' who blurred the lines on the playing field of his discipline. Indeed, Foucault's entire body of work, and especially his analysis of governmentality, helps us understand the supreme world-governing organisation that is the UN. The governance it exerts is the modernist technology of survival of the state, by using all its practices of organisation, classification, surveillance and suppression in the ongoing quantification of its authority. In this respect, the UN is approached as fully adapted to the sovereign rationalism that organises reality by ordering each category of (international) political practice and discourse in terms of surveillance and suppression, while at the same time wielding an authority with a reforming and productive side, through its choice of strategies and techniques.

Eduardo Galeano, as he himself admits, is one of the few Uruguayans not endowed from birth with soccer-playing skills (GALEANO, 2013, p. 01). However, as a supremely talented writer, he is uniquely placed to initiate us into the world of football via politics. His writings give voice to the peoples of the world. They are essentially the spectators of this 'game', in whose name the UN was founded, who live the normality and the exceptions of politics and its institutions.

The basic aim of this study is to compare and examine the parallel lives of politics and football in their shared path through history and the dramatic change in the conduct of both games. In an age characterised by the relentless instrumentalisation of every activity and the perpetual pursuit of growth and profit, football's magical moments and memories are replayed in the new stadiums of the rationalisation of the world and of politics. More specifically, the study attempts to narrate two apparently incompatible histories in the context of a single common tale of two institutions, the UN and football. Its aim, however, is not to offer a systematic Foucaldian reading of the historic evolution of the UN, but to illustrate its dual nature through the analogy with football - on the one hand, the promise of peace in the name of the peoples through its Charter and on the other the perpetual compromise of national interests and the balance of power - through its application of technologies of power over the course of its lifelong operation. Beliefs, historical facts, and metaphors from politics and the playing field tie the narratives of the UN and football solidly together. Interchanging them as the subjects of passages in the text is intended essentially to present a unified narrative of the practices of power and rational organisation in politics.

Why does the UN play football?

Over the course of the 20th century, sport, and particularly football, left its mark on the world. The attraction of football is unchallenged; it is the uncontested king of sports. Certain regions (e.g. Europe, Latin America) are perennial champions and football is a passion which is a vital part of their culture. Technology and market expansion have spread it throughout the world. Despite the relentless professionalization and perpetual profit-

seeking, it is the game itself in its simplicity that infuses people's lives with passion. Thus, its discourse and images fill everyday life at national, regional and global level, both on and off the pitch.

> In the West, for ages past, power and political life turned around a theological-political axis. The political order was grounded in theology, and could be legitimate only in pretending to realize theological goals. The authority of power came from on high. ... Today everything turns around a different axis, the sportive-political. ... Sport has become an inexhaustible source of arguments and metaphors for political leaders (REDEKER, 2008, p. 496).

The UN, by contrast, does not arouse the same interest and passion, although all countries have an interest in participating in the General Assembly and its agencies. It may be the epitome of universal action, influencing the international scene, but its operation and structure are not widely known and understood. While global society may be aware of the activity of some of its individual agencies, the work of the UN itself, in conjunction with the political power of the permanent members of its Security Council, is considered hard to perceive and full of contradictions. Nonetheless, something of the same passion does perhaps colour the UN's relations with Third and Fourth World countries, for which, since the '60s and the march of decolonization, it has provided a forum for airing their problems and financial resources for helping to solve them.

Consequently, the football 'game' played by the UN is charged with all the apparently conflicting incompatibilities between football and politics. The spread of football has shaped the lives of states on many levels, transcending borders and the traditional approach to practical politics between countries. Notwithstanding this, it continues to be regarded as an unimportant activity quite distinct from the practice of politics. And indeed, until the end of the 20th century the academic community treated football and politics as two totally different and separate worlds (ALLISON AND MONNINGTON, 2002, pp. 105-110).

In the discipline of international relations, specifically, football had little or no political significance (LEVERMORE and BUDD, 2004, pp. 06-15; TAYLOR, 1986, p. 29). It was felt that the world of football could lend no prestige to research in the field. Due to the long-term decisive domination of the theoretical models of realism and neorealism in international relations (especially up to the '80s), studies in the field focused on questions of security, military force and diplomacy. Gradually, a critical approach focusing on other aspects and parameters of the international system - beyond the state-centred approach of international relations - began to emerge in the context of other theories (such as constructivism, post-structuralism, post-colonialism) and revealed, among other things, the importance of the connection between that discipline and sports (BEACOM, 2000). The absence of any integrated dialectical relation between international relations and football is even more inexplicable in light of the constant use of football terminology in political rhetoric,

which in turn does not adequately explain the paradox according to which a nation-state, as the sovereign unit of global politics, sees its stature enhanced by football results and titles. In applied politics, on the other hand, states had become aware of the unifying force of football by the beginning of the 20th century. As countries and societies became more and more homogenous through the ever-greater promise of economic growth and social acceptance, football began to assume the dynamic of a "parade of national colours", while Pascal Boniface added an additional criterion to the classic definition of a state: after territory, people and government, comes a national football team (BONIFACE, 2010, p. 59). In the framework of "sports diplomacy" generally, "football diplomacy" has become a basic element of state policy. Real Madrid is a case in point: "The Franco dictatorship had found a travelling embassy that could not be beat" (GALEANO, 2013, p. 40).

This picture began to change radically at the dawn of the new century. The interplay between football - and sport in general - and international relations (both as applied politics and as a field of study) has been distilled into a situation where "sport no longer exists in the margins of international relations" (HILL, 2004, p. 01). The post-Cold War environment of 'sports diplomacy 2.0' is dominated by a plurality of actors other than states. As Stuart Murray notes:

> In this context, sports diplomacy 2.0 is facilitated by traditional diplomats working alongside IGOs, sportspeople and corporations. These networks use sport to "engage, inform and create a favourable image among foreign publics, governments and organizations, to shape their perceptions in a way that is (more) conducive to the sending government's foreign policy goals" (MURRAY, 2016, p. 620).

Books on football have multiplied, highlighting its special role in the shaping of (international) politics (EISENBERG, 2006). These works discuss, broadly and in depth, the position and role of football and its political dimensions in the shaping of (international) politics in all its analytical contexts, including globalisation (CLELAND, 2015), colonialism (ALEGI and BOLSMANN, 2010), international organisations (KENTROTIS, 2018), peace and development (HUGHSON and SKILLEN, 2014), questions of identity (STERKENBURG and SPAAJI, 2016) and terrorism after the September 11 attacks (TOOHEY, TAYLOR, and LEE, 2003). Football is no longer considered as isolated from political, economic and social developments and practices, or simply as a field for their appearance and application. The history of football contains the same practices and the same discourses as the history of conceptual, political and institutional frameworks of analysis of (international) politics. By extension, football and every aspect of (international) politics are shown to share a common ground. Both 'games' are now dominated by a spirit of rationalism combining practices and techniques of spectacle and profit (BROWN, 2006).

> We in the United Nations rely on that language every day. We use it in our efforts to heal the emotional wounds of war among young people in refugee

> camps, and in countries recovering from armed conflict. We use it to try to bridge ethnic, social, cultural and religious divides. We use it to promote teamwork and fair play. We use it to empower girls. We use it in our work to reach the Millennium Development Goals—the set of powerful, people-centred objectives adopted by all countries as a blueprint for building a better world in the 21st century (UNITED NATIONS, SECRETARY-GENERAL, 2006).

In 1978, UNESCO described sport and physical education as a fundamental right for all (HOUSTON and JARVIE, 2016). The UN General Assembly Resolution 52/15 of 20 November 1997 came about later on, proclaiming the year 2000 as the International Year for a Culture of Peace (BEACOM, 2000, p. 22). While the UN's member states had realised before WWII that the language of sport, and of football in particular, was part of everyday life the world over, the organisation itself needed the change of century to follow the trend. In 2001 the UN acquired a new Geneva-based institution: former UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan created the United Nations Office on Sport for Development and Peace (UNOSDP) under the direction of the 'Special Advisor to the United Nations Secretary-General on Sport for Development and Peace'[3]. The reasoning was that it would use the dynamic of sport as an effective tool for promoting peace and achieving the MDGs. When 2005 was proclaimed the 'International Year of Sport and Physical Education', member states were urged to incorporate "in their national legislation and policies the role of sport in dealing with numerous domestic foreign policy challenges" (BEUTER, 2008, p. 359).

In football terms, the UN could be a normal player in international relations, since it is made up of regular national teams, which define the international system. The UN's officials thought that they could keep for themselves the key role of referees over the clashing national egotisms of its members, which is, after all, how the states had discovered it as the irreplaceable arbiter in their championship matches, and their peoples had accepted this fact. More often than not, though, it proved equally unable to either win the approval of the crowds in the stands or to impose its authority on the field. The combination of its aristocratic structure and geopolitical conjunctures have precluded as inconceivable and inadmissible any attempt to give the UN privileges and power over its members similar to those enjoyed by FIFA. Its leaders would be delighted to have powers comparable to those of the "owners of soccer, who from their castle in Zurich … do not propose, [but] impose" (GALEANO, 2013, p. 266). The UN developed an uncanny resemblance to the players in recent World Cups: "[they] were on their best behavior. They didn't smoke, they didn't drink, they didn't play" (GALEANO 2013, p. 262).

One of the football-inspired tools used to promote awareness of the UN's MDGs was a 32-page educational comic book titled: 'Score the Goals - Teaming Up to Achieve the Millennium Development Goals' (UNITED NATIONS, 2010), which was addressed to chil-

[3] Kofi Annan appointed Adolf Ogi as the first Special Adviser (2001-2008). Ban Ki-moon appointed Wilfried Lemke as the next one (2008-2017).

dren between 08 and 14 and featured 10 football stars[4] shipwrecked on an island on their way to play a charity football match as UN Goodwill Ambassadors. The UN was investing in the power of football, that untapped region of inexhaustible possibilities that gives children unbounded scope for freedom of expression as described by Galeano (2013): "I'm one of those who believe that soccer …is also much more: a feast for the eyes that watch it and a joy for the body that plays it. A reporter once asked German theologian Dorothee Sölle, "How would you explain happiness to a child?" ... "I'd toss him a ball and let him play" (GALEANO, 2013, pp. 242-243).

On the other hand, this football freedom is entrapped by the specific development context of the sovereign rational and classificational system of politics. There emerges a peculiar form of resistance here to this governing technique: "As soon as there is a power relation, there is a possibility of resistance. We can never be ensnared by power: we can always modify its grip in determinate conditions and according to a precise strategy" (FOUCAULT, 2003, p. 280).

Children are severe judges, and the producers of this comic book should have taken more care with it. The team does not represent the whole organisation, for it contains no big names from Asia or Oceania. What's more, it only has 10 players, a goalie and 09 forwards or midfielders, whereas a proper team needs at least 11, including 04 defenders, to play a game according to the official rules. Although the matches this all-star team is going to play in the UN's colours are intended to promote its goals, they still ought to follow the rules. Even in a children's comic book, and even when it is clear that power is being used for specific ends, this is no guarantee that the results will necessarily lead to achievement of the desired goals (HELLER, 1996, pp. 87-89).

The UN initiative to strengthen peace and development through sport ended unexpectedly and ingloriously in 2017. At a meeting between UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres and International Olympic Committee (IOC) President Thomas Bach on March 4^{th} of that same year, it was agreed that these two top international organisations should cooperate directly and, in the name of avoiding 'parallel work', the UN Secretary-General announced the closing of the UNOSDP. This was despite of the fact that cooperation between UNESCO and the IOC on the role of Sport and Culture in the service of the peaceful coexistence of peoples had already been instituted in 1999 (BEACOM, 2000, p.13). In any case, the dysfunctions and inherent weaknesses of this new UN organisation had already been signalled by Catherine Houston and Grant Jarvie:

> The United Nations Office on Sport for Development and Peace remains loud but small in comparison to other UN humanitarian agencies. Serving as an example of the way sport is conceptualised within the international humanitarian community, with significant interest and excitement but lacking in implementation, capacity and practice beyond advocacy. Interviews with officials

[4] It is about the following star footballers: Emmanuel Adebayor, Roberto Baggio, Michael Ballack, Iker Casillas, Didier Drogba, Luis Figo, Raúl, Ronaldo, Patrick Vieira, Zinédine Zidane.

> highlighted three imperative barriers to the inclusion of sport for development and peace into the international humanitarian agenda: 1. Lack of Evidence. 2. Lack of Funding. 3. Lack of Education (HOUSTON and JARVIE, 2016).

The post-war world of the UN and football

The lines of the UN's playing field were drawn over the ruins of the post-war world. History officially records it as having been founded in 1945, when it joined the world's real football pitches and encountered the game's power of integration. Football had been part of the everyday life of states, nations and individuals since the '30s when, as Macon Benoit puts it:

> The game took on four main characteristics. First, it became an agent of international relations. The foreign policies of European nations became ostensibly articulated in the international game. Second, it became a source of political propaganda. ... Thirdly, it became a tool of public pacification. Football worked well with nations' plans to depoliticize their populations. And finally, ... [t]he football arena became a safe channel for the expression of disaffection with the regimes concerned (BENOIT, 2008, p. 532).

The new team that appeared on the pitches of international politics in the mid '40s had historic roots. It was a new version of the League of Nations, with new colours and badges. It was more representative than its predecessor, including all the great players of the international post-war reality. Mandatory unanimity was replaced by consensus with a greater volition for measures to prevent war. Its main characteristic was a mindset bent on using more, and more flexible, tactics. Mark Mazower highlights the particularity of the UN, challenging the traditional axiom "that the United Nations rose - like Aphrodite - from the Second World War, pure and uncontaminated by any significant association with that pre-war failure, the League of Nations" (MAZOWER, 2009, p. 14).

The UN was shaped by a vision of a universal organisation intended for the whole world, old and new. There was, therefore, just one criterion for admission: the state had to be 'peace-loving'. Ideological conflicts notwithstanding, the victors of WWII were in agreement as to the size of their new stadium: it had to accommodate the entire world, without the exclusions of the past (MAZOWER, 2009, p. 198). The war now shifted from the battlefield to the new playing fields of productive peace. This puts us on the trail of the UN's 'archaeological phase'. The new institution had been lumbered from the outset with the stuff of the predominant Western notion of the nation-state automatically integrated into the history "of the European 'ratio' from the Renaissance to our own day" (FOUCAULT, 1994, p. xxii). It began to formulate its own discourse, but within some specific thought systems and clearly defined historic and social conditions (MILLS, 2005, p. 55). However, its encounter with the entire planet, in whose name it speaks, created an intermediate space between the West and the rest of the world, revealing a history "of its conditions of

possibility" (FOUCAULT, 1994, p. xxii) which enabled the UN to write its own history. 'Archaeologically speaking', by its very nature the UN embraced alternative ways of thinking beyond those "of our own Western culture: the Europe of the 16th through the 18th centuries" (GUTTING, 2005, p. 41). What is of interest, then, is not just the institution itself but also the environment of the power system that brought the UN to the surface (GUTTING, 2005, p. 42). All this 'archaeology of knowledge' allowed the UN to be accepted voluntarily, just as the peoples of the world embraced football's freedom of expression in order to acquire identity and national awareness. Football had already begun to give everyone a weekly occasion for celebration. It became the church of the oppressed and excluded, as well as of those denied a vote because they were poor, black or coloured, or who lacked representation because there was no parliament. "There are towns and villages in Brazil that have no church, but not one lacks a soccer field. ... On a normal Sunday people die of excitement during the mass of the ball. On a Sunday without soccer, people die of boredom" (GALEANO, 2013, p. 156).

The post-war world of international politics became normalised like the world of football. The founding of the UN would have the same dual role, providing all countries with a platform for expression and guaranteeing security by preventing conflict. Immediately after its 'archaeological emergence' the UN's very nature led to its 'genealogical manifestation', where knowledge interfaces with power and its transformations. This is a history of the present, which is traced and assessed through the bloodline of today's rules, practices and institutions (GUTTING, 2005, p. 61). Admission to the UN is considered to be the supreme confirmation of every state's international legitimacy. The powers of the post-war system gave the emerging nationalisms of the post-colonial world a democratic aspect. In order to control them from within, being aware of the dangers to their interests of the spread of communism or capitalist democracy alike, they formalised this pluralism in the context of a democratic General Assembly. The now 'civilised' states became in their turn the protectors of the sovereign spirit of the UN, namely that the state is above 'dangerous' minorities' and other rights. The old aristocratic spirit of the League of Nations returned, but with democratic national colours (MAZOWER, 2009, pp. 194-195).

The UN's ability to produce discourse as a subject of international politics in the context of its own hierarchy ran up against the corresponding hierarchical structures of the underlying individual member states. The UN's course is the enduring outcome of the coarticulation of 'archaeological analysis and genealogy' with respect to the power game and its tactics with initiatives and limitations on both sides. In football's corresponding institutional reality, the new states seek immediate admission to the FIFA system. National entities associated with struggles for independence or autonomy use football as an additional string to their diplomatic bow. Today, FIFA has 207 members to the UN's 193. The discourses of the UN and of football - through the usefulness of their structure and language - retransmit the truths of sovereign power in the post-war societies of states and

peoples.

The UN's home ground may look like any other splendid stadium, but the reality of post-war conflicts has obliged it to cynically redesign, for each match, the field on which it has played ball for more than 70 years. The post-war system of rule is based on continuous flexibility and adaptability, the outcome of the powerful states' determination to keep the UN from suffering the fate of the League of Nations. The endless bloodshed marring the pages of international politics in various regions of the world has forced the UN to appear on dirt pitches, playing a 'match of death' (RIORDAN, 2003) for its aims and effectiveness. Just as when "the players of the 1942 Dynamo Kiev team ... [h]aving been warned by the Nazis that, 'If you win, you die', started out resigned to losing, trembling with fear and hunger. ... When the match was over, all eleven were shot, wearing their club shirts, at the edge of a cliff" (GALEANO, 2013, p. 39).

The UN's grand aims for world peace and security for states and peoples were compressed into the more confrontational framework of peaceful coexistence up until 1990. The UN is defined by sovereignty and security (SLAUGHTER, 2005), the power of the nation-state still stamped with reminders of colonialism. National discourse sanctifies the new space occupied by the UN, which is diffused throughout the world with the prestige of the original institution. Every form of discourse that escapes the framework of the UN is condemned as incompatible with the dictates of the sovereign dogma of power (FOUCAULT, 2003, p. 183). This, along with the name of the 'Cold War' and its conflictual agenda with crises large and small, underlines the elitist side of the UN. Its structure, with the special position of the Security Council of WWII victors compared to that of the General Assembly, is a constant reminder that the UN framework serves primarily the game of the leading powers and their interests. This dual nature is what makes the UN the hope of the world and at the same time the protector of the strong. On the one hand it offers all states and peoples the prospect of solidarity, proclaiming in the Preamble of its Charter that "We the people of the United Nations, determined to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, in the equal rights of men and women and of nations large and small"[5]. On the other, the veto of the five permanent members of the Security Council perpetuates on the collective level the imperial superstructure of the UN over the democratic base of the remaining members. The primordial pledge of that 'we', however, namely "to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war"[6] , has only protected the strong countries from war. Foucault has a different definition of that 'we': "It seems to me that the 'we' must not be previous to the question, it can only be the result - and the necessarily temporary result - of the question as it is posed in the new terms in which one formulates it" (GUTTING, 2005, p. 35).

[5]Available at http://www.un.org/en/sections/un-charter/preamble/index.html. Accessed on January 08, 2018

[6]Available at http://www.un.org/en/sections/un-charter/preamble/index.html. Accessed on January 08, 2018

The UN, as Mazower points out, carries the history of the British Commonwealth adapted to the new imperial discourse of the victors of WWII, challenging another historiographical axiom: "And second, that it was, above all, an American affair. ... Instead I present the UN as essentially a further chapter in the history of world organization inaugurated by the League and linked through that to the question of empire and the visions of global order that emerged out of the British Empire in particular in its final decades" (MAZOWER, 2009, p. 14).

How could it be otherwise? As Stephen Wagg vividly puts it, the British had first kick at the ball in the modern world, teaching it the game with missionary zeal (WAGG, 1995, p. 01). Along with the game of parliamentary democracy, football travelled from Britain's colleges and working class neighbourhoods to every port in the world. The new countries that emerged from colonialism saw mirrored in football the new reality for the construction and development of their nation-states. Football, as a game and with the creation of teams, gave representation and a voice, particularly to the under-privileged within a country, especially those without a democratic tradition, contributing to their integration.

Just as football helped democratise domestic political life, the UN expanded the opportunities for democratising previously aristocratic international relations. It supplied what was missing from colonial relationships by serving as an institutional decompressor of international crises, masking wars. As the 20th century wore on, the predominant political-economic system encouraged people to let off steam at football matches, where the pressure of social tensions stemming from oppression and exclusion could be relieved. Along with the small local conflicts tolerated on the international fringes, the UN and football served as substitutes for war, carried out by other means and on other fields. The quantitative triumph of the states in the UN finds parallels in FIFA discussions about greater representation of national teams in the final phases of World Cup competitions. Everyone has to have a sense of belonging to institutions that give them the authority of legitimacy in return for the perpetuation of sovereign power.

State sovereignty is the emblem of the post-war UN. States old and new are thus fortified in their national defences, precluding interventions in their domestic affairs. The member states prefer to play an intensely static game, with controlled moves and regulations. For both the UN and football, the gradual institutionalisation of their operation fostered a controlled ordering of the regularity of their internal and external life. The UN's global and regional calendars are appropriate tools for exercising international policy and reinforcing national identities. As Boniface said of football, what else are all the UN's meetings and services around the world? The steady repetition of national and international meetings and matches is very much like a church calendar with its regular feast days celebrated in places of worship (BONIFACE, 2010, p. 128). This, however, resulted in the creation of a new cycle of fierce global competition for these profitable new laurels.

In the asphyxiating atmosphere of sovereignty and security, the nation state continues to define the fields of this securitisation war, promising a world of solidarity but with surveillance and the rules of law. Power is exercised on every level in forms that go beyond the state and its mechanisms, where each one retains a hierarchically equal position as regards the ability to exercise it (FOUCAULT, 2003, p. 168). All these tactics and practices, the so-called micropowers within and beyond state mechanisms and institutions, demonstrate the UN's progress towards its present third stage, which is defined by the technology of power and its ethics in the inseparable dipole of power and knowledge. In this context, the UN endeavours to display its third characteristic, solidarity, which survives in the guise of development. More than just a passive recipient of the predominant statist discourse, the UN now produces it as well, helping to disseminate the new reality in the guise of utility. The traditional sovereign state defines the new fields in its transition from an anachronistic colonialism to the productive development desired by all. The sovereign discourse of applied international politics is forged within the unlimited possibilities of specialised knowledge and technology for states and their institutions, presenting new positions as 'natural', as new versions of the truth of power. In this new view of international politics, we have the opposite of the dogma that knowledge is power. As Jonathan Hearn says of the new type of power, "we were using it generally...as 'power to'. However very often when people think of power, they first think ... of 'power over', as what we often call 'domination'" (HEARN, 2012, p. 06). The anatomy of this new type of power is made up of all the processes, possibilities, tools, techniques and targets available to it. The technology of power builds a constantly changing network of productive relations and biopower actions that does not rest simply on suppression and obedience (SIMONS, 1995, pp. 27-30).

The technology of power exploits the collective structure of the UN, its consensual decision-taking in conjunction with the specialised language of the law it produces, offering new views of the reality of international questions. The sovereign discourse of international institutional normality produces, organises, and in the end consumes constructions, leading to the prospect of the gradual replacement of the closed geographical borders that resulted from wars by the new biopolitical borders of the desired freedoms for greater collaboration and profitably productive power (FOUCAULT, 1990, pp. 75-76). The UN is evolving from a post-war sovereign normality to a post-ColdWar version of a productive engine of power. The evolution of the UN system "indicate[s] that sovereignty itself has become infused with a biopolitical program" (JAEGER, 2010, p. 80). The football played on the pitches of biopolitical power is a game of productive peace. In the case of epidemics, for example, the health agencies focus more on protecting the developed countries than on those faced with the problem, thus making their promised development even more remote. The UN's 'we' reveals its selfish side, untouched by those outside the boundaries of the developed biosocieties (KELLY, 2010, pp. 12-21). For Foucault (1990), power is sometimes imposed by exclusion, as was the case with the League of Nations, and at

other times by inclusion or reproduction, as is the case with the UN system. The UN stands out as the guardian of secure and peaceful coexistence with universally applicable political criteria and consensual procedures (THAKUR, 2006). Leaving the UN is not recommended, and indeed almost prohibited, because it is counterproductive. As Mazower observes,

> What the UN's present member states have in common is basically a shared acceptance of diplomatic and legal norms regarding the recognition and mutual interaction of states. They find these too useful to give up - there has been only one instance of a member voluntarily withdrawing from the UN (Indonesia in 1965) and that lasted less than a year - but the notion of moral community that Zimmern and other theorists had argued necessarily bound members of a common civilization no longer exists (MAZOWER, 2009, pp. 199-200).

In football terms, the UN's stadium lights are trained on the general game plan: keeping the peace in a liberated world. Essentially, however, the whole UN system is a Panopticon for ensuring the visibility of the fruits of peace while retaining control of their production. In Foucault's words, "It must give way to everything due to natural mechanisms in both behavior and production. It must give way to these mechanisms and make no other intervention, to start with at least, than that of supervision" (FOUCAULT, 2008, p. 67).

In the UN's game, Foucault sees Karl von Clausewitz as a key player:

> At this point, we can invert Clausewitz's proposition and say that politics is the continuation of war by other means ... namely that within this 'civil peace', these political struggles, these clashes over or with power, these modifications of relations of force - the shifting balance, the reversals - in a political system, all these things must be interpreted as a continuation of war. And they are interpreted as so many episodes, fragmentations, and displacements of the war itself. We are always writing the history of the same war, even when we are writing the history of peace and its institutions (FOUCAULT, 2003, p. 16).

Snapshots of the career of FC UN-ited

From its first appearance on the global political scene, the UN proclaimed its distinctive character in its Charter. While it guarantees, at least on paper, that it represents the peoples and their struggle for the post-war present and future, in practice it does little for them and more for the interests of the stronger states. This providence for coexistence reflects the symbolism of the celebrated Argentinean 'Machine'. As Galeano recounts,

> In the early 1940s, the Argentine club River Plate had one of the best soccer teams of all time. ... People called that legendary team 'The Machine' because of its precision plays. Dubious praise: these strikers had so much fun playing they'd forget to shoot at the goal ... Fans were fairer when they called them the 'Knights of Anguish', because those bastards made their devotees sweat bullets before allowing them the relief of a goal (GALEANO, 2013, p. 86).

The UN demonstrated the same skill when it adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948. That was the best 'guarantee-goal' that the world would see: football on a par with the brilliance of Benfica and Torino in the extraordinary match they played on May 3rd, 1949 in Lisbon, which the Portuguese won 04-03. But the best goals are the ones that people see on television, and since 1970 human rights are considered to be more dynamically served by the Council of Europe's European Convention on Human Rights (1950). The UN may have proclaimed a particular moral commitment to the peoples and their rights, beyond the logic of the state, but as time went on its actions tended to reinforce national discourse at the expense of solidarity (MAZOWER, 2009, p. 199). In any case, since then the UN has had a significant moral presence in the international state-centred community: "In the mid-1950s, Peñarol signed the first contract for shirt ads. Ten players took the field with a company name displayed on their chests. Obdulio Varela, however, stuck with his old shirt. He explained: 'They used to drag us blacks around by rings in our noses. Those days are gone'" (GALEANO, 2013, p. 108).

On April 07, 1953, the UN replaced one Scandinavian Secretary-General, the Norwegian Trygve Lie (1946-1952), with another, Sweden's Dag Hammarskjöld (1953-1961), who proved to be as brilliant a player as his compatriots Nils Liedholm and Gunnar Nordahl. Hammarskjöld thought that 'the United Nations was not created to bring us to heaven, but in order to save us from hell' (BOEL, 2011). That is why in 1954 the Nobel Peace Prize was awarded to the UN High Commission for Refugees. That award, however, was overshadowed by the far more memorable football miracle of Berne, where the newly created Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) defeated a hitherto unbeaten Hungary 03-02 in the final game of that year's World Cup. The reverberation of that miracle was slow to reach UN Headquarters in New York: the FRG was admitted to the UN in 1973, and promptly won a second World Cup, the following year in Munich, with a victory over the supposedly invincible Dutch squad.

In September 1960, 17 former colonies became members of the United Nations. This was a golden page in the organisation's history, on a par with that of the Brazilian national team of the day, with Garrincha, Didi, Vavá, Zagallo and the young Pelé, which won back-to-back World Cups in 1958 and 1962.

> He [Pelé] played more than thirteen hundred matches in eighty countries, one after another at a punishing rate, and he scored nearly thirteen hundred goals. Once he held up a war: Nigeria and Biafra declared a truce to see him play. ... When he executed a free kick, his opponents in the wall wanted to turn around to face the net, so as not to miss the goal. ... Off the field he never gave a minute of his time and a coin never fell from his pocket (GALEANO, 2013, p. 152).

The UN's work towards decolonisation parallels the achievements of the Brazilian football legend. In 1969 the UN scored Pelé-style with the entry into force of the Interna-

tional Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination. Essentially, the UN was playing a unique style of football, with the imperialism of the Great Powers in defence, the national sovereignty of the states holding the centre, and the emerging nationalism of the colonies leading the attack. Mazowe argues this point very neatly:

> The UN's later embrace of anticolonialism ... has tended to obscure the awkward fact that like the League it was a product of empire and indeed, at least at the outset, regarded by those with colonies to keep as a more than adequate mechanism for its defense. The UN, in short, was the product of evolution not revolution, and it grew out of existing ideas and institutions, their successes and failures as revealed by the challenge of war itself - the Second World War, the First, and further back still, the Boer War at the turn of the twentieth century (MAZOWER, 2009, p. 17).

Up to the end of the '60s football had 'the innocence of Adam' and helped further the prospect of national integration. On football pitches around the world the game was played aggressively, theatrically. The Brazilian style of play symbolised the epitome of the new global regional powers. The new equilibriums within the UN and international politics with the mass entry of new states from the former colonies could be likened to a goal by Jairzinho against England in the 1970 World Cup, when "the British press commented, such beautiful soccer ought to be outlawed" (GALEANO, 2013, p. 154).

> Tostão got the ball from Paulo Cézar and scurried ahead as far as he could, but all of England was spread out in the penalty area. Even the Queen was there. Tostão eluded one, then another and one more, then he passed the ball to Pelé. Three players suffocated him on the spot. Pelé pretended to press on and the three opponents went for the smoke. He put on the brakes, pivoted, and left the ball on the feet of Jairzinho, who was racing in. ... He came on like a black bullet and evaded one Englishman before the ball, a white bullet, crossed the goal line defended by the keeper Banks (GALEANO, 2013, p. 155).

In the '70s and '80s the work of the UN paralleled the football being played by most countries, namely tough, sometimes unsporting defence but little scoring. The brilliant exceptions to this norm were the amazing Ajax Amsterdam and the Dutch national teams, another two 'Machines' echoing the example of River Plate.

> They called the Dutch team the 'Clockwork Orange', but there was nothing mechanical about this work of the imagination that had everyone befuddled with its incessant changes. ... [T]his orange fire flitted back and forth, fanned by an all-knowing breeze that sped it forward and pulled it back ... faced with a team in which each one was all the eleven, the opposing players lost their step. A Brazilian reporter called it 'organized disorganization' (GALEANO, 2013, p. 164).

For its part, the UN is "... a machine in which everyone is caught, those who exercise power just as much as those over whom it is exercised" (GORDON, 1980, p. 156). In its peace-keeping missions, the UN wanted to imitate the Dutch style of play, but its

Secretaries-General favoured the leading states' 'catenaccio' system, following the model of the top Italian teams - Inter, Milan and Juventus: "At the World Cup in 1970 ... [t]he whole world was suffering from the mediocrity of defensive soccer, which had the entire side hanging back to maintain the 'catenaccio', while one or two men played by themselves up front" (GALEANO, 2013, p. 157).

In the 1980s the UN gave the international community the Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief (1981) and the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (1984), and at the end of the decade the Convention on the Rights of the Child (1990). In many areas, however, the aim was not the supposed goal, i.e. the legally binding convention, but protracting the preliminaries, as for example with the Law of the Sea and the conferences on the environment, climate and population. "This championship [in Italy 1990], boring soccer without a drop of audacity or beauty, had the lowest average scores in World Cup history" (GALEANO, 2013, p. 208).

Since 1990, the spirit of neoliberalism has dominated all aspects and activities of the state. As Wendy Brown has commented, "With neoliberalism, the political rationality of the state becomes economic in a triple sense: the economy is at once model, object, and project. That is, economic principles become the model for state conduct, the economy becomes the primary object of state concern and policy, and the marketization of domains and conduct is what the state seeks to disseminate everywhere" (BROWN, 2015, p. 62).

Similarly, in the same context, Football Ltd has dominated every aspect of everyday life, technology and politics. Its teams are a set of employees specialised in avoiding defeat. The farewell to amateur football is paralleled by the dramatic expansion of the newly professional UN of economic and social funds and programmes. Everywhere the search is on for new geographical and thematic areas in order to deploy the possibilities of the sovereign spirit of standardised policy and rationalised football. Galeano describes this very well with his description of Romário:

> From who knows what part of the stratosphere, the tiger appears, mauls, and vanishes. The goalkeeper, trapped in his cage, does not even have time to blink. Romário fires off one goal after another: half volley, bicycle, on the fly, banana shot, backheel, toe poke, side tap. Now he owns a collection of Mercedes-Benz cars and 250 pairs of shoes, but his best friends are still that bunch of unpresentable hustlers who, in his childhood, taught him how to make the kill (GALEANO, 2013, pp. 224-225).

The UN made a real contribution to decolonisation and strengthening human rights. But it has gradually morphed into a bureaucratic monster to cover its needs. Africa and Asia may organise World Cup events in fancy stadiums, but hunger, poverty, disease, corruption, civil war and displacement are more solidly entrenched as an invariable part of everyday life now than in the colonial past. As Eric Gruneau says, "in a world where ne-

oliberalism has emerged as an international form of common sense... [i]n the case of sport for development and peace this may well mean engaging with local activist groups who oppose public investments in large-scale sporting events in favour of the provision of non sporting public goods and services" (GRUNEAU, 2015, p. 57). Stories of corruption and abuse of power and resources by the UN's own agencies increase people's distrust of its missions, military or otherwise. The UN can no longer score a goal like Maradona's in the 1986 World Cup in Mexico, when he tipped the ball into the net after just 10 seconds of play, having covered some 60 metres and dribbled past half the English team.

In a world of multiple and uneven challenges and threats, UN membership continues to be of value to countries. The UN is an island of solidarity in the "carceral archipelago" (FOUCAULT, 1995, p. 297) of war and dominance. Entry is easy, for everyone; but there is no easy way out. Inclusion and reform within the UN give legitimacy to the normal state; otherwise, it is considered a pariah of international politics. In its official texts it is still a beacon for humanity and therefore its story is not one of failure. Despite the increasing clamour for fundamental changes, especially in the representative representation of ambitious states at the top of the pyramid, the UN has remained 'genealogically' faithful to the dictates of its official narrative and to the enduring spirit of the interdependence of power and knowledge in the 'archaeological' landscape of international politics. There are, therefore, reasons for the UN to illuminate buildings and monuments around the world every year. "To mark this anniversary, monuments and buildings across the world are being illuminated in UN blue. As we shine a light on this milestone anniversary, let us reaffirm our commitment to a better and brighter future for all" (UNITED NATIONS, NEWS CENTRE, 2015).

Nonetheless, the sovereign discourse and practices of the victors of WWII continued to play the real football, limiting the UN essentially to friendly matches for charitable and humanitarian purposes, which generally end in a draw, have a passing political purpose, are pursued on lifestyle terms, and are not registered in football's 'genealogical' memory.

This paradox is expressed in the setting of the UN's comic book. The only place where children learn about the aims of the United Nations is on an island from which escape is difficult. The discourse of football, which is played everywhere, mediates the narrative of the UN, adapting it to the norms and standards of professional politics expressed in terms of a fiesta, but also of discipline. The rhetoric on that remote island is of a game played for the good of mankind, as it was when the opening 'we' was meant for the sovereign states after all, who in the name of mankind were promised protection from the scourge of war. Today, that same 'we' promises biopolitical peace protecting mankind from its non-productive members. Beyond that island, in the archipelago of biopolitical war the triumph of the winner is everything, and nothing is heard but the cheers of the victorious. For the UN and for football, the 'we' continues to exist only after the end of

the match, as in Galeano's eloquent words: "I miss the celebration and the mourning too, because sometimes soccer is a pleasure that hurts, and the music of a victory that sets the dead to dancing sounds a lot like the clamorous silence of an empty stadium, where one of the defeated, unable to move, still sits in the middle of the immense stands, alone" (GALEANO, 2013, p. 270).

Dag Hammarskjöld's vision of what the UN, and by extension the world, should be like - "when people, just people, stop thinking of the United Nations as a weird Picasso abstraction and see it as a drawing they made themselves" (BOEL, 2011) - remains unfulfilled. In this complex world the sole option proposed by the protagonists in the operating theatres is the dogma of violence, as the only means of treatment, manically seeking out the symptoms rather than the causes of its illness. The accountable and standardised operation of the world of international politics is a policy that has always respected power and power alone, winning by any means, regardless of the consequences (JARVIE, THORNTON, and MACKIE, 2018). "You win because you're good, rather than you're good because you win", noted Cornelius Castoriadis, … and Arnold Toynbee had already seen enough of that when he wrote, "Civilizations in decline are consistently characterised by a tendency towards standardization and uniformity" (GALEANO, 2013, p. 255).

Conclusion

This study has examined the parallel lives of politics and sport through the specific examples of the UN and football in their common march through the 20th and 21st centuries. Their stories are neither incompatible nor isolated, despite the changes and adaptations to events and situations in each period since WWII. The UN and football are inseparable interconnected parts of the common single post-war history of the world of (international) politics.

Despite its aristocratic beginnings and the memories of colonialism, the UN continues to promise the nations the preservation of peace by limiting wars. The nations for their part look to the post-war value of the UN for a peaceful present and future, despite its ambiguous operating framework which maintains an uneasy balance between national interests and the muscle of the Great Powers.

Football, meanwhile, continues to be a field of expression in which everyone can find personal and social completeness. It requires no special attributes and can be played anywhere with anything that resembles a ball. On the other hand, the football pitch is an arena for political and economic conflict and trials of strength between individuals and every kind of geographical and multi-level collectivity.

This whole world of competing international relations and profitable governance is illustrated by the football version of the UN's narrative. The vision of peaceful development for all nations has gradually degenerated into a utilitarian and standardised method of governance. Politics has become synonymous with rationalised categorical classifica-

tion, where there is no room for institutional fiestas and initiatives of doubtful value and where intergovernmental rivalries are heightened. Football fields are filled by profit-seeking institutions, where the game is played incessantly, while the magic of the game is gradually sacrificed to the sole focus on winning by any means. The 'we' persists simply as a hope for a world of solidarity without discrimination in the action of the UN and in the game of football.

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