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Football and Colonialism, Domination and Appropriation: the Mozambican Case[1]

Nuno Domingos

This essay deals with the relationship between football and colonialism, examining the period when Mozambique was a Portuguese colony. An analysis of a glossary of local terms (in the Ronga language of the South of the country) is used to examine the tension between the mechanisms whereby the sport was introduced and its appropriation by the local people. The glossary describes game situations as was compiled in a journal article by the poet José Craveirinha in 1955.

Many of the analytical principles employed in studies on the role played by sport in colonial settings, namely in works on the French and British possessions, rouse questions applicable to the analysis of the Portuguese case. The benefit brought by the comparison between national models does not exempt, however, from the realization of a more singular scrutiny, which places the object within the particular context of the societies studied. The hypothetical Portuguese specificity must be fragmented in studies on concrete spaces of settlement, for the analysis of local social structures, regional dynamics and standards of development. It must be assumed, thus, that the evolution of sporting forms is derived through an encounter and not through the uncontested imposition of the colonizer's practices. The process of local appropriation and transformation of cultural elements introduced by the colonizer can conceptually be studied by expressions that state the dynamics of the colonial encounter, as for example the concept of 'creolization'.[2]

The study on 'creolization' in African sport can function as a laboratory from which it is possible to observe wider dynamics. However, it is essential that such an approach does not obscure the analysis of sport as something singular, as an original expression of complex historical processes. This essay strives to present an inaugural approach to the appropriation and transformation of the game of football in Mozambique.

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To reduce the analysis of sport in Africa to the introduction of modern European sports is not a wholly consensual matter. Some authors argue that it is not correct to establish a rigid division between sporting forms introduced by European settlers and traditional athletic practices. The first part of the volume *Sport in Africa*,^[3] which was one of the first works to take the subject as an autonomous object of inquiry, is dedicated to the study of non-modern ‘sporting forms’. John Blacking, in one of the volume’s articles, suggests that the social functions of modern sport in Africa were not substantially different from those resulting from traditional athletic practices as dancing or fighting: ‘certain types of experiences, as well as certain general patterns of physical movement and interaction, are not necessarily limited to the contexts and practice of modern sport’.^[4] To identify the continuities between traditional athletic activities and the new sports introduced by European colonizers is one of the keys aspects in the analysis of sporting configurations in Africa. It is important to consider, however, that the introduction of modern sports occurred in a period of great transformation in African societies: strong radical changes in the labour systems, fast processes of urbanization, intensification of State control over territories and individuals, reshaping of the family organization, changes in the traditional hierarchies.

The majority of studies on sport in colonial settings, whichever the continent concerned, discuss its role in contexts of social change. Some researchers who have analysed the case of the British colonies strove, at first, to perceive the employment of sport as an instrument of power. These works are placed within a wider debate: the role played by culture in the preservation of the English Empire. Bernard Cohn is one of the authors whose work analysed the social and political effects of the ‘culture of colonialism’. In the preface to Cohn’s book, *Colonialism and Its Forms of Knowledge*, Nicholas B. Dirks summarizes the main lines of the analysis of colonialism that is focused upon the relevance of cultural variables:

colonial conquest was not just the result of the power of superior arms, military organization, political power, or economic wealth – as important as these things were. Colonialism was made possible, and then sustained and strengthened, as much by cultural technologies of rule as it was by the more obvious and brutal modes of conquest that first established power on foreign shores. (...) it is not been sufficiently recognized that colonialism was itself a cultural project of control.^[5]

J.A. Mangan and Brian Stoddart are among the group of authors who have studied sport from this perspective.^[6] Mangan introduced the ‘bond theory’, arguing that sporting practices had played a role in the creation of ‘cultural bonds’ between colonizer and colonized. The structure of these bonds would determine the acceptance of the colonizers’ practices and values by the local populations, contributing to impose a political recognition. This author mentions the exportation of what he denominates *homo ludens imperious*:

Throughout the Empire sportsmen and to a far lesser extent sportswomen and sports fields were acknowledged agents and agencies respectively of this bonding process. Through this process by virtue of domination, control and contact, cultural links

were established between Great Britain, dominion and colony which affected irreversibly the nature of indigenous cultures, political relationships, and subordinates' perceptions of superiors and vice versa.[7]

Brian Stoddart employs a similar line of inquiry, conceiving colonial sport as a transmitting vehicle of ideas, beliefs, values and conventions that contributed to consolidate the imperial mission.[8] The games were instruments of socialization, infusing discipline, group spirit, respect for hierarchies and rituals; they were instances that reproduced a social condition inherent to a status of national civilization. The keepers of values that characterized one 'form of Britishness'[9] became a reference group whose leisure habits tended to be copied by local elites, a way to consolidate mechanisms through indirect rule. In the British case, the agents of this cultural strategy were the members of the colonial administration, transmitters of the *Victorian* sporting *ethos* assimilated in elite Public Schools, which specialized in educating the colonial cadres.[10]

This vision of the introduction of sport in the British Empire, focused upon the implementation of a project of dominance executed by well identified agents and by chosen sports, seems, however, not entirely appropriate to the introduction of football in Africa. On the one hand, African colonization had singular characteristics. On the other, the same principles of analysis that supported the colonial history of sports such as cricket or tennis cannot be applied to the study of football.

Harold Perkin points out that football was not among the elites' sporting practices exported to the 'English world' by colonial cadres who came from Oxford and Cambridge. Football was precociously professionalized in England.[11] Its aristocratic origins, in the aforementioned Public Schools, gave place to a popular practice, whose process of professionalization with the concomitant promotion of players from working classes clashed with the amateur and elitist ethos that still defined sports such as rugby or cricket. As Hutchinson states:

Association football has been Great Britain's most notable contribution to international sport and to the global entertainment industry. It differed from the high imperial games chiefly in that soccer was rarely the chosen sport of the governing classes: it travelled not with the diplomatic corps, but in the kit-bags and holdalls of private soldiers, or merchants, railway workers, miners and schoolteachers. Soccer was given no entrée. It was rarely delivered along with Christianity, lighthouses, and British legal systems, to colonised countries; which is why soccer – the most successful of empire games – thrived better in most countries of the world other than the old dominions, where it was historically overshadowed by rugby and cricket, or by squash, or badminton, or tennis.[12]

This description suggests a dispersion of the agents who transmitted the game, something that indicates that we should relativize analyses that focus only upon the role of sport as an instrument within a centralized strategy of cultural domination. This does not dismiss the importance of investigating the role played by sport within colonial projects of domination. However, it is necessary not to restrict the creation of strong 'cultural bonds' to the result of centralized policies overseen by colonial agents. This principle will perhaps be even more manifest outside the British colonial context. If it

is possible to identify some patterns, some of them claiming national originality, it is a risk to nationalize historical processes through the application of strict analytical frameworks.

The game was transmitted in Africa through the action of various agents with different interests: it grew in the vicinity of great state and private enterprises that, as was the case in industrialized Europe, sponsored sporting activities as they strove to gain control over labour relations;^[13] it was born as a result of the missionary effort, in which it served to educate, discipline and contribute towards communitarian integration; it was stimulated by the associative dynamics of settlers, characterized by an active sporting dimension; it benefited from the migratory flows, of which the massive movement of Mozambican workers heading towards South Africa and Rhodesia is an obvious example; its development was stimulated by the actual economic dynamics, specially, from the outset of the twentieth century, by the growth of communications, which originated higher levels of mobility.

After its introduction, football expanded in many ways. The limits of its appropriation were not controlled by colonial organizations, something that liberated the process of ‘creolization’ of the game. ‘Native’ clubs and associations were founded, which created their own structures, to regulate the competitions. The network of native associations reached a pan-African dimension, a reality that is exemplified by the tours of Mozambican teams, made since the first decades of the twentieth century, to the Transval region, in South Africa.

Even when the contact Africans had with football was directly overseen (within the sphere of a factory or through the work of missions), there remained some scope towards recreating the game. Laura Fair was able to show this process in the course of a study about football and other forms of ‘popular culture’ in Zanzibar, during the colonial period. The author shows how football, which was introduced through the disciplinarian action of religious missions, acquired a diversity of specific meanings:

young men who took up football and transformed it into the new national game did so not because they were overwhelmed with desires to ‘improve’ their industrial character of Christian morality (most were in fact Muslim), but because they were able to infuse football with elements of indigenous recreation and leisure aesthetics and thus transforms football into a game that had important local meaning.^[14]

The analysis that focuses upon the processes of ‘creolization’ of modern sporting configurations emphasizes, on the one hand, the continuities between traditional and modern practices, but, on the other hand, still argues that out of that meeting arose new forms. In football’s case, where the rules create borders that leave plenty of space for the execution of individual gestures and collective movements, the game gained, without a doubt, strong local dynamics, whose meanings may inspire studies about styles and ways of playing. These styles of playing, however, are not just a direct reflex of the elementary social structures that characterize a certain historical and geographical milieu. They are not yet, certainly, the product of substantialist mystifications about cultural essences. The evolution of the game of football is accompanied, in particular from the moment there are organized competitions, by a singular process of rationalization, which is characterized by the development and sharing of something that

might be called a ‘thought regarding the game’ whose function is to be applied to the sporting practice.[15] The evolution of this ‘thought regarding the game’ can be seen in the publication and distribution of manuals, in publications from institutions such as the *International Board*, in press articles, as a consequence of the circulation of players and coaches, etc. Its application is present in the training methods, in the placement of players in the field, in the organization of tactics and strategies. The game standards in Africa at the beginning of the twentieth century were not globalized as happens today, but from very early on, usually through the importation of an Anglophone vocabulary, which was frequently translated at national or local level, positions within the pitch were defined, gestures and moves were named. The ‘style of play’ will always be derived from the dialectic between this rationalization and the influence played by the dynamic of local structures. The contextualization effort is useful to avoid a certain mythologization of ‘indigenous styles’ or ‘national styles’ or even to minimize eventual substantivist uses of the concept of ‘creolization’.

This local appropriation may assume a multitude of meanings, occasionally contradictory. In certain circumstances, the sporting practice represented an attempt to adhere to the colonizer’s values, often through the mimicry of his leisure time, strengthening the viability of the ‘cultural bonds’ argument. Football still constituted a means of social mobility, a way of integration in the colonial society or even a ticket to travel to the metropolitan society. But the game also became an arena of resistance to the colonial power: explicitly, when associations and clubs became active parties in the political game; implicitly, when, in the context of formal appropriation, political meanings were created, more through practice than strategy. The nature of these meanings may indicate, simultaneously, adhesion and resistance to the dominant values, and this should be interpreted within the context of concrete historical situations.

The various works on the development of sport in colonial settings constitute, thus, a set of useful instruments of analysis to approach the Mozambican case. In the following pages, some of the questions presented shall be dealt with, whilst others shall remain, certainly, unanswered.

The sporting organization developed in Mozambique under the Portuguese colonial rule reflected in its own way the social divisions that characterized the colonial environment. The introduction of modern sports benefited from the growth of the main cities, namely Lourenço Marques, the new territorial capital from 1898.[16] Its strategic position in the southern-African regional economy, which flourished after the discovery of gold in 1873 in the Transval region, led to the intensification of the port’s exploration and to the construction of a railway connecting the territory to its neighbouring countries.

One of the first records that attempted to systematize the evolution of sport in Mozambique was written by a captain in the Portuguese army, Ismael Mário Jorge[17] following an article, *L’Education Physique et le Sport*, presented in the Paris Colonial Congress in 1931. In this article, the author outlines a chronology of events that

he considered fundamental to the development of sporting practices in Mozambique. The programmatic distinction between ‘physical education’ and ‘sports’ is present throughout the description, concerned, above all, in defending the role of the colonial state in the growth of athletic practices. Developed as a means to support the nationalized vision of the body, physical education was promoted in Mozambique through the military institution and schools. Ismael Mário Jorge described how army companies, from the first half of the nineteenth century, organized physical exercises. From the military world, physical education entered the school system. After the pioneering work of some missionary schools, at the outset of the twentieth century the *Liceu 5 de Outubro* inaugurated, in Lourenço Marques, the teaching of the discipline through ‘scientific’ methodologies. Swedish gymnastics, or Ling’s method, was the paradigmatic example of a ‘scientific approach to the discipline’, being also the one that offered ‘more guarantees of being a rational and psychological method, applicable as much to civilians as to militaries, and satisfying the essential objectives, physical and moral’.[18] In 1930, according to Jorge’s narrative, physical education would begin to be taught in normal primary schools, to ‘non-natives’, and in rudimentary schools of the same degree to the ‘native’ population. Trying to impress the Paris Colonial Congress, the author presents a multitude of numbers that attested to the expansion of physical education in Mozambique.[19] Considering the fragility of the teaching structure organized by the Portuguese administration in its colonial territories, namely before the 1930s, these numbers should be considerably relativized.[20]

There were also other physical activities in Mozambique developed within the military context: combat sports, shooting and fencing, athletics, such as jumping, running and throwing, pentathlon, horse racing, swimming and equitation.

Jorge’s account about the development of the so called ‘porting games’ in Mozambique reveals considerable differences regarding the centralized model typical of the introduction of physical education and other sports developed by military units. The author considers that ‘private organisations’ were responsible for the systematization of the practice and organization of sporting competitions such as football, basketball, hockey, handball, volleyball, tennis, rugby and other competitions. In the first two decades of the twentieth century Lourenço Marques witnessed the emergence of a substantial number of sports associations and clubs. The members of the English community oversaw the organization of golf, cricket, tennis and nautical sports’ competitions. Clubs such as the *Lourenço Marques Athletic Club*, *Lourenço Marques Tennis Club* and *Club de Golf de Lourenço Marques* were central to these sporting activities, which were also mundane leisure practices, in which the Portuguese of the colonial ruling cadre took part.

Regarding football, the captain assures us that, before 1904, there were already various groups of practitioners. He refers, as he develops his sporting typology, to games played by individuals of western origin. Jorge considered that the ‘natives’ had no sporting culture.[21] Their athletic activities, such as hunting and fishing, were utilitarian. He also called attention to their warrior dances, during which stories are told, to the prodigious jumps, which were filled with gymnastic elements that showed a formidable mobility, and to their plastic poses. Despite the aesthetic appreciation, the

captain's argument was based upon the idea that such physical activities belonged to a 'natural' order, that should not be mistaken with the complexity of sports practiced by Europeans. In the article he presented to the Colonial Congress, he considered that the sports which could be transmitted to natives were those that employed 'natural means': walking, running, jumping, climbing, weightlifting, throwing, fighting and swimming.

This scenario, inspired by a racial conception of aptitude towards sporting practices, only appeared to be contradicted by the quick dissemination of the game of football, which did not quite fit the aforementioned model. Jorge referred to the activity of the *Associação de Futebol Africana* (AFA), which organized a league with the participation of more than ten clubs, adapting rules and regulations typical of its European counterparts.[22] Despite the fact that AFA's statutes were only approved in 1934, the association was active since the 1920s, a period, especially towards the beginning of the decade, when there was a large growth in African associateship.[23]

The 'native competition' was held at the same time as the official Lourenço Marques league, organized by the *Associação de Futebol de Lourenço Marques* (AFLM), a sporting structure affiliated to the Portuguese Football Federation. This competition had already, towards the end of the 1920s, the participation of some clubs that are still among today's most important in Mozambique, such as *Sporting Club de Lourenço Marques* (b.1916), affiliated to *Sporting Clube de Portugal* (which, after the independence, became *Maxaquene*), *Grupo Desportivo de Lourenço Marques* (b.1921) and *Clube Ferroviário de Lourenço Marques* (b.1924). In this league, one of the leading teams was still *Lourenço Marques Athletic Club*, one of the first Mozambican clubs, founded before 1908. Completely formed by Englishmen it played, until the 1920s, an important role in the development of the game in the city of Lourenço Marques.

Lourenço Marques football structure was thus initially divided between the AFLM official league and the one organized by the *Associação Africana de Futebol*. The latter, as the newspapers referred, was responsible for African football. The racial frontiers between these leagues were not completely sealed; some black players and especially of mixed race, participated in AFLM's competition, which was considered the most prestigious. Everything leads us to believe, however, that the football universe reproduced the logic of the assimilation system introduced by Portuguese colonization. On various occasions, in the pages of *O Brado Africano*, a newspaper created in 1918 by Lourenço Marques' *Grémio Africano*, which was a bastion of the 'nativist' movement, there were protests regarding the exclusion of African teams from AFLM's league and against the marginalization of black players.[24]

Alongside the institutional framework, football developed somewhat more spontaneously, being played in the streets and neighbourhoods, although it is not known if by mixed or racially separated teams. Its growth throughout the territory was quick as can be seen in a chronicle published in *O Brado Africano* in 1939 (21 January) about sporting life in the district of Inhambane: 'Football here, as everywhere else, is the chosen sport. It is the sport practiced in a larger scale as can be attested by a multitude of football fields, spread throughout the roads crossing the district, (?), with trees in the middle of the pitch and two bamboos placed on the floor and crossed by a third one to serve as goals!')[25]

The final results of Lourenço Marques' 1923 championship demonstrate the Athletic Club's Englishmen domination, who won with 16 points, twice that of *Sporting Club de Lourenço Marques*, the second placed team. Shortly after the end of the championship, the *Taça de Honra* was decided between this same English team and *Desportivo*. The article published in *Lourenço Marques Guardian* (11 September 1923) about the match reveals some of the characteristics that would define the development of the game in the city. The reporter points out that *Desportivo* 'employed plenty of violence and more than one foul was noticed'.[26] The Englishmen, on the other hand, 'employed very little violence'. As it was a bilingual newspaper, the *Guardian* added some comments in its English language version of the article: 'It is regrettable that the spectators could not control their feelings at some of the decisions given by the referee who, on several occasions was forced to reprimand section of the crowd'.[27] In the following year, there was another game between the two teams in *Desportivo*'s stadium. Once more, the *Guardian*'s reporter was displeased. The game, 'a school of dedication', was transformed into a 'carnival' in which many *sportsmen* played alongside 'other creatures who perverted everything, putting all shame aside to stoop as low as to throw themselves upon the propaganda of disorder and aggression' and the following words could even be heard: 'break his shins'.[28]

Within a small milieu, in which the 'English practice' remained an example, some behaviour in and outside the field was not considered suitable: players' violence, protests regarding the referees' actions, the existence of a noisy crowd; basically, anything that did not fit the idealized view of the 'gentleman-player' or the 'gentleman-spectator'. The referees were recruited, at that time, from among the group of players and they were normally renowned *sportsmen*. Their impartiality could not be contested.

From the chronicles of that time, we can infer that the ambience in some of the games was characterized by a mundane atmosphere, in which competitiveness was not much fostered, in that it could never surpass the sporting posture that was typical of amateurism. In a game played the year before, between a team of Portuguese and another of Englishmen, 'there were plenty of refreshments, cakes, tea and other drinks, as well as chairs and covered stands'.[29] The British consul as well as the head of English business affairs were invited to attend. Some special games, in which there were almost always English teams, normally the Athletic Club, were played for charity causes. In those events, Lourenço Marques society showed itself, the Civil Governor would be present, there were balls organized and bands were invited to play.

The ambience that characterized some games, namely those played by English teams, mimicked without a doubt the logic of cultivated amateurism, in a selected ambience where behaviour associated with the popularization and democratization of the sport were not allowed. In Lourenço Marques, however, the vulgarization of the sport was strong. The arrival of Portuguese settlers, the actual expansion of the sport in the metropole, the development of economic activities in Mozambique and the city's growth, were important factors that contributed towards this process. This evolution contributed to change some behaviour in the game. Situations that, in 1923, shocked

the *Guardian's* reporters, would become common: participant spectators that pressure referees and players, that are critical in defeat but exuberant in victory, players who are more competitive, violent and argumentative with the referee, all of which were common characteristics of this sport's modernization process.[30]

The growth in interest in football occurred alongside an increasingly greater coverage by the press. Newspapers would promote the popularization of the game, bringing notoriety to teams and players. Whilst it is not very suitable to speak of professionalization, it is correct to say that the popularization allowed for a greater competitiveness and a gradual functional specialization within the teams. In relation to the 'English model', the Portuguese players, but also athletes with different origins, who were agents in the popularization process, transformed the performative dimension of the game.

But it wasn't just in the universe of the 'colony's official football' where the game became popular. The *Associação Africana de Futebol's* league attracted many teams. There are fewer written sources about this competition. The *O Brado Africano* newspaper published, as early as the 1920s, articles about this competition's matches, in Portuguese, but also in Ronga, a language from the southern part of the territory. The way the game spread among the African populations, in terms of its practice and also of its consumption as a spectacle, is not only measured through the existence of a considerable number of clubs or associations. These are, however, an important example of African associateship, more significant because after the proclamation, in 1926, of Portugal's military dictatorship, which gave way, in 1933, to the *Estado Novo* regime, political and syndical protest was restrained.[31]

It should be noted, however, that the development of an African sporting universe served towards the affirmation of the ability of the 'native' player and to emphasize the necessity of his institutional recognition. In *O Brado Africano* various articles argued that players of *Associação Africana de Futebol* should play in teams that represented collectives, such as Lourenço Marques' city's team. Having lost, following the colonial institutionalization of the Portuguese *Estado Novo*, its interventionist capacity, *O Brado Africano* argued for the football player within the same context of its fight for the access of Africans to certain citizenship rights.[32]

On 15 December 1955 the newspaper published an article entitled 'The Use of Natives in the Valorisation of Portuguese Sport'. The author argues for the participation of 'ultramarine' athletes, Europeans and Africans, in Portugal's national teams. He argues that the 'ultramarine' athlete had a special aptitude towards the practice of sports. But he speaks of all the 'ultramaries' and not just of players with African origins and does not want to – although he does this rhetorically – defend the opinion of a representative of an association from neighbouring Transval, who stated that the 'black has tendons and nerves which have an abnormal anatomical configuration'. Presenting, even if indirectly, the 'natural argument', the author attacks the fact that 'regional associations' legislate 'towards denying the participation of blacks, depriving the country of a potential that if seriously worked could provide Portugal with a considerable contingent of sportsmen of exceptional quality'.[33] He concludes, by arguing that the fact that Lourenço Marques' football team 'had some footballers whose ability was at the same level as that of many ignored Africans is saddening'.[34]

The fight for the rights of the African player was not, however, the only way to value him. Whilst not quite being a meritocratic revindication regarding an official model, another course of valorisation focused upon the African player's expressive individualism, looking upon that which distinguished him. As football was an activity in which creativity played a crucial role, this was about placing an emphasis upon the singular ability of the African player, not in relation to a model, but as an autonomous creator integrated in collectives of players that shared a similar understanding of the game. Football, one of the few areas in which Africans were allowed some visibility, was seen as a noble activity. Unlike the 'basic' and 'natural' physical activities that Captain Ismael Mário Jorge argued were susceptible to being adopted by the 'native population', football made it possible to exalt interpretative and creative components, to rouse images of physical might but also to suggest intellectual ability. One of the examples of this valorisation of the African player can be found in an article written by the poet and reporter José Craveirinha[35] for the *O Brado Africano*.

In 1955, Craveirinha published an article titled 'Ronga Terminology in Football, an Opportune Conjugation and its Interpretation'.[36] In his introduction, he states: 'The disclosure of local African's (Ronga) football jargon is opportune not only because it reveals in the native a disposition that is ready to adapt to new things but also to transform them or rediscover them'.[37] Some of the expressions presented in the glossary were, according to Craveirinha, adapted by local Europeans, as there weren't any Portuguese or English expressions that illustrated those situations within the game. The ten expressions introduced by the Mozambican poet contribute to identifying some of the mechanisms of 'creolization' of the game in Mozambique, helping to understand the formation of a singular morality or, in other terms, of another order of interaction reproduced during the match. We lack, of course, some data that could help to clarify the meaning of some gestures and movements. Despite this, it is evident that this a different game to that which is revealed in the chronicles that described, as early as the 1920s, the amateur logic defended by English clubs such as the Athletic Club.

Most of the expressions in this small glossary describe situations that involve some kind of violent behaviour. For instance:

Pandya: (read as pandja) Whilst in Portuguese there isn't a word that expresses the moment when the players feet, as they dispute the ball, kick it simultaneously and provoke a sound that is characteristic of this impact, the African sportsman created the word *pandya*, which, if we translate literally, means to crack or to burst! This expression became a part of the local Portuguese jargon;

Beketela: The player who anticipates the opponent's action and places his foot on the ball in such a way as to provoke a shock that, quite often, provokes serious traumatisms in the player who kicks it and almost always leads to his fall. Its translation is to put. *Beketela* is used with meanness, by placing the foot slightly above the ball in such a way that the leg (the ankle and

shin area) will hit the heel of the foot placed on the ball. There is the *beketela henlha* – to put in the air – and *beketela hansi* – to put below;

Wandla: To purposefully slow down in a play so that the opponent manages to kick the ball first but, with his own thrust, he grazes strongly in the shin area at the top of the boot, which is raised in the air. Translation: to bark;

Tyimbela: (tchimbela) To shoot the ball directly at the opponent with maximum violence so that he is intimidated in later plays in which advantage can be gained simply by threatening to kick, something that almost always makes the target turn his back to the ball, allowing to pass him very easily.

These gestures, in which violence prevailed, and whose local importance led to the creation of specific designations, were not, as can be seen, considered in negative terms.[38] On the contrary, its origin in ingenious means created by the players to gain advantage over the opponents was valued. The advantage, it should be noted, may not even be related with the immediate benefit to the team, in the sense of creating a situation that, for instance, would end in a goal. The reasoning behind these gestures seems to lack a utilitarian rationality that is typical of modern football, in which each movement is thought almost always in relation to the objective of gaining a collective advantage, which in itself would make victory possible and, with it, the achievement of the result. The cunning these designations refer to has to do with individual battles within the game, for which the players should be prepared. Fought during the match, these confrontations gained some kind of autonomy in itself. It should be safe to assume that this autonomy, possessing in some way its own internal logic as well as specific gestures and meanings, was acknowledged as much by other practitioners as it was by the spectators who, understanding the meaning of those actions, would express themselves when they happened. The gestures were, in this way, part of a singular ‘order of interaction’.

This same logic of individualization of gestures practiced within the game, now without an explicitly violent character, can be seen in other expressions introduced by Craveirinha:

Hpfa: It is the precise moment in which the player has just been dribbled or feinted and still hasn't regained his balance or the precise moment when the following happens: the ball touches the net, the sound of boot against boot, etc.;

Psêtu: It is used to make fun of the opponent in a play just after he is beaten. It has an onomatopoeic origin;

Pyonyo: When the same play referred to above is repeated or when its execution takes longer; in this case the translation means: to end with the player;

Wupfetela: the name of the play in which the player targets the goalkeeper with the intention of tiring or demoralising him by continuing this action. The expression is derived from seasoning some food and it means to season the goalkeeper by tiring him. There is, as can be seen, a great deal of psychology involved in this action.

In these instances, we can see the importance of virtuous action of the player over the opponent. Part of these expressions refers to the execution of technical gestures facing the opponents, namely the dribble and feint, gestures that in other geographical contexts are closely connected to dance.[39] The superiority of a movement that

assures its executioner an advantage over the opponent, because he was fainted or because he is on the floor, also becomes a moral advantage, an affirmation of individual ascendancy, of merit that the other team's individual should be made to pay. The expressions classify, once more, actions in which two players are involved and one overcomes the other; in these instances they do not employ violent means but merely technical dexterity. When Craveirinha, as he refers to a specific play, talks about its psychological implications, he affirms that this type of demoralization exercise was part of the game, fulfilling a function that was closely associated with the objectives we are more frequently used to identify in modern professional football: the search for goal. The morality defined in these terms was also different from the class ethos, which vied to reproduce a status that was not at ease with the social mixture derived from the sport's popularization, prevalent in the amateur model. In this last case, the need for the result, a characteristic of the professionalization of the sport, was not the most important element and the interaction within the field served to reproduce a social status.

The psychological game played with the opponent, the ability of artifice, of trick was, to Craveirinha, proof that the African player was not a 'physical and instinctive being', as Jorge had described him, but someone who interpreted the game's actions, thinking of ways to gain advantage over the opponent, even when these meant the use of strategies in which violence played an active role. Craveirinha ends his article stating that:

As can be seen by what has been presented, the native possesses a wealth of imagination that is somewhat extraordinary and inexhaustible when something captivates his extremely sensitive attention. Associated to all this is the high sense of malice the African possesses, employing that particular trait of his character in the activity in which he is involved.[40]

Although the word malice might mean 'tendency towards evil', Craveirinha employs it as synonymous with cunning, sagacity, craft, acumen and astuteness. Although it is possible to consider that Craveirinha himself presents an analysis that is essentialist in its nature, when he suggests that the characteristics of the African player were 'qualities of character', the idea that the game was a way of affirmation of the mental/intellectual abilities, even running the risk of them being naturalized, enables the effective valorisation of the African player as an individual and not just as an athlete. Not all opinions within the *O Brado Africano* concurred with this.

In 1953, a writer named José Manuel[41] wrote six articles titled 'Youth and football'. In these articles he argues that the valorisation of the African individual is actually being held back by the 'ball, that hollow spherical object, of leather, rubber and air, that requires nothing but a strong kick from the ground to make all youths go crazy'. The ball 'played its role, taking mentality away from the brains, installing itself, with its tentacles reaching all the cerebral cells of youth'.[42] The criticism towards contemporary youths was placed alongside compliments towards preceding generations:

Plentiful youths have taken the intellectual value of black people to great heights, showing, as they countered wrong ancient concepts, stated by intellectuals who proclaimed that the only good thing black people had was the Herculean strength of their arms, to labour, and who did not care to know anything else, that beyond the

strong muscles their body also holds a predicate that God, besides matter, gave to all human beings, without distinction of skin colour – Spirit.[43]

Football was muscle and the strength of muscle did not mean any thing other than the insistence upon the corporal dimension of the African, according to the colonialist definition: the physical labourer. But football was even worse than work, because it was not productive.[44] The game, argued José Manuel, did not contribute to any spiritual enlightenment, unlike reading or music, activities that did greater justice to ‘Portugal’s civilising effort in these oriental shores of Africa’.[45] This vision was not atypical of a global conception of civilization accepted by some African elites, even within a context of claims demanded of the colonial power. After accepting the occidental rationalist division between body and mind, the body was deprived of any intelligence faculty. No civilizing qualities were acknowledged in football.

Football was, however, a more democratized activity, a possible form of expression, in a context where Africans were not allowed, except for a small minority, to have access to a set of rights and activities monopolised by the colonialist society. Craveirinha’s article, valuing a minor activity, in the sense of its social nobility, tries to counter the symbolic power exercised by the colonial regime. Whilst not being above some criticism, namely about how he excessively romanticizes the ‘African game’, Craveirinha, in his article, strives to fight the colonial power through a ‘revolution of perception’ of human activity, taking away from the colonialist’s symbolic universe the hegemony in the construction of images regarding intelligence and creativity.

The investigation about how the game of football was ‘creolized’ suggests the identification of differences, the search of characteristics that identify ways of communal appropriation, of elements that distinguish one culture from others. In the case of the development of football in Africa, the common opposition is between colonized and colonialist, the latter being normally designated by his national origin. Whilst not wanting to disclaim the effective relevance of this exercise in cultural opposition, it is essential not to absolutize these oppositions. The African adoption of modern sporting forms, such as the game of football, reveals itself as a dynamic process with meanings that are sometimes contradictory and which should be analysed within the context of local realities. This is, above all, something new, usually produced within the context of the new African ‘popular culture’, urban in its nature, prospered in a colonial space characterized by a profound change in the fundamental axis of daily life.

The game of football in Mozambique, after its local adaptation, was not transformed immediately into some kind of typical cultural specimen, into something belonging to an ethnographical museum. The search for characteristics that represent any specific cultural idiosyncrasy should not be made to the detriment of the search for the common appropriations, a way not to deny anyone the ability of manipulating the modern forms. It is impossible to take Craveirinha’s glossary and transform these meanings into some kind of proof of the existence of an African football, placed in a different universe. Having underlined the differences and presented the singularities,

we should understand the connections between this African football with the evolution within a ‘thought regarding the game’. In the gestures named in Craveirinha’s glossary there is none that refers to collective movements, game models, strategies and tactics. However, in the newspaper articles that covered the *Associação Africana de Futebol*’s matches there appears to be a progressive organization within the game, of tactics and of players increasingly specialized in the field. The same happened, possibly at a more elaborate level, with the *Associação de Futebol de Lourenço Marques*’s league. When, towards the end of the 1940s, various Mozambican players went to the metropolis to play football, their ability in the game, reflecting the development of the sport in Mozambique, incorporated elements that enabled them, as history has shown, to adapt easily. Contrary to conceptions such as those of Ismael Mário Jorge, that persist throughout the times, the African player wasn’t simply defined by natural characteristics, but also by the practical absorption of a thought regarding the game.

Notes

- [1] This essay is derived from a PhD project about the history of football in Mozambique during the colonial period, undertaken at the department of Anthropology and Sociology in the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London. As it is in its initial phase, the study lacks a deep empirical research, in particular regarding its ethnographic dimension. The logical sequence of facts as well as the development of interpretations based upon the debates that approach a theme such as this, remain weak. As such, I will strive to limit the essay to information and interpretations that, ideally, will make it possible to reach a coherent whole. There shall arise more questions than answers and the hypothesis will be greater than the conclusions. Some parts shall be left blank, although intuitions may suggest, occasionally, categorical answers.
- [2] The concept of ‘creolization’ is used, in the African context, by the anthropologist Ulf Hannerz (‘The World of Creolization’). In studies about football, Armstrong and Giulianotti, in the introduction to the volume they edited about football in Africa refer that: ‘Football’s introduction and inculcation within Africa is a story both of cultural colonization by Europeans and of cultural adaptation or creolization by the African people’ (Armstrong and Giulianotti, *Football in Africa*, 8). Although the employment of concepts such as ‘creolization’ or ‘indigenization’, which Appadurai used to study cricket in India (Appadurai, *Modernity at Large*), or even ‘nativism’ which Gregório Firmino used to study the appropriation of the Portuguese language in Mozambique (Firmino, ‘A Nativização do Português em Moçambique’), is quite useful in that it presents a dynamic to the colonial encounter, giving the colonized individual an ability to recreate cultural forms, these concepts also present the danger of essentialism. What is gained with the dialectic enunciation of this encounter, may be lost with the absolutization of ‘cultures’, as individuals and processes are reduced to some kind of narrative in cultural blocks (frequently nationalized) considered as relatively homogeneous.
- [3] Baker and Mangan, eds, *Sport in Africa*.
- [4] Blacking, ‘Games and Sport in Pre-Colonial African Societies’, 5.
- [5] Dirks, in Cohn, *Colonialism and Its Forms of Knowledge*, ix.
- [6] This line of research about the colonial sport was inaugurated by the pioneering work of C.L.R. James (1963), titled *Beyond a Boundary*, an autobiographical book about the author’s experience in the West Indies that focused upon the importance of cricket.
- [7] Mangan, *The Cultural Bond*, 3–4.
- [8] Stoddart, ‘Sport, Cultural Imperialism, and Colonial Response in the British Empire’.
- [9] Various authors designated this form of being English as *Englishness*.

- [10] See Hargreaves, *Sport, Power and Culture*; Mangan, *The Cultural Bond*; and Holt, *Sport and the British*.
- [11] Perkin, 'Teaching the Nations how to Play', 216.
- [12] Hutchinson, *Empire Games*, 178–9.
- [13] In Angola, there is the paradigmatic example of *Petro de Luanda*, which belonged to the oil exploration company; in Mozambique, the role of the railway state company, responsible for the expansion of *Clube Ferroviário* in a number of cities, stands out.
- [14] Fair, 'Ngoma Reverberations: Swahili Music Culture and the Making of Football Aesthetics in Early Twentieth-Century Zanzibar', 107.
- [15] To analyse this singular logic more systematically, the notion of 'social field' proposed by Bourdieu may be quite useful.
- [16] Although legally only from 1906.
- [17] Ismael Mário Jorge played an important role in the development of sport in Mozambique: infantry captain, teacher at the *Liceu 5 de Outubro*, scouting leader, president of *Junta de Salvação Pública* and director at *Associação de Futebol de Lourenço Marques*.
- [18] Jorge, *L'Education Physique et le Sport*, 6.
- [19] According to the author (5): Physical education was taught, to native children, in 60 rudimentary primary schools, two arts and crafts schools, one education institute, 145 Portuguese missions' schools, 87 foreign missions' schools; to native adults, in one normal primary school, 16 military units; to non-native children, in 28 rudimentary primary schools, one central high school, one education institute for women, in six elementary primary schools (private), four scouting groups; to non-native adults in two military units. According to Jorge (6): there were 38,813 native children and 1,073 native adults in these schools, and 3,308 non-native children and 84 non-native adults.
- [20] See Newitt, *História de Moçambique*; Paulo, 'Da Educação Colonial Portuguesa ao Ensino no Ultramar'; and Hedges, *História de Moçambique*, vol.II.
- [21] Jorge, *L'Education Physique et le Sport*, 25.
- [22] In 1932, the *Associação de Futebol Africana* had the following members: *Grupo Desportivo Luso-Africano*, *Grupo Desportivo Vasco da Gama*, *Grupo Desportivo João Albasini*, *Grupo Desportivo Beira-Mar*, *Sporting Club Azar*, *Grupo Desportivo Mahafil Islamo*, *Grupo Desportivo Alto Mar Nhafoco*, *Atlético Club Maometano*, *Grupo Desportivo Beirense*, *Sport Nacional Africano*, S. José de Llanguene's *Grupo Desportivo 'Pela Raça'* and *Grupo Desportivo Nova Aliança*.
- [23] Rocha, *Associativismo e nativismo em Moçambique*.
- [24] In 1943, a writer in *O Brado Africano* who signed as Jack, pseudonym of Joaquim Augusto Correia, launched one of the strongest campaigns to promote the integration of African sport in the colonial sporting structures.
- [25] *O Brado Africano*, 21 January 1939, 5.
- [26] *The Lourenço Marques Guardian*, 11 September 1923, 3.
- [27] Ibid., 4.
- [28] *The Lourenço Marques Guardian*, 5 August 1924.
- [29] *The Lourenço Marques Guardian*, 23 June 1923, 5.
- [30] Dunning, 'A Dinâmica do Desporto Moderno'.
- [31] Hedges, *História de Moçambique*, vol.II, 115 and Rocha, *Associativismo e nativismo em Moçambique*.
- [32] In 1958, *O Brado Africano* was integrated in *União Nacional* and became totally controlled by the regime, Rocha, *A Imprensa de Moçambique*.
- [33] 'A utilização dos nativos na valorização do desporto Português', *O Brado Africano*, 15 October 1955, 6.
- [34] Ibid., 7.
- [35] José João Craveirinha was born in Lourenço Marques, in 1922. Renowned poet and reporter, he worked for various periodical publications, namely *O Brado Africano*, *Itinerário*, *Notícias*, *Mensagem*, *Notícias do Bloqueio* and *Caliban*. He was an employee of Lourenço Marques'

Imprensa Nacional. He played football in some Lourenço Marques' clubs. He was arrested by the Portuguese political police (PIDE) and imprisoned for five years. Following Mozambique's independence, he became a member of Frelimo (the movement responsible for the freedom struggle, which came into power after the Portuguese left) and presided over the Associação Africana. He received the biggest Portuguese literary award, the Camões Prize in 1991. He is one of the most distinguished poets in the Portuguese language and among the greatest African writers. His first work, Xibugo, was written in 1964.

- [36] *O Brado Africano*, 12 February 1955.
- [37] Craveirinha, 'Terminologia Ronga no futebol: uma opurtuna conjugaçāo e sua interpretaçāo', *O Brado Africano*, 12 February 1955, 8.
- [38] It is essential, also, to understand this violence in its proper context, without attempting to apply contemporary tables of analysis, which are almost always based upon a social origin in middle-class sensibilities.
- [39] See Archetti and Dick, *Sport, Dance and Embodied Identities*, and Lopes, 'Successes and Contradictions in "Multiracial" Brazilian Football'.
- [40] There remains here to develop in greater complexity the eventual relations between communal relations and the way the game was interpreted. This contextualization exercise, which should also be applied to other groups practicing the game, shall be done in the next stages of this work.
- [41] Quite likely, he was an African who was a member of *Associação Africana da Colónia de Moçambique* and also President of *Centro Associativo dos Negros da Colónia de Moçambique*, the name by which an important African collectivity became known after 1938: *Instituto Negrófilo de Lourenço Marques*.
- [42] José Manuel, 'A juventude e o futebol', *O Brado Africano*, 8 August 1953, 2.
- [43] Ibid.
- [44] The author was also concerned about the 'considerable reduction in production, due to the constant labour interruptions in order to attend football matches and relate these to others'. *O Brado Africano*, 3 October 1953, 2.
- [45] José Manuel, 'A juventude e o futebol', *O Brado Africano*, 26 September 1953, 2.

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