

# INFAMOUS (IN)VISIBILITIES: USES OF ANTHROPOTECHNICAL DEVICES FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF FOOTBALL PLAYERS' CIRCULATION

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**Abstract:** This article proposes to analyze the process of some Brazilian football players' circulation. We argue that these circulation in a professional football system (RIAL, 2008) are mediated by the use of multiples anthropotechnical devices such as the social medias, image promotion in local and global media, biographies books, its antecesor devices (DVDs) and others. By using the concepts of *visibility* and *minor football* (in a Foucauldian sense) we sustain the centrality of the notion *tele-spectacle* to understand the (dis)continuity of some careers through professional football. In turn, through bodily capital (WACQUANT, 1995) and visibility (HEINICH, 2012), footballers seek professional circulation mediated by subjects (agents, managers and also other footballers) and anthropotechnical devices (social media, DVD's distribution, and others). Also, we put in evidence the circulation of infamous brazilian football players who had been interlocutors from a multi-sited ethnographic research conducted in Brazil, Portugal and the Netherlands. The fieldwork used combined methods such as in-depth interviews, ethnographic experiences and social media following. We sustain through fieldwork an infamous condition for those footballers' careers who are achieving precarious professional recognition, and also reflecting about their relationship with fame and their life trajectories.

**Keywords:** circulation; football; celebrity; visibility; fame.

**Resumo:** Este artigo se propõe a analisar o processo de circulação de jogadores de futebol brasileiros. Argumentamos que essas circulações em um sistema de futebol profissional (RIAL, 2008) são mediadas pelo uso de múltiplos dispositivos antropotécnicos como as mídias sociais, promoção de imagens em mídias locais e globais, livros de biografias, seus dispositivos antecessores (DVDs) e outros. Utilizando os conceitos de visibilidade e futebol menor (no sentido foucaultiano) sustentamos a

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centralidade da noção de tele-espetáculo para compreender a (des)continuidade de algumas carreiras através do futebol profissional. Por sua vez, por meio do capital corporal (WACQUANT, 1995) e da visibilidade (HEINICH, 2012), os futebolistas buscam a circulação profissional mediada por sujeitos (agentes, dirigentes e também outros jogadores) e dispositivos antropotécnicos (mídias sociais, distribuição de DVDs, entre outros). Além disso, colocamos em evidência a circulação de jogadores de futebol brasileiros infames que foram interlocutores de uma pesquisa etnográfica multisituada realizada no Brasil, Portugal e nos Países Baixos. O trabalho de campo utilizou métodos combinados, como entrevistas em profundidade, experiências etnográficas e acompanhamento nas redes sociais. Sustentamos através do trabalho de campo uma condição infame para as carreiras daqueles futebolistas que estão alcançando um reconhecimento profissional precário, e também refletindo sobre sua relação com a fama e suas trajetórias de vida.

**Palavras-chave:** circulação; futebol; celebridade; visibilidade; fama.

### **From Visibility to Unemployment: Images of Infamous Brazilians Football Players' Circulation Through Ethnographic Research**

Contemporarily, the images broadcast by the media about established footballers are recurrent. The incessant bombardment of information about successful football careers has minimized the importance and presence of players who receive low and medium salaries. Even though this situation may be fleeting, as wages, recognition and infamy alternate periods of greater or lesser visibility, subjective action calls for the production of images based on sporting success, even if on a small scale.

Therefore, football meta-narratives show stories of heroes, glory, fame and a lot of money, leaving other modes of existence on the margins of professionalization. To counter one of the most recurrent justifications for the search for professionalization in football, namely the high salaries paid, we used some statistical surveys to measure its proportion on a national scale - at least the salaries officially released in Brazil (registered by the Brazilian Football Confederation, CBF, affiliated to FIFA). This is because the declaration of salary in the employment contract, in some cases, does not match what is actually paid, and a higher salary may or may not be found (RODRIGUES, 2007).

In the 1990s (between 1993 and 1996), of the 14,000 athletes registered with the CBF, 81% received up to two minimum wages (in this period the minimum wage was R\$112.00, approximately U\$100 US dollars), cited by Proni (1998, p.229). By the end of the decade, more precisely in 1999, the number of

athletes receiving up to two salaries increased to approximately 85% (DAMO, 2005, p. 182).

Another important data regarding the economic compensation of footballers refers to the year 2003, when it was released by the Sindicato dos Athletes of Rio Grande do Sul (cited by RODRIGUES, 2007), of the 22,000 footballers registered with the CBF, 18,500 were unemployed and 3,500 had employment to some club. At that time, 85% received up to 3 minimum wages. What does it matter or for whom does it matter?

Leaving aside more recent data, this scenario has hardly changed substantially, since, according to one of the interlocutors, the increasing state intervention and the policies of precarious work that operate in professional football, even the declared salary for tax collection purposes and jubilees “to not make the declaration, I put R\$1,550.00 [brazilian reals, approximately 750 US dollars at the time] right, you know? [...] I prefer to take most outside [reference to non-declaration of state taxes]” (interview excerpt)<sup>4</sup>. Although the payment of the salary (and the act of “getting it out of the way”) reveals a higher remuneration than the “declared”, this remuneration does not relate to the large figures constantly disclosed by athletes with greater media exposure.

Regarding the visibility of being recognized as a footballer, when contesting the most accepted view of the career, one of the interlocutors places this unseen plan in the profession: “[...] most people only see the good side of a player, they only see these players who play in Europe, play in a Brazilians top division, who earn a lot amount of money [...]” (CAIO, interview, October 2012), referring to footballers who are identified as having the highest salaries.

Therefore, in the case of the circulation of footballers (RIAL, 2008), the name is the image, and the image is the identification. When taking the trajectory of one of the footballers who made up a more extensive network (not necessarily the interlocutors with whom we kept in contact during the field research), we used one of the national publications entitled “I found! Wanderer, Fabiano Eller

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<sup>4</sup> Value corresponding to income tax exemption at the time of the interview, year 2013. Purposely without using any identification.

becomes an idol in Pelotas and dreams of Brazilian top division” (FREITAS, 2012)<sup>5</sup>.

Through the aforementioned report, the dimension of visibility can be tensioned from the question: “where did you play?”, or even, “where did you go”, since Fabiano Eller, recognized footballer “carries the FIFA Club World Cup and three Conmebol Libertadores on his back still doesn't think about hanging up his boots and even considers parliamentary life” (FREITAS, 2012, p.1)<sup>6</sup>.

This articulation between professional recognition, media exposure and club visibility operates in order to highlight the ephemeral “appearances” of footballers, consecrated or not, in the media field. From the narratives composed by the gift and the recognition of a (footballer) identity, how is the updating of this image carried out among the infamous<sup>7</sup>?

To answer this question, we use Deleuze's reading (2001, p.100), for which the constitution of the subject goes beyond the given and is constituted from it, in its smallest part, that which seems indivisible to us, “although there are things smaller than the smallest bodies that appear to our senses, the fact remains that there is nothing less than the impression we have of these bodies or the idea we have of them”. In this sense, our impression is that heroes must be greater than what they really are. And on the other hand, the infamous are considered less than what they really are.

The “titles” mentioned in the article above (“FIFA Club World Cup and three Conmebol Libertadores”) help us to make the logic of visibility work, which associated with recognition is clearly updated in the many spaces where (tele-)spectacle football is broadcast. Still on the updating of this image, it can only be considered as counter-hegemonic if we take the parameter of visibility, where

[...] this model that is daily imposed on the planet, decimates so-called minor, minority ways of life, not only more fragile or more precarious or more vulnerable, but also more hesitant, more dissident. Sometimes traditional, sometimes the opposite, still

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<sup>5</sup> Personal translation from the original in Brazilian portuguese: “Achei! Andarilho, Fabiano Eller vira ídolo em Pelotas e sonha com a Série A”.

<sup>6</sup> Personal translation from the original in Brazilian portuguese: “carrega Mundial de Clubes e três Libertadores nas costas ainda não pensa em pendurar chuteiras e cogita até vida parlamentar”

<sup>7</sup> We use the meaning of infamous adopted by the philosopher Michel Foucault (2019) to refer to those subjects who deserve little attention in the reports or in official history.

nascent, tentative or even experimental (PELBART, 2013, 13m55s)<sup>8</sup>.

The excerpt above highlights the contradictions in the construction of media images based on celebrities, which, added to the hierarchies present in football, the importance of the market, media coverage, transmission fees paid to clubs, start to associate the image with a of life and a representation of the “footballer” *logos*. In a sense, the tele-spectacle transformed the massive presence in/of the stands as a requirement for the production of the show, for a displacement of vision and the production of mediated images, more specifically media.

From the cameras and viewing angles expanded by the technological detailing, new procedures were introduced regarding the rules of the game and technological interference, new ways of relating to technological improvement, expansion of readings made of a game and repetition from agencies specialized companies that configure new ways of entering the market. Thus, there is an establishment of a new imagetic relationship between the public (spectator) and the footballers, “[...] while aesthetically immediate, visibility is politically mediated” (BRIGHENTI, 2010, p. 52).

This media and tele-spectacle impulse expanded to the so-called “minor” games does not satisfy the consuming and consumerist demands of an aesthetic appeal and increasingly interested in the minutiae of what is imagined to be the “game”<sup>9</sup>.

This minor football is necessary for the hierarchical configuration of the club, mainly due to the formulation of the sports idol and the historical impossibility of denying biographical affective affiliations by its audience (spectators). In turn, minor football reaches a limited scale in terms of media diffusion without, however, being excluded from a massive propagation according to the particularities that it may present.

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<sup>8</sup> Personal translation from Brazilian portuguese “esse modelo que se impõe cotidianamente ao planeta, dízima modos de vida ditos menores, minoritários, não apenas mais frágeis ou mais precários ou mais vulneráveis, mas também mais hesitantes, mais dissidentes. Ora tradicionais, ora ao contrário, ainda nascentes, tateantes ou mesmo experimentais” (PELBART, 2013, 13m55s).

<sup>9</sup> An example of this is the configuration of a new polarization of clubstic belonging (DAMO, 2005) between the preferences of the local club and the global-clubs.

This media articulation is put into operation by concrete subjects. However, visibility is a condition (the minority) and not just a subject designated as “celebrity”. If we examine in detail the construction of a regime of visibility, we assume that while “glory” is in a more meritocratic position of visibility, mainly because of its relationship with an official history, “fame” is related to the propagation of celebrities, history of the production of subjects and truths. The latter, more used by contemporary media, to a certain extent more “democratic” and less elitist.

On the other hand, the “finding” of the report that has a “national” diffusion by Fabiano Eller, contrasts with the status of a “great hiring” of the club in a report with “local” projection:

**Figure 1**

*Hiring of Fabiano Eller*



Note: Risse (2012), Diário Popular Newspaper, 08.05.2012, p. 21.

The difference in scales also refers to the public to which each of the reports is addressed, even with global accessibility through its digital network diffusion, the report written by the newspaper “Diário Popular” is directed to the

readership of the club's city contractor. The report written by Freitas (2012) was published in one of the largest digital portals in Brazil (Globoesporte.com), finding a diffusion with greater media reach.

According to the report presented in Figure 1, the footballer is qualified as the "main reinforcement of Grêmio Esportivo Brasil" (RISSE, 2012, p. 21)<sup>10</sup>. In addition to referring to the successful part of his sports career through the description of "world champion for Internacional"<sup>11</sup>, the news associates his image with his victorious passage through the club with the reproduction of a photograph of his professional performance at the club that "consecrated" him as "world champion".

On the other hand, the "reappearance" of Fabiano Eller in a club that at that time (year 2012) was competing in the fourth Brazilian National Division (known as "Série D")<sup>12</sup>, reveals a relative staggering of club visibility. This, in turn, disseminated by the media by associating the transfer of the footballer - referred to as one of his main signings for the season - with the visibility of the clubs in which he played ("big clubs, such as Vasco, Palmeiras, Flamengo, Fluminense, Santos e Internacional", RISSE, 2012 p. 21), or even his "international" trajectory, in which his "most important participation were in 2005, with Trabzonspor in Turkey, and in 2007 and 2008, with Atlético de Madrid, from Spain" (RISSE, 2012, p.21), configure a way of relating club visibility with the individual trajectory.

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<sup>10</sup> Refers to Grêmio Esportivo Brasil, a football club in Brazil, popularly known as Brasil de Pelotas or Xavante. Founded in 1911, the club maintains a constant presence in national and regional competitions. On some historical references of the club, see: JAHNECKA (2010).

<sup>11</sup> Referring to Sport Clube Internacional, a football club in Brazil, founded in 1909, the club has great regional and national visibility. With regard to the "World Cup", it refers to the footballer's participation in the victory of the intercontinental tournament with the winning clubs of competitions organized by FIFA's subsidiary confederations. Until 2004, known as the Intercontinental Cup, clubs played a single match between the winners of the continental tournaments of UEFA and CONMEBOL, FIFA subsidiaries in Europe and South America, respectively. From 2005, the competition was replaced by the FIFA Club World Cup, when it started to include the winning clubs of the 4 other confederations (OFC, AFC, CONCACAF and CAF, respectively administrators of the clubs and championships recognized by FIFA in Oceania, Asia, America North and Central and Africa). In terms of visibility, along with the European Champions League (a competition organized with UEFA clubs), the FIFA Club World Cup is one of the competitions that has the greatest club prestige, mainly because it enables the confrontation between clubs with national visibility and the European global-clubs, bringing together the champions of the "major" continental competitions at once.

<sup>12</sup> In Brazil, the tele-spectacularized matrix is currently divided into national and state divisions. With the exception of clubs whose participation is assured by the previous year's classification in the 3 national divisions (series A, B and C, in this order of hierarchy), the 4th division (known as "série D") maintains interconnection with the state divisions. These in turn, each year, enable participation in the "Série D" according to the performance of the clubs in each competition.

When considering the example cited, the diffusion of the circulation of footballers - especially in the "European context", according to the national media - makes a mechanism work where the visibility that holds the football clubs inserted in the first levels of the tele-spectacularized matrix is associated with the dissemination on a global scale of national championships. In turn, the image created for the professional recognition of each footballer is directly related to their "sports curriculum" (referred to as "passes" given their transitory condition).

Thus, the migration movements of footballers in a minor football can be considered the one inserted in the tele-spectacularized matrix with greater restrictions regarding the reach of its visibility. This one operates a set of relationships based on club hierarchies and on the media exposure of clubs and footballers. Even so, such exposure is not defined *a priori*, since media communication operates through networks and connections according to some interests circumscribed to a certain historical moment.

In the case above, even if the "stays" in the aforementioned clubs are not self-reported by the footballer as those he considers "most important" in his career, the report operates with the social recognition given to "European clubs", as well as attributing hierarchical relationships between clubs located in Brazil, making the "appearance" associated with the status of each club in this club hierarchy.

Here, the concept of "plane of immanence" (DELEUZE & GUATARRI, 1992) can help us to denaturalize the representations produced by the images of clubs and footballers who participate in minor football. If there is an appearance of the image, another system emerges, other than that of the plane of immanence. This other system, however, is not natural, but something that must be produced (or mediated).

In the case of clubs and footballers of minor football, even if they do not have a permanent visibility on a global scale, this duration depends on operations and on some anthropotechnical devices that make up the visibility regime: "DVDs", books (from biographical style) and the use of certain social networks such as "youtube", "facebook" and "twitter".



As in several moments mentioned throughout the fieldwork, footballers use some devices in order to expand the possibilities of being made visible and expand their migratory possibilities:

- Sérgio, interview in May 2012: “he [Brazilian footballer] was asked if he knew any goalkeepers. My dvd ended up getting into his hands, the Chinese looked at it, liked it, ended up making contact through him to sign a one-year contract”;
- Édson, interview in March 2013: “I made a lot of DVDs with these games and sent them to several club managers in Portugal, I must have made 15, 20 DVD copies. He went to Portugal because they told me that they liked Brazilian players a lot. I must have done that in March when our championship started, in May or June was when I received the first contact from the manager, saying he would take me to Porto or Boavista because they liked my DVD and that Boavista was interested”;
- Camilo, interview in August 2012: “About the video, I went to a producer here in the city. [Luciano: Did you pay for him?] Yes, he did the editing.”;
- Sérgio, interview in March 2013: “And then he [director of the club] looked at my link on youtube, the dvd, liked it, ordered me to hire him, sent a ticket, we made an arrangement, I went there [China]”.

Furthermore, in the case of a specific need of a club, some footballers are also consulted about some information about another footballer, as reported by Sérgio in his transfer to China. It is for this same reason that footballers asked for your help in the exhibition of their images: “‘help me there, take a dvd’. That’s a lot. I have friends who haven’t talked to me in years. I was there in China: ‘show my dvd there’” (SÉRGIO, interview in March 2013).

In turn, these images can come from a variety of sources, including by means by which they are not intended, as reported by Édson (interview in March 2013):

I’m playing in Santa Catarina [state level championship], the club itself films all the games to have the coach’s disposal, if he wants to do some study about the players performance. The club itself

provides you with the DVD's of the games at the end, it's on me to take and edit my best shots, we always do, always good to have material.

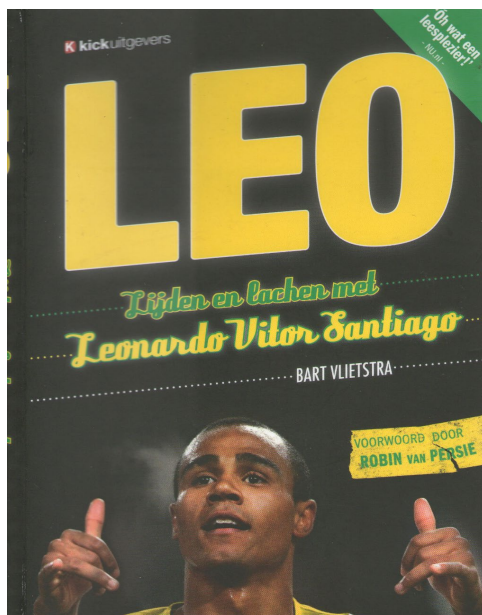
Regarding the product of this edition, Édson complements his comment by suggesting what its uses are in his career:

Because if the boy [scout] followed the Santa Catarina championship, he will say: "I know Édson, Camboriú's number 10, oh no, he didn't play, he was at the bench [referring to substitute]". If I'm going to Japan where my manager has a lot of "open doors", he's never heard of Camboriú, he'll need to see some of my material. But he played for Boavista in Portugal, it doesn't matter, he wants to see the material the same way, so you need to have a video, preferably current".

Thus, the "sports curriculum" in relation to membership in previous clubs (as in the case of Boavista, from Portugal), is not enough to obtain the potential for visibility, a justification for which it can be expanded by the various anthropotechnical devices mentioned, beyond the processes of exoticization of Brazilians in Portugal (MACHADO, 2009). Another example, exceptional in the context of minor football, was the publication of the biographical book of a footballer in the Netherlands in 2013, as shown in the figure below.

## Figure 2

*Book Cover "Leo: suffering and laughing with Leonardo Vitor Santiago"*



Note: Personal Collection, book cover.

The use of these devices helps to remain in this visibility regime, since the duration of this exposure must be updated. Book publishing is much less central to producing visibility compared to other devices. In the case of Figure 2, it is the biography of a Brazilian footballer who had a great part of his career linked to clubs located in the Netherlands<sup>13</sup>. Even recognized as a Dutch citizen at the age of 18, the colors of the cover of the biographical book written by Bart Vlietstra in 2013, refer to the ethnic identification associated with the footballer. It is not by chance that the colors green and yellow, symbolized by the colors of the Brazilian flag, are the ones that give the colors of the letters on the book's cover.

This identification empowers the bearer of his image, since “Brazilian” footballers currently find themselves with a potential value in the football market. Furthermore, the preface is written by one of the most visible footballers in the country at that time, Robin van Persie, as shown in the lower right part of figure 2 (“preface by Robin van Persie”)<sup>14</sup>.

With respect to these anthropotechnical articulations which produce a “regime of visibility”, footballers have a “duty” to be who they are, even if they are not, as they never are, but they appear to be. Thus, in agreement with Pierre Bourdieu, Édison Gastaldo states that “the act of enunciation has a sociological dimension, insofar as every social action is an act of communication. Thus, when someone 'speaks', he does so from somewhere, with a certain authority and addressing someone” (GASTALDO, 2006, p.17).

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<sup>13</sup> Leonardo Vitor Santiago is an exception to early transfers made by clubs located in the Netherlands. In his case, the movement to the country is carried out at the age of 12 when he begins to form part of the “jeugdopleiding”, as the youth categories are known in Dutch, of Feyenoord Rotterdam. In his “circulation” in the Netherlands, the footballer stayed from 1995 to 2011, where in addition to “playing” for Feyenoord, he also signed to NAC Breda, Ajax Amsterdam, and in 2017 he returned to the country signed by FC Eindhoven after having circulated by clubs located in Austria, Hungary, Germany and Australia between 2011 and 2016.

<sup>14</sup> Translation from “Voorwoord door Robin van Persie”. Robin van Persie was one of the footballers who played alongside Leonardo Vitor Santiago between 2001 and 2004 at Feyenoord Rotterdam. Particularly in 2013, the year the book was published, Robin van Persie became the top scorer in the history of the Dutch national team, which reinforces the justification for using the visibility of clubs and footballers who find greater media exposure to update the “Brazilian” footballer's visibility.

### Figure 3

Report in the newspaper “Spits” about the sale of the book “Leo: suffering and laughing with Leonardo Vitor Santiago”.



Note: Spits Newspaper, 22.11.2013, p.15

### Figure 4

Advertisement about the sale of the book “Leo: suffering and laughing with Leonardo Vitor Santiago” in the newspaper “Spits”

enoord-shirt met 'Leonardo' achterop zag, was toen Kalou het onder zijn eigen shirt bleek te hebben aangetrokken en het na een doelpunt aan het Feyenoordpubliek toonde.

## Guantanamo Bay

Zo wilde de 19-jarige aanvaller aandacht vragen voor zijn vriend, 'een fantastische voetballer', zei hij na afloop op een toon alsof hij het over een gevangene op Guantanamo Bay had. Leonardo liet door de telefoon weten 'te kunnen huilen van geluk'. Wat hij daarop ook hartstochtelijk deed.

Toen Gullits opvolger Erwin Koeman Leonardo al na zijn eerste training wegens gebrek aan inzet bij de belofte parkeerde, hengelde NAC hem binnen.

Daarna bleef het lang stil tussen ons. Ik weet niet meer exact waarom. Leonar-

The image shows an advertisement for the book 'LEO' by Bart Vlietstra. On the left is a short text snippet. On the right is the book cover, which features a photograph of Leonardo Vitor Santiago. The cover text includes 'kickuitgevers.nl', 'LEO', 'Lijden en lachen met Leonardo Vitor Santiago', 'BART VLIETSTRA', and 'VOORWOORD DOOR ROBIN VAN PERSIE'. Below the book cover is the following text: 'Leo, door Bart Vlietstra. ISBN: 978-904881901-0, 17,95 euro (374 bladzijden). Vanaf vandaag in de winkel of te bestellen via kickuitgevers.nl.'

Note: Spits Newspaper, 22.11.2013, p.15

Under the title “Leo has his own language”, the report ends with a photo of the cover of the book sold accompanied by the description of the sale of the book: “Starting today in the store or to order via [kickuitgever.nl](http://kickuitgever.nl)”. In addition to an extensive description of the book's content and part of the contacts between the writer and the footballer, the report articulates part of the anthropotechnical devices to update the footballer's visibility.

Therefore, there is a constant updating of this representation, the images are produced with intentions positioned in the midst of relations of visibility. Even if the analysis of the “visibility regimes” that give rise to a “minor football” concerns the sports field, above all, tele-spectacle football, the condition of a multiplication of characters that pixelate contemporary recognition occurs in the most diverse areas, as mentioned by Minois (2012, p.393):

The trivialization of celebrity does not only concern the entertainment world. It also touches holiness. The pontificate of John Paul II (1978-2005) experienced an unprecedented inflation in the number of beatifications (around 1,500) and canonizations (around 500): more than double all the cases previously recorded in 450 years, since the XV century!<sup>15</sup>.

In parallel to this phenomenon of celebrity production, in recent years, the power of the media has been relativized from the emergence of small media and “social networks”<sup>16</sup>. Which in a way helps to decentralize the placement of images while propagating an unlimited amount of data.

With regard to the production of visibilities in the sports field, it has also been used to broadcast the representation of footballers in other contexts, such as the case of institutional policy. The suggestion made by the 2012 report, when Fabiano Eller “even considers parliamentary life”, is materialized.

In 2018, Fabiano Eller (footballer, previously mentioned), the report of the newspaper “A Gazeta” entitled “‘Famosinhos’ [little famous] debut at the polls but don't get the election”, compares the candidacy of “acquaintances in sports, on

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<sup>15</sup> Translation from: “La banalisation de la célébrité ne concerne pas seulement le monde du spectacle. Elle touche aussi la sainteté. Le pontificat de Jean-Paul II (1978-2005) a connu une inflation sans précédent du nombre des béatifications (environ 1500) et de canonisations (environ 500): plus du double de tous les cas enregistrés auparavant em 450 ans, depuis le XV siècle!” (MINOIS, 2012, p. 393).

<sup>16</sup> In this case, Brighenti (2010) differentiates between “mass media” and “new media”, referring mainly to a new form of imagery production. This construction is based on a contemporary perception of territoriality in the “public” sphere mediated by the different media.

TV or exercising prominent positions in the Executive Branch” (REDAÇÃO DE A GAZETA, 2018). This differentiation made between visibility “in sports” and “on TV” refers to other candidatures made by journalists and other characters with a constant presence in the television media. In the case of the aforementioned footballer “despite the advantage of previous visibility” (REDAÇÃO DE A GAZETA, 2018), in 2018 he did not manage to reach the number of votes required for the election as Deputy of the state of Espírito Santo (Brazilian state)<sup>17</sup>.

Regarding the use of sports recognition, the construction of a regime of visibility is based on the articulation of historically available anthropotechnical means. Even so, the development of information technologies that aim to control and monopolize the production of images (the action on the deleuzian plane of immanence), use standardized techniques that have almost no margins to leave the script stimulated by the media. An example of this in the sports field is the interviews with footballers, increasingly scripted. Thus, it is possible to state which are the moments in which it is allowed to “speak” and which are the contents to be reproduced by the different anthropotechnical devices. As stated by Miskolci (2015):

Historical records need to be read against the grain, taking into account what we can call a regime of visibility, which is intrinsically linked to the hegemonic moral code. [...] A regime of visibility translates to a sophisticated power relationship, as it is not based on direct prohibitions, but on indirect, but highly efficient, ways of managing what is visible and acceptable in everyday life. Thus, a regime of visibility is also a regime of knowledge, as what is visible and recognized tends to establish the boundaries of the thinkable (p. 62)<sup>18</sup>.

In the case of footballers, the “hegemonic moral code” concerns this association between sporting success and the fame that each subject acquires throughout their sporting trajectory (career as defined by HUGHES, 1993). Thus, a regime of visibility applied to the sports field, focused mainly on footballers of

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<sup>17</sup> Recently, many footballers were elected to legislative positions in Brazil, among them: Romário, Jardel and Valdomiro, In the 2018 election, footballers Danrlei and Bebeto were elected, but other subjects who use media exposure considerably increase this list, among these other sportsmen, actors and television artists, etc.

<sup>18</sup> “In the sphere of sexuality, a regime of visibility is a notion that seeks to synthesize the way in which a society confers recognition and makes visible certain love arrangements, while controlling other ways of relating through moral surveillance, the restraint of its public expression, in short. , by maintaining these other forms of love and sexuality in relative discretion or invisibility” (MISKOLCI, 2015, p. 62), personal translation.



a minor football, concerns the evaluative distribution in a hierarchical scale occupied momentarily by clubs and footballers in line with this hegemonic moral code.

**Figure 5**

*Michel Bastos returns to the “training club”: articulation between club and footballer visibility*



Note: “Esporte Clube Pelotas” Website (CANEZ, 2020).

Through figure 5, we seek to associate the individual sporting success of footballer Michel Bastos with his performance in his “training” club, Esporte Clube Pelotas<sup>19</sup>, where the player appears with the club’s current shirt (at the time of publication, 2020) and in the background, a poster fixed in one of the rooms at the club’s stadium in which the footballer playing for the club can be seen (left image) alongside an image where the footballer plays for the Brazilian team (right). In the case of Michel Bastos, it is the footballer who expands the club’s potential for visibility, since his image is associated with a successful sporting trajectory. This last image, the maximum exponent of football success, is socially accepted as hierarchically superior to the others, since the subject with visibility

<sup>19</sup> It refers to Esporte Clube Pelotas, founded in 1908, one of the most traditional clubs in the city of Pelotas, Brazil, it also regularly participates in national and regional tournaments.

recognizes in his career the clubs where he "went", as is the case of Esporte Clube Pelotas, his first club as a "professional".

**Figure 6**  
*Hiring Guly*



Note: Diário Popular Newspaper, 22.12.2011, p.24 (RISSE, 2011).

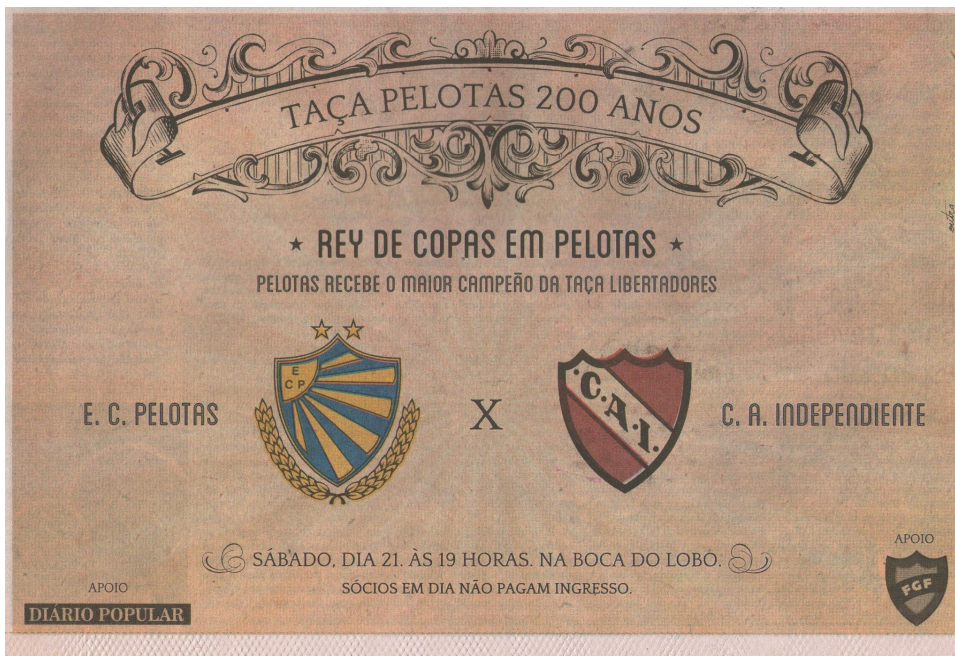
On the other hand, when resuming the concept of "sports family" (SPAGGIARI, 2015), in Figure 6 we can see how the visibility of one of the family members is used (Edinson Cavani, football player with constant participation in the "Uruguayan national team") to spread the news of the hiring of Walter Fernando Guglielme Gomez, known as Guly, by Esporte Clube Pelotas. Regarding the updating of visibility through the use of images, in the highlight Cavani acting in the "national team" with the photo at the bottom of the figure, Guly has a socially validated "curriculum", after all he is the "brother of Edinson Cavani", and biologically tested, as it is her "brother on her mother's side".



With regard to club visibility, with Figure 7 we highlight the use of a club's visibility through its complementary descriptions rather than its social recognition outside the sports field. In the case of Club Atlético Independiente, it is accompanied by the reasons for its club visibility, after all, the Argentinian club “is the greatest champion of the Conmebol Libertadores Cup”, or simply “the king of cups”, according to the announcement of the “200 Years Pelotas Cup”<sup>20</sup>.

**Figure 7**

*Advertisement of the “200 Years Pelotas Cup” in the most popular local newspaper*



Note: Diário Popular (2012) Newspaper, 12.07.2012, p.25.

Systematic repetition is a strategy to associate the image (relations of perception) with the construction of this image (relations of power), since it ensures the functioning of visibility. Not even the fact that Club Atlético Independiente won the Conmebol Libertadores da América Cup 7 times offers

<sup>20</sup> Refers to Club Atlético Independiente founded in 1905. Since then, the club has won 7 times (in 1964, 1965, 1972, 1973, 1974, 1975, 1984) the Conmebol Libertadores Cup. Championship that brings together the winning clubs of the national championships organized by the subsidiaries of CONMEBOL and maintains a significant continental media visibility.

sufficient conditions for exercising this visibility, since the elements that make up this historicity must necessarily be constantly updated.

Thus, it is not possible to determine how the visibility conferred by the "circulation" by certain clubs affects the choices about the circulation of each subject (*life project* in terms of VELHO, 2003), since the footballers' careers are also composed of historicities and biographical elements. In the case of Nathan, a footballer with a long history in clubs in Rio Grande do Sul, the visibility of a club in São Paulo (state with "the best market in Brazil" according to many interlocutors) was not enough to ensure his permanence at the club:

[...] I did well, I was doing well in the championship, there were some [clubs] interested, but as I had a contract, I wanted to stay there. It was a good thing there, Campinas, a great team from the Brazilian championship first division, is there now? I had a great championship! We went to sit down again to talk and he [manager] charged me four thousand reais a month[...] I said: "Oh no, there's no way, I won't even make it for lunch." (NATHAN, interview, May 2012).

In his contract for a championship, Nathan refers to his participation in Guarani Futebol Clube as a club with a lot of visibility in the sports field<sup>21</sup>. At the end of the contract, in his negotiation for the contract renewal, the businessman who had mediated the execution of the contract with the club, increased the collection on the salary received by the footballer, which was decisive for the decision to return to Rio Grande do Sul (a Brazilian state):

I didn't regret it, because the salary was better than I would earn there, and as I was 28 years old, my business was money [...] everything for me professionally would be much better in São Paulo, suddenly today I could have done a championship there, they went up to the B series of the Brazilian [second division], I could have won three thousand reais [fictitious about 1500 US dollar] and today I'm earning thirty thousand [fictitious approximately 15000 US dollar], but I preferred not to risk it because I was at an age where I couldn't lose money, so I preferred to opt for money [...] since I left Guarani, I've always had a very good salary sequence [...] I could have been in a better club, in the "brasileirão" [Brazilian top national division], something like that, you know, but I don't regret it. (NATHAN, interview, May 2012).

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<sup>21</sup> Refers to Guarani Futebol Clube, founded in 1911, the club has a permanent presence in the "major" national championships.

As Nathan mentions, in addition to the visibility of clubs' participation in certain championships, the generational issue also had its place when deciding on career continuity. When opting for a club inserted in “minor football”, even though everything “professionally would be much better”, his evaluation was about the conditioning of age to his career aspirations. In addition, the footballer could return to Rio Grande do Sul without the agent’s intervention, according to him “you [agent] do not need to find a team for me because here in Rio Grande do Sul I already have a name, here I manage myself” (NATHAN, interview, May 2012).

However, the production of these images is not exclusively for economic purposes. Nathan and Camilo, for example, place the use of images on an affective side. The first, about the relationship with the children, refers to the “proud for them [children], you are often on TV, then they say [other children] to your son: 'Look at your father!' And at his school, everyone knows 'Oh, your father is a football player[...]'” (interview, May 2012). Camilo, on the other hand, when asked about the possession of a physical copy of his “DVD”, commented: “It's on the internet, I don't have the dvd. I ended up giving it to my father to leave as a souvenir at my grandfather's house” (interview, August 2012).

Thus, thinking about the production of images from a pragmatic logic in a regime of visibility of minor football is not enough to address the complexity of the uses made of the imagery construction of footballers. Even if these are used to maintain this regime of what is visible and what is not, there is no doubt that minor football exists from other relationships created by footballers, football clubs and "spectators".

If, on the one hand, the “appearances” in this visibility regime are, to a greater or lesser extent, effusively announced when the footballers are circulated - mainly from their hiring, or the possibility of, and their sporting performance - , the finals of contract or even the disconnections when published, are numerically inferior and hardly displayed by the recognition of sports performance.

## Figure 8

### *Cleverson's departure from the club*

#### NOTA OFICIAL



Atacante Cleverson não faz mais parte do elenco profissional do GE Brasil. Foto: Carlos

Insauriaga

O Grêmio Esportivo Brasil vem por meio desta informar que o atleta Cleverson não faz mais parte do elenco profissional. Alegando motivos pessoais, o jogador solicitou rescisão de contrato, que foi aceita pelo clube.

Note: Grêmio Esportivo Brasil Website (2016), 02.08.2016.

Above all, the hiring practices of clubs located in Brazil, for the most part, do not favor the permanence of footballers for periods longer than 10 months. In the case of termination of the employment contract, the visibility placed does not go beyond the brief lines intended to justify the “contract termination”, in which it is common to find “personal reasons” as a sufficient argument for the information. In the case of footballer Maicon Sapucaia, also part of a more extensive network of interlocutors, the reason was “family order” and even though the club’s performance did not meet expectations, “it has no connection with his last performances defending the blue and gold shirt”<sup>22</sup>.

In the case of footballer Fabiano Eller, previously referred to as a signing made with a lot of media exposure, the description of the conclusion of the contract with Grêmio Esportivo Brasil in 2012 is also timid when compared to the dissemination strategies of his “arrival”. On December 10th, 2012, the Diário

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<sup>22</sup> Refers to the note issued by Esporte Clube Pelotas (2012) on September 5, 2012, when footballer Maicon Sapucaia was terminated. According to the club's website, “The athlete Maicon Sapucaia is no longer part of the aureo-cerulean squad. In agreement with the direction of the club, the player terminated his contract and was disconnected from the group that disputes the Copa Hélio Dourado [state tournament]. The reason presented by Maicon Sapucaia is of a family nature and has no connection with his last performances defending the blue and gold shirt” (Esporte Clube Pelotas, Official Note published September 5, 2012). In particular, the footballer sporadically maintained a contract with the club, totaling approximately 40 months of professional activity.

Popular newspaper published an article composed of 8 photos of Fabiano Eller - all of them as a footballer for Grêmio Esportivo Brasil -, in which the justification is of the affective order because he “told that he was missing the wonderful city [as Rio de Janeiro is known] and couldn't miss this chance” (DIÁRIO POPULAR, 2012)<sup>23</sup>. Here, geographic and visibility issues in relation to urban centers go beyond club visibility.

Without many arguments about contract terminations, nor with extensive dissemination, the production of visibility in minor football seems to be much more in evidence with regard to the expectations of the circulation of footballers. The repeated symbolic acts of “putting on the shirt” are not the same as “taking off the shirt”. Such acts are updated from the many devices available for the construction of the visibility regime in which clubs and footballers are inserted.

### **By Way of Conclusion**

The exposure of images of clubs and footballers should not be considered disconnected from the mediation carried out by television channels, as well as from the parameters established by FIFA. Above all, such mediation finds resonance in the relationship between aesthetics (ways of perceiving footballers and clubs) and politics (ways of visualizing and representing footballers and clubs), from which zones of (in)visibility of the tele-spectacle are produced.

In the case of minor football, it has also been modified by the redefinition of this imagery mediation from which the production of images of footballers and clubs seeks insertion in the imagetic hegemony of the tele-spectacle. Concomitantly with the visibility of the clubs, the footballers of a minor football promote their circulation through the use of images in the midst of anthropotechnical devices, as demonstrated throughout the paper.

On the other hand, even if there is a circularity of visibility, the tele-spectacle operates from the oscillation between “moments” or “scenes” in minute detail (highly scripted) and those that mean little or nothing. This does not exclude the possibility of the existence of resistance to micro-powers<sup>24</sup>.

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<sup>23</sup> Shortly after the end of the contract with Grêmio Esportivo Brasil, Fabiano Eller goes to Audax Rio de Janeiro Esporte Clube, in the state of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

<sup>24</sup> An example of resistance in the media scripts was the refusal of a dancer to proceed with the choreography at the opening ceremony of the soccer World Cup played by men in 2014 in Brazil. According

Even if the constitution of a regime of visibility defines – based on hegemonically accepted eligibility criteria – the conditions for media exposure, gaps (micro-resistance) are available to reconfigure power relations and what can be made visible.

Although the questions about visibilities in minor football concern a specific field of cultural dynamics, we insist on questioning how the majority is transformed by minor becoming? Undoubtedly, the identification with a majority described in sociological terms based on categories whose “center” is the average, urban, white, heterosexual, cis-gender, consumer man, can offer us clues for the production of other becomings.

In the case of footballers, regardless of the visibility given to their careers, a condition is respected regarding their professional practice: “You need to play to appear, your work has to be on display, it has to be exposed. Those who don't play are not seen” (SÉRGIO, interview, May 2012). Therefore, “individual” performances and meritocracy, which are so often mentioned as socially accepted values, should also be thought of as the “capital of visibility” (HEINICH, 2012).

By taking the national media production of an “incarnate god”, as the image of the Brazilian pilot Ayrton Senna was made – technology associated with national desires –, Daniel Lins (1995, p.87), offers us an interpretation for the construction of the imaginary fallacy of the hero, a character necessary for the media reality, because “the hero, the winner, then means a potential rebel. Apocalyptic hero, ideologically apathetic, without claim or cry of protest”.

In a minor football, the (im)possibility of narrating the facts from the mythology and the hero in their multiple forms concerns a representation figure, which remains in the imaginary with very little intensive duration. An immolation that must be constantly repeated to be updated and thus promote the circulation desired by footballers.

The concept of minor football necessarily establishes a relationship with fame, because historically the incorporation of footballers in contemporary football comes from the transition from a football show to a football show. This transition marked by the expansion of media importance in sports transmission

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to his comment, spread on social media shortly after the event, the act was a form of protest to question the realization of the mega-event, as many social movements had also done in the months that preceded it.

(PRONI, 1998; LOPES, 1999; VIGARELLO, 2008; RIAL, 2012, 2016) produces new forms of representation as a function of technical specialization (creation of sports channels, proliferation and increase of sports competitions, multiplication of hours broadcast, etc.) which in turn is fed back by the aesthetic fruition of those who consume it (GUMBRECHT, 2007).

Even so, the material conditions of effective circulation were largely supported by the changes of the last 30 years in terms of rights and professional recognition (AGERGAARD & TIESLER, 2014; ALMEIDA, PISANI & JAHNECKA, 2013; ARAÚJO, 2002; CARTER, 2011; CHAIDRON & ARNOULD, 2006; MCARDLE, 2000; WILLIAMS, 2007; among others). In this sense, we contrast the version of an official history, as well as a common memory to unanimously signify the victorious history, or of the winners, proliferated from telematic images (those concentrated in digital and/or physical image sources). At the same time, based on the life projects of infamous footballers, we question the pseudo-meritocracy of “playing well” (Maussian gift/talent, as discussed in DAMO, 2005) as an exclusive and excluding way to sportive professionalization or way to circulate.

Regarding the notion of regimes of visibility, we agree with the argument of Andrea Brighenti (2010) who defines it from the intersection between the domains of aesthetics (relations of perception) and politics (relations of power). Thus, we take into account the visibility of the media type to situate the placement of images of footballers from a minor football<sup>25</sup>.

In conclusion, about the production of contemporary images, we can analyze at least two aspects: a) the way in which the images are produced. According to the analysis of Benjamin (2010) and Debord (1997), the exhibition value that removes the cult value of the work of art and its criticism of the reproducibility of a work (or of the uses of the spectacle), can be considered in our case for the context where, when and how the (re)production of images of

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<sup>25</sup> According to the author, we can still differentiate visibility from the “social” type, which is associated with the idea of recognition; visibility as “control”, used as a form of regulation; and “media”, in which “subjects are isolated from their original context and projected into another context endowed with logic and specific rules” (HEINICH, 2012, p.24). On visibility, see: Brighenti (2007; 2010) and Heinich (2012). The latter is one of the works of reference to the notion of visibility. Unlike the theses that followed the star-system of Morin (1989), the author historicizes the contemporary relationship with fame from the notoriety of society modern western beginning with Madame Tussauds wax museum and emphasizes the analysis of 20th century media elitism.



Brazilian footballers are inserted (through anthropotechnical devices); and, b) the uses of these images by the interlocutors and the way in which they see themselves inserted in a context of production of the tele-spectacle.

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