



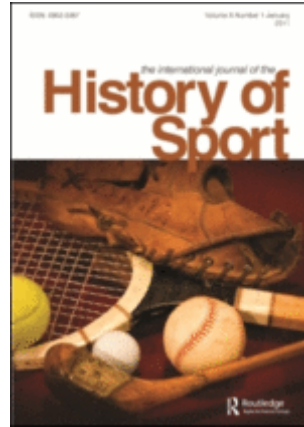
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Remembering Brazil @Mexico1970: Social Media & Collective Memory Making in Times of COVID-19

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3 **Remembering Brazil @Mexico1970: Social Media & Collective Memory Making in Times of**
4 **COVID-19**
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Remembering Brazil @Mexico1970: Social Media & Collective Memory Making in Times of COVID-19

Abstract

In March 2020 – following the rapid increase of COVID-19 (Coronavirus) cases in the country – several Brazilian sports leagues momentarily ceased to slow the virus spread among the population. Despite the record number of deaths caused by the disease, most of these leagues re-started by mid-July. Brazilian TV channels offered football match reruns as an alternative to fill weekly schedule gaps. Therefore, within a somewhat dystopian context of political chaos, deep economic recession and unparalleled public health crisis, the most-watched sports channel in the country, *SporTV*, decided to celebrate the 50th anniversary of Brazil's third FIFA World Cup title at the 1970 men's tournament by rerunning the six matches played by the successful national football team (aka *Seleção*), from April 14 to the 19 and on June 21. Focusing on Twitter, this article demonstrates how the moment provided content for social media narratives about the country's assumed 'glorious' past, its fractured contemporary state and uncertain futures. In doing so, we offer insights into the complexities of memory craft within sport histories and nation-making practices.

Key words: Brazil, Football, Nostalgia, World Cup, COVID-19

Continuities of social and cultural life produce and sustain innumerable opportunities for memory-making.¹ The perpetual performances, participation and consumptions associated with sport constitute one such continuity. As well noted, in its varied forms sport provides events and narratives that matter for individuals, groups and states not only for identity formation and commemoration in the present, but also for the historical anchoring and projection of this identity into the future.² Memory craft in sport takes many forms. For example, individual reminiscences of sporting performances or experiences, nostalgic camaraderie shared on club terraces as fans revel in teams' past glories, ambivalent connections and/or affective moments fostered in museum visits, or nation-state propaganda heavily marketed using jingoistic and populist rhetoric.³ Irrespective of form, the exercising of memory is not benign, and can constitute deeply political

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3 and value-laden acts as individuals, groups or states choose (consciously or otherwise) what is
4 remembered, whose memory it is, how it is remembered, and what may also be forgotten/silenced.

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6 Regarding the formation and utilization of popular sporting memories within nation-states
7 these processes are twofold. First, they entail recognition and reification of certain moments (e.g.,
8 a particular athlete or team success, or less often defeat, significant contest, or sport mega event
9 hosting). Then, second, is an acknowledgement that such moments are definitive and ‘shared’
10 symbols within grander historical and/or contemporary narratives (e.g., of a nation’s
11 independence, resistance against certain political ideologies, entrenched national rivalries borne of
12 enduring conflict, or protests vis-a-vis ‘just’ causes). Such memory making is not fixed and
13 indelible but shifts over time, and in relation to social and political attitudes and perceptions.
14 Accordingly, sport memories may assume lesser or greater significance in the public realm, be
15 reappropriated by new groups and causes, and/or be reimagined differently in the present moment.
16 As King notes, ‘memories must be called forth publicly but since they can only be lived through
17 their contemporary consciousness they also undergo constant though slow transformation as their
18 periodic resurrection is inevitably influenced by new circumstances’.⁴ Such is the case explored in
19 this paper with regard to collective and individual memories related to Brazil’s much-venerated
20 1970 FIFA Football World Cup win in Mexico, and the coalescence of these memories in 2020-
21 21 at the juncture of the 50th anniversary celebrations of the event amid Brazil’s current
22 circumstances contoured by the COVID-19 pandemic. As we interrogate, the moment provided a
23 symbolic catalyst for collective memory work, and a national focus and interest around the
24 common adoration for the national team that intertwined with wider public discourse and
25 discontents.⁵

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27 Beyond content matter, mechanisms of memory manufacturing are also important in how
28 moments are collated or obscured, affirmed, contested or mobilized, or come to constitute
29 prevailing hegemonic narratives. With regard to the proliferation of popular sporting memories,
30 and alignment of sport to wider narratives of nationhood, nationality, state politics and
31 contemporary life, media plays a crucial role. From radio and television broadcasts, print media,
32 to newer forms of social and digital media, platforms for generating and mobilizing sporting
33 memories remain considerable. For recalling Brazil’s global football success in 1970, social media
34 sites such as Twitter, the focus in this paper, have become instrumental spaces for the politicized
35 construction of memory. Such sites, as social media scholars note, are also of value in exhibiting

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3 ways and processes of myopicism, romanticism, nostalgia, and tensions, at work in the pursuit of
4 a social(ly)-mediated 'national' narrative.⁶ Within the current context of the COVID-19
5 pandemic, social-media(ted) processes of national nostalgic indulgences in sport have, Gammon
6 and Ramshaw argue, assumed further salience.⁷ Engaging in nostalgia-themed media (e.g., past
7 national performances, old films and historical documentaries of landmark cultural events, and
8 sharing historic content across media spaces), have provided valuable mechanisms for sustaining
9 social connection and community association, ameliorating the consequences of isolation and
10 despair, and formed part of a 'cocktail for coping' that offers, for some, ways to navigate their
11 current circumstances.⁸

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19 Subsequently, in this paper, we explore some ways Twitter has served as a collective
20 memory space and afforded opportunities for entrenching sporting memories with contemporary
21 public discourse in Brazil - e.g., what Brazilian identity and politics have been, who the nation
22 does/does not represent, or where the country might go in the future. As one of the most
23 predominant forms of social media in the country, Twitter is culturally, socially and politically
24 entrenched within the fabric and processes of public and private life, such as in how individuals,
25 groups, communities formulate their identities, (inter)actions, and external representations, and
26 affords a key channel for interaction, engagement and communication, and, constitutes a space
27 of/for public debate and discourse formation. Specific to this paper, Twitter has an historical
28 function in simultaneously serving as a space for archival retrieval and presentation, revealing,
29 collating, interrogating 1970 materials and records, and a site for historicizing processes in which
30 engagements with the/a 'Past' are subjected to analysis, scrutiny and reinterpretations - which, in
31 the case of Brazil's 1970 football victory, become further reified against the contemporary context.
32 However, Twitter, as with most forms of social media, is a dynamic and constantly evolving space
33 in which information is constantly being produced, communicated, changed, and recreated. As
34 such, the site also provides a valuable means to understand how social media spaces may contribute
35 to the (re)formation of prevailing narratives, and how the interactive components, such as
36 comments, visual media, 'likes', retweets etc, may also contribute to transforming narratives and
37 challenging memories, which in turn may create varied and alternative histories - in this case, about
38 Brazil, its' football histories, national politics and perceived dislocations from its past.

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53 Drawing on data collected from Twitter from March 1 to June 22, 2020, the year of the 50th
54 anniversary of the 1970 FIFA World Cup which coincidentally was also the first months of
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3 COVID-19's arrival in the country, we reveal some evident themes of this social media memory
4 construction. In doing so, we also consider ways this formation of a collective national memory,
5 however fallible, patchy, or contested, contributes to the ability of a group of social media
6 constituents to simultaneously indulge in affectations of the past that may mitigate or ameliorate
7 feelings about the country's present and potential. Our goal was not to analyze whether social
8 media users consider the 1970 World Cup *seleção* – 'a team to be held up as the ultimate exponents
9 of the beautiful game'⁹ with the likes of Pelé, Tostão, Jairzinho and Rivelino - one of the best
10 squads of all time; a debate rehearsed by many others.¹⁰ Moreover, our intention is not to craft
11 further narratives of Brazilian football history, which others have already effectively undertaken.¹¹
12 Instead, we evaluated how recent international affairs, such as the globalization of football and the
13 COVID-19 pandemic, as well as domestic sport-related and socio-political events - such as
14 Brazil's 2014 FIFA World Cup defeat, and the political polarization of the nation - affected ways
15 some Brazilians remember their national team and recall the country's football apex. We have thus
16 assessed tweets that ranged from bittersweet longings for a period in which the *seleção* was an
17 instrument of national unity, to accounts intended to blame '*the other side*' (a metonym for the far-
18 right political shift) for the deterioration of national football and its symbols, as well as of Brazilian
19 society as a whole.

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22 In our analysis, we show how Twitter has contributed to distinct shared memories of a
23 unified 1970 national team whose success was read as reflecting, and harmonizing with, a
24 progressive political shift in Brazilian politics and, generally, the country's turn towards
25 modernization and a more substantial global and geo-political presence. Yet, as we indicate, these
26 narratives also neglect contextually nuanced readings of the victory, team, football, and Brazil at
27 the time and since - particularly, for example, vis-à-vis political influences in the team selection,
28 the role of the State media in perpetuating jingoistic tropes, for political and economic advantage,
29 and entrenched inequalities and divisions within Brazilian communities that persist because of
30 modernization processes. Ultimately, this examination adds to continued debate over the
31 ubiquitous, yet meaningful, presence of social media spaces within sport memory practices,¹² and
32 adds valuable insight into how sport is sustained as a key catalyst for mobilizing unifying and/or
33 virulent forms of national thought and belonging.

34 35 36 37 38 39 40 41 42 43 44 45 46 47 48 49 50 51 52 53 54 55 **Sport, Football and Collective Memory** 56 57 58 59 60

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3 Generally conceptualized as forms of recall of experiences and moments in/from/of the past,¹³
4 memory and related processes of remembering, nostalgia and forgetting are fundamental to the
5 construction and reconstruction of sporting consciousness.¹⁴ Memory holds significance as a
6 means by which individuals, communities, organisations, and populations can e/affectively anchor
7 their existence to the past. Yet, memory-making is complicated namely because constructions of
8 memory are fleeting, fluid, subjective and easily can defy attempts at concrete, tangible, and fixed
9 interpretations.¹⁵ The amorphous and complex qualities precipitate need for cautious intellectual
10 critique.¹⁶ Nonetheless, this fragility of memory does not impede its use or power as a unifying
11 force within the sport sector, nor does it diminish its value as a key construct through which to
12 think, know and be in/of sport. Memory matters to the emotive relationships people forge with
13 sport, its social and cultural significance, and how people frame historic experiences to give
14 meaning and purpose to their contemporary lives and futures.

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24 Scholars have persuasively evidenced the heuristic, metaphysical and political utilities of
25 memory in the formation of certain sporting histories,¹⁷ club and organisation identity formation,¹⁸
26 and fan attachment to sporting times and spaces.¹⁹ Fixations with memory have been particularly
27 evident in continued examinations of global and local football cultures.²⁰ Research here has
28 highlighted explicit and latent ways memory and identity politics in sport have coalesced to ground
29 how people make sense of their connections to the sport, club, team, fan community or specific
30 physical spaces as landscapes of ‘imagined community’ formation. Such memory work manifests
31 through, variously: specific language and idiom usage; perpetuation, mythologizing and reification
32 of traditions; production and consumption of memory-related material including merchandise,
33 memorabilia, archival documents, sporting paraphernalia, songs/chants/banter etc; heroine/hero
34 worship; shared experiences couched in nostalgia; and, communal exercises of revelry, *ad*
35 *nauseum*.²¹ Overall, such tangible displays are not only fundamental to what it means to belong to,
36 know and be in sport, but also sustain continuities of sport as productive sites of collective
37 consciousness and popular cultural manufacturing.

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48 Subliminally, rehearsing established critique of the concept’s fragility and fallibility,²²
49 memory practices become more difficult to discern and articulate. Individual sport fans’
50 experiences are, for example, simultaneously unique and ubiquitous; a *mélange* of personal *in situ*
51 engagements such as attending/watching a match at a specific time and space, unreliable
52 recollections and retrievals of experiences contoured by passages of time, and re-imaginings of
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3 what individuals wish experiences to be, mean and be for.²³ Added to this are related forces of
4 nostalgia,²⁴ selective recall and forgetting, and nuances of the social/cultural and intra-personal
5 contexts in which memories are recalled and shared - in the pub, on terraces, at home, or in
6 virtual/social media spaces.²⁵ As with formations of collective memory, the role of subjective
7 interpretation, bias and reformation/transformation prevail within individual memory construction.
8 As evident in examinations of fans shifting recollections of their club's performance and rivalries
9 over time, memory is malleable and makeshift as individuals adjust recollections in ways that
10 favourably align with current circumstances and socio-cultural mores. Seen, in our analysis, in
11 reappropriation and alignment of memories of Brazil's 1970 Football World Cup victory to current
12 political attitudes and desires for a nostalgic turn to a certain irretrievable socio-cultural
13 landscape.²⁶ As discussed shortly, the politicization of memory and quest for memory
14 commonality provides the foundation for this paper.

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16 We consider memory as an intertwined notion of individual and collective identity that
17 works to shape and consolidate personal and communal experiences even, if these differ, to
18 version(s) of a past deemed, at least at that moment, acceptable, comfortable, and cohesive. As
19 evidenced later, and in synergy with previous assessments of the country's political appropriations
20 of football,²⁷ memories of Brazil's 1970 victory became a metaphor for a triumphant and strong
21 nation and sense of communal statehood centered on jingoistic forms of Brazilian belonging. For
22 some social media users, '@Brasil1970' becomes a metonym and virtual signifier for a raft of
23 individual and collective political persuasions. The interplay of the personal and the collective are
24 not, we acknowledge, distinct to sport or to football. Yet, these domains provide some of the most
25 visible and public ways where memory making is entertained and sustained. The mass popularity
26 and spectacle of global sport, and indeed football, offer ways individuals, and the ideologically
27 aligned groups they attach themselves to, may affirm particular memory renditions such as what
28 aspects of a past matter, to whom they matter and why, and how memories are preserved.²⁸
29 Concomitantly, this process also serves to police, restrict and combat memories that offer counter
30 narratives, experiences and interpretations that run contrary to prevailing thought irrespective of
31 whether such knowledge is factually accurate, nostalgically myopic or offensive.²⁹

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33 At the most mundane level, the working of memory may simply enable distinctions
34 between cultural insiders, outsiders or those on the periphery - for example identification of
35 authentic club/team fans: geopolitical acceptance and legitimacy of individuals aligning to

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3 club/team spaces, times and ideals; and, wider shared recognition of 'belonging'. However, at the
4 most extreme, any personal variances of sport/football memory are put aside and absorbed within
5 hegemonic discourses of a collective consciousness about the team, club, community, or nation.
6 Collective memory may then become weaponized and lionized in the galvanization of particular
7 regimes of thought around dominant narratives of a club's performance, or the team's position
8 within wider temporal, spatial or geopolitical narratives of the community, region or nation.³⁰
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14 The politicization of collective memory in football takes many forms as it mirrors and
15 imbeds itself within the specific geo-locales and geopolitics of particular socio-cultural settings.³¹
16 As seen in football over the course of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, such weaponization
17 of memory has become particularly corrosive, conflict-ridden, exclusionary and pernicious.³²
18 These effects can most easily be witnessed in entrenchment and alignment of football to national,
19 transnational and global geopolitical events and discourses. In many nations, for example, football
20 may unite individuals and communities, but also concomitantly serves to affirm the legitimacy and
21 authority of that very collective unity as a proxy for the success of the place and time, and wider
22 narratives of citizenship and belonging. The usefulness and power of football memories as a
23 mechanism for confirming or denying domestic and transnational identities and allegiances, as
24 proxies for national, supra-national or sub-national alliances and identities, assumed notable
25 significance in the mid- and late twentieth century.³³ In Europe, for instance, the consequences of
26 shifting colonial and imperial relations across the continent, the force of two World-wars, mass-
27 migration, and re/dis/new-establishment of nation-state borders following the end of the Cold War
28 and dissolution of the Soviet Union, reinvigorated and reaffirmed collective sentiments among the
29 continent's football communities and created new conditions in which identity and memory
30 formation could be played out.³⁴ As Perasović and Mustapić note in relation to histories of Split's
31 HNK Hajduk football team in Croatia, club narratives have been intertwined with the country's
32 dynamic progression from the former Yugoslavia, independent identity within ongoing Balkan
33 geo-politics, and denials of the club's anti-fascist associations.³⁵ As others broadly note, collective
34 memory making in football becomes profound when the seeming banality of individual
35 experiences can be forged around shared events, times and spaces that resonate with some sort of
36 contextual significance.³⁶
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54 Collective memory-making in sport/football around geo-political discourse is not
55 particularly new, nor does it always have adverse consequences for constituents, clubs, or
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3 countries. Furthermore, as we experienced in our research, processes of collective memory
4 formation may be largely banal and superficial, and rarely elevate to a level of problematic
5 politicization that would constitute need for wider concern such as supporting or antagonizing
6 ideological conflicts, political separatism, hatred or violence. Yet, in the *in situ* and continued
7 historical reproductions of football, it is not just what the memories are and whose they are, but
8 what they represent, what they do and whose purposes they serve. Ultimately, reification of
9 memory matters because it has the capacity to not only detach past recollections from those who
10 initially lived and experienced it, and from contexts in which it was produced, but also because it
11 dis- and relocates memories to new times and settings, attaches them to new individuals and
12 groups, and supplants/recreates memories that existed previously. These concerns about the
13 transformational capacities of memory and complexities of memory making we take forward in
14 this paper.

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24 This research contributes to the investigation of sports memory as an element of dispute in
25 the polarization of political narratives in contemporary Brazil. Accordingly, and guided by social
26 media and digital scholars,³⁷ we employed an empirical qualitative approach involving content and
27 sentiment analysis of messages posted by Brazilian users on Twitter to illustrate how recent sport-
28 related and socio-political events have shaped the memories of 1970s seleção and politicized
29 football and national discourses in the present. Notwithstanding widespread use of social media
30 platforms in Brazil, Twitter remains a significant public platform for these disputes.³⁸ Twitter was
31 also chosen because of the possibilities of capturing raw material from multiple sources in the
32 same space, all posts circulate within the public domain, and the space operates as a conduit for
33 both the circulation of meaning and scrutiny.³⁹ Data were gathered utilizing the Twitter platform's
34 own search engine as a collection tool. The decision to use the site's own search engine instead of
35 external software was made due to the date of collection, made a few months after the phenomenon
36 and in which the tested software (R and Python) returned limited results.

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46 The data collection took place between January 13-21, 2021, and included the tweets
47 published between March 1, 2020 when the broadcast of the games was announced by the
48 programme *Faixa Especial* on the *Sport TV* channel, and June 22, the day after the rerun of the
49 1970 Mexico World Cup final. The search was made using the following content-related hashtags:
50 #50anosdotri; #copade70; #copa70; #copade1970; #copa1970; #brasil1970 and #mexico1970.
51 From these hashtags - which selected the content produced by individual Twitter users as well as
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3 by football clubs and other collective organisations - keywords were searched to explore the
4 presence of political discourses and language regarding Brazil's national state, as well as tweets
5 linked to historic or current football memories.⁴⁰ For this research, the following keywords were
6 defined:
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12 **Insert Figure 1 here.**
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15 *Scanned words without occurrences: Ame-o ou Deixe-o/Love it or leave it; Bolsonaro;
16 Comunista/Communist; General/General; Joga Bonito/Play Beautifully; Ladrão/Robber; Lula;
17 Milagre Econômico/Economic miracle; Mito/Myth; Petista/Workers' Party member; PT/Workers'
18 Party; Tempo Bom/Good times; Saudades/Longing.⁴¹
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24 Notwithstanding the study's statistically small size for making broad generalization, we adopt
25 Malini's conceptualization of the significance of small data. We cohere with the argument that
26 when the objective is not quantitative, for example in this case to articulate the (re)construction of
27 ideologies of memory, identity and football in Brazil, it is not necessary to fetishize data quantity.⁴²
28 On the contrary, a reduced sample provides a better perspective of analysis that may be of help in
29 evolving theories and/or creating a conceptual basis for issues that arise. Subsequently, a total of
30 777 tweets from 528 different users were collected and analyzed.⁴³ Key themes, such as social and
31 sportive nostalgia and the political polarization of the country, were identified and singled out
32 using the above-mentioned keywords (see figure 1). What follows is an analysis of a particular
33 creation of a virtual space that has fueled certain rhetoric and ideologies. Through interrogating
34 the space it is possible to better appreciate that the language hashtags and other social media
35 mechanisms including 'likes' or 'retweets', does not emerge out of nowhere, but is co-created and
36 given meaning/new meanings within the online 'community'.⁴⁴
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48 **The Brazilian Socio-cultural & Political Context**

49 Football and nationalism have enjoyed a mutually beneficial relationship in Brazil for most of the
50 twentieth century, with the sport becoming instrumental to the promotion of national pride and the
51 integration of distant geographical regions as well as different socio-economic groups. Successive
52 Brazilian governments have thus fostered its fandom across the country and striven to link
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3 Brazilian national team performances to the success of their own regimes. With the increasing
4 popularization and professionalization of the sport from the 1930s, and the consequent entry of
5 non-white and working-class athletes into the ranks of the most popular teams of the country, the
6 sport afforded politicians, such as Getúlio Vargas and his nationalist-authoritarian Estado Novo
7 regime (1930-1945) opportunities to use sport to bolster political narratives of the modern state.⁴⁵
8 After consecutive wins by the seleção against European national sides in France in 1938, Socio-
9 Anthropologist Gilberto Freyre argued that the free-spirited and extravagant football played by
10 Brazilians was the result of the country's miscegenation, both in genetic and cultural terms, which
11 would have granted to Brazilians of all walks of life an inherent *Dionysian* drive – a 'taste for
12 flexion, for surprise and floridness'.⁴⁶ The notion elaborated by Freyre that 'Brazil was a racially
13 and culturally mixed country came into force as a kind of unofficial state ideology, held above
14 racial cleavages and class and the social conflicts that were precipitated at the time',⁴⁷ football
15 emerged as a mechanism that allowed Brazilians 'of all social classes, races and beliefs, to
16 symbolically break the country's daily hierarchies'.⁴⁸
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29 **The Chromatic Spell of the 1970 National Team**

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31 The 1970 World Cup was Brazil's first live, via satellite, in colour TV broadcast. However, as
32 most Brazilians did not own a colour TV set, the new military-ruled government organized
33 transmissions in public places so people could watch coloured images of the *seleção* for the first
34 time.⁴⁹ It is estimated that 54 million Brazilians watched the 1970 World Cup live,⁵⁰ an impressive
35 number considering that the total population of the country at the time was 95 million inhabitants.
36 On the evening of June 3, 1970, 93% of the turned-on TV sets in the State of Guanabara, nowadays
37 Rio de Janeiro, were casting Brazil's first match. On June 20, the day of the final, virtually all the
38 screens were tuned in Brazil's decisive game against Italy.⁵¹ Broadcast innovation brought
39 improved image quality, increased camera angles and viewpoints, instant replays, and an overall
40 air of chromatic modernity to the competition and the nation. Moreover, watching football in
41 colour invariably helped create an intrinsic interrelation between the 1970 team and the golden
42 yellow jersey, the *amarelinha* - adopted after the team's 1950 defeat against Uruguay. Yet, at the
43 time Brazil remained under a nationalistic authoritarian regime that understood football as a
44 valuable political asset. In this context, President Emílio Médici not only created the financial
45 means to inject money into the preparation of the national team for Mexico 1970 but also interfered
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3 in the work of coach João Saldanha by publicly lobbying for the inclusion of specific players in
4 the national team. The conflict between Médici and Saldanha culminated with the latter being
5 sacked from the national team and being replaced by Mário Zagallo months before the World Cup.
6 Saldanha later claimed that he was sacked from the *seleção* due to his political leanings.⁵² On the
7 football pitch, Brazil - which, under Saldanha, had won all the matches in the South American
8 qualification stage, - continued to impress in Mexico 1970. The team of Pelé (officially, Edson
9 Arantes do Nascimento), Tostão, Jairzinho and Rivelino, to name a few, was seen as an astonishing
10 combination of *futebol-arte*, collectiveness and athletic prowess. The team won all its matches.
11 The 4 - 1 victory against Italy in the final made Brazil the first team in history to be three times
12 world champion, a feat that was rewarded by FIFA with the perpetual possession of the real Jules
13 Rimet trophy.
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24 **Brazil circa 2010s and football**

25 Although the military dictatorship ended in 1985, football retained significance within Brazilian
26 society as a powerful symbol of national prestige. Despite what has been described as a perceived
27 decline of the Brazilian national league due to a globalization-driven exodus of players to European
28 clubs,⁵³ the *seleção* was able to reach three consecutive world cup finals. The victories in USA
29 1994 and Japan/South Korea 2002 made Brazil the first football national team to win a fourth and
30 a fifth World Cup. However, in 2013, just one year before the beginning of the FIFA World Cup,
31 hundreds of thousands took to the streets in protest throughout the country due to a wide array of
32 domestic issues. The preparations for the upcoming competition were a central subject in the
33 protests in which demonstrators denounced ‘the abysmal distance between the quality standards
34 of the already existing stadiums in Brazil and the FIFA demands alongside alleged cases of public
35 money embezzlement, fraud and overbilling during the construction of the World Cup arenas’.⁵⁴
36 The Brazilian establishment was taken by surprise by the fact that ‘the citizens of the futebol nation
37 were in revolt, and football, long a source of unity, had come to be at the heart of the country’s
38 intersecting problems’.⁵⁵
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50 The *seleção* made its way to the 2014 World Cup semifinals displaying what public
51 commentators said amounted to uninspiring football that did not do justice to previous generations.
52 When Brazil suffered an astonishing loss against Germany by 7-1, the worst defeat in *seleção*’s
53 history, Brazil’s influential national newspaper *O Globo* proclaimed ‘SHAME, DISGRACE,
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3 HUMILIATION' in the following morning's front page.⁵⁶ In referencing the stadia, *O Globo*
4 called the match the *Mineiratzen*; the 21st rendition of the 1950's collective trauma, the
5 *Maracanazo*.⁵⁷ The defeat may be perceived as a symbolic turning point in Brazilian history as it
6 was followed by deep economic crises, the controversial impeachment of President Dilma
7 Rousseff, the 580-days imprisonment of former President Luiz Lula da Silva, as well as the
8 election of far-right Jair Bolsonaro in 2019.⁵⁸ Such events, and others such as COVID-19, have
9 also contributed to the increased socio-political polarization of the country that has then
10 subsequently played out across social media spaces.⁵⁹
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19 **Football and the Corona Virus (COVID-19) Pandemic**

20 On February 25, 2020, Brazil registered the first confirmed case of COVID-19. By June – the 50th
21 anniversary of Mexico 1970, when most of the tweets present in our study were posted - Brazil
22 was living the climax of the COVID-19 pandemic first wave, a catastrophic scenario with more
23 than a thousand deaths per day and, at the time, a grand total of nearly 60,000 deaths associated
24 with the disease. The country's economy, which had not yet recovered from 2015-16s recession,
25 also contracted by a record 9.7 per cent in the second quarter of 2020.⁶⁰ Movement restrictions that
26 took place in many Brazilian cities by the end of March halted the professional football leagues
27 taking place in the country. Professional football leagues resumed by July 2020 but without
28 supporters in stadia. During this period, many TV channels decided to broadcast old football
29 matches to fill the gaps in their schedules which were previously reserved for the transmission of
30 the suspended leagues. In April 2020, the largest television network in the country, *TV Globo*,
31 announced they would transmit all the games of the Brazilian national team in Mexico 1970
32 through their paid sports channel, *SporTV*. The matches were broadcast during primetime from
33 April 14-19 and the final was transmitted a second time on June 21 - to celebrate the 50th
34 anniversary of Brazil's third world title.
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46 Although the COVID-19 pandemic severities still reverberate in Brazil and beyond, this
47 paper's focus on social media production, sport nostalgia and collective memory making are thus
48 timely and warranted. The connections between the COVID-19 pandemic, social-media(ed)
49 memory making and sport nostalgia have been identified as an emergent yet notable feature of
50 contemporary leisure practices and mass media framing. Like other significant global or national
51 moments, lockdown has spurred a significant interest in nostalgic activity and provided a
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3 ‘welcome distraction across the generational spectrum’.⁶¹ Part of this activity has comprised social
4 media platforms and their users contributing to a prevailing nostalgic zeitgeist through the
5 production, co-creation, reproduction, and consumption of selective historic sport vignettes. In
6 intertwining leisure and nostalgia such practices not only offer participants forms of respite and
7 escape but may also be aligned with wider contemporary political ideologies, social movements,
8 and ideals to help resurrect, remember and reimagine *anew* national glories and achievements.
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15 **(Re) presenting Contestable Brazilian Football Identities in Social Media Space**

16 The 50th anniversary of Mexico 1970 served to catalyze certain collective memory construction.
17 Many tweets analyzed were filled with sport-related nostalgia of a bygone era of pre-globalized
18 football fixated on the Brazilian national team’s victories in three out of the four FIFA World Cups
19 between 1958 and 1970. Phrases such as ‘the best national team ever’ or ‘*the greatest national*
20 *team ever*’ were recurrent on tweet feeds using hashtags #50anosdotri, #copade70, #Copa70.
21 Tweets like ‘50 years of the best and greatest national team ever #50anosdotri, #Copa70’⁶² and
22 ‘the best national team ever, without a doubt #50anosdotri’⁶³ emphasized a narrative that the
23 1970’s *seleção* still remained highly regarded as superior and/or most successful than its
24 counterparts.⁶⁴ For many, the 1970 national team represented an aura of excellence embodied
25 through athletic prowess; specifically, that of star athlete Pelé. ⁶⁵ ‘[T]he 1970 World Cup
26 represents more than the coronation of the greatest athlete of all time, King Pelé, but also the epic
27 display of the Greatest Team that has ever been seen’.⁶⁶ Pelé’s life story, a quintessential sporting
28 parable of marginalized ethnic and working-class meritocratic endeavour and virtuous
29 protagonism within national sporting success, resonated strongly with successive generations of
30 Brazilian communities who perceived football as a means to escape poverty.⁶⁷ Through football,
31 Pelé became a footballing king, one of the biggest names in the history of the sport and, perhaps,
32 the most well-known Brazilian of all time. ‘Pelé’ has thus become constantly recreated over time
33 both within and far beyond social media spaces. In essence, constituting a metonym for the success,
34 strength and creativity/innovation of the country’s football, and vicariously, the vitality of the
35 country as a whole. Such discourses, particularly ideas that Pelé comes to represent all that is great
36 about Brazilian football, feed into the mythscape and selective memory making,
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53 In reimagining Brazil’s 1970 victory, Pelé embodies intertwining mythologies. First, the
54 ways that football is played in the country is intimately related to the African-ness of Brazil, and
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3 that the so-called mulatto football is superior to its European counterparts. Second, that football is
4 a primary force of national integration of Brazil's marginalized group.⁶⁸ Collectively, in the
5 context of ethno-racial integration and socio-economic accession, Pelé's feats and Brazil's third
6 world title in 1970 (a world first) is significant as a national victory in as much as it materialized
7 the (footballing) technical superiority of a multi-racial and underdeveloped nation, with a mestizo
8 team⁶⁹, over their white-European counterparts. As a result, 1970s *seleção* players became national
9 heroes.⁷⁰ Unsurprisingly, heroic discourses were also strongly reflected in the Twittersphere. For
10 example, '50 years ago, Brazilian football achieved one of the most epic achievements in history.
11 Our eternal tribute to the heroes of the third [world title]'.⁷¹

12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 *The 1970 Seleção as an Expression of a Bygone Era*

22 The Brazilian team's defeat against Germany in 2014 was perceived as the culmination of a long-
23 lasting process emerging since around the 1990s of the deterioration and 'crises of Brazilian
24 football' in which young football talent emigrated, national team commitment diminished and the
25 'Brazilian-ness' of the sport was lost.⁷² Such perceptions are deeply associated with a romantic
26 reaction against ongoing globalization processes within the country and a nostalgic return to an
27 assumed 'golden age' of Brazilian football c.1950-1970.⁷³ Within this reimagining, the 1970s
28 *seleção* has become representative of the nation's 'true' football. In this process, the team's
29 unequalled match-play record during qualification and the tournament, aesthetic appeal of players
30 such as Pelé, and also Rivellino, Jairzinho and Tostão, and the aspirational trajectory of the mestizo
31 squad, merge to form a strong memory narrative vis-à-vis Brazilian multi-ethnic integration, global
32 might and a 'good old days'. This positive nostalgic spirit is further crystalized when the
33 contrasting memories of the country's football nadir – the 7-1 result against Germany at the 2014
34 FIFA World Cup in Brazil the *seleção*'s biggest defeat in football history, are recalled. As user's
35 remarked, the 1970 *seleção* embodied 'the true and longing Brazilian football',⁷⁴ or stating that
36 'no 7 to 1 erases the team of 70'.⁷⁵

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48 The 1970 *seleção* is afforded further gravitas by the fact that all 22 Brazilian 1970 World
49 Cup team played in the nation's domestic league at the time, and there was greater
50 representativeness of players from across the nation's geography.⁷⁶ For example, the 1970 *seleção*
51 comprised athletes from eleven clubs within four of the most traditional footballing states in the
52 country - São Paulo, Rio de Janeiro, Minas Gerais and Rio Grande do Sul. The presence of so
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3 many domestic idols wearing the *amarelinha* aided strong local identification with the national
4 team and, ultimately, socially-mediated memories about community affiliation with *seleção*
5 victories that linger in the present. Commemorating the 50th Anniversary of the *seleção* FIFA
6 world title in 2020, for example, Brazilian football clubs like Santos FC tweeted, ‘Carlos Alberto
7 Torres, Clodoaldo, Pelé, Edu and Joel Camargo, the heroes from the black-and-white in winning
8 the third world title’⁷⁷. Clube Atlético Mineiro similarly noted, ‘the heroes of *tri* deserve our eternal
9 tribute, especially our idol Dario, who was part of the great cast that enchanted the world in
10 1970’⁷⁸. Such practices, as Giulianotti rehearses, are a reminder that ‘the club functions to enable
11 an “imagined community” to be constructed, with key events in its history providing common
12 reference points that bind fan groups, players, and officials, whether at local, national, regional or
13 transnational levels’.⁷⁹ With the Mexico 1986 FIFA World Cup tournament being the last time
14 Brazil sent a squad formed by a majority of domestically competing athletes, the 1970 *seleção* and
15 the *Tri* is held in particular reverence within the collective national imaginary.

26 27 *Mexico 1970, COVID-19 and the Arc of Nationalistic Authoritarian Governments*

28 Due to the role the present plays in memory recollections, it is useful to consider the current
29 Brazilian political divide and its symbolic connections with football and the national team. As
30 previously noted, during the 2013 FIFA Confederations Cup in the country, football was caught
31 in the series of protests that eventually culminated with the impeachment of then-President Dilma
32 Rousseff. Brazil’s deep political and economic crises divided the nation between right wing and
33 left wing factions, and such a divide was reflected in the contemporaneous memory narratives of
34 Mexico 1970. Some Twitter users recollected, for example, the sacking of João Saldanha before
35 the beginning of the World Cup together with the allegations that the military dictatorship played
36 an active role in the decision. As many posts proselytized, the event was caused by the fact that
37 Saldanha was a ‘communist’ and Zagallo, who replaced him, was a ‘conservative’.⁸⁰ Others saw
38 the decision as the result of a mixture between Saldanha’s pro-democracy political leanings and
39 his resistance against the external influence from state officials in his *seleção*:
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51 On 21/06/70, Brazil won its third world title! My tribute goes to Coach Saldanha, who
52 built the team, had 100% success in the qualifiers, and was fired shortly before the World
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3 Cup, as he was against the dictatorship, and did not recruit [the players] who President
4 Médici wanted!.⁸¹
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8 Politically, Mexico 1970 was a major victory for the military regime. The widespread commotion
9 caused by the *seleção* captured even members of left wing groups who were determined not to
10 support the national team due to its mutualistic relationship with the dictatorship, ‘the country of
11 football had dawned and the nation could finally be loved... it was no longer necessary to be
12 ashamed of being a patriot’.⁸² Fifty years later, as such euphoria naturally lingered away and
13 violent repression ended with the military regime, journalists and media outlets used popular
14 hashtags related to the World Cup and the third-title anniversary to expose the opportunistic
15 relationship between the military and the 1970 *seleção* to younger generations: ‘Listen and find
16 out what the military government demanded from world champion players in 1970... #botafogo
17 #brasil #copa1970 #50AnosdoTri’.⁸³ and ‘*Memórias do Chumbo - O Futebol nos Tempos do*
18 *Condor*⁸⁴ is part of a series of four documentaries that address the relationship between football
19 and military regimes in Brazil, Argentina, Chile and Uruguay... #Copade70’.⁸⁵
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29 Similarly intertwining state politics, football and collective memory, the *Histórias de*
30 *Brasilia* Twitter account recollected the Brazilian national team's encounter with President Médici
31 two days after the final against Italy in the federal capital. ‘June 23, 1970. Exactly 50 years ago,
32 the Brazilian team, three times football champion, arrived in Brasília, being received with
33 celebration by the population. The final destination was the Planalto Palace, where they met with
34 President Médici’.⁸⁶ Simultaneously praising the national team and criticizing both General
35 Médici and current President Jair Bolsonaro, also a former army Captain closely affiliated with
36 Brazilian military forces, for his counterproductive behavior in relation to the COVID-19
37 pandemic social restrictions: ‘[t]his is the sort of mass gathering with a military president in
38 Brasilia that has marked history. But it was not the President’s merit, but that of the stars of the
39 Mexico World Cup’.⁸⁷ The user’s mention of the mass gathering promoted by General Medici with
40 football world champions in June 1970 was seemingly put forward as a criticism of President
41 Bolsonaro’s recent history of disrespect towards precautionary measures against the current
42 pandemic spread. According to Mergulhao and Castro, by June 5, 2020, President Bolsonaro had
43 already participated in or caused at least 84 mass gatherings in the country since the start of the
44 pandemic, despite the World Health Organization’s recommendations of social distancing.⁸⁸ In the
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gatherings, Bolsonaro only wore a mask on three occasions. The study did not consider events, solemnities, and meetings with authorities, ‘although, in some [of these] situations social distancing was [also] disrespected’.⁸⁹

As scholars noted during the COVID-19 crisis, ‘nostalgia-inspired leisure has been widely used, broadcast, and consumed, perhaps as part of a “cocktail for coping” meant to have a palliative effect during the initial stages of the pandemic’.⁹⁰ In this case, comfort has been found in creating memories of Brazil’s third world title: ‘[i]f there was one good thing that the coronavirus did to me, it was being able to watch the 1970 World Cup with my father. Today there is a goal from Jairzinho! #Covid_19 #FiqueEmCasa #copa70’.⁹¹ Such tweets also convinced other Twitter users to respect social distance norms as ‘#FiqueEmCasa’ meaning ‘#StayAtHome’. Other users also praised the 1970-related media content that came with its 50th anniversary during the health crisis: ‘the pandemic will pass, but live streams such as this one with #Rivellino, @Galinho1953 e @JCAcanalha @oscanalhas must continue’.⁹² In accord with Gammon and Ramshaw, such tweets illustrate ways in which social media affords some with an ‘ability to reflect on the knowable and comforting past [that] is perhaps far more enjoyable – and far less anxiety- inducing – than contemplating a traumatic present and a potentially bleak future’.⁹³

The *Amarelinha* as a Disputed Symbol

If the 1970 World Cup marked the beginning of an era of a national symbols’ popular appropriation through the widespread selling of the *amarelinha* - as well as other products styled with the national flag colours⁹⁴ - its rebroadcasting by Brazilian television during the 2020 Pandemic shed light on the jersey’s resignification. While the *amarelinha* was embraced by right wing groups as a symbol of anti-corruption and anti-leftism, left-leaning Brazilians have distanced themselves from *seleção*’s golden yellow jersey. Paradoxically Mexico 1970’s retransmission sparked desires by some left-leaning individuals to reconnect with *seleção*’s yellow top: ‘many people who wear this shirt today make us feel ashamed. The heroes of the Tri do not. The love for football and our team is something that fascist-like people will never take away from us. The colors are ours, of Brazilians, of any group, creed or ideology’.⁹⁵

Disputes over the *amarelinha* are not new but have antecedents in the country’s political turmoil around 2013.⁹⁶ Then, protests by popular non-partisan movements were supposedly held above political cleavages and parties, so national symbols including Brazilian national team

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3 jerseys, national flags and singing the national anthem were omni-present and accepted artefacts.
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5 Nonetheless, as public demonstrations progressively turned against left-wing President Rousseff,
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7 most of the left-leaning militants abandoned the protests, thus ‘the movement (and with it, [these]
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9 national symbols) began to be gradually appropriated by the right’.⁹⁷ Through such reappropriation
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11 these groups ‘ended up monopolizing the use of yellow-green and, in this way, sought to constitute
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13 themselves as the only bearers of a legitimate narrative about Brazil’,⁹⁸ antagonizing left-leaning
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15 parties and individuals through a moral panic based on the widespread fear of a potential rise of a
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17 communist regime and/or pseudo-Marxist values within Brazilian society.

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19 *Amarelinha* disputes, and its consequent impairment as a pan-national symbol, is but one
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21 factor contributing to a partial disconnecting of Brazilians from the national football team. The
22
23 increasing political polarization of the country - aggravated by the past years’ socio-political,
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25 economic and public health crises - has arguably also diminished the nationalistic euphoria caused
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27 by early 2010s economic growth and few advances on social equality. *Seleção*’s lukewarm
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29 performances in the past four FIFA world cups, substantial defeat in 2014, and the inaction of
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31 Brazil’s government during the Pandemic that has contributed to the country being one of the
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33 world’s worst-hit nations, have, too, fed a volatile public atmosphere and symbiosis of state politics
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35 and football that has shaped perception and interest in the national team.

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37 [First] they melted the cup. Later, they took football off the top. Finally, they hijacked the
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39 jersey - they turned it into the dress of vulgar and undemocratic people who disrespect
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41 even victims of the pandemic. But soon, the *amarelinha* will symbolize the elegance and
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43 strength of Brazil once again.⁹⁹

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45 Ultimately, coverage of Mexico 1970 in 2020 – and the collective memory opportunities the
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47 Twittersphere provides – serve, paradoxically, as both an *in illo tempore* memento of a pre-
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49 pandemic period in which the nation was imagined a physically and emotionally ‘together’ and
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51 united in support for ‘the best national team’, and catalyst to perpetuate a divisive political
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53 dichotomy.

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55 Studies of social media play important roles in contributing to critiques of historical
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57 framing and memory politics. Here, Twitter interrogation offered means to examine interplays
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59 between the *seleção*, Brazilian politics and COVID-19 pandemic on the country’s social fabric

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3 and football nostalgia. When ideas, discourses and shared sentiments about an event that took place
4 50 years ago manifest in the public domain using contemporary expressions and references it is
5 possible to see the complexities, tensions, and fragility of memory in relation to social, political
6 and sport discourses in the present. In this context, Brazil's performance at Mexico 1970
7 transcends beyond references of 'best national team' to become a notable symbol of a pre-
8 globalization era of football, a nostalgia-tinged 'good old times', and desires for continued
9 collective unity amid divisive national politics. These processes, we appreciate, are not exclusive
10 to football nor Brazil. Various scholarship has highlighted sports' continued roles in collective
11 memory reproduction and the political significance of this memory formation for wider social,
12 cultural and/or geopolitical imperatives.¹⁰⁰ Researchers have noted that while particular nations
13 and cities may wish to project particular ideals onto sport mega events such as Olympic games or
14 Football World Cups, and leverage political relations and outcomes, controls over memory making
15 are easily rendered *anew* by the passage of time and contextual shifts. Such issues are also evident
16 domestically, whereby local clubs, organisations and fans not only contribute to sustaining
17 memory productions, but become complicit in the modification of those memories over time in
18 pursuit of galvanizing the cultural significance of the sport, but also their varied attachments to
19 it.¹⁰¹ As Violette and Attali highlight, memories and meanings become easily detached from their
20 original bearings and become operationalized by individual, organizations and other stakeholders
21 for ulterior purposes and motives.¹⁰² Yet, it is this dis-anchoring of memory and freedom of
22 memory ownership and association that sustains its currency in popular vernacular and affords it
23 new identities and meanings in relation to prevailing ideologies and political regimes. Ultimately,
24 with Twitter's abilities to skew chronological linearities, contextual nuance, or veracity, the space
25 provided here opportunities to amalgamate simultaneously contrasting, overlapping and
26 contradictory recollections and imagining of the country's football and political past and present -
27 specifically, a version of an optimistic yet tumultuous 1970s Brazil and its *seleção* with a similarly
28 fraught contemporary nation in 2020 in need of sportive and political restoration.¹⁰³

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¹⁷ For example: Bainer, 'Sport, space and memory'; Brentin, 'Ambassadors of memory'; Capraro & Vargas, 'Football, national culture and politics in Brazil in 1970'; Doidge & de Almeida, 'From goalscorer to politician'.

¹⁸ Michael Groll, 'UEFA Football Competitions as European Sites of Memory—Cups of Identity?', in *European Football and Collective Memory*, In *European Football and Collective Memory*, eds. Pyta Wolfram & Nils Havemann (London: Springer, 2015), 64-84; King, 'Violent pasts'; Merck, Yamashiro & Hirst, 'Remembering the big game'; Jean Williams & Richard Holt, 'The beautiful game'?

¹⁹ Botiková, 'Stand up, if you're a Zbrojovka fan!'; Goldblatt, *Futebol Nation*.

²⁰ Giulianotti, 'Football events, memories and globalization'; Ramshaw & Gammon, 'Difference, dissonance, and redemption in sport heritage'; de Melo & Drummond, 'Globo, the Brazilian Military Dictatorship and the 1970 FIFA Football World Cup'; Penfold, 'National identity and sporting mega-events in Brazil'.

²¹ Seweryn Dmowski, 'Football sites of memory in the Eastern Bloc 1945–1991', in *European Football and Collective Memory*, eds. Pyta Wolfram & Nils Havemann (London: Springer, 2015), 171-184; René Kopietz & Gerald Echterhoff, 'Remembering the 2006 Football World Cup in Germany: Epistemic and social consequences of perceived memory sharedness', *Memory Studies* 7 no. 3 (2014): 298-313; Pyta Wolfram & Nils Havemann, eds. *European Football and Collective Memory* (New York: Springer, 2015); Benjami Perasović & Marko Mustapić, 'Football, politics and cultural memory: The case of HNK Hajduk Split', *Kyymypa/Culture* 6 (2014): 51-62.

²² Hoskins' 'Memory of the multitude'; Michaelian & Sutton 'Collective memory'; Ricouer, *Memory, History, Forgetting; Living Up to Death*.

²³ See, for example, Dmowski, 'Football sites of memory on the Eastern Bloc 1945-1991'; Wolfram & Havemann, *European Football and Collective Memory*; Souza & Capraro, 'Women's football in Brazil'.

²⁴ Here, we are guided by Gammon and Ramshaw's summative definition of nostalgia as 'an emotional response brought on by a dissatisfaction or detachment in the present, and an anxiety for the future' (2021, 132).

²⁵ Botiková, 'Stand up, if you're a Zbrojovka fan!'; Gammon & Ramshaw, 'Distancing from the present'; Giulianotti, 'Football events, memories and globalization'; Bernardo Borges Buarque de Hollanda, *O descobrimento do futebol: modernismo, regionalismo e paixão esportiva em José Lins do Rego* (Rio de Janeiro: Biblioteca Nacional, 2004). Notable here are also revisions, and condemnations, around football hooliganism, or the individual interpretations of the politicization of football competitions (see, Giulianotti, 'Football events, memories and globalization'; King, 'Violent pasts'; Stefan Lawrence & Garry Crawford, G. eds., *Digital football cultures: Fandom, identities and resistance* (Oxon: Routledge, 2018)).

²⁶ Capraro & Vargas, 'Football, national culture and politics in Brazil in 1970'; Thell De Castro, 'A Copa de 1970 foi em cores, mas a maioria tinha TV preta e branca', *UOL*. (2014) Available at <https://noticiasdatv.uol.com.br/noticia/copa-na-tv/copa-de-1970-foi-em-cores-mas-maioria-tinha-tv-preta-e-branca-3722> (accessed 6 August 2021); de Melo & Drummond, 'Globo, the Brazilian Military Dictatorship and the 1970 FIFA Football World Cup'; Daniel Malanski, 'Juntos num só ritmo': FIFA World Cups of 1950 and 2014 as milestones of Brazil's advances towards regional representation within Brazilian-ness', *Sport in Society* 19, no. 10 (2016): 1518-1536; Penfold, 'National identity and sporting mega-events in Brazil'; Souza & Capraro, 'Women's football in Brazil'.

²⁷ Couto, 'Football, Control and Resistance in the Brazilian Military Dictatorship in the 1970s'; Doidge & de Almeida, 'From goalscorer to politician'; Goldblatt, *Futebol Nation*; Malanski, 'Juntos num só ritmo'; Penfold, 'National identity and sporting mega-events in Brazil'.

²⁸ Mangan et al., 'Rivalries'; Phillips, 'Remembering sport history'; Williams & Holt, 'The beautiful game'.

²⁹ Bairner, 'Sport, space and memory'; Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory*; Ricouer, *Memory, History, Forgetting; Living Up to Death; Time and narrative, Vol. 1*.

³⁰ Botiková, 'Stand up, if you're a Zbrojovka fan!'; Perasović & Mustapić, 'Football, politics and cultural memory'; Pyta & Havemann, *European Football and Collective Memory*.

³¹ Merck, Yamashiro & Hirst, 'Remembering the big game'; Williams & Holt, 'The beautiful game'.

³² Brentin, 'Ambassadors of memory'; Dmowski, 'Football sites of memory on the Eastern Bloc 1945-1991'; King, 'Violent pasts'; Lawrence & Crawford, *Digital Football Cultures*; Mangan et al., 'Rivalries'.

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- ³³ Bairner, 'Sport, space and memory'; Giulianotti, 'Football events, memories and globalization'; Goldblatt, *Futebol Nation*.
- ³⁴ Brentin, 'Ambassadors of memory'; Botiková, 'Stand up, if you're a Zbrojovka fan!'; Drnowski, 'Football sites of memory on the Eastern Bloc 1945-1991'; Groll, 'UEFA Football Competitions as European Sites of Memory'; Kopietz & Echterhoff, 'Remembering the 2006 Football World Cup in Germany'; Lawrence & Crawford, *Digital Football Cultures*; Wolfram & Havemann, *European Football and Collective Memory*.
- ³⁵ Perasović & Mustapić, 'Football, political and cultural memory'.
- ³⁶ For example, Botiková, 'Stand up, if you're a Zbrojovka fan!'; Drnowski, 'Football sites of memory on the Eastern Bloc 1945-1991'; Groll, 'UEFA Football Competitions as European Sites of Memory'; Wolfram & Havemann, *European Football and Collective Memory*; Kopietz & Echterhoff, 'Remembering the 2006 Football World Cup in Germany'; Wolfram & Havemann, *European Football and Collective Memory*.
- ³⁷ Eugene Agichtein, Carlos Castillo, Debora Donato, Aristides Gionis & Gilad Mishne, 'Finding high-quality content in social media'. In: *Proceedings of WSDM '08: the international conference on Web Search and Web Data Mining*, Palo Alto, CA, USA, 11–12 Feb 2008. ACM, New York, (2008): 183–194; Kelley Cristine Gonçalves Dias Gasque, 'Teoria fundamentada: nova perspectiva à pesquisa exploratória', In *Métodos para a pesquisa em Ciência da Informação*, ed. Suzana Pinheiro Machado (Brasília: Thesaurus, 2007), 83-118; Maria Lakatos & Marde Andrade Marconi, *Fundamentos de metodologia científica* (Brasília: Atlas, 2017); Gary Osmond & Murray G. Phillips eds. *Sport History in the Digital Era*. (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2015).
- ³⁸ Francisca M. R. de Andrade, Tarssio B. Barreto, Andrés Herrera-Feligeras, Andrea Ugolini & Yu-Ting Lu, 'Twitter in Brazil: Discourses on China in times of coronavirus', *Social Sciences & Humanities Open* 3, no. 1 (2021): 100118; Gabriel P. Nobre, Kecia A. M. Ferreira, Ismael S. Silva, and Glívia A. R. Barbosa, 'Using Twitter to Characterize Public Opinion in Brazil During Political Events', *International Journal of e-Collaboration (IJEC)* 15, no. 3 (2019): 49-61.
- ³⁹ Rafael Grohneiman, 'Em busca dos fãs do Bolsonaro no Twitter: reflexões epistemológicas e metodológicas sobre circulação de sentidos e pesquisa em mídias sociais', *XXVII Encontro Anual da Compós* (Pontifícia Universidade Católica de Minas Gerais, Belo Horizonte – MG, 2018).
- ⁴⁰ The authors initially defined keywords that are generally used in Brazil in the context of nostalgia, sports and the current main political debates in the country. The authors then analysed the tweets which were pre-selected by the use of the aforementioned hashtags to see if there was any significant repetition of words that were relevant to the article's themes and that were not initially included in the analysed universe.
- ⁴¹ Research notes and data analysis files in possession of the authors.
- ⁴² Mario Filho, *O Negro no futebol brasileiro* (Rio de Janeiro: Editora Civilização Brasileira, 1964).
- ⁴³ Research notes and data analysis files in possession of the authors. As not all users use hashtags and those that use them do not always choose the same ones, there was probably a greater number of people tweeting about the subject, but this research was limited to those tweets that brought one of the chosen hashtags for analysis. Also, it is important to note that tweets with memes were excluded from the analysis.
- ⁴⁴ Symeon Papadopoulos, Yiannis Kompatsiaris, Athena Vakali & Ploutarchos Spyridonos, 'Community detection in social media', *Data Mining and Knowledge Discovery* 24 no. 3 (2012): 515-554.
- ⁴⁵ Bernardo Borges Buarque de Hollanda, 'Echoes of the Tragedy: The Sport Memoir and the Representation of the 1950 World Cup', *The International Journal of the History of Sport* 3, no. 10 (2014): 1287-1302.
- ⁴⁶ Freyre, Gilberto. "Foot-ball mulato." *Diário de Pernambuco* 17, no. 06 (1938): 1938.
- ⁴⁷ Lilia Mortiz Schwarcz, *O espetáculo das raças. Cientistas, instituições e questão racial no Brasil, 1870-1930* (Companhia das Letras: São Paulo, 2012), 325.
- ⁴⁸ Ronaldo Helal, *Passes e impasses - futebol e cultura de massa no Brasil* (Petrópolis: Vozes, 1997).
- ⁴⁹ Thell De Castro, 'A Copa de 1970 foi em cores, mas a maioria tinha TV preta e branca'. *UOL*. (2014) Available at <https://noticiasdatv.uol.com.br/noticia/copa-na-tv/copa-de-1970-foi-em-cores-mas-maioria-tinha-tv-preta-e-branca-3722> June 12 2014 (Accessed on 27 July, 2021).
- ⁵⁰ *Ibid.*
- ⁵¹ *Ibid.*
- ⁵² Saldanha *Apud* Milliet Filho 2009, 384.
- ⁵³ Ronaldo Helal and Antônio Jorge Soares, 'O declínio da pátria de chuteiras: futebol e identidade nacional na Copa do Mundo de 2002', *Encontro Anual Da Compos* 12, (2003): 1-15.
- ⁵⁴ Malanski, 'Juntos num só ritmo', 1526.
- ⁵⁵ Goldblatt, *Futebol Nation*, 223.

⁵⁶‘Mineiraten: Vergonha, Vexame & Humilhação’, *O Globo*, Available at <http://memoria.oglobo.globo.com/jornalismo/primeiras-paginas/vergonha-em-casa-17225851> July 9 2014 (Accessed 27 July 2021).

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

⁵⁸ Lula da Silva was condemned under corruption charges in a trial which, in 2021, was invalidated as its judge was ruled biased by the country’s Supreme Court.

⁵⁹ Rafael Kondlatsch. *Gatekeeping no século XXI: o controle sobre a informação jornalística em tempos de rede sociais* (Bauru: Psiu Editora, 2021).

⁶⁰ Daniela Amorim & Vinicius Neder. ‘PIB tem queda histórica de 9,7% no 2 trimestre e confirma recessão’. 1 September 2020. <https://economia.estadao.com.br/noticias/geral,pib-tem-queda-historica-de-9-7-no-2-trimestre-e-confirma-recessao,70003420993> (accessed 12 August, 2021).

⁶¹ Gammon & Ramshaw, ‘Distancing from the present’, 131.

⁶² @futebolgalvao, posted 21 June 2020.

⁶³ @SamuelP11783373, posted 21 June 2020.

⁶⁴ Although the word *seleção* is generally linked to the Brazilian national team in particular (especially in non-Portuguese speaking countries), it literally means *selection* and is often used to describe any national team (i.e. seleção francesa de futebol, seleção inglesa de rugby and so on). Therefore, the authors of the tweets either meant that the 1970 Brazilian national team was the greatest and best national team among all national teams in history or only when compared to other Brazilian national squads.

⁶⁵ To summarise, in the 1958 FIFA World Cup, Pelé shocked the world becoming a 17-years-old main actor in the conquering of Brazil’s first world title and went on to be substantial contributor to the country’s global football prowess. In 2000, Pelé – already recognized as Brazil’s iconic number 10, was awarded FIFA’s ‘Player of the [20th] century’.

⁶⁶ @franciscolayons, posted 21 June 2020.

⁶⁷ Carlos Mandel and Fernando dos Santos, ‘Futebol profissional: saída da pobreza?/ Professional Football: a way out of poverty?’, *Mosaico* 9 no.14 (2018): 195-213.

⁶⁸ Filho, *O Negro no futebol brasileiro*; Raul Milliet Filho, ‘Cenários e personagens de uma arte popular: futebol brasileiro, hegemonia, narradores e sociedade civil’, *Unpublished Doctoral Thesis* (São Paulo: Universidade de São Paulo, 2009); Mauricio Murad, ‘Um ícone chamado PELE’, *Cahiers du monde hispanique et luso-brésilien* 98 (2012): 171-182.

⁶⁹ The 1970 Brazilian side, as many other national squads, is considered to be the reflection of the country’s population - made of a majority of people with mixed ethnical backgrounds, especially having Portuguese, African and Indigenous descent.

⁷⁰ Murad, ‘Um ícone chamado PELÉ’.

⁷¹ @oficialpolliana, posted 21 June 2020.

⁷² Leda Maria da Costa, ‘Quem matou o futebol brasileiro? A novela da copa do mundo de 2014 na cobertura do jornalismo esportivo’, *Eptic online: revista electronica internacional de economia política da informação, da comunicação e da cultura* 18 no. 1 (2016): 119-132, 128.

⁷³ Helal and Soares, ‘O declínio da pátria de chuteiras’.

⁷⁴ @Vinyyoms, posted 14 April 2020.

⁷⁵ @guisalviano, posted 7 June 2020.

⁷⁶ Although this composition of the teams at the time was not particularly unusual, by comparison, in the 2018 FIFA World Cup, when Brazil was eliminated in the quarter-finals against Belgium, only three of the 23 athletes of the seleção played in the nation’s domestic league.

⁷⁷ @SantosFC, posted 21 June 2020.

⁷⁸ @Atletico, posted 21 June 2020.

⁷⁹ Giulianotti, ‘Football events, memories and globalization’, 4.

⁸⁰ @historiaempb, posted 23 June 2020.

⁸¹ @Celimbh, posted 21 June 2020.

⁸² Betty Milan, *O País da Bola* (Rio de Janeiro: Record, 1989), 24-25.

⁸³ @linharesmemoria, posted 14 June 2020.

⁸⁴ Lucio de Castro, *Memórias do Chumbo: o futebol nos tempos do Condor*, ESPN, 2012.

⁸⁵ @FmTerritorio, posted 21 June 2020.

⁸⁶ @historiasdebsb, posted 23 June 2020.

⁸⁷ @CacodaMotta, posted 21 2020.

⁸⁸ Alfredo Mergulhao and Rodrigo Castro, 'Bolsonaro participou de pelo menos 84 aglomerações desde o início da pandemia de COVID-19', *O Globo*, available at <https://oglobo.globo.com/brasil/bolsonaro-participou-de-pelo-menos-84-aglomeracoes-desde-inicio-da-pandemia-de-covid-19-25048811> June 5, 2020, (Accessed 27 July, 2021); World Health Organisation, 'Advice for the public: Corona-virus Disease (COVID-19)' <https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/advice-for-public> (accessed 7 October 2021). It has been suggested that Bolsonaro's participation in mass gatherings was part of a governmental strategy to promote herd immunity by contagion as a means 'to favor the free circulation of the new coronavirus, under the pretext that the infection would naturally induce the immunity of individuals, and the reduction in economic activity would cause greater harm than the deaths and sequelae caused by the disease. Deisy de Freitas Lima Ventura & Rosana Reis, 'A linha do tempo da estratégia federal de disseminação da COVID-19', *Direitos na pandemia: mapeamento e análise das normas jurídicas de resposta à COVID-19 no Brasil*, São Paulo, n. 10 (2021) 6-31. Available at: <https://static.poder360.com.br/2021/01/boletim-direitos-na-pandemia.pdf> (accessed 15 September 2021), 27.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

⁹⁰ Gammon & Ramshaw, 'Distancing from the present', 135.

⁹¹ @UchoasLeandro, posted 15 April 2020.

⁹² @historiaempb, posted 23 June 2020.

⁹³ Gammon & Ramshaw, 'Distancing from the present', 135.

⁹⁴ Simoni Guedes & Edilson Da Silva, 'O segundo sequestro do verde e amarelo: futebol, política e símbolos nacionais', *Cuadernos de Aletheia* no. 3 (2019): 73-89.

⁹⁵ @MarceloNour, posted 21 June 2020.

⁹⁶ Guedes & Silva, 'O segundo sequestro do verde e amarelo'.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.* 11.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.* 12.

⁹⁹ @Leonencio, posted 21 June 2020.

¹⁰⁰ Richard Cashman, 'Sydney Olympic Park 2000 to 2010: A case study of legacy implementation over the longer term', in *Routledge handbook of sport and legacy*, eds. Richard Hold & Dino Ruta (Oxon: Routledge, 2015), 99-110; Simon Springer, 'Olympic Violence: Memory, Colonialism, and the Politics of Place', *ACME: An International Journal for Critical Geographies* 14 no. 2 (2015): 631-638; Simon Martin, 'Rebranding the republic: Rome and the 1960 Olympic Games', *European Review of History: Revue Européenne d'histoire* 24, no. 1 (2017): 58-79.

¹⁰¹ See, for example, Leigh Boucher, 'Public emotions and their personal consequences: the nationalizing affects of the Australian Football League since 1990', *The International Journal of the History of Sport* 32, no. 13 (2015): 1546-1566; Lawrence & Crawford, *Digital Football Cultures*.

¹⁰² Louis Violette & Michaël Attali, 'The Olympic Memory: Institutional and Heritage Issues', *The International Journal of the History of Sport* 37, no. 11 (2020): 1066-1085.

¹⁰³ Coda: On May 31st, 2021, following the resignation of co-hosts Colombia and Argentina due to security concerns, protests and soaring Covid-19 cases, and just two weeks from the competition's start, Brazil was announced as sole host of the 2021 Copa America tournament. The announcement was perceived by press as an attempt to distract Brazilians away from the country's multifarious crises and – then - over 460,000 Covid-related deaths. Although mooted, a tournament boycott by players lacked unity and consensus, and the tournament subsequently proceeded behind closed stadia doors. With Brazil beaten in the final by Argentina, the event marked a poignant, unresolvable, continuity in the polarization of national football and its politicization of *seleção* players.

Figure 1. Demonstration of key terms used during analysis

Keywords (Portuguese)	Keywords (English)	# of occurrences
Melhor/Maior seleção de todos os tempos	Best/Greatest national team of all times	17
Heróis	Heroes	8
Verdade/Verdadeiro	Truth/True	6
Militar	Military	4
Ditadura	Dictatorship	3
Presidente	President	3
Comunista	Communist	2
Covid-19	Covid-19	2
Fique em casa	Stay home	2
Futebol arte	Beautiful football	2
Pandemia	Pandemic	2
Pra frente, Brasil!	Onward, Brazil!	2
Saudoso	Longing/Nostalgic/Departed	2
Raiz/Nutella	<i>See section Raiz vs Nutella</i>	1