

## ERIC DUNNING'S EXPLANATIONS ABOUT HOOLIGANISM IN BRAZIL: A CRITICAL REFLECTION

*AS EXPLICAÇÕES DE ERIC DUNNING SOBRE O HOOLIGANISMO À LUZ DO  
CONTEXTO BRASILEIRO: UMA REFLEXÃO CRÍTICA*

*LAS EXPLICACIONES DE ERIC DUNNING ACERCA DEL HOOLIGANISMO A LA  
LUZ DEL CONTEXTO BRASILEÑO: UNA REFLEXIÓN CRÍTICA*

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**Keywords:**  
Sociology.  
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Review.

**Abstract:** Eric Dunning's academic work is crucial for the development of sociology of sports. This article was produced after a deep, detailed and careful reading of his work and Brazilian literature concerning violence in football and/or organized fan groups, given the author's striking influence on Brazilian studies. We consulted academic databases, university libraries and our personal archives. This study presents the main concepts of figurational sociology and the development of sport, which create the bases to describe explanations about British hooliganism and its influence on research about violence in Brazilian football.

**Palavras chave:**  
Sociologia.  
Esportes.  
Violência.  
Revisão.

**Resumo:** A obra de Eric Dunning ocupa um papel central na conformação da área acadêmica da Sociologia do Esporte. Este artigo foi produzido a partir da leitura repetida, cuidadosa e detalhada das principais produções de Dunning e da produção científica brasileira sobre violência no futebol e/ou torcidas organizadas, dada a influência marcante desse autor nos estudos brasileiros. Para o levantamento das fontes, foram consultadas várias bases de dados, bibliotecas de universidades e nossos acervos particulares. Este estudo expõe os fundamentos da sociologia figuracional e do desenvolvimento do esporte, que criam as bases para descrevermos as explicações sobre o fenômeno do hooliganismo britânico e sua influência nas pesquisas sobre violência no futebol brasileiro.

**Palabras clave:**  
Sociología.  
Deportes.  
Violencia.  
Revisión.

**Resumen:** Resumen: El trabajo de Eric Dunning tiene un papel central en la sociología del deporte. Este artículo fue producido a partir de la lectura cuidadosa y detallada del trabajo de Dunning y de la producción científica brasileña acerca de la violencia en el fútbol y/o las torcidas organizadas, dada la fuerte influencia de este autor en los estudios brasileños. Como fuentes, fueron consultadas varias bases de datos, bibliotecas de universidades y nuestros acervos particulares. Este estudio expone los fundamentos de la sociología figuracional y del desarrollo del deporte, que crean las bases para describir las explicaciones del fenómeno del hooliganismo británico y su influencia en las investigaciones sobre la violencia en el fútbol brasileño.

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Honoring a thinker is not praising him or even interpreting him, but discussing his work, thus keeping him alive, and demonstrating, in action, that he defies time and keeps his relevance (Cornelius Castoriadis).

## 1 INTRODUCTION

Eric Dunning is one of the most important and influential authors in Sports Sociology. Following his master Norbert Elias, he opposes the idea that there is such a thing as a natural attitude of human beings. In his view, the human condition has been built by individuals themselves in a long, slow civilizing process. In his work, Dunning discusses sport based on that process while rethinking such process based on his research findings. In Brazil, his research has served as analytical basis for several studies in Physical Education and other fields of knowledge, contributing to define the guidelines of programs and policies for sports and leisure. Therefore, we consider it appropriate to develop works that take his studies as research objects. In this article, we decided to (re)think his explanations of hooliganism in light of the Brazilian context, since their option to analyze this specific context entails theoretical controversies and has important political consequences.

To achieve this goal, we adopted a three-stage argumentative strategy. Firstly, we present Dunning's explanations about hooliganism. To this end, we considered relevant to address, albeit briefly, the explanations on the topic from which and against which the author drew up his own. In the second part, we describe the incorporation of those explanations into the study of organized fan groups (*torcidas organizadas*) and/or violence in Brazilian football. Material on the subject was sought at CAPES's Theses Bank, SciELO, Laboep's survey of Monographs, Dissertations and Theses, UNICAMP's Library, and our particular archives.<sup>1</sup> In the third and final part we analyze the relevance of such incorporation. In particular, we discuss the relevance of Dunning's explanations about hooliganism as a scientific tool of analysis for Brazil's context.

## 2 DUNNING'S EXPLANATIONS OF HOOLIGANISM

Dunning's work plays a central role in Sociology of Sport. According to the author, his 1961 master's dissertation *Early Stages in the development of football as an organized game: an account of some of the sociological problems in the development of a game* was one of the first works to address specifically sports in British sociology (COAKLEY; DUNNING, 2000). Until that moment, sport was the object of reflection by Physical Education professors who discussed it as a cultural and social product, but still far from a sociological discussion conducted "with rigor and depth", and works were still highly empiricist (COAKLEY; DUNNING, 2000, p. xxiii). In Sociology, sport appeared marginally in the works of authors such as Theodor Adorno, Max Horkheimer and Norbert Elias, who recognized its great visibility but did not developed specific reflections about it.

Among other matters related to sport, Dunning addressed hooliganism. That phenomenon gained notoriety in the 1960s as a serious British social problem. In the 1980s, it gained an even larger public dimension, among other reasons, because of a few major tragedies – although,

<sup>1</sup> These databases were chosen for several reasons. CAPES website was chosen because its thesis database provides access to abstracts of all theses and dissertations defended in Brazil since 1987. SciELO, in turn, is an electronic library of reference, covering a vast collection of Brazilian scientific journals. Laboep's survey offers several monographs, dissertations and theses on football fans. UNICAMP's library, in turn, is a reference that offers a large collection of books – an important type of production not offered by the other databases. Finally, our private archives have some works not found anywhere else.

in some cases, those tragedies were wrongly attributed to hooligans' actions, e. g. when 96 Liverpool fans died in Hillsborough, trampled or crushed against the fence due to overcrowding and police incompetence. Because of increasing interest in hooliganism, in the 1980s, Dunning and his colleagues from Leicester – such as Patrick Murphy, Ivan Waddington and John Willians – received substantial funds from the Social Science Research Council and the Football Trust.

Although they enjoyed certain hegemony in that decade, these authors were not the pioneers in studies on violence in football in Britain or elsewhere. Other works were already being developed, for example, those carried out by German sociologist Gunter A. Pilz (HOLLANDA, 2008). Two sets of explanations stood out in the British academic field: psycho-sociological ones offered by Oxford researchers Peter Marsh, Elisabeth Rosser and Rom Harré, and sociological, Marxist-based ones presented by Ian Taylor and John Clarke (MURPHY; WILLIANS; DUNNING, 1994). Those views were discussed by Dunning, Murphy and Willians, as well as some “official” explanations, which were – at least until the end of the 1980s – widely accepted by football authorities. Those explanations include one that sees alcohol consumption as the main “villain” of violence in football and another one sustaining that such violence would be a reflection of that occurred on the playing field (DUNNING; MURPHY; WILLIANS, 1993, MURPHY; WILLIANS; DUNNING, 1994).

Dunning, Murphy and Willians (1993) consider that “official” explanations have analytical limitations. After all, there are violent fans who do not drink<sup>2</sup> and peaceful fans who drink too much. Similarly, there are matches with violence in the field but not in the stands and vice versa. Moreover, many of the fights occur before the matches. When those authors maintain that the explanations have analytical limitations, they do not deny that alcohol consumption and violence on the playing field might sometimes facilitate violence among fans. In fact, they underscore the fact that such explanations are to be placed under a broader explanatory framework. For example, it would be necessary to understand the role played by (excessive) alcohol consumption and violence within the model of masculinity that guides more violent fans.

Among other things, Dunning, Murphy and Willians (1993) observe that the explanations provided by Oxford researchers underestimated the severity of violence between rival fans. According to researchers from Leicester, that is because they considered hooligans' violence as limited, in general, to the symbolic level, i. e. to exaggerated threats, to ritualized insults and the denial of the opponent's masculinity. Such limitation would be partly due to the fact that Oxford researchers had been heavily influenced by anthropologist Desmond Morris's work and therefore presuppose that ritual and violence are mutually exclusive as behavioral categories – what would have “blinded” them to the fact that rituals could be seriously violent. Another criticism leveled at the Oxford researchers is that, although they demonstrated that football violence is governed by a set of rules, they did not show how those rules are socially constructed, creating the impression that they are voluntary creations of individuals acting freely without “social chains”.

Dunning, Murphy and Willians (1994) emphasize that, broadly speaking, Taylor and Clarke analyzed hooliganism as a kind of “resistance movement” by working class youth to the process of commodification in British football. Although they do not totally deny the validity of the results in Taylor and Clarke's work, they criticize them because they would suggest that violence in football emerged as a social phenomenon in the 1960s. Another challenge is that such explanations would suggest a clear conflict between working class groups and

<sup>2</sup> Many of them do not drink precisely to fight better.

“[...] that the core participants came into conflict with the authorities and members of the more established classes largely as part of an attempt to fight among themselves (DUNNING; MURPHY; WILLIANS, 1993, p. 304, emphasis by the authors).

In response to these explanations, Dunning, Murphy and Willians (1993) analyzed hooliganism under the theory of the civilizing process. In their two volumes on that process, Elias and Dunning (1992) describe a series of social changes, after a detailed study of sources on behaviors and social norms of British, French and German societies from the twelfth to the nineteenth centuries. Among other changes, they underscore further refinement of social standards; increasing social pressure to exercise self-control<sup>3</sup> of feelings, behaviors and bodily functions; and higher control of violence and aggression. Such higher control, they say, has reduced the ability to experience pleasure in causing suffering and witnessing violence, and increased mutual identification. These changes, however, far from having a linear cause and effect relationship, would make up the same social process. More precisely, it is a blind, unplanned process with no specific direction. This means that, inasmuch as it is the result of generational transfer of experience and knowledge, it is also subjected to reverse processes, i. e. “decivilizing spurts” (DUNNING, 2014).

According to Dunning, Murphy and Willians (1993), such “spurts” would explain hooliganism, which would be generated by non-incorporation of more “civilized” values and modes of behaving by “rougher” sections of the English working class. Young people from those sections would see the context of football as a special space for fights, aggression and other forms of violence<sup>4</sup> – which serve as a means for public assertion of masculinity in their social environment. Unlike what occurred in more “established” social classes, the practice of violence in those segments would not necessarily cause shame. On the contrary, it would be more open, tolerated and even a reason for pride, since its members would be “[...] typically denied status, meaning and gratification in educational and occupational spheres, the major sources of identity, meaning and status available to men higher up in the social scale” (DUNNING; MURPHY; WILLIANS, 1993: 258).

Adults from those segments would also have less control over children and adolescents, since they spent much of their time on the streets, socializing with other children and older adolescents. Consequently, interaction between them would be aggressive and develop domination hierarchies largely based on age, strength and physical prowess (DUNNING; MURPHY; WILLIANS, 1993). Therefore, Dunning, Murphy and Willians (1993, p. 259) sustain that these young people:

[...] On the one hand, they tend rationally to seek physical confrontations because these are, for them a source of identity, status, meaning and pleasurable excitement. On the other hand, they tend to respond aggressively in threatening situations because they have not learned to exercise the degree of self-control that is demanded in this regard by dominant norms in British society.

According to the authors, from the mid-1960s on those young people felt even more motivated to cause trouble and confusion in football because English newspapers began to publish more articles about fights in stadiums as places dominated by vandals. To some extent, that analysis influenced Brazilian scientific literature on organized fan groups and/or violence in football.

3 Self-control can be understood as consciousness's increasing ability to regulate behavior, acting as controller of human beings' impulses and drives towards adapting to social patterns of behavior (Elias and Dunning, 1992).

4 According to the Leicester researchers, cinemas, dance halls and seaside resorts have also been privileged spaces for those practices, varying according to the influence of the several fashions (DUNNING; MURPHY; WILLIANS, 1993).

### 3 INCORPORATION OF DUNNING'S EXPLANATION OF HOOLIGANISM INTO STUDIES ON ORGANIZED FAN GROUPS AND/OR VIOLENCE IN BRAZILIAN FOOTBALL

The analysis of that production indicates that Dunning's work is often cited as a theoretical reference for some Brazilian researchers to contextualize violence in football. In the field of Sociology of Sport, an example is Reis's *Futebol e Violência* (2006). In the field of history and psychology, in turn, there are doctoral dissertations (HOLLANDA, 2008; LOPES, 2012) addressing, to some extent, the academic debate around the theses of the Leicester School, including some criticism to them. However, although it has received some attention from Brazilian researchers, we noted that the incorporation of Dunning's work varies significantly depending on the field of study.

In psychology, for instance, his influence is very limited. A proof of that is that no major work in the area of organized fans and/or violence in football (LUCCAS, 1998; CAVALCANTI, 2002; CARNEIRO; SANTOS, 2008; HRYNIEWICZ, 2008; SANTOS, M. B., 2009; LOPES, CORDEIRO, 2010; LOPES, 2012, 2013; ARAGÃO, 2013) is based on "figurational paradigm". In fact, Dunning is not even mentioned in some of those studies. A rare exception is Lopes (2012), which, despite starting with another reference, discusses some of the theses of the Leicester School and the criticisms made to them. At first, we could attribute this lack of influence to the fact that Dunning is not a psychologist. This explanation, however, seems to be implausible because most authors mentioned above work in the area of Social Psychology – a field that traditionally dialogues with sociology. A better explanation is that since the theme of sport is not highly developed in the field of Psychology, there is still little work with or even knowledge about established sociologists in the area. Another possible explanation is that the field of studies about violence in football is still quite fragmented in Brazil, hampering dialogue between different knowledge areas.

In the field of Anthropology, in turn, a significant part of the studies on organized fans and/or violence in football dialogue, at some point, with the works of Dunning and Elias. Examples of that are the pioneering works of Toledo (1996) and Teixeira (2004). In *Os perigos da paixão*, Teixeira (2004, p. 173) studied, through ethnographic observation, the universe of organized fans of Rio de Janeiro's big clubs. Corroborating Elias's reflections, he says that "the view that a football game, more than hobby or fun, is a form of excitement where viewers simulate collisions, moderately releasing certain emotions, seems particularly good". Therefore, starting from the assumption that football simulates clashes, the author poses the following question: Why do those simulations sometimes become real clashes? In order to answer it, she refers again to Elias's work and notes that

the compensating function of excitement through the game increases as serious and life threatening inclinations decrease. That means that sports is some kind of antidote to individuals' over-control and tensions, making them moderately release their emotions; however, those excitements resulting from mimetic tensions may become serious and generate "decivilizing spurts" (TEIXEIRA, 2004, p. 171-172).

The works of Elias and Dunning are also influential in Sociology of Sport. That field, however, is different from the others: only part of sociological studies on violence in football and/or organized fan groups that dialogue with those works were produced in Sociology departments. Among studies produced in those departments, we highlight Monteiro's (2003) master's dissertation, which, among other things, questions the relevance of relating, in Rio de Janeiro's context, a more "aggressive" ideal of masculinity with "rougher" sections of the working class, as Dunning and Elias do in England. For the author, the "warrior ethos" and the

“macho ideal” also manifest themselves in middle and upper classes with access to quality private education and high-value consumer goods.

In the Department of Applied Social Sciences at the State University of Ponta Grossa, Netto (2009) uses Elias’s concepts of psychogenesis and sociogenesis to understand the phenomenon of organized fans and its links with violence. In the field of Physical Education, Heloisa Reis has conducted several studies on violence in football that dialogue with Dunning’s work – some of them developed by her mentees, such as Canale’s (2012) master’s dissertation. In her doctoral thesis (REIS, 1998), the author uses Weber’s typology of action improved by Dunning to address incidents of violence. Another central concept drawn from Dunning’s and Elias’s work presented by Reis (1998) is that of “social connections”. In addition to basing her research on the Leicester School, Reis organized the 1<sup>st</sup> and the 10<sup>th</sup> editions of the International Symposium on Norbert Elias and the Civilizing Process at the State University of Campinas, as well as 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> editions of the Seminar on Hooliganism and the 2014 World Cup.<sup>5</sup> The 1<sup>st</sup> Seminar was attended by Dunning, and became a chapter of the book *Sociologia do esporte e os processos civilizatórios*, published in 2014.

#### 4 CONTRIBUTIONS AND LIMITATIONS OF DUNNING’S EXPLANATION OF HOOLIGANISM TO UNDERSTAND THE BRAZILIAN CONTEXT

It is important to note that the name of the event mentioned above includes “hooliganism”, referring to one of the author’s hypotheses, according to which it would be a worldwide phenomenon. That is a controversial point in the current debate about violence in Brazilian football: whether or not Brazilian hooligans exist. In his classic *Fighting Fans*, Dunning *et al.* (2002) argue that hooliganism is a worldwide phenomenon. The book is divided into 16 chapters where renowned researchers write about violence in football in different countries. In the introductory chapter, Dunning *et al.* (2002) note that the term hooliganism is inaccurate, unscientific and covers a wide range of behaviors somehow related to football. They also explain that their use of the term to understand these behaviors in other countries does not mean they understand that hooliganism is always and everywhere explained mainly or solely by the issue of class.

In *El fenómeno deportivo*, Dunning (2003) raises another important caveat: for him, the idea that hooliganism is a worldwide phenomenon is only a working hypothesis. To be confirmed, it should be subjected to public debate and, above all, proved by empirical, systematic studies based on theory and conducted in different parts of the world. However, as the author himself acknowledges, that work would be very costly and difficult to organize, given the current lack of paradigmatic unity in Sociology. Nevertheless, that would be the only way to modify, revise and expand – or even discard altogether – the hypothesis that hooliganism is a worldwide phenomenon.

In the South American context, some researchers refuse to use *hooligan* as a category. Even in *Fighting Fans*, in the chapter ‘*Aguante*’ and *repression: football, politics and violence in Argentina*, sociologist Pablo Alabarces (2002) explains that he sees significant differences between Argentinean *barras-bravas*<sup>6</sup> and British hooligans. The main difference would be the

<sup>5</sup> According to Reis (2014), Eric Dunning has been to Brazil eight times, contributing to the debate on violence in sport. The Unicamp School of PE has been one of the centers hosting and spreading his work in Brazil. In his last visit, he produced a book exclusively for the Brazilian public called *Sociologia do esporte e os processos civilizatórios*, with theoretical details on the theory of civilizing processes and its consequences for analysis of the phenomenon of sport and violence (DUNNING, 2014) (DUNNING, 2014).

<sup>6</sup> Let us make one thing clear: the category of *barras* is not native, i. e. it is not used by the members of those groups who call themselves *la hinchada*. *Barras* is a derogatory term used by the media and other fans, who accuse their members of having an instrumental relationship with the club, which would be driven by individual and economic interests – which, of course, they deny (ALABARCES, 2012).

fact that the former are historically related to political violence. According to the author, it is not by chance that the end of Argentina's dictatorship in 1983 combined with "explosive reappearance" of the *barras*. In *Crónicas del aguante*, he spells out the argument: "[...] the *barras* copied the model of the dictatorship's task forces and work outside the legitimate State monopoly of violence – base of modern liberal contract. That contract was fully and completely violated by the military" (ALABARCES, 2012, p. 35). According to the author (ALABARCES, 2012), many of those groups act as storm troopers at the service of sports officials and politicians who finance them.

The *barras'* adoption of a native model of organization and operation seems to give the conflicts in Argentina certain characteristics. For example, currently, the highest number of homicides in local football is due to internal disputes in those groups (SUSTAS, 2011), among other things, over control of the illegal market of ticket (re)sale. That market is a result of the above-mentioned relationship between the leaders of *barras* and clubs officials. In addition to some conflicts presenting their own characteristics, some of them involve the use of firearms – which is rare in the English context. However, despite this, those conflicts (at least a significant part of them) are, as suggested by Zucal's (2010) analysis, closely associated with a certain standard of masculinity – more specifically with the principle of *aguante*, which determines that one must tolerate physical pain in order to be a "real man".

Although Zucal (2010) and Alabarces (2012) reject some of the theses of Leicester School, it is hard not to notice some resemblance to the "aggressive masculinity" pointed out by Dunning. In *El fenómeno deportivo*, Dunning (1999) acknowledges that there may be differences between Hispanics ideals of *machismo* and male ideals in Northern Europe and North America. However, he notes that there is a general characteristic in patriarchy: the assumption that men will fight and be aggressive in specific situations such as to defend the honor of the nation in a war. So, considering that football would mimic the latter, it would facilitate the manifestation of warlike behavior of patriarchy. In this sense, the very structure of world elite football, combined with the general characteristics of patriarchy, would help create trouble and continuing violence – what would make hooliganism a worldwide phenomenon. Moreover, Dunning (1999) notes that the hard core of violent fans would act in a premeditated way.

For this reason, it might be possible to speak of hooliganism in Brazil, but it does not mean that our organized fans are the equivalent of British hooligans. That thesis is refuted by most scholars studying the topic (TOLEDO, 1996; PIMENTA, 1997; REIS, 1998; SANTOS, T. C., 2004; LOPES, CORDEIRO, 2010; LOPES, 2012), who point out significant differences between the two groups. According to Murad (2007, 2012), only a minority of organized fans (5-7%) engage in violent actions. Therefore, the question is if Brazilians violent fans can be categorized as hooligans – whether or not they are members of organized fan groups.

The first difficulty in categorizing them as such is precisely the lack of consensus about the very definition of hooliganism.<sup>7</sup> What does that attitude mean exactly? This difficulty, however, does not seem to be insurmountable because, although there is no consensus about its definition, it would suffice to explain and justify its use. However, we must not forget that the category was created by politicians and journalists and only later incorporated into the scientific field (DUNNING, 2014). So, the question is: to what extent should the field use a category that carries a judgmental (negative) load and often reinforces stereotypes and feeds prejudices? Would it not be more

<sup>7</sup> Term first created and used by British journalists.

appropriate to employ categories used by “natives”?<sup>8</sup> Far from academic rigidity, considering the perspective of “insiders”, of those who participate in Brazilian football’s body and armed clashes, has important consequences. The main consequence is that we break away from the myth – widespread by the media and “common sense” – that violence caused and suffered by those actors is irrational. On the contrary, as observed by Toledo (2012, p. 140), we can assume that it has to do with the disengagement with the body historically reified by morality of work, that is, it would be related to projection, from the 1990s on, of “[...] other possibilities for upward mobility or visibility beyond values focused on manual effort, on morality around the family or religion”.

Another problem with adopting *hooligan* as a category is that violence in Brazilian football has unique characteristics. For example, the use of firearms is much more widespread here than in England<sup>9</sup> – which highly increases the mortality rate. In addition, the involvement of violent fans with far right political parties and/or nationalist projects seems to be rarer in Brazil<sup>10</sup> (LOPES; CORDEIRO, 2010). Not to mention the emergency in the country, since 2005, of conflicts among fans in the same groups as a result of drug and arms trafficking (MURAD, 2007).

In the face of these and other differences between Brazilian and British violent fans, it may be appropriate to understand hooliganism only as a stance taken by violent fans, which will depend on the social norms that regulate interactions between them in specific situations (DAVIES; HARRÉ, 1999). Therefore, assuming the idea of a stance would mean accepting that these fans can position themselves (and be positioned) or not as hooligans in violent clashes. Working with this notion would also help to eliminate some misunderstandings, such as that a fan classified as hooligan will behave in the same way in all football events. Let us remember that many Scottish national fans – the Tartan Army – behave peacefully in their national team’s matches, especially abroad, but are violent hooligans in the club sphere in their country (GIULIANOTTI, 2002).

Nevertheless, more than the category *hooliganism* itself, our greatest concern is focused on its political and ideological uses. Language, of course, is not a neutral representation of reality, a mere piece of garment we put on our ideas to be able to express them; it builds the world we live in and can either reproduce it or transform it (IBAÑEZ, 2005). In the Brazilian context, the term hooliganism has served to legitimize the adoption of the “British model” of security (and that, as we shall see, has negative implications). The logic presented is simple: violence in football is synonymous with hooliganism. The United Kingdom has eliminated hooliganism, therefore we must adopt their solutions. That logic is present, for example, in the 2005/2006 report by Brazil’s National Commission on Violence Prevention for Safety in Sporting Spectacles (CONSEGUE) under the Ministry of Sports and the Ministry of Justice. The document is the basis for a series of experiences conducted as a pilot project in football matches held in São Paulo.<sup>11</sup>

Of course we recognize that lessons coming from abroad should be assimilated, but we cannot forget that they need to be adapted. Thus, the “British model” cannot be seen uncritically, as the CONSEGUE report does. Following Lopes and Reis’s<sup>12</sup> reflections, we see a number

8 In Brazil, the fan who engages in physical clashes is usually called “*pista*” (ground) “Going to the ground” means going to clashes.

9 It is not always seen as legitimate, though. In the Argentine context, anthropologist Verónica Moreira (2013) conducts an interesting analysis of moral disputes around the use of the firearms in football.

10 Although it should be noted that, according to Giulianotti (2002), the media in general overestimates this relationship in the UK. Links with the far right would be typical of German and Dutch skinhead (ALABARCES, 2012).

11 LOPES, Felipe Tavares Paes; REIS, Heloisa Helena Baldy dos. **Políticas de segurança ou de dominação?** Dimensões ideológicas do relatório da comissão paz no esporte. (Mimeo).

12 LOPES, Felipe Tavares Paes; REIS, Heloisa Helena Baldy dos. **Políticas de segurança ou de dominação?** Dimensões ideológicas do relatório da comissão paz no esporte. (Mimeo).



of problems in that model. In addition to failing to end hooliganism (it now occurs in pubs, in travels abroad and in lower leagues), it contributed to gentrify and homogenize British football. As observed by Giulianotti (2002, p. 109), currently, “[...] guards expel those who get up and block others’ view. Fans screaming at football matches can be accused of violating public order under recent legislation”. In addition, based only on information provided by intelligence services, a fan can be considered a potential hooligan and be barred from entering stadiums, even in the absence of any prior conviction. Thus, the “British model” reverses the logic of criminal law, eliminating presumption of innocence in favor of an actual presumption of guilt (TSOUKALA, 2014).

Therefore, the question is: do we want that for Brazil? Should we sacrifice a popular fan culture on behalf of a controversial security model? Dunning and colleagues (DUNNING, MURPHY, WILLIAMS, 1993) used to say that football is a man’s reserved area. Indeed, since the 1990s in the UK, it became an area reserved for the middle and upper classes. In view of this, should we not consider our uniqueness and look more closely at projects developed in realities closer to our own, such as Colombia?

Concern over political and ideological uses of Dunning’s thesis is also present in works of Zucal (2010) and Alabarces (2012), especially association of social class with hooliganism. Based on the analysis by Armstrong and Giulianotti, the authors maintain that the relationship established between the Leicester researcher of hooliganism and “rough” sections the English working class contributed to legitimize repressive actions – especially towards those sectors. For them, it was no surprise that the Leicester School received many funds, precisely during the administration of Margaret Thatcher, for whom “[...] the poor were and are to the blame for everything...” (ALABARCES, 2012, p. 135). Although Dunning’s theses may indeed have been functional to Thatcher’s repressive policies, one must recognize that the author raises a number of caveats on them. In *O futebol no banco dos réus*, Murphy, Williams and Dunning (1994, p. 218) are emphatic:

[...] Imprisonment in its current form and as a generic response to hooliganism enjoys the same scientific credibility as the idea that alcohol is a good cure for a hangover. On the other hand, the punitive approach aims at dissuasion, that is, it is intended to prevent more people from joining the ranks of hooliganism. However, the events of recent decades do not suggest that hooligan groups have had any recruitment difficulties.

Another criticism by Zucal (2010) and Alabarces (2012) to Dunning is that today the middle-classes participate in Argentinean *barras*, for instance, the *patovicas* – hard core of River Plate’s *barra Los Borrachos del Tablón*. That is, the social makeup of *barras* would be relatively heterogeneous. Armstrong (2003), in his field research in the city of Sheffield, had come to similar conclusions regarding local hooligans. Unfortunately, there is no room here to discuss the methodological bases of that debate, but for our purposes it suffices to highlight that class is seen as central to it.

Indeed, the debate on violence in football and social class entails important reflections. First, that there is no single definition of social class. On the contrary, in the scientific field we witness a social struggle over a legitimate class definition. Therefore we consider that it is not possible to relate violence and social class without a clear concept of the latter (which, of course, presupposes a well-defined theory of society). However, this is almost never done in the academic debate about violence in Brazilian football. Some criticism leveled at Dunning for his use of the term “‘rougner’ sectors of working class” seems to ignore his precise definition.

In response to his British critics, Dunning (2006) points out that “rough” is defined only in terms of values related to engaging in violence and starting fights. Those values would be shared by groups having some or all of the following attributes: more or less extreme poverty; unskilled and/or unstable work; low formal educational levels; low geographical mobility; families with extended but mother-centered kin networks; and high segregation of social gender roles, with male power prevailing over women, often exercised violently and physically (ELIAS, DUNNING, 1992). Since these characteristics are related in complex and indirect ways and not all of them need to be present for a group to be “rough”, it does not seem correct to say that Dunning establishes a mechanical and prejudiced relationship between poverty and violence. After all, he opens space for us to think that the former is not a necessary condition for the latter. On the contrary, he draws attention to the fact that many poor people are “respectable” and that middle and upper classes also have their “rougier” sectors. He even recognizes that a portion (around 20-30%) of hooligans come from those segments (DUNNING, 2006).

Commenting on football violence in other regions of the world, Dunning (2003, 2006) even states that what brings violent fans together is not necessarily class. Therefore, to avoid misunderstandings and the impression that his analyses are universal, the author recognizes that his classic *The Roots of Football Hooliganism*, written with Murphy and Williams, should have its title changed to *The Roots of English Football Hooliganism*. From his point of view, therefore, what is really universal is violence in football, which would be designed and powered by each country’s fault lines: in England, by inequality between social classes and regions; in Scotland (at least in Glasgow) and Northern Ireland, by religious sectarianism; in Spain, by linguistic nationalism of Catalans, Castilians, Basques and Galicians; in Italy, by divisions between North and South; in Germany, by relations between East and West and between Rightist and Leftist groups. According to Dunning, those fault lines often overlap and feed each other. So when he says that religion is central in Scotland and Northern Ireland, he does not mean that class does not exist there and that it is unrelated to the former; he only says that its “weight” in producing violence is possibly lower.

Having explained that, Dunning (2003, 2006) notes that, as a hypothesis,<sup>13</sup> it is possible to assume that all those fault lines have something in common: the fact that they are prone to produce structural approximations to the so-called “ordered segmentation” or, to express it in Eliasian terms, social figurations of “established-outsiders”. Those figurations would be organized through group ties that give rise to intense antagonism of “our group” against the “group of others”. Therefore, Hooliganism as a worldwide phenomenon would be structured by conflicts caused by that type of social figuration. It should be noted that it is not the “cause” of hooliganism, but it would play a certain role in the sociogenesis and reproduction of the most violent groups, being generated, reinforced and reproduced within patriarchal societies.

Another possible criticism at Dunning (and his relevance or not for the Brazilian context) that should be examined is that he reduces violence in football to hooligans’ actions, forgetting that perpetrated by other social actors. On the one hand, Dunning (1994) emphasizes the central role played by the media in promoting hooliganism – in particular from the 1960s on. As we have seen, he also criticizes police repression and many of the measures adopted by British authorities. Therefore, it seems incorrect to accuse him of reducing the problem to hooligans’ action. On the other hand, his work does not seem to emphasize enough to the fact that violence is often legitimated (what does not mean it is legal) also outside the circles of violent fans. Of

<sup>13</sup> According to Dunning (2006), that hypothesis should be “tested” by a series of empirical and theoretically oriented studies that might change it, revise or expand it.

course, this kind of information cannot be obtained through any survey (ALABARCES, 2012; ZUCAL, 2010), since most fans are aware that general rules and values condemn the practice of violence. However, legitimization of that practice becomes evident when we investigate the immediate context of football matches in Brazil. For example, threats against opponent athletes and fans can be heard in all sectors of the Brazilian stadiums, without exception.

Finally, it should be noted that his work does not seem to pay the necessary attention to the process of making policies to prevent football violence and is limited to the analysis of the “final product”. Although the issue is complex and raises points that cannot be easily unified – such as social exclusion, democracy, violence and social justice – it cannot be separated from the analysis of violence in Brazilian football. Firstly, because it affects the very levels of violence and crime. After all, non-recognition of fans’ democratic rights and their exclusion from that process tend to portray the whole rule as a form of repression and consequently as an invitation to repression. Secondly, because if we assume a broader concept of violence, that exclusion can be interpreted as a form of structural violence that destroys solidarity ties and produces psychological distress. As Vasilachis de Gialdino (2004, p. 111) would say, “[...] we must remember that contempt hurts as much as the injury and indifference hurts as much as the whiplash”.

#### 4 FINAL REMARKS

In this article, we sought to (re)think Dunning’s explanations on hooliganism in light of the Brazilian context. Thus, we seek to question both its automatic adoption without any historical and social mediation and its mere rejection. And by questioning that, we seek to indicate to what extent its approach can be constructive for the analysis of that context and to express our debt to the author. Whatever its limitations are, Dunning was right when he went beyond describing particularities of the phenomenon of violence in football in each region of the world. After all, we believe that, just as we should not universalize his analysis of the British context, we should not lose sight of the possible similarities, since they may be related to common cultural and social changes. Rather, we should stress the importance of sharing knowledge for policymaking.

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