

Pacifying the Empire of Love: Security, Sport and Scandal in Rio de Janeiro¹

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Introduction

This article examines the convergence of security, sport, and scandal in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, by analyzing incidents involving two famous football (soccer) players, Vagner Love and Adriano. Preparations for the 2014 World Cup and the 2016 Olympics have entailed dramatic interventions in Rio's urban and social fabric. These projects have sought not simply to prepare the city for these two global sporting "mega events," but also to re-brand Rio as modern and cosmopolitan, an attractive hub for international investment and tourism (Castro et al 2015; Gaffney 2010). A central goal has been to present an image of the city as safe and secure. Not surprisingly, the city's favelas – symbols of poverty and crime – have been subjected to the most intense interventions aimed at restructuring the city in preparation for the World Cup and the Olympics (Freeman 2012).

Many recent events – such as the disappearance of Amarildo de Souza after the police arrested him in the "pacified" favela of Rocinha, and the fatal police shooting of ten year-old Eduardo de Jesus Ferreira in the pacified favela of Complexo do Alemão – have called into question attempts to secure the city. Favela residents often demand safer neighborhoods, and there has been a substantial drop in the number of homicides in Rio. Yet there are deep problems with the "pacification" policy, including police

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dissatisfaction, intensified conflict with traffickers over territory, a higher incidence of petty crime in favelas, and a greater polarization of Rio's urban space (Musueci et al 2013, Carvalho 2013, Barreira 2013). While the pacification policy has changed police strategies, it has not led to structural changes in the judicial and criminal justice systems. Impunity for police who commit acts of violence against civilians remains the norm.

My intention here is not to analyze how the pacification policy is affecting the lives of residents of Rio's favelas. Instead, I show incidents involving two famous soccer players can serve as a lens that reveals a set of larger anxieties, contradictions and contestations that underlie the attempt to "pacify" Rio de Janeiro. As Marcos Alves de Sousa has put it, soccer in Brazil has served as "ritualistic spectacle where dramas related to the nation, gender and race can be represented" (Sousa 1996:150). In the analysis that follows, I will look at football, as Eduardo Archetti argued, not as a reflection of an essentialized Brazilian culture, but as one mode through which Brazilians can *reflect upon* their society (Archetti 2003:217).

Adriano and Vagner Love both grew up in poor neighborhoods and played football internationally, including for the *seleção* (the national team). They also had success playing for Flamengo, the team most closely associated with Rio's "*povoão*" (common people). They seemed to embody the idealized image of the *craque*, or star Brazilian soccer player: poor boys who moved up in their world through their skill and talent, yet who retained their connection to "regular" people.

In 2009 and 2010, though, the Brazilian media heavily criticized Adriano and Vagner Love for incidents that took place in Rocinha and Vila Cruzeiro, two favelas that have had very contentious experience with pacification. Scandal can be defined as significant negative public attention that surrounds an occurrence depicted as transgressing commonly accepted moral or legal norms. The scandals involving Adriano and Vagner Love were a particular type: media scandals. Such "celebrity

scandals” involving sports figures, Orin Starn has argued, can reveal a great deal about other social forces, especially gender, sexuality and race (Starn 2011: xvi-xviii).

I argue that these scandals reveal three anxieties which shape the pacification program and the attempt to re-brand Rio: concern that global capital might produce forms of social mobility that disrupt social hierarchies; worry about the contradictions between a rule-governed model of modernity and social practices based on creativity and improvisation; and distress about shifting structures of racial difference. When Vagner Love and Adriano, who is nicknamed “The Emperor,” played together for Flamengo, they were dubbed the Empire of Love. The scandals that erupted about them during this time reveal a certain “performance anxiety” as Mega Events placed Rio on a global stage.

Securitization, soccer and celebrity scandal:

Attempts to produce greater security in Rio de Janeiro is one aspect of a new mode of governance that Paul Amar has termed “humanized securitization” (Amar 2013). The attempt to pacify Rio’s highly uneven and unequal urban space does not simply entail the occupation of territory by the army and police. Unlike prior policies aimed at eliminating political subversives, criminalized and racialized youth, or “terrorists,” this exercise of power is aimed at “rescuing” people who are seen as vulnerable. As a result, this mode of governance entails practices and discourses which attempt to create subjects who “naturally” need greater security. Individuals must be “parahumanized,” or transformed into vulnerable “victims” who need to be rescued by outside interventions (Amar 2013:17). The creation of these “needy” victims, in turn, requires highlighting some aspects of their identity, a process that Amar calls “hypervisibilization.” It also requires moralizing discourses and the highlighting of

racial, class, gender and sexual identities. Anxieties, desires and fears must all be mobilized.

Examining incidents involving two soccer players might seem like an unlikely way to analyze attempts to pacify Rio. However, as many observers have argued, sports in Latin America have been as a key component of modernization and nation-building projects (Sheinin 2015). This is particularly true of the sport of football (or soccer), which was imported into Latin America in the late nineteenth century (Mason 1995, Goldblatt 2006). The success or failure of South American teams in global competition, and their style of play, came to be seen as indicative of larger national qualities and characteristics (Galeano 1998).

Perhaps no other country is more closely linked to football than Brazil. Since the 1920s, social and political forces have combined to make football an essential component of Brazilian national identity (Soares and Lovisollo 2003, Helal and Gordon 1999). Brazil has qualified for every World Cup, hosted the competition twice, and has won the competition five times, more than any other nation. Football, Roberto Da Matta has argued, has often provided Brazilians with a “special mode through which society allows itself to be perceived or ‘read’ by its members” (Da Matta 2009:99).²

Football in Brazil is also deeply tied to understandings of race. Along with samba and carnival, other social practices which came to be symbolic of Brazilian national identity, football has been seen as strongly identified with Afro-Brazilians. Several prominent nationalist intellectuals – such as Gilberto Freyre and Mario Filho – argued that the sport only became truly Brazilian when black Brazilians were allowed to play (Rodrigues 1947, Maranhão 2007). Thus, football is often held up as an example of “racial mixing” that is often seen as a hallmark of Brazilian national identity.

² Recent research, and widespread protests against spending of public money for the 2014 World Cup, indicates that the ties between football and Brazilian national identity are weakening (Bartolo et al 2010).

News reports about Brazilian football players being involved in improper activities off the pitch is hardly new. Star players – such as Romário, who was notorious for his womanizing and for concocting excuses to avoid training, or Ronaldo, who was involved in a scandal involving a transvestite prostitute (Kulick 2009) – have been able to shrug off these sorts of incidents with few repercussions. Romário’s his well-known distaste for abiding by the rules of “proper” society actually contributed to his image as a player who exemplified the “true” Brazilian style of football (Kittleson 2014:168-175).

What is surprising about media reporting on the incidents involving Vagner Love and Adriano is not that they were involved in “scandalous” behavior. Instead, what is surprising is the depth of outrage and the particular aspects of the players’ actions that were highlighted. “Everyday conversations about soccer,” Roger Kittleson has observed, “are one way that Brazilians think about the nation – and by extension their place in it – in the face of persistent social, economic, and political uncertainties” (Kittleson 2014:2-3). The essential questions to examine when analyzing these conversations about soccer are: how and why did Vagner Love and Adriano become deserving targets of police and media intervention? What fears and concerns were spoken through the language of soccer commentary that might not otherwise be speakable?

Soccer commentary about incidents involving behavior by Adriano and Vagner Love in Rio’s favelas is symptomatic of a deeper “pathological” anxiety about attempts to securitize Rio’s favelas. The attempt to “securitize” Rio’s favelas entails, as Amar argues, the attempt to reconfigure larger claims and contestations over social justice, effective citizenship and the distribution of resources into technocratic concerns with enforcement operations and risk assessments (Amar 2013). The narratives that circled around Adriano and Vagner Love reveal that this process is far from seamless and uncontested.

Mega Events and Favela “Pacification”:

The *Unidades de Polícia Pacificadora* (UPP or Police Pacifying Units) program began in 2008, when the Rio state authorities changed how favelas are policed. The official goals of the UPP policy were threefold: to retake territory controlled by drug traffickers; to provide public safety to favela residents; and to “contribute to the breaking of the ‘logic of war’” that had characterized the city of Rio (www.upprj.com). From the beginning of the program, the UPP policy was also closely tied to the 2014 World Cup and the 2016 Olympic Games. The police captain in charge of the first UPP, for instance, was part of the Brazilian delegation which met with the International Olympic Organizing in 2009 (Carvalho 2013:288).

In a larger sense, the UPP policy is designed to “rebrand” Rio. This is a project with deep historical roots and that has often centered on the city’s favelas (Jaguaribe 2011). By the 1990s and 2000s, Rio’s favelas had come to be seen as a prime symbol of the city’s insecurity, zones which existed beyond the state’s control, areas where the rule of law did not apply. A few highly publicized incidents where traffickers staged day-time attacks outside of the favelas also seemed to signal a new, more resistant and violent, form of organized criminality. Rio’s political and economic leaders saw improving public security as essential to consolidating positive economic change and presenting Rio as a global city. José Luiz Alquéres, the president of the Commercial Association of Rio, stated that of all the policies implemented to improve the business climate in Rio, the one that drew the most attention to positive changes was the establishment of the first UPP in the favela of Dona Marta (Alquéres 2011: 68).

The elaborate displays that accompany favela pacification clearly reveal the policy’s important symbolic component. When the police occupy a favela, they often

hoist the Brazilian flag, as if until that moment favelas had been part of a separate nation. When the favela of Rocinha was occupied in November 2011, Sérgio Cabral, then Rio's governor, stated: "I believe that this is an historic and emotional day for all of Brazil, and especially for the city of Rio. We have recovered this territory for the 100 thousand people who live in Rocinha . . . people who need peace." (O Globo, November 13, 2011). The massive operation occurred without a single shot being fired, and no drug traffickers were arrested. The international press, though, saw the larger significance: the occupation of Rocinha, the New York Times declared, was "a pivotal effort by the government to assert control over lawless areas of the city ahead of the 2014 World Cup and 2016 Olympic games" (New York Times, November 13, 2011).

Adriano and Vagner Love: "only happy in the favela"

In 2009 and 2010, just as Rio's authorities were expanding the favela pacification program, Adriano and Vagner Love were embroiled in a series of media-driven scandals in the favelas of Vila Cruzeiro and Rocinha. The incident involving Vagner Silva de Sousa, known as Vagner Love, is the most straightforward. In 2010, the Globo television network aired footage which apparently showed Vagner attending a *baile funk* (funk music party) in the favela of Rocinha (Jornal do Brasil 2010). The footage showed Vagner entering the party escorted by two armed drug traffickers. Earlier that day, Flamengo, the team Vagner played for, had beaten Macaé, with Vagner scoring two goals. He decided to celebrate by attending Rocinha's funk party, one of the best-known in the city of Rio. Though he is not from Rocinha – he grew up in the working-class neighborhood of Bangu – Vagner was well known there. News reports claimed that armed drug-dealers circulated throughout the party while Vagner was there, but he had no further interaction with them.

The incident attracted major attention, and Vagner Love was condemned by many for his apparent “association” with traffickers. Two days after television news report was aired, Vagner was questioned by the police, and denied having any involvement with the traffickers in Rocinha (Veja, March 23, 2010). However, he did not deny that traffickers were present at the party, stating: “That’s normal, in any favela in Rio de Janeiro you’d see that.” (Zero Hora, March 15, 2010). He also stated that he did not regret going to the party, and that he would not stop visiting Rocinha, where he had friends and sponsored a social project.

Adriano is the more famous of these two players, having helped Inter Milan win four Italian championships, earning the nickname “The Emperor.” After his success in Europe, Adriano returned to Brazil to take the Rio-based team Flamengo to victory in the Brasileirão national championship in 2009. Adriano has also become widely recognized as a player who has squandered his substantial talents on his predilections for alcohol, parties and women (Mendonça 2012). Here I want to focus on a series of incidents in 2009 and 2010, because they linked Adriano’s supposedly “scandalous” actions with Vila Cruzeiro, the favela where he grew up.

In April of 2009, Adriano was in Brazil to play with the Brazilian national team in two World Cup qualifying games. He was then supposed to return to Inter, but never showed up at the training grounds in Italy. For three days, rumors spread that he’d gone “missing.” When Adriano resurfaced publicly, he said that he’d been with his family. The story rapidly spread that he had refused to return to Europe and, instead, had spent the time with friends in Vila Cruzeiro.

Adriano’s girlfriend at the time stated that he often went to Vila Cruzeiro, where he felt shielded from media attention. Adriano, she stated, was “*só feliz na favela*” (only happy in the favela) (Revista Época 2010). It is hard to tell from the media reports, exactly why Adriano sought to avoid training and remained in the favela. At this time,

Adriano was reportedly mourning the recent death of his father. Helal notes that football players' images are divided into two: a "public-mythic" one, and a "private-human" personality (Helal 2003:21). It is possible to speculate that Adriano sought, ultimately unsuccessfully, to discard his public image and seek refuge in his private persona, surrounded by friends and family in Vila Cruzeiro.

The police, though, proposed a radically different interpretation. Responding to rumors that Adriano had been kidnapped, the head of the anti-kidnapping division of the Civil Police claimed that Adriano had spent the time with two high-level traffickers in Vila Cruzeiro. He stated: "Everyone knows that he grew up there. He's a friend of Mica and Fabiano, and was with them the three days that he was there" (Revista Época 2009). Adriano seemed to have been attempting to shed his public notoriety by retreating to a "domestic" space where he was just as well-known for being a school-yard friend as for being "The Emperor." The police, though, imposed another persona upon him: the accomplice of favela-based drug traffickers.

This incident provoked a break with Inter, and Adriano went to play for Flamengo, the Rio-based team that he'd been a fan of since his youth. Unfortunately, this was not the end of Adriano's problems. In early February 2010, photos began circulating that showed Adriano and a friend making hand signals of the Comando Vermelho drug trafficking group and posing with what appeared to be a gold-plated automatic rifle (O Dia 2010). More seriously, a few months before this incident, Adriano was called to the police station to explain how a motorcycle that he purchased ended up being registered under the name of the mother Mica, one of the main drug traffickers in the Complexo da Penha area. Adriano told reporters that he'd known Mica since the two were children, as they'd grown up together in Vila Cruzeiro. He claimed, though, he had given money to another friend to buy the two motorcycles and didn't know how one of them ended up in Mica's possession, since he had traveled to Italy before the

motorcycles were registered (Estadão 2010, O Dia 2010). This scandal led to Adriano breaking with Flamengo, and once again traveling to Italy where he played, briefly and not very successfully, for Roma.

As Vagner Love and Adriano were turned into objects that needed to be rescued, certain aspects of their comportment were singled out for visibility and came to be seen as “scandals”. Sally Engle Merry points out that scandals have the greatest impact “when normative consensus about the behavior in question is more common” (Merry 1984:296). If Vagner Love had behaved improperly in a nightclub in a wealthy neighborhood, even if drugs were being consumed there, it is doubtful that his actions would have attracted much attention. Likewise, Adriano’s attempt to avoid training hardly violates the stereotypical image of Brazilian football players.

However, Vagner Love attended a funk party in a favela, a highly criminalized space. Thus what became “hypervisible” was not his alleged disregard for the law, but the criminalized space of the favela where these actions took place. Similarly, Adriano did not evade training in order to hang out on Rio’s famous beaches. Instead, he remained with friends in the favela of Vila Cruzeiro. It was his preference for this urban space that was depicted as “unnatural” and even possibly criminal. Finally, both players openly describe themselves as black. The star player Romário was born in the favela of Jacarezinho and grew up in working-class neighborhood of Vila da Penha. He also openly stated that although he personally did not use drugs, he had friends who were involved in drug-trafficking (Kittleson 2014:173). These statements had few lasting negative consequences, and only added to Romário’s reputation as a “*malandro*” (rouge, or hustler). Romário, though, is usually seen as a typically *moreno*, or mixed-race, person. The repercussions of being depicted as associating with criminals proved to be very different for players who are seen as “black,” such as Vagner Love or Adriano. For Adriano and Vagner Love, the “hypervisibility” of the criminalized space of the favela

combined, in a toxic fashion, with their racialized identities. Violating the social norm that connects “backwardness” to the space of the favela merged with violating the norm that connects blackness to subservience.

What is interesting about the scandals involving Adriano and Vagner Love is not their effect on the players: Vagner Love recuperated from the negative attention quickly, while Adriano appears to have a serious problem with alcohol and has had a turbulent professional career. Nor did these scandals have much of a direct effect on the Rio state authority’s favela pacification policies. Rather, media coverage of Adriano and Wagner Love’s actions revealed anxieties about Rio’s performance on a global stage. The athletes themselves, though, refused to play along and challenged some of the assumptions about securitization.

Global circulation and destabilized social hierarchies:

Securitizing Rio – attempting to transform the city’s problems, many of which stem from deeply rooted structures of inequality, racism and social marginalization, into a technocratically-manageable issue of “security” – is based upon the assumption that a safer city will lead to increased access to transnational capital. In order to sell the Mega Events, the city’s political leaders have claimed that the influx of money from sponsors and tourists will have a lasting positive impact upon the city. Mayor Eduardo Paes, for instance, has dubbed the Olympics “the citizens’ games,” claiming that the games “will enhance returns for the city’s most important shareholders: its citizens” (Paes 2015). Yet one of subtexts in the scandals involving Adriano and Vagner Love is an anxiety about the socio-cultural impact of rapid flows of transnational capital.

Football has been a global sport since the turn of the twentieth century, when it rapidly spread from its British birthplace (Goldblatt 2006). Since the 1980s, though,

football has been increasingly impacted by a multitude of transnational forces, ranging from the sport's regional and international governing bodies, to global media conglomerates and corporate sponsors, cosmopolitan agents and sports marketing firms, and transnational supporters' groups and international players unions (Giulianotti and Robertson 2012: 217, 224; Kittleson 2014; Goldblatt 2006). The neoliberal economic policies that swept Latin America in the 1980s have also deeply affected the sport. The deregulation of mass media, for instance, has massively increased the profitability of Europe's most popular leagues. These policies have also increased inequalities between wealthier and poorer teams, leading to "serious outbreaks of indebtedness and bankruptcy" (Giulianotti and Robertson 2012: 224).

Both Adriano and Vagner Love came from poor backgrounds in Rio, began playing with Brazilian club teams, and then went on to earn far more money playing in Europe. They were hardly exceptional. In the 1980s and 1990s, the mismanagement of Brazil's domestic league combined with economic crisis pushed Brazilian players toward better-paying jobs abroad. Domestically, Brazilian football was deeply impacted by global economic forces. Brazilian teams increasingly took on aspects of corporate organizations and accumulated large debts, yet their leadership structures often remained in the hands of patronage-wielding leaders known as *cartolas*.

The effect of global forces on Brazilian football has been the subject of hot debate. The prosperity enjoyed by commercial football in its most important European hubs (England, Spain, Germany, Italy and France) has had contradictory effects on Brazilian soccer. On the one hand, the global visibility of Brazilian players has given the country's national team extensive prestige, and has led to a great demand for Brazilian players. At the local level, though, global economic forces have "only served to intensify the existing contradictions faced for many years now within Brazilian football" (Alvito 2007:526). The skill level of players is low, as the most talented quickly emigrate abroad,

viewership of games is dropping, and some teams have become mere “phantoms” which exist mainly to market players for transfer abroad. The result, Marcos Alvito claims, is that “Brazilian football is facing a serious crisis” (Alvito 2007:525).

Adriano and Vagner Love embodied the anxiety that global flows of capital might deeply disrupt Brazil’s established social structure. Newspaper commentary on Adriano and Wagner Love repeatedly mentioned their global ties. Articles constantly contrasted the players’ humble origins and their current wealth. For instance, an article about Adriano in *Época* magazine stated: “From a poor *moleque* (urchin), he became one of the most expensive players in the world, earning a salary of 600 thousand Euros” (*Época* 2009). Yet Adriano and Vagner Love seemed to contradict the expectations that increased global economic integration and upward social mobility would lead to the rejection of “backwards” forms of sociability in favelas.

Comments after the scandals involving the players and their ties to “undesirable” elements in favelas swung two ways. Some suggested that regardless of wealth, players from such poor backgrounds would always be socially-inferior. An anonymous commentator on a website said about Vagner Love visiting the party at Rocinha: “You can take the man out of the ghetto, but not the ghetto out of the man.” Others were confused about why, despite their wealth, the players continued spending time in favelas. Here the presumption seemed to be that because they’d gained greater social status, visiting favelas was strange behavior. Several articles, for instance, played on Vagner Love’s nickname, commenting on his “strange love” for favelas. A commentator on *Veja*’s website said: “How absurd. Of course the majority of favela residents are good people, who live there because they lack other alternatives. I think that they’d like to live somewhere else. Vagner Love travels in the opposite direction” (Veja 2010).

These discourses positioned Vagner Love and Adriano as unable to fully recognize that their class status has been transformed, unable to recognize their “true”

upward social mobility. They were seen lacking: either unable to see where they “should” be socializing, or pathologically attached to the “wrong” sorts of places and people. The logic here has strong parallels with racial discourses which attempt to use physical traits to circumscribe social and cultural actions. Because a person’s physical appearance is categorized in a certain way, they are expected to “naturally” behave in a particular manner; when they behave in the proscribed manner, this is then taken as proof of the “naturalness” of culturally-constructed racial categories.³

The players, however, consistently rejected these attempts to frame them as deficient and refused to see their actions as improper. They were adamant that their new wealth did not mean that they had abandoned their social origins, and denied that socializing in favelas was unusual. When asked about attending the party in Rocinha, Vagner stated: “I always go to places like that. I have social projects in those kinds of neighborhoods and that’s why I go there. I have godchildren and friends there, and I’ll never stop going back to my origins, my roots” (Zero Hora, March 15, 2010). Adriano put it much more bluntly. When asked why he was in Vila Cruzeiro instead of training in Italy, Adriano stated: “I love my favela, I wouldn’t trade it for anything in this life” (Época 2009).

There was also a strong racial component to this dynamic. If in Brazil, money typically “whitens,” Adriano and Vagner Love were insisting that they could be wealthy and cosmopolitan, and also proud to be black and from poor communities. They did not appear to see their economic status and “natural” racial identities as contradicting each other. Instead, their new-found wealth provided them with even greater access to forms of sociability and leisure associated with Rio’s poor and non-white, while also allowing them to enjoy patterns of consumption reserved for the wealthy. News reports

³ I owe this insight to Veve Lele.

about Vagner Love repeatedly highlighted that he went to the party in Rocinha in an expensive new car, and both players have been romantically linked with lighter-skinned women.

The “hypervisibility” of the criminalized space of the favela cements this anxiety about the effects of globalization. Historically, favelas can be seen as the product of massive global flows, as they housed many descendants of enslaved Africans after abolition in 1888. In the 1950s, many favelas were built near factories fueled by Brazil’s export-driven economy. Although they were “unofficial” – in many cases not even appearing on city maps – these neighborhoods could be contained, politically and socially, by long-standing patterns of patronage. This “containment” was disrupted in the 1980s as favelas became key transit points in a trans-national flow of cocaine (Penglase 2014, Arias 2009). Favela-based drug-traffickers had access to capital and commodities (drugs and guns), which allowed them to wield forms of power reserved for the economic and political elite. The scandals surrounding Adriano and Vagner Love – linking, as they did, upward social mobility, global ties, race and favelas – indicate a concern that securing Rio might lead to other disruptions of established social, economic and political structures.

Security or Unpredictability, or “art” versus “results”

Media commentary on Adriano and Vagner Love pointed to a second anxiety, about the feasibility and consequences of imposing a more predictable, rule-governed, set of norms on Rio’s social and cultural space. Attempts to generate security are premised on the assumption that greater order should be imposed on a social and cultural world seen as chaotic, unpredictable and “insecure.” This discourse of securitization attempts to present security as a non-political good that is naturally desirable. In the process, it

elides the many vested interests – such as private security firms, global policing consultants, weapons manufacturers, and businesses connected to an expanded carceral apparatus – that stand to benefit from these policies. Adriano and Vagner Love did not directly criticize discourses of securitization. What their stories do reveal, though, are two related critiques: first, they refused to see favela forms of sociability as “insecure” or criminal, “naturally” requiring greater policing; second, their stories raise questions about the cost of imposing order and predictability on a social world characterized by improvisation and creativity.

In these two scandals, social practices which are common in favelas were criminalized. Vagner Love and Adriano were condemned for engaging in modes of sociability – such as having backyard barbecues, attending funk parties, and riding Honda Hornet motorcycles – which are fairly typical for young men in favela neighborhoods who can afford to do these things. The favelas of Vila Cruzeiro and Rocinha were seen as spaces of irresponsibility, neighborhoods free from the discipline of the “modern” world. The lack of order in favelas was then connected to the players’ lack of discipline and self-regulation. For instance, a report on Adriano in the *Estado de São Paulo* newspaper was headlined: “The Fall of Adriano’s Empire and the Happy Irresponsibility in the Favela”. One recurrent image was that Adriano preferred to be in the favela where he could spend all day flying a kite.

Many commentaries stated that Adriano and Vagner Love should “know better” than to associate with “criminals,” and that stepping into a favela automatically put them at risk. But Vagner Love and Adriano resisted these “securitizing” discourses. Rather than seeing favelas as unsafe and insecure spaces, Vagner Love and Adriano talked about these neighborhoods as spaces of greater freedom and sociability. Vagner and Adriano commented on the greater personal autonomy that they felt in such spaces, where they are not treated as famous soccer players and or held to the norms of

sociability of upper-middle class, white, Brazil. For instance, Adriano's girlfriend at the time, Joana Ribeiro, stated that when Adriano had difficulties dealing with the pressure of being a star athlete, he went to Vila Cruzeiro. "It's there that he feels good," she said. "He can fly kites, go around barefoot and have a *churrasco* (barbecue) with his friends. There he's not The Emperor" (Revista *Época* 2010).

Their actions also challenged the assumption that the lines between legality and illegality are natural and "obvious." The players and their friends noted that the assumption that "*bandidos*" and non-criminals shouldn't socialize flies in the face of day-to-day interactions in favelas and poor communities (see Penglase 2014). A friend of Adriano's from Vila Cruzeiro, a musician nicknamed MC Tikão, said: "We've known everyone in the community since we were kids. Friendships continue even if each person follows their own path, whether crooked or straight" (Estadão, November 11, 2012). Vagner Love also stated that while "of course" traffickers were present at funk parties, these spaces were not inherently criminal or dangerous. When asked why he went to communities where traffickers were present, Vagner Love said: "I saw that a lot when I was a kid, I grew up with that. I've lost lots of friends to crime, but I never became involved, I never used drugs, I go to have fun, because I like it" (Veja March 15, 2010).

The notion that the lines between legality and illegality, between security and insecurity might not be clear and "obvious," but blurred and arbitrary provoked outrage among many readers. This "mixing" with criminals was seen as crossing a line and as a troubling sign of a larger national moral crisis. A commentator on Veja's website wrote sarcastically: "Football players tend to be admired by fans, especially youth, and Brazil's youth are being given some great examples: when they look at Brasília they see Sarney [a notoriously corrupt politician] smiling and posing as the

guardian of morality; when they look at football, they see players hanging out with traffickers. What a great country we're building" (Veja March 15, 2010).

It is not surprising that anxiety about the feasibility and consequences of imposing order should surface in scandals involving soccer players. Ronaldo Helal, in his analysis of media narratives of football "idols," notes that the qualities of players that are most often emphasized are improvisation, irreverence and creative genius. Characteristics like effort, discipline and determination, on the other hand, are downplayed (Helal 2003:20). This narrative corresponds to a long-standing image of Brazilian football which contrasts Brazil's supposedly more creative and improvisational style to the more "disciplined" European style. Helal observes that an "authentically Brazilian" football player is often depicted as "walking on the frontier between order and disorder" (Helal 2003:28).

However, the Brazilian team's failure to advance beyond the second round of the World Cup in 1982 provoked a wide-ranging debate about the national team's best strategy. Proponents of *futebol arte* – a style which values improvisation, creative dribbling and individual skill – have argued against those who advocate *futebol de resultados* – a more "pragmatic" style which subordinates creativity to teamwork and prizes results over aesthetics (Da Matta 2009, Goldblatt 2014). Concern about Brazilian football reached a peak in 1998, when Brazil lost to France in the final game of that year's World Cup. Brazil's loss led to soul-searching about the character of Brazilian football: does success depend upon the skill and creativity of individual players, or does it require a more disciplined and organized style of play? Since the 1990s, the emphasis has been on an organized and defensively-minded style. Yet, as Kittleson notes: "an emphasis on organization, the collective, and tactical sophistication ... have coexisted, conflictively, with celebrations of the tropical, childlike joy, and artful in *futebol*" (Kittleson 2014: 210).

The media scandals involving Adriano and Wagner Love, though, revealed very little ambivalence, and instead are characterized by an unequivocal moralizing discourse. Adriano and Wagner Love are both forwards, a position which demands improvisation and the ability to creatively maneuver around obstacles. Yet such behavior was not permissible off the pitch, especially not if the players were socializing in favelas. Here a deeper anxiety about securitization becomes visible. Producing a safer urban space requires the forcible imposition of order on Rio's favelas. Does this mean that the city – as with the national soccer team – will also lose some of its magic and cultural distinctiveness? Adopting a “pragmatic” strategy did not lead Brazil to success claiming its sixth World Cup victory when the country hosted the 2014 World Cup. Instead, when Brazil faced the highly-skilled German team in the semi-finals without their star striker Neymar, the team collapsed in a dramatic fashion. The Brazilian team's strategy achieved neither an aesthetically-pleasing style of play nor a positive result. Will attempts to “pacify” the city of Rio, likewise, be futile?

Race and place:

The third anxiety that Adriano and Vagner Love's scandals reveal is a concern about shifting racial discourses and experiences. The Olympics and the World Cup are intended to showcase Rio – and more broadly Brazil – on a global stage, and a central aspect of Brazilian nationalism and self-image has centered upon race. An inescapable preoccupation is whether these global sporting events will reveal Brazil as a non-racist and multi-racial society, or as one with enduring racial disparities and inequalities.

The sub-text that informed images of Adriano and Vagner Love, perhaps so powerfully exactly because it was often invisible, was race. The experiences that Vagner Love and Adriano had while playing in Europe may have made them increasingly

sensitive to how racial discourses operate in Brazil. Vagner Love and Adriano both played football in parts of Europe where racial taunts by opposing fans are extremely common (Holland 1995, Back, Crabbe and Solomos 1998). Vagner Love stated that when he lived in Europe, while playing for CSKA Moscow, experiences of discrimination off the pitch were part of daily life. Adriano did not comment directly on experiences of racism while abroad. However, the prominence of racist taunts in Italian football makes it highly unlikely that he did not experience similar attacks (Podaliri and Balestri 1998, Thompson 2013). Marcel Tonini has documented that black Brazilian football players who played in Europe tend to develop a deeper sense of “negritude,” as they experience more explicit forms of racism than in Brazil (Tonini 2013:20).

Vagner Love appears to fit this pattern. In explaining why he continued to visit favelas like Rocinha, Vagner Love stated that he preferred visiting favelas to living in Europe in part because he is subjected to less racism in favelas. In an interview with Sportv, he stated: “the culture of favelas is different than anywhere else in the world. Over there [in Europe], anywhere that you go, people look at you. Because I’m black, because I’m Brazilian, there’s that prejudice. In the favela, everyone treats you well, they open the doors of their homes to you” (Gazeta Esportiva April 2, 2010). While Vagner did not explicitly comment on racism in Brazil, he emphasized a distinctively favela-based experience of race. His contrast was not between an explicitly racist European society and non-racist Brazil, but between experiences of racism in Europe and a more welcoming experience in favelas. What he left unstated was the contrast between racial experiences in favelas and racial experiences in the rest of the city of Rio.

Several observers also noted that the attention paid to Adriano and Vagner Love for their supposed “involvement” with traffickers was much more intense than coverage of white celebrities involved in similar cases. The blogger Mateus Mendes de Souza noted the difference between coverage of Vagner Love and Adriano’s cases and that

involving the white comedian Leandro Hassum Moreira, whose father was sentenced to 10 years in prison for drug trafficking. When he searched for the three men's names and the word *traficante* (drug-trafficker) in G1 and Google – two of Brazil's largest online news sources – the results were shockingly disparate: a Google search for Adriano and *traficante* resulted in 114,000 hits, a search for Vagner Love and *traficante* got 177,000 hits, and a search for Leandro Hassum and *traficante* resulted in only 153 hits (Blog do Matus).

Most obviously, this points to the presence of racism in a society that often sees itself as free from racism. It also signals a different experience of race in favelas, spaces that are largely, although not exclusively, inhabited by black and mixed-race people. The assumption that favela spaces are also spaces of criminality and illegality is also revealed. Yet the form that race takes in these articles is ironic: in a sense, it is not hypervisualized but “invisibilized,” a subtext that is so clear that it does not even need to be stated. In media coverage of Adriano and Vagner Love, the ties between blackness, favelas and criminality were presented as an “obvious” aspect of Rio's urban geography.

Conclusion: Sport Scandals and Performance Anxiety

The scandals involving Adriano and Vagner Love occurred in favelas which now have UPP police pacification programs. It is unlikely that the football players had much of a direct effect on efforts to pacify Rio. The occupation of Vila Cruzeiro by the police and army in November 2010 was triggered by a series of attacks carried out by drug traffickers on a major highway and in other areas of the city. Vagner Love being escorted to Rocinha's funk dance by traffickers, if that is in fact what happened, drew increased attention to organized crime in that favela. The scandal involving Vanger

Love, though, did not precipitate Rocinha's occupation by the police and military in 2011.⁴ Rocinha's location just above a major highway tunnel connecting the tourist areas of Ipanema and Leblon with neighborhood of Barra da Tijuca, where many of the Olympic Games will be held, was no doubt far more important.

Instead, what the scandals surrounding the player reveal are a larger set of "performance anxieties" as Rio is placed on a global stage. Daniel Goldstein has argued that discourses and practices centered around security have become central aspects of an emerging mode of governance in Latin America (Goldstein 2010). He points out that security is a discourse that attempts to paper over the contradictions and social fragmentation instigated by the collapse of the neoliberal project in Latin America. The scandals involving Adriano and Vagner Love reveal that this process is far from seamless. Attempts to "pacify" Rio produce deep fissures and anxieties, contestations and contradictions, and the "parahumanized" often refuse to be made passive victims who can be "saved" by others.

The attempt to produce greater security in Rio is an essential part of an effort to encourage greater inflows of international capital. If this does occur, will global economic forces improve life in Rio for all of its citizens, or disrupt established social, political and cultural hierarchies? Will "safer" favelas lead to greater economic opportunity for poor, black and mixed-race favela residents? This could produce forms of upward social mobility, and greater access to capital – exemplified by Adriano and Vagner Love – which violate the "acceptable" norms of upper-class Brazilian society.

Pacifying the city of Rio also relies on discourses that depict favelas as "naturally" unsafe and insecure, and that depict the line between legality and illegality

⁴ Much more attention was drawn to Rocinha in August 2010, when traffickers from that favela engaged in a shoot-out with the police early one Sunday morning in the wealthy neighborhood of São Conrado and invaded the Intercontinental hotel.

as equally clear-cut and “obvious.” Yet the incidents surrounding the players raised anxieties about whether such lines were clear. Both players had enough personal wealth to avoid supposedly “dangerous” favelas, yet both chose to socialize there. Rather than seeing favelas as “unsafe,” they saw them as spaces of social intimacy and greater autonomy. And instead of depicting drug-traffickers as an invading army, one that could be sharply distinguished from “regular” favela residents, they revealed the patterns of sociability, friendship, and joint occupation of space that connect favela residents who sell drugs with the far larger number who do not.

The scandals involving Adriano and Vagner Love also drew sharp attention to how race is mapped onto the unequal urban fabric of the city of Rio. Here, the stories reveal a major missing component of the pacification policy: while the policy seeks to change how the police patrol favelas, there has been no sustained attention to how race and racism impact policing. Yet the scandals involving Adriano and Vagner Love show how the criminalization and racialization of Rio’s favelas are deeply intertwined.

Beyond drawing attention to the fact that distinctions between “safe” and “unsafe,” legal and illegal, criminal or innocent, might not be universal, but might depend on one’s social location, the scandals also posed a deeper question: is “pacification” feasible and desirable? Will pacification produce safe, secure and rule-governed spaces for residents of Rio’s favelas? Or will pacification, like attempts to “modernize” Brazilian football, reveal ongoing patterns of corruption, continuing inequalities, and deep institutional weaknesses?

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