

THE MONOPOLY IN SPORTS: A COMPARATIVE STUDY ABOUT THE ORGANIZATION OF COMMERCIAL SPORTS IN USA, ENGLAND AND BRAZIL (1870-1920)

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The present study aims to compare the economic structure for commercialization of the most popular sports (Szymanski, 2010) in the United States (baseball), England (football) and Brazil (football). The choice of comparing baseball with football occurs because it was the preferred sport in USA and also based on the organization that Baseball reached. Until 1902 there were different leagues, as The National Association of Professional Baseball Players and National League of Baseball Clubs, which compete for the attention of consumers. The Major League Baseball brought together the idea of one sport one league.

The Premier League is a reference for most football leagues around the world. As the Baseball League in US, the football in UK was fragmented in different leagues, which did not allow them to have one championship as we know today. The creation of the League resulted in the model that is predominant in the football leagues around the world. To analyze Brazil, our focus was Rio de Janeiro city at the turn of the nineteenth to the twentieth. This choice was made since only a few major cities had sports development, and Rio was not only the country's capital, but it was also the most developed city in terms of sports. Also, football was the most important sport. In that period there was not a National Championship in Brazil, which could be analyzed. We analyze why these three countries have different forms of sports organizations (leagues) that sell sports events. England had an open national league system with team relegations and promotions. United States had a close national league, with no relegation and promotion system (Fort, 2000; Cain and Haddock, 2005). Brazil has both regional and national open leagues with team relegations and promotions.

Since we observe that the leagues are deliberately designed to increase profits by means of monopolistic market control, we can analyze sports leagues' formation through the lens of Marxist monopoly's conception (Sweezy, 1942).

Supported in comparative methodology, we work with historical research data as official documents from the governments, sports clubs and leagues in both physical (in Brazil) and online archives. The comparative historiographical methodology, seeks to understand both generalizing aspects, as, and especially, the peculiar characteristics of the economic organization of the sport in different ways in each of these countries.

The clubs and leagues were examined in the light of economic and geographic characteristics of each region. Population, economic and transport data were collected in both official statistical abstracts from the three countries, and in publications of authors who are dedicated to studying such points. The size of countries, the number of large cities and the distance between them, and the possibility of displacement for athletes, coaches and supporters are taken into account to analyze the economic possibility of the formation of regional or national championships. Data from clubs and leagues were obtained in official records of these institutions. Based on the methodology of comparative studies (Kocka, 2003), we analyze three similar contexts in three different locations to better understand the economic viability of such projects.

As results we could observe that the monopolization of sports markets occurred differently in the three countries, but at almost the same time (between 1890 and 1920). But, as Brazil was in late phase of capitalist development and there was no way of integrating distant regions of the country, there was space for a national league and many official regional leagues. We conclude that, despite a monopolistic movement in the sports capitalist development, each country has particular characteristics that were crucial to the way that this monopolization occurred. This research shows that in each country, sports managements were able to take decisions with monopolistic intentions hardly influenced by a broader context. And these decisions still remain in the sports' structure of each country until nowadays.

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