

The Making of a Global FIFA: Cold War Politics and the Rise of João Havelange to the FIFA Presidency, 1950-1974, by Luis Guilherme Burlamaqui, translated by John Ellis-Guardiola, Oldenbourg. De Gruyter, 2023, 243pp., £87.50, ISBN 978-3-11-075968-6

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The title of Brazilian historian Luis Guilherme Burlamaqui's book is indicative of the intrinsic link between former FIFA President João Havelange and the construction of FIFA as a global institution that still dominates world sport. In their obituary to Havelange, *World Soccer* noted that 'his legacy is the world of sport as we know it'¹. He dominated world football for the last quarter of the twentieth-century, forging diplomatic, political, financial and sporting networks that converted FIFA into a seemingly untouchable behemoth, prior to the corruption scandals that brought down his successor Sepp Blatter and tarnished his own reputation. As such, studies on FIFA and Havelange's rise to power and impact following unseating Sir Stanley Rous in 1974 have not been lacking; as Burlamaqui discusses, much of this historiography was sponsored by Havelange himself, in an attempt to narrate and cement his achievements.

This book, the first volume of the RERIS: Studies in International Sport Relations network, sets out to interrogate these official histories of Havelange's ascent to the FIFA presidency. Originating from Burlamaqui's PhD thesis in Portuguese and translated effectively by John-Ellis Guardiola (though a more thorough edit would have been useful), the book explores how global political and sporting concerns in the 1960s and 1970s overlapped, and were exploited adroitly by Havelange. These concerns predominantly related to Third World nations in Africa and Asia seeking more influence and representation in the sporting and diplomatic spheres, as well as dissatisfaction with FIFA's eurocentricity. Burlamaqui establishes the Games of the New Emerging Forces (GANEFO) in 1963 as an important starting point in this process. GANEFO and other political/sporting conflicts affecting FIFA have received some prior, but insufficient, academic attention. Dietschy looked at how FIFA gradually moved from a European dominated institution to respond to globalization processes and the problems caused by new members joining from the decolonising world². Sugden and Tomlinson argued that these new FIFA members from the Third World 'were more attuned to the political dimension of the game than were longer established football nations'³ whilst discussing the crises involving China, Chile and South Africa. The latter situation regarding South Africa, apartheid and Rous' unwillingness to mix football and politics that led to the subsequent creation of a bloc of African FIFA members voting for Havelange, was also the subject of close analysis by Darby⁴. Burlamaqui's book allows for a closer and extended discussion of this political dimension of football awareness that was effectively mobilised by Havelange. However, it also strikes out into new ground, by exploring important factors such as the Brazilian political and economic context that allowed Havelange to export a political 'grammar of development' (25) to the Third World in his campaigning, the construction of social, sporting, business and political networks in Brazil and abroad, and the role of agents in his campaign for the FIFA presidency.

At its core, this is essentially a book scrutinising the construction of networks with a focus on soccer-as-diplomacy as conceived by Peter Beck⁵. Each chapter has these issues at their heart. Bookended by an introduction and conclusion, the book is divided into five chapters. Chapter 1 explores FIFA under Rous in the 1960s dealing with various political issues that impacted upon its own structures and governance of the game, thereby indicating within FIFA itself and between Rous and different continental and national football federations that could be exploited by Havelange in his presidential

campaign. Crucial here is explanation of the fallout of the 1966 World Cup leading to the South American nations coalescing as a voting bloc for perhaps the first time since they had outmanoeuvred European delegates in the 1929 FIFA congress to ensure Uruguay would host the first World Cup⁶. This bloc, Burlamaqui argues, given South America's footballing prestige, would be able to lead and influence newer FIFA members in Africa and Asia, creating a powerful alliance within FIFA that would unseat Rous and remain a feature of Havelange's 24-year FIFA presidency.

Chapters 2 and 3 focus on Havelange and his accumulation of sporting, business and political resources within Brazil that led first to his presidency of the Brazilian Sports Federation (CBD) and then to aspire to the FIFA position. Havelange is shown to be the product of a social class and ideology seeking to maintain influence over sport and society in Brazil. Membership of clubs such as Fluminense helped established alliances that would be sustained in the business and political domains in subsequent decades. Of particular note is Havelange's relationship with President Juscelino Kubitschek the politician at the forefront of much of Brazil's development thrust from 1956-1961. Burlamaqui shows how Havelange earned political currency through making the 1958, 1962 and 1970 Brazil World Cup wins a personal triumph of his CBD governance based on technical, tactical, and scientific preparation and organisation, but how he was lucky to survive the 1966 failure. Due to Brazil's economic miracle and success on the footballing field (and despite human rights abuses perpetuated by the military government that Havelange cautiously worked alongside), Brazil and its football, led by Havelange and Pelé as 'two harmonic poles of the relationship between the people and the elite' (134) became of relevance internationally for Third World nations interested in both economic and sporting development.

Chapter 4 discusses how this interest facilitated the creation of networks between Brazil, Havelange and African and Asian federations. Here, Burlamaqui focuses on the case study of the agent Elias Zaccour as an important intermediary for Havelange in these continents. Through organising tours of relatively unheralded clubs such as Bonsucesso, ABC Natal and São Cristovão and more major teams such as Pelé's Santos to Africa, the Middle East and more peripheral European nations, Havelange could demonstrate a commitment to these newer FIFA members, understand their grievances, and create relationships that could be transferred to votes and support when it mattered. In addition to his own exhaustive tours around the globe, Havelange also invited African and Asian delegates to Brazil to see evidence of a development model that could serve as an example elsewhere. Chapter 5 explores the voting maps and the Rous and Havelange stances on political and sporting crises in China, Chile, South Africa and Portugal that would affect voting patterns for the FIFA presidency. The addition of Portugal as an additional factor impacting on campaigning is welcome. Here, Burlamaqui is careful to unpick some of the regional disputes that made voting a rather more complex scenario than it is often portrayed by other work on the election. He also assesses corruption claims raised by Rous himself in the aftermath as well as by other writers, concluding that it is 'difficult to imagine that Havelange won the election exclusively by buying votes' (190).

In modern sporting parlance, there is a tendency to focus on 'opportunities' rather than limitations. In addition to the strength of its own research and arguments, what this book does so effectively through its own case study centred on Brazil as represented by Havelange, is demonstrate opportunities and pathways for future research into the construction and operation of sporting and diplomatic networks in history. These networks could include and focus on those between individual nations and FIFA (or other major sporting governing bodies), between nation and confederations, and intercontinentally within more global networks. Burlamaqui convincingly shows that South America 'was not a passive agent in building an international sports order' (23), and more work is needed on how other South American nations have acted as part of this sports order, either

individually or through CONMEBOL. Similar work can, and should, be conducted on similar processes in Africa and Asia in order to complement the existing rather Eurocentric research. The role of sports tours discussed by Burlamaqui in chapter 4 also offers a rich area of research potential, and I for one would welcome more detailed work on this understudied area of sports diplomacy. There is often a tendency to focus on press reports as the main primary sources for analysis of the nation represented through sport; such reports could be aligned with the types of sources that Burlamaqui so effectively draws upon (eleven archives in three countries, government reports, diplomatic cables, interviews and FIFA and football federation records) to provide a study of the diplomatic processes involved before, during and after such tours. As Burlamaqui indicates, Zaccour was not the only agent and intermediary at work here; who else was operating, where, why and how?

In short, this book is an important contribution to the field of work on FIFA, sporting diplomacy, and the historiography of South American football and its global impact. It effectively decentres European concerns to place more global processes to the forefront. Given the importance of Brazil and Havelange on and off the pitch in the period of time that the book focuses on, this seems more than apt.

Notes

1. *World Soccer* 16 August 2016
2. Paul Dietschy, Making football global? FIFA, Europe, and the non-European football world, 1912–74'
3. John Sugden and Alan Tomlinson, Global power struggles in world football: FIFA and UEFA, 1954–74, and their legacy, p.6
4. Paul Darby, Stanley Rous's 'own goal': football politics, South Africa and the Contest for the FIFA presidency in 1974
5. Peter J. Beck, Conclusion: "Good Kicking" is not only "Good Politics" but also "Good Diplomacy"
6. Lorenzo Jalabert D'Amado, Montevideo 1930: reassessing the selection of the first World Cup host'

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World Soccer. 'Joao Havelange leaves behind a huge legacy and a tainted reputation'. 16 August 2016, <https://www.worldsoccer.com/world-soccer-latest/joao-havelange-leaves-behind-a-huge-legacy-and-a-tainted-reputation-386294> [accessed 11 June 2024)