
A Mulatto Brazil - The narrative of the Dionysian character of Brazilian society in the 2014 FIFA World Cup

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Résumé

In 2014, Brazil hosted the FIFA World Cup. Amidst cases of corruption and excessive spending that tainted the event (Goldblatt 2014), the organising committee took the opportunity to reinforce social myths concerning Brazilian society, using carefully chosen historical fragmentary references (Pfister 2011). One of them - conveyed by the event slogan, its mascot, its posters and its ceremonies - was that of a *Mulatto Brazil* (i.e. an inventive and festive nation under the sign of two idiosyncratic worlds). The myth, which had its roots in the duality between Dionysius and Apollo (Nietzsche, 2000), was brought forward by Gilberto Freyre (1938) during Brazil's nationalistic authoritarian regime, the *Estado Novo* (1937-1945). According to it, Brazil's history of miscegenation between African and European peoples defines how Brazilians live their lives, organise their society, make music, dance and... play football (Freyre 1962, Maranhão 2007). In this presentation, we will introduce the identitarian, political and commercial uses of the Mulatto Brazil myth throughout the 20th century and - through the content analysis of its promotional material and ceremonies - demonstrate how it was used by the 2014 FIFA World Cup organizing committee so to reinforce the idea of Brazilian exceptionality (based on idealised concepts of ethnicity) to attract tourists, ease social tensions and justify the expenditure with the event.

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