

# The National Torch Relay in the City of Porto Alegre (1938-1947): a study on the participation of sports clubs<sup>1</sup>

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**Abstract:** This study aims to understand the participation of sports clubs of Porto Alegre in devising the National Torch Relay (NTR) in the city of Porto Alegre (State of Rio Grande do Sul – Brazil) from 1938 to 1947. Printed and oral sources were used in this study. Sports clubs of Porto Alegre, represented by athletes and managers helped to create and set up the NTR in Porto Alegre. Moreover, sports clubs built representations of the Brazilian national identity through the NTR.

**Key words:** Sports Clubs. Relay. History.

## 1 INTRODUCTION

The National Torch Relay (NTR) was a cultural event that took place in the beginning of the celebrations of Independence Week in Porto Alegre (RS) in the late 1930s (AMARO JÚNIOR, 1944; LIGA DE DEFESA NACIONAL, 2006). It was implemented by the National Defense League (NDL) in 1938 and repeated annually with the support of the sports clubs of Porto Alegre. It was devised by club managers after they attended the unique Olympic Torch (BORGERS, 1996), in the Opening Ceremony of the Olympic Games of Berlin in 1936.

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<sup>1</sup> This article corresponds to an excerpt of the masters degree dissertation of the first author called "The Fire burning in our clubs! The National Torch Relay in Porto Alegre (1938-1947)".

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When they returned to Brazil, these managers decided to implement a similar event in the city of Porto Alegre. In the first 1938 edition, NTR started at Viamão – the first capital city of Rio Grande do Sul – and ended in Porto Alegre. The torch was carried by famous local athletes to the National Pyre built in the Farrroupilha Park – also called Redenção – to be lit at zero hour of 1<sup>st</sup> September (CORREIO DO POVO, 1938a, p. 11).

The celebration events of Independence Week of Porto Alegre started when the National Pyre was lit. They would last until 7<sup>th</sup> September, the official day of the Independence of Brazil, when the Symbolic Fire that had been burning since the 1st September was extinguished on the National Pyre of Porto Alegre.

Based on these facts we noticed that since 1938 NTR was one of the main activities celebrating Independence Week in Porto Alegre, as suggested by the article: “The greatest race in do Brazil” (FONSECA, 1961, p. 66-67).

It was also noted that NTR quickly became very popular, both locally and domestically. By the end of the New State Regime (1937-1945), NTR had already extrapolated national frontiers and was considered the “biggest torch relay event (symbolically) in the world” (INICIADA..., 1944, p. 10).

Although NTR is held until nowadays, under this study we endeavored to investigate the 1938-1947 period. This timeframe encompasses the year when the first relay took place in 1938 until its last edition in 1947, when the first signs of the weakening of NTR were noted. Moreover, after 1947, there were other cultural in place to affirm the regional identity of Rio Grande do Sul (BILHAR; OLIVEN, 2006; PAIXÃO CORTES, 1994).

Considering the participation of sports club managers of Alegre in creating the NTR, and because Porto Alegre was also the finishing line of the Torch Relay, i.e. the high point of the event, this study focuses on that city.

The scope hereunder addressed the Cultural History (CHARTIER, 2000; BURKE, 2005; PESAVENTO, 2004) in order to discuss different concepts, e.g. Representations (CHARTIER, 2000); Invented Traditions (HOBSBAWM, 1988; 1984) and National Identity (SMITH, 1997). Based on the perspectives, the purpose of this study is to understand the participation of sports clubs of Porto Alegre in the creation of the National Torch Relay in Porto Alegre from 1938 to 1947.

## 2 METHODOLOGICAL ROUTE

NTR had not yet been the subject of academic studies, where only a few references were found to it in publications focused on the New State Regime. To this end, in order to meet the objectives of this study, printed sources were investigated and oral interviews were recorded and used as a source. Historical sources collected in different venues, such as private collections, public archives, libraries, clubs, sports federations, foundations, memorials and museums were organized firstly into a Databank (ROLIM, 2008) to facilitate understanding the information.

Documents and works about NDL were the primary resource sources; while they provided primary references, NDL documents are rigid and focused in their content, usually written by the same authors. Thus, the same quotes were often found in different NDL documents. However, we used NDL records as the primary source in relation to the name of athletes, clubs, cities and NTR issue number. Secondary sources were magazine *Revista do Globo*, the newspaper *Correio do Povo*, sports related almanacs and specific publications.

*Revista do Globo* was an important magazine published in the State of Rio Grande do Sul by publishing house *Livraria Editora Globo* in 1929-1967. According to Torres (1997), *Revista do Globo* strengthened the media of Porto Alegre and filled the gap left behind by similar publications that failed.

Three specific issues of NTR were found and some 30 of *Revista do Globo* that shed light on the context of this study.

The issues of the month of September of newspaper *Correio do Povo* for the period 1938-1947 were investigated according to the criterion applied to the month when the NTR took place and the years of the editions studied here under. It should be noted that *Correio do Povo* was constantly used as a propaganda tool for the political regime of that time. Based on newspaper's editorials and the tone of its articles, they revealed its support to President Getúlio Vargas, and consequently, to the initiatives to NDL (TORRES, 1997).

The publications on sports and variety of previous years were used as a source of information. Of the 14 sports publications used in the study, Mazzoni (1943/1944) wrote a note about NTR and Amaro Jr. (1947) also made a direct reference to NTR. Other issues of this publication were used to address the context of the study.

Secondary sources used in this study were Volume 1 of the collection "*Aspectos Gerais de Porto Alegre*" [Overall Features of Porto Alegre] (PIMENTEL, 1945), and the book "*Brasileiros de cabelos loiros e olhos azuis*" [Brazilians with blond hair and blue eyes] (DAUDT, 1952). The former was published in the end of the New State Regime, where eight pages referred to the Regional Nucleus of NDL and its most important initiatives, among which NTR. The latter brought some information on the relationship between sports managers that were in Berlin (1936) and then with NTR. Daudt's (1952) book shows the influence of German immigrants and their descendants in institutions and entities.

Two interviews were the oral source of this study previously approved by the Ethics and Research Committee of the Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul under the study number 200.7739. Criteria used to select the interviewees were the indirect involvement with NTR, and mainly their direct contact with the creators of NTR.

The interviewees will be called by the initials MT and HL under this study. MT is the son of Túlio De Rose and he accompanied his father throughout his career in sports and journalism NTR. HL attended the first edition of NTR in 1938 in Porto Alegre and saw his father carrying the Torch. Moreover, HL is associated with the sports club *Porto Alegre Grêmio Náutico União*, where he met Darci Vignoli and befriended Túlio De Rose.

Interviews were recorded and later transcribed and analyzed with the other documents (BARDIN, 2000; MORAES, 1999; TRIVIÑOS, 1987). The historiographical method applied to this study was to “Assemble, combine, compose, cross, reveal the detail, give relevance to the secondary” (PESAVENTO, 2004, p. 65). Hence, all sources used herein can be considered the bearers of significant traces constructed to investigate the issue at hand. The assessment of NTR is presented below.

### **3 SPORTS CLUBS AND THE CREATION OF THE TORCH RELAY**

The National Torch Relay (NTR) was an invented tradition that started in 1938. This cultural practice was implemented during the New State Regime (1937-1945) and has lasted up to the present time. It was a fertile historical period for Brazilian politics when there was a concern to build the nation's traditions. NTR is one of the many traditions that arose in the period, where it was strongly institutionalized and in a short time became permanent. In face of this situation and according to the theoretical guidelines of Hobsbawm (1988) we endeavored to formulate a version of NTR for issues related to its creation and implementation, rather than to its survival up to the present time.

NTR was created in Porto Alegre in 1938 when it was institutionalized by a regional center called the National Defense League (NDL). NDL a civic cultural entity created by

Olavo Bilac on 7 July 1916. Its Central Board was set up in the National Library of Rio de Janeiro (LIGA DE DEFESA NACIONAL, 1983). The ongoing objective of NDL according to the Minutes of the Inauguration, handwritten by Bilac, was to: drive conscious and cohesive patriotism; disseminate primary, professional/military and civic education; and defend work with discipline; defend liberty with consciousness; and the dignity of our history by paying homage to heroism and to prepare our future (BILAC, 1916 *apud* LIGA DE DEFESA NACIONAL, 2006).

Due to the encouragement of the country's nationalization process during the Brazilian New State Regime (1937-1945), NDL became stronger as it was aligned to the ideals of that administration. It can be noted that Regional Boards and Municipal Centers were set up under the umbrella of NDL's Central Board. Hence, the institution was given members and 'arms' to embrace the Brazilian society. One of those 'arms', so to speak, was the 'strong arm' installed in Rio Grande do Sul on 12 October 1937.

The State of Rio Grande do Sul was chosen perhaps due to the problem of "lack of union within the federation" (BILAC, 1916 *apud* LIGA DE DEFESA NACIONAL, 2006), given that this State and specifically its capital city Porto Alegre were known for its large population of German immigrants and their descendants. Moreover, Porto Alegre in the 1920s was known as the "German city" (PESAVENTO, 1994) due to the influence of these immigrants, both economic and sociocultural.

With the cultural mark left by the "Brazilians with blue eyes and blond hair" (DAUDT, 1952), Porto Alegre, was different from the center of Brazil. Although its references came from large urban centers, such as Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo, in the city's quest to become modern it turned to trends from another country.

The extent of the “German impact” is clear under this study by addressing the eight fascicles<sup>2</sup> published by *Revista do Globo* in 1936 with news about the Olympic Games Berlin. Furthermore, it should be noted that the closer relationship with Germany has been ongoing since the second half of the nineteenth century, when German instructors of gymnastics and other sports came to work in the sports clubs of Porto Alegre. German immigrants and descendants, some of which were gymnasts from Porto Alegre, would also go to Germany both to visit their relatives and gymnastics institutes (MAZO, 2003).

Hence, it is safe to suggest that travelling from Porto Alegre to attend the Olympic Games in Berlin did not happen by chance. In his research of articles published by *Revista do Globo*, Dalmáz (2002) presents the types of relationships between Brazil and Germany in different periods. According to the author, from 1933 to 1936 it was based on mistrust and enthusiasm. Thus, travelling to attend the Olympic Games of 1936 was an opportunity to see *in loco* the so-called modern German society, where body-related activities and sports played an important role.

The quest for modern standards in Porto Alegre was not limited to cultural aspects. Initiatives endeavored by the state and municipal government had already started a process of change to the lifestyle of its citizens. The transformations that Porto Alegre underwent in order to become a ‘modern city’ provided the necessary support for great public events to take place, such as the celebrations of Independence Week and NTR (MONTEIRO, 1992).

However, the fact that the city’s ethnic-cultural identity was associated with German immigrants is worthy of notice, as it was because of the attendance of sports managers from Porto Alegre to the Olympic Games of 1936, when they saw the Opening Ceremony Torch Relay for the first time, that this

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<sup>2</sup> Fascicles of magazine *Revista do Globo* that focused on the Olympic Games of Berlin in 1936 are issues no.168, 177, 181, 186, 188, 189, 194 and 195.

event could be copied and implemented as the NTR in Porto Alegre.

But who were those citizens of Porto Alegre that attended the Olympic Games of Berlin in 1936? At the Opening Ceremony of the Games, among the members of the delegation of the Brazilian Confederation of Sports (CBD), the following managers and members of sports clubs of Porto Alegre were: Túlio De Rose and Ernesto Capelli, both with *Club Italiano Canottieri Duca degli Abruzzi*<sup>3</sup> and the rowing Federação Gaúcha de Remo; José Carlos Daudt, representing *Liga Atlético Rio Grandense* and *Turnerbund*<sup>4</sup> and Darci Vignoli of *Turnershaft*<sup>5</sup>, who later joined the regional center (RS) of the National Defense League. Túlio De Rose was also there as correspondent for the newspaper Empresa Jornalística Caldas Júnior.

In his interview, MT informed that Túlio “was only in charge of sending News about the Olympic Games of Berlin, but he was impressed with the celebration and with the Olympic Torch Relay”. The emotional intensity caused by the Olympic Torch Relay on Túlio De Rose and the hundreds of people in the stadium reveals the force of this cultural practice that would later become one of the symbols of the Olympic Games of the Modern Ages (INTERNATIONAL OLYMPIC COMMITTEE, 2002). Furthermore, according to MT:

The delegation from Rio Grande do Sul also interviewed Hitler [...] as he was aware that there were many German immigrants in Rio Grande do Sul; he knew a lot about Blumenau, he knew that Rio Grande do Sul was near Blumenau, and he gave my father [Túlio De Rose] a bayonet, a penknife that was a bayonet [...]

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<sup>3</sup> Also known as the Italian Club. After the nationalization process it was called ‘*Clube de Regatas Duque de Caxias*’ (MAZO, 2003).

<sup>4</sup> The last German sports club to be nationalized. As of 1942 it was called *Sociedade Ginástica Porto Alegre* 1867, presently called SOGIPA (MAZO, 2003).

<sup>5</sup> The rowing club founded by German immigrant descendants in 1906. After the nationalization process the club was called *Grêmio Náutico União* (MAZO, 2003).

All this stimuli we ingrained in Túlio De Rose to the point that he conceived “the idea of promoting a similar event in our country, uniting the sons and daughters from all the states in a symbolic reaffirmation of national unity a” (AMARO JR., 1944, p. 40). The time elapsed between returning from Berlin (1936) and the actual enactment of the first edition of NTR in 1938 in Porto Alegre can be considered as the time Túlio De Rose was looking for means to enable the Olympic Torch Relay in Porto Alegre.

The work done by Túlio De Rose as a journalist for newspaper *Correio do Povo* of Porto Alegre and his association with *Federação Gaúcha de Remo* and *Clube de Remo dos Italianos* enabled him to carry out this initiative. However, in order to hold a symbolic Torch Relay event, Túlio De Rose would have to overcome some hurdles, such as unpaved roads covered with potholes, call athletes and offer them no reward for their participation, and first and foremost, justify the importance of holding a symbolic event that at a first glance seemed to be directly associated with the Olympic Games.

Despite all the aforementioned unfavorable aspects to holding the NTR, after two years Túlio De Rose was able to see his dream come true. This was largely due to his friendship with Darci Vignoli, who was also in Berlin and was a member of the NDL Regional Center and the sports club *Grêmio Náutico União*. The association between Darci Vignoli and Túlio De Rose seems to be relevant enough to affirm that it was in Vignoli the Túlio found and ally among the member of NDL who helped in actually implementing the NTR. According to HL:

Túlio encouraged the managers of the National Defense League, specially president and friend Captain Darcy Vignoli to implement great sports, civic and cultural events [...] Thanks to his prestige [Vignoli's] with federal sports agencies and his solid friendship with President of Brazil Getúlio Dornelles Vargas, it was possible to

consolidate the Symbolic Torch Relay of Brazil, always organized and led by Túlio De Rose.

However, the register of NTR with NDL was done by Major Ignácio de Freitas Rolim. Major Rolim seemed to be the organizer of sports events sponsored by the government,<sup>6</sup> and for this reason we make reference to his being the organizer of the Regional Center (RS) of NDL in 1937 and 1938. Thus, he was responsible for inaugurating the 1<sup>st</sup> NTR in 1938, as the opening ceremony of Independence Week in Porto Alegre (PIMENTEL, 1945).

The justification for implementing the NTR in 1938 was strongly associated to the historical relationship established with this event. The idea of fire was used as it is a natural element “that is part of the history of humankind since the beginning of evolution” and because the objective of the Olympic Movement in the form of the Olympic Torch was to “unite the races” (LIGA DE DEFESA NACIONAL, 2006).

In this sense, other ‘official’ publications of NDL (SAFADY, 1960; 1971) that were used as sources confirm this idea, as they included chronicles, poems and the so-called nationalistic texts about NTR that support the justifications for the creation of NTR. Moreover, the justification to hold the NTR was supported by sacred and historical associations built by the media of the period at hand.

Newspaper *Correio do Povo* gives a good example, where the implementation of the first edition of NTR stands out (CORREIO DO POVO, 1938b). Publications were the means to disseminate the idea that NTR would be merely the continuation of a practice already established in the past of the great historical and successful civilizations (O FOGO, 1938a, p. 5; O FOGO, 1938b, p. 5; O FOGO, 1938c, p. 5). Hence, the goal was to justify in Porto Alegre a cultural practice that would foster building Brazil into a great country.

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<sup>6</sup> For further information see Castro (1997).

In order to reach the goal of implementing NTR as a continuous event, Hobsbawm (1984) defines traditions as a set of practices usually regulated by tacit rules or norms generally accepted, where these practices detain a ritualistic or symbolic nature. Thus, it should be pondered if there were no formal rules in place for NTR. We did not find any record for the period at hand of formal and/or instituted rules for the creation of NTR. Actually, it seems that there were 'tacit or commonly accepted rules' for organizing NTR.

It is possible to identify common and variable elements in the construction of a NTR within the scope of the State of RS. These elements depended on the organization of the city where the NTR was coming through. According to information collected, it is possible to register elements shared by the NTR: NTR started with a ceremony where the torch was lit; then, the torch was passed to the athletes; who started relaying it along the cities where they ran; until they reached Porto Alegre where the ceremony to light the Pyre would be held.

Hence, establishing the NTR was done via tacit rules depending on the venues where it crossed, i.e. the basis for NTR, which was leaving one venue and arriving at another, remained unchanged.

However, its format was constructed depending on the cities it would cross through. Up to a certain point, this ensured its innovative nature and led the local communities to identify themselves with the NTR

However, one should keep in mind that the NTR in itself had a goal. Thus, it was possible to categorize it, according to Hobsbawm (1984; 1988) as a created tradition, the main purpose of which was socializing, imparting ideas, a system of values and behavior standards.

#### **4 SPORTS CLUBS AND THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE REPRESENTATION OF BRAZILIAN IDENTITY VIA THE TORCH RELAY**

This section addresses how sports clubs via NTR helped to build the Brazilian national identity in the mind of the citizens of Porto Alegre. The invention of this tradition aimed at creating a process whereby norms and values would be installed via repetition from 1938 to 1947.

It should be noted that during the New State Regime (1937-1945), all publications were controlled by federal agencies, i.e. the Press and Propaganda Department (DIP). Most of the printed material used as a source for this study was stamped by DIP and their publishing had probably been approved by the New State. Thus, the representatives that helped build the national identity in the minds of the citizens of Porto Alegre could show the idea of who created it (CHARTIER, 1994).

NTR was part of the process of building the new Brazilian national identity (SMITH, 1997) proposed by the New State Regime. The tradition would strengthen solidarity bonds of the members of society, whereby they would share common myths and memories. To this intent, from 1938 to 1947 NTR endeavored to build a cohesive and nationwide representation in the minds of the people of Porto Alegre. The format for this representation was travelling throughout the nation– Brazilian cities – bringing the National Torch to the capital city of the State of Rio Grande do Sul-Porto Alegre.

Table 1 shows the year of each edition, the meaning attributed to NTR, and the kilometers covered in the country until it reached Porto Alegre.

Year of Edition	NTR Starting Point	Meaning of NTR	Km Covered <sup>7</sup>
1938	Viamão (RS – Brazil)	Alluding to the first capital city of RS	25
1939	Rio Pardo (RS – Brazil)	Alluding to a city of RS rich in tradition	411
1940	Florianópolis (SC – Brazil)	Alluding to the capital city's historic relationship	599
1941	São Paulo (SP – Brazil)	Alluding to the place of the Independence of Brazil	2,123
1942	Tiradentes (MG – Brazil)	Alluding to Tiradentes, considered a martyr of the Brazilian Independence	3,974
1943	Salvador (BA – Brazil)	Alluding to the first capital city of Brazil	4,639
1944	Recife (PE – Brazil)	Alluding to national heroes of the Guararapes War	6,397
1945	Monte Castelo (Italy)	Alluding to the participation of Brazil in the victory of the WWII allies	6,370
1946	Washington (USA)	Alluding to USA President Franklin Roosevelt	5,459
1947	Pistoa (Italy)	Alluding to soldiers killed in WWII	3,535

**Table 1.** NTR Editions

From table 1 it can be observed that the National Torch had a symbolic meaning according to the value it was given when it was lit. NTR presented athletes and historical figures as deities; authorities and sports managers as priests; the Farroupilha Park as a temple; the National Pyre as an image; and the NTR and the lighting of the National Pyre as rites. Hence, the representation of national unity and cohesion were reinforced by building common memories in the minds of the people of Alegre.

We noted that the building of the representation of national unity and cohesion was also done by posters (SAFADY, 1960) that aimed at disseminating NTR in Porto Alegre. According to Smith (1997, p. 58) the “[...] nation is a community of shared myths and memories, just as ethnic groups”. Hence, it can be considered that posters were

<sup>7</sup> Different sources provided different kilometers for NTR editions. This study considered information provided by the National Defense League that sponsored NTR.

produced as a strategy to create in the population a mindset of shared myths and memories that would reinforce national identity. Building representations did not suffice; it was fundamental that they be shared by everyone.

Building the representation of the national unity was also associated with the idea of a victorious country that had helped in achieving world peace as an ally of the United States in WWII. On the other hand, by covering different municipalities in the State of Rio Grande do Sul that were well-known for their ethnic diversity reinforced the idea of unity based on a single identity; the Brazilian identity.

It should be note that in 1939, NTR travelled across cities such as Santa Cruz, Venâncio Aires, Lajeado, Estrela, Taquari, Montenegro, São Sebastião do Caí, Novo Hamburgo and São Leopoldo (CORREIO DO POVO, 1939a). These cities, located in the interior of Rio Grande do Sul, had a large population of German immigrants and their descendants; through their cultural and sports associations their shared representations of the German or Italian identities.

Hence, NTR was a cultural event that helped disseminate nationalist ideas and consequently to build national unity in the municipalities of Rio Grande do Sul. This fact, to a certain extent, would help build in the minds of the people of Porto Alegre, the idea that there was a national unity in place and that it included cities identified by other forms of identities.

In this sense Smith (1997) notes that in order to consolidate its control and to homogenize the population into a compact nation, the leaders endeavored to include ethnic minorities by creating a nationalism educational program supported by influential institutions. To this purpose, NTR fostered ideas of colonization and official images of the nation to which everyone should conform. This would stall any other ideas, symbols or mindsets from being adopted.

According to Oliven (1986, p. 72), the phenomenon of culture in Brazil was based “[...] on the process of appropriating cultural manifestations and their subsequent transformation into national identity symbols”. Hence, civic events such as NTR are used to forge the mindset and to impose beliefs shared by the population as it presented images that created nationality. To this purpose, these public events were efficient tools used to reach the minds of the people and to foster the idea of national unity.

The success of ceremonies to build national identity was also associated to aesthetic issues they fostered, where the perception of beauty, diversity, dignity and warmth brought about by the skillful presentation of forms, mass, sounds and rhythms would evoke the distinct spirit of the nation (SMITH, 1997). Furthermore, the building of national unity in the minds of the people of Porto Alegre was reinforced by the city’s media. Radio stations would broadcast bulletins about NTR (TORRES, 1997) and newspaper *Correio do Povo* (1939b, p. 3) covered in the section dedicated to the municipalities the NTR event in those cities:

*Farroupilha* (31 Sep C.P.): “Today, at nine o’clock in the evening the ‘symbolic fire’ will arrive in our city with Cahy, who at midnight will light the pyre on the Altar of the Nation at the city of Caxias”

*Estrela* (31 Sep C.P.): “Today, at four o’clock in the morning the symbolic torch arrived in the city and was received at the border with the municipality of Lageado [...] It proceeded to the Bom Retiro villa from here at seven o’clock in the morning, where it arrived at eight o’clock”.

*Novo Hamburgo* (31 Sep by phone): “It was a veritable event, with the arrival of the ‘symbolic fire’ in the city at 8.30 pm. The torch was received at the border of this municipality and São Leopoldo, at a venue called Boa Saúde”

Thus, ceremonies such as NTR were used to reinforce the ideal to be reached. It can also be considered as part of a nationalism educational program and its values. Its repetition was used to remind citizens of their cultural bonds and political relationship, reaffirming both identity and unity (SMITH, 1997).

It should be noted that similar to what occurred in the interior of Rio Grande do Sul, sports associations in Porto Alegre since the mid-nineteenth century to the late 1930s was strongly marked by ethnic differences of the founders of the first clubs in the city. During this period, clubs were venues where the cultural identity of those groups were built, especially in the case of German and Italian immigrants and their descendants (MAZO, 2003).

The sports panorama of Porto Alegre comprised clubs, associations, societies, leagues, committee sand federations that exalted sports and different representations of their cultural matrix. With the onset of the New State Regime, and especially via the performance of the NDL regional center, the sports clubs of Porto Alegre had to conform to the demands posed by nationalizing actions that were in effect in Brazil. They were no longer able to hold cultural manifestations identified with the country of origin of the immigrants and their descendants. Within this context, one can infer that there was a dispute among the representations of cultural identities in city, involving the clubs considered foreign because the founders were German or Italian immigrants, and those considered national.

Hence, sports clubs should demonstrate their patriotism by participating in the celebrations of Independence Week, which included the NTR, whereby they would receive a diploma when they marched in the parade (MAZO; ROLIM, 2007). However, the 'network' that should have been in place between Túlio De Rose, José Carlos Daudt, Ernesto Cappeli and Darci Vignoli, and some of the sports club managers of

Porto Alegre may have facilitated the participation of the clubs in the NTR.

José Carlos Daudt was a member of the club called Turnerbund and was a representative of the Liga Atlética Rio Grandense, which was an institution that had called some of its athletes to take part in the first edition of NTR (CORREIO DO POVO, 1938b). Túlio De Rose and Ernesto Cappeli were members of the Clube Italiano Canottieri Duca degli Abruzzi; however, Túlio De Rose “[...] would get a three-month dispensation from the newspaper Correio do Povo to organize the NTR” (interview given by MT). Ernesto Cappeli did not have the same advantages in his job, and for this reason he dropped out from organizing the NTR. Túlio De Rose was a close friend of Darci Vignoli. Darci Vignoli was a member of Turnershaf and Liga Náutica, and later joined the regional center of the National Defense League, where he was the president of the regional center and was strongly supported by government due to “[...] his friendship with President Getúlio Vargas” (Interview given by HL).

To this end, managers joined NTR “[...] in order to defend the interests of their clubs, having in mind the sports development of Porto Alegre” (interview given by HL). The retaliation suffered by many clubs given their ethnic background might have been a red flag for sports managers to join nationalist projects.

Hence, when the ‘lent’ their athletes to Brazil’, managers would be collaborating with building national identity via NTR, and consequently would be led to thinking they were protecting their clubs from retaliation imposed by nationalization.

Table 2 shows the participation of athletes from the sports clubs of Porto Alegre in NTR along the route to Porto Alegre.

Year of NTR	Name of Athlete	Sports Club	Relay Route
1938	Mário Rosa	Not identified	Passo do Sabão
	Casemiro Marinho	<i>Grêmio Foot Ball Porto Alegrense</i>	Bairro Parthenon
	Carlos Alencastro	Not identified	Avenida João Pessoa
	Otto Ritter	<i>Turnerbund</i>	Lit the Fire on the Nation's Pyre
1939	Lauro Kliemann	<i>Turnerbund</i>	Lit the Fire on the Nation's Pyre
1940	Antônio Pereira Lira	Not identified	Lit the Fire on the Nation's Pyre
1941	Arno Franzen	<i>Clube de Regatas Almirante Barroso</i>	Carried the torch from the Rosário Church to the lighting of the Pyre
1942	Oscar Barbosa dos Santos	Not identified	Lit the Fire on the Nation's Pyre
	Antonio Rosa	Not identified	Escorted the Fire to the Pyre
	Eugênio Carlos Pinto	Not identified	Escorted the Fire to the Pyre
	Otto Ritter	<i>Turnerbund</i>	Carried the torch to the Nossa Senhora das Dores Church
1943	Carlos Eugênio Pinto	Not identified	Lit the Fire on the Nation's Pyre
	Mario Nascimento Medeiros	Not identified	Escorted the Fire to the Pyre
1944	Darci Jardim	<i>Grêmio Esportivo Renner</i>	Lit the Pire in Porto Alegre
1945	Érika Renner	<i>Turnerbund</i>	Carried the Fire to the Pyre
1946	Carlos Montagna	Not identified	Lit the Pyre in Porto Alegre
1947	Túlio De Rose	<i>Cannotieri Duca degli Abruzzi</i>	Carried the torch from Pistoia, Italy

**Table 2.** Athletes who carried the Symbolic Fire

Table 2 shows that sports clubs of Porto Alegre, represented by their athletes and managers that had joined NTR aimed at building the integrated representation of the sports milieu of Porto Alegre, previously marked by ethnical differences in the project of building the Brazilian national identity.

However, it is interesting to note that building the integrated representation of the sports milieu of Porto Alegre faced resistance. There was a dispute among the different representations, which included the athletes involved in the NTR. The ‘representation dispute’ dynamics can be observed in the uniforms of the sports clubs worn by athletes representing their clubs to run the streets of Porto Alegre. Moreover, the manner in which publications treated some athletes is evidence of this dispute of representations.

To this end, newspaper *Correio do Povo* stated that the honor of lighting the National Pyre was given to “Lauro Kliemann of Turner-Bund, South American champion of long-distance race” (CORREIO DO POVO, 1939a). In the publication of NDL athlete was “João Lauro Kliemann – Brazilian Champion of 800 meters” (SAFADY, 1960, p. 66). Hence, it could be construed that at the same time they were national heroes and collaborated in building a national identity, they represented the preservation of the identity of their clubs of origin.

It should be noted that athletes – veterans, university students, the military, students – that carried the Nation’s Symbolic Fire from 1938 to 1947 originated from different sports clubs of Porto Alegre. However, the honor of lighting the National Pyre, i.e. the last carrier of the Nation’s Symbolic Fire in the relay was an outstanding athlete from the sports club they represented in the representation dispute.

According to Smith (1997) they were specific ideas and doctrine intertwined with so-called old traditions that provided the symbolism and ceremony that would bring about profound popular emotions and aspirations. In this sense, the implementation of the doctrine specific to NTR occurred via institutions and people that were associated to it.

The National Defense League was the official institution and the sports managers of Porto Alegre were the collaborators of this process to implement national identity within the context of Porto Alegre. However, we believe that

the social institution carried out by clubs was a determining factor for NTR to be recognized by the people of Porto Alegre shared by all. Hence, every year in September these individuals as a whole would renew their feelings of belonging to the Brazilian nation.

## 5 FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The purpose of this study was to understand how sports clubs participated in the creation of the National Torch Relay (NTR) in Porto Alegre from 1938 to 1947. However, in going beyond the scope of the sports clubs of Porto Alegre, the study of the NTR can also help to understand the importance of sports during the New State Regime in Brazil. It was observed that when joining the creation and implementation process of NTR, sports clubs built the representation of a Brazilian national identity in the minds of the people of Porto Alegre. Under the period at hand, the NTR can be construed as a historically original tradition that was freely invented, and one may consider it a ceremony that was created to forge on the people of Porto Alegre, their citizenship awareness.

Governmental mechanisms created to build the Brazilian national identity in the State of Rio Grande do Sul and especially in Porto Alegre were reinforced by the invention of the NTR, the creation and implementation of which was justified during the period at hand. Furthermore, the social institution endeavored by clubs, especially by sports managers of Porto Alegre that attended the Opening Ceremony of the Olympic Games in Berlin was conducive for the NTR to reach the minds of the people of Porto Alegre with representations of national unity and cohesion.

During the political period when Brazilian national identity was being affirmed, NTR can be considered one of the nationalizing actions undertaken by Brazil in the cultural-sports scenery. The relevance given to NTR in the period at hand leads to the affirmation that its nationalizing action was

somewhat efficient. By extrapolating the country's frontiers, it was considered the most important symbolic relay event in the world, as the Olympic Torch Relay was only introduced into the worldwide scenario in 1948.

The outstanding role played by the NTR exceeded the limits of its nationalizing action, where it became an attempt to put Brazil in the limelight in the worldwide scenario. By staging the NTR, Brazil was showing its political and organizational virtues through a cultural event that took on Olympic characteristics. Hence, government support to the NTR can be construed as one of the forms of aligning the country to great world countries that also reveal themselves as such via Olympic events.

This allusion reinforces the idea that the historical study of sports and its related practices merit special attention if we are to understand political and social relationships that are part of the sports scenario. Searching for printed sources outside the country, especially in cities where the NTR was held, may help reaching other interpretations about NTR. Moreover, broad ranging printed and oral sources would enable different perceptions to the NTR, given that sources at hand for this study were limited by control mechanisms created by Brazilian government during the New State Regime.

**A Corrida de Revezamento do Fogo Simbólico da Pátria em Porto Alegre (1938-1947): estudo sobre a participação dos clubes esportivos**

**Resumo:** Este estudo tem como objetivo compreender a participação dos clubes esportivos porto-alegrenses na invenção da Corrida de Revezamento do Fogo Simbólico da Pátria (CFS) em Porto Alegre (RS – Brasil) no período de 1938 a 1947. Fontes impressas e fontes orais foram utilizadas nesse estudo. Os clubes esportivos porto-alegrenses, na figura dos seus atletas e dirigentes, ajudaram a inventar e fixar a CFS em Porto Alegre. Além disso, os clubes construíram representações da identidade nacional brasileira através da CFS.

**Palavras-chave:** Clubes esportivos. Corrida. História.

**Carrera de Relevo del Fuego Simbólico de La Nación en Porto Alegre (1938-1947): estudio sobre la participación de los clubes deportivos**

**Resumen:** Este estudio tiene como objetivo entender la participación de los clubes deportivos *portoalegrenses* en la invención de la "Carrera de relevo del Fuego Simbólico de la Nación" (CFS) en la ciudad de Porto Alegre (RS – Brasil) en el período comprendido entre 1938 a 1947. Fuentes impresas y fuentes orales fueron utilizadas en ese estudio. Los clubes deportivos *porto-alegrenses*, en la figura de sus atletas y dirigentes, han ayudado a inventar y establecer la CFS en Porto Alegre. Por otra parte, los clubes esportivos construirán representaciones de la identidad nacional brasileña a través de la CFS.

**Palabras clave:** Clubes Deportivos. Carrera. Historia.

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Received on: 1 Sep 2008

Approved on: 4 Aug 2009