192 - NOVA GERAÇÃO (NEW GENERATION) FOOTBALL SCHOOL: PHYSICAL SKILLS AND MORALITY

Camilo Araújo Máximo de Souza; Tiago Lisboa Bartholo; Antonio Jorge Gonçalves Soares
PPGEF/ UGF
Universidade Gama Filho, Rio de Janeiro, RJ, Brasil.
camilomaximo@bol.com.br.

Introduction

The aim of the article is to present a partial report on data collected and analyzed in the Nova Geração[1] football school. The intention here is to show how the transmission of physical skills occurs in the process of teaching and learning of football, and the motivations of the youngsters to participate in the Nova Geração football school, run by an untrained professional.

The data are the product of direct observation of the classes, with the use of field diaries, and from interviews and questionnaires completed by the students. We observed classes, in all, in four age categories in this period: Mirim, Infantil, Juvenil and Juniores.

Since we are dealing with a first approach to the problem of research, the text, at times, will be more descriptive than analytical. One of the aims of the research report is precisely to recalibrate the way the researchers look at the data.

We point out certain important questions that will guide the reflections in the article: what are the strategies of the teacher in teaching football? What does the teacher understand by 'good football'? What measures should be adopted to create cohesion and adhesion to the group?

About the field of observation

The Nova Geração football school was founded on March 14, 1988, in the park at the Aterro do Flamengo, a leisure area situated in the Flamengo district, southern zone of the city of Rio de Janeiro.

It was Carlos Fernando, known as Cacá, now seventy-three years of age, who founded and ran the Nova Geração. Although never a professional footballer, Cacá played as an amateur - in what today would be known as 'the lower rungs' - in the forties at Madureira Sport Club, a club in the suburbs of Rio de Janeiro, which belongs to the first division of football in Rio.

In the eighties, Carlos Fernando worked for a few years as a spotter of players - a scout - for Fluminense football club, carrying out tests - known as 'filters' - which took place twice a week at a field in Vila Militar, a district inhabited basically by military personnel and their families, in Deodoro, a suburb of Rio de Janeiro.

To carry out these training sessions on public land, the Nova Geração school has authorization from the administration of the Aterro do Flamengo Park, which allows it to function Saturdays and Sundays from nine in the morning to three in the afternoon.

The football school is divided into four categories: Mirim - boys of 8, 9 and 10; Infants - boys of 11, 12 and 13; Juvenil - boys of 14, 15 and 16; Juniors - boys of 17, 18 and 19.

The categories Mirim and Infantil train for one hour each day. Those in the Juvenil and Junior category train for an hour and a half each day. All categories train only on Saturdays and Sundays. The Nova Geração has one hundred boys divided into these four categories - around twenty-five players in each group.

Physical Techniques

The entry into the field of observation and direct contact with Cacá and his students was very easy. Cacá is a short man, with light skin and few hairs. His bow legs give him a characteristic gait. There is a saying among football people that a good player is known by the way he walks. Apart from that, there is a whole physical posture and a symbology linking bow legs with great football stars, such as Garrincha, Romario and so many other professional players. He comes to the training session in shorts, regatta shirt, short socks and football boots. After introductions we had total permission to talk with the youngsters and the parents who had come to watch the session. We conducted interviews and were also allowed to remain at the side of the pitch. Cacá was very responsive to our questions and, at times, came over spontaneously to chat. This atmosphere was important for the collection of material for the field diary. Many relevant data for our research were obtained through conversations with Cacá who seemed always to have a new story to tell.

We could note that the presence of researchers in the football school was interpreted by the natives as a proof of the prestige of the school. Cacá repeatedly said that 'television', 'reporters' and 'researchers' were welcome, since they spread his teaching. The special status accorded to the researchers by the 'natives' allowed us free circulation throughout his football school.

According to Marcel Mauss (1974), gestures and physical movements are techniques belonging to each culture, transmitted down through generations and imbued with specific meanings.

In all societies, the transmission of knowledge is passed from generation to generation. That transmission of knowledge is what keeps alive the culture of a society. The language, the writing, the cuisine, the habits and customs are elements that form part of a culture.

Using the ideas of Mauss, we can present the physical techniques, or the ways in which we use our body for different tasks in everyday life, as another cultural element that can be transmitted from one generation to another.

The body and consequently the physical gestures represent cultural and social values and principles. We must not disconnect the body and the physical gestures from the society in which it belongs, the society of which it forms a part.

Transporting this concept to the sports field and specifically to football we can raise the hypothesis that the physical techniques used in the playing of football can represent or express values of the culture to which the players belong.

There exists in the media an image, supported by fans and 'specialists' (coaches, managers, commentators), in which

1 This article is part of a Masters Course Research whose aim is to analyze two different football schools: one run by untrained teachers and the other by professionals formally trained in physical education. The work has a comparative perspective and seeks to make explicit different techniques of physical education, in other words, what are the measures/strategies used by teachers to teach the game of football? The names, of the football school, and those of the the persons mentioned, are fictitious.

2 In all there were twelve days of observation, a daily average of six hours, totalling approximately seventy-two hours of attendance.

3 There are, in all, eight synthetic grass pitches in that area. The first six (1 to 6) measure 60 x 30 metres. Fields 7 and 8 measure 80 x 40 metres. All the pitches are surrounded by fences.

4 We presented ourselves to Cacá as researchers from the Gama Filho University.

5 The concept of molding is pertinent, since, claims the teacher, the older players in the school have already learned how to play 'good football', so it is not necessary to interrupt the game or apply punishments to the players.

characteristics such as creativity, skillfulness, agility, make up the 'way' in which the Brazilian player performs on the pitch. When Brazilians play football, they display 'peculiarities' which set them apart from players of other countries. A matter of style or 'jeito' called the 'Jogo Bonito', or 'Beautiful Game'.

The school as a proper place for the transmission of knowledge in a systematic form has an important role in the education of children, adolescents and young people. Football schools, such as the Nova Geração, have as the basis of their work the physical training of their students for the practice of football. We must understand physical training as the learning of physical techniques that will enable the students to improve their performance in the practice of this sport. Still, these skills are possibly associated with the aesthetic and normative values which would be read about by the social actors as the 'Beautiful Game'.

In the football school the process of teaching and learning happens in most cases between the teacher and the student. The teacher's role is that of of 'wise man', who contains the knowledge - and the student has the role of 'disciple', who needs to receive new teachings which will aid his education.

The observations made at Nova Geração will enable us to understand how this process of teaching and learning of physical techniques works. In the school we observed that the principal teaching resource used by the teachers for the transmission of knowledge is oral expression; no other type of resource, such as audio-visuals (video) or books, are used. So it is through the analysis of the speech of the teachers in the Nova Geração football school that we shall attempt to understand which are the messages transmitted which seek to 'mold' the physical techniques of the students so that they can improve their performance in games.

The Classes

During the whole period of observation we could confirm that, to teach the game of football, Cacá has a strategy that he calls the 'collective'. In methodological terms from the field of physical education, it could be said that Cacá uses the Total method, according to the classification of Telmo Pagana Xavier, in all categories with a few distinctions between them. Still, we know that Cacá's methodology was not the result of academic training. Let's take a look at it.

In the lower categories the teacher participates actively in the games. He is a kind of 'wild card' player who, in his words 'organizes the game' for the two teams. Remember that in the 'native' language the youngest need the instructions of the more experienced for the practice of the game. Cacá plays only for the team in possession of the ball, never participating in defensive actions. He teaches the boys while he plays. His participation serves as a model to be copied by the students. The trainer in this sense is the one who knows how to play and how to teach. The youngest students seem to enjoy the presence of the teacher in the game.

Cacá's participation in games decreases as the age of the students advances. Cacá doesn't play in the more advanced age categories; there, his participation is that of referee and/or instructor from the side of the pitch. One of the fundamental points in Cacá's speech which has not been mentioned is that the trainer says that what he is teaching in his school is the 'real art-football'. In that moment, Cacá puts on the table the values he uses to attract students and the curious. The 'national style' is deployed like a brand that differentiates his pedagogy.

Generally during his sessions Cacá has two fundamental points related to the basis of the game: the first is the pass. This marks the collective character of the game. The second is the speed and/or objectivity of the game. Cacá has strategies for molding the boys' 'jeito' or style of playing. During the game he makes constant appeals for the game to develop a form that he perceives as efficient and beautiful. Note that for Cacá beauty and objectivity are reconcilable categories during the game. Let us observe his interventions at pitch-side:

- "Marvellous! That's football, exchanging passes at speed, beautiful, son!" (22/07/2006)
- "You shit, play for the team dammit! Football is a collective game, remember?" (12/08/2006)
- "That's it, Weber, nice ball, you need to play with intelligence not stupidity!" (26/08/2006).
- "Robson, look up before passing the ball! You need to see who you're giving the ball to!" (26/08/2006)

During the whole period of observation we never attended a training session focused on learning how to dribble, or any moment of free experimentation with new movements or physical techniques. Note that we could have a double interpretation: could it be that to dribble is not taught because in Brazil it is thought that that physical skill is a 'gift', thus beyond the possibilities of intervention by a teacher? We cannot give a confident reply. Meanwhile, Cacá, on more than one occasion, has declared that he is not a teacher - 'either you can play football or you can't' - ratifying the idea in Brazil that good players are born that way. His role then is like that of a prospector who hopes to find, amongst all that mud, a precious stone, and his intervention is merely to polish the gemstone he has found.

Another point that interests us are the coercive measures imposed by Cacá in the teaching of the game. In general, he has two strategies: he can call the attention, verbally, of a boy or pull him out of a game. The punishment could include exhausting exercises such as push-ups or running around the pitch. The punishment serves as an example to others, and reinforces the idea of the collective game. In general punishments of this kind are used after a frustrated attempt at dribbling which Cacá judges to be an act against the spirit of the team. Some other attitudes adopted by the students which attract punishment are: lack of effort or seriousness in training; cynical fouls; arguments and fights among students.

The art-football concept, with its ideals of spontaneity, creativity, joy and dribbling, does not appear in any clear form among the coercive arrangements imposed by the teacher. Let us not forget that since the youngsters who attend the Nova Geração also play football elsewhere - at regular school, in other clubs, on public spaces or in the streets - the matter of not practicing the dribble or other skills in the 'collectives' of Nova Geração does not mean that they do not develop these abilities elsewhere. We note that the 'star versus team' tension is always present in Brazilian football (Soares and Lovisolo, 2003). In Cacá's sessions there is an explicit intention to mould the game with a collective character.

The dream school: the cases of Anderson and Leandro

One of the points which we wished to investigate from the beginning at Cacá's school were the motivations behind students' participation at Nova Geração. As soon as we began the work of observation we could see that the students have great respect for the teacher. On arriving at the school, a wide and open space, they all make sure they greet Cacá. During the games the trainer is a kind of mirror in which all players seek affirmation after a game. A similar dynamic is described by Wacquant (2002) in the boxing academies of Chicago. It's through the trainer that the boy refines his actions.

In this observation period we conducted interviews with various boys at the school with the aim of mapping the socioeconomic level of the population sample taught by Cacá. We found that many of the boys lived quite far from the Aterro do Flamengo. The youngest generally were brought by car - by parents or 'acquaintances'. The oldest came by train and/or bus. They are generally children from homes that by their descriptions seemed modest.

The Nova Geração enjoyed, for eight years, support from the Dutch club Feyenoord. That episode appears to be central to the construction of the memory of the school. In 1995 the Nova Geração discovered the player Anderson who went to play in Holland. At the age of thirteen the boy set off with his mother. Now twenty-four, Anderson is playing for Celta Vigo in the first division of the Spanish championship. Cacá repeatedly mentions his ex-player. In his opinion Anderson is 'ungrateful' and 'shameless', since when he is home on vacation he never visits the school that found and developed his talent. Cacá is talking here about the moral value of reciprocity. Leandro is breaking with his 'past', is how Cacá sees it.

Anderson's success created an important link between the Nova Geração school and the Dutch club for eight years. Cacá received six thousand dollars a year from Feyenoord during the period of partnership. This was invested in the school itself with the intention of giving continuity to the project.

As a result of this episode the Nova Geração school earned some notoriety. Cacá created what he called the Museum of Nova Geração where he keeps objects and documents that he considers relevant in the telling of the school's history. Anderson's success is, in a way, shared by all. Cacá's 'contacts', that is to say, the social capital, in Bourdieu's sense, which he claims to have abroad are an important triumph for the (re)construction of the memory and survival of the school. The value of the 'contact' or 'knowledge' in the native language of footballers seems to be central. Another time we shall carry out a dense analysis of this concept that we consider central in the discourse of the natives.

At present the school no longer receives help from the Dutch club. Cacá offers, as well as free training, a lunch for the players. He employs a lady called Nice who prepares the food and drinks. She receives a weekly wage from Cacá of R$80. All of the costs of the school are currently paid by Cacá - who claims to have help from his children - and a Rio de Janeiro city councillor, who, according to Cacá, has been helping the school for ten years with monthly donations of R$100.

Our field work was very productive in allowing us to observe that the school is taken very seriously by all - trainer, students, and parents. The practice matches are disputed with great intensity, but 'without violence', in the words of Cacá. Parents at the side of the pitch shout comments during the game. The figure of the referee is required in all games. One of our hypotheses is that the figure of the referee is what distinguishes a 'kick-about' from a formal game or practice match. In one ethnographic case in our field diary we observed that for the lack of a referee a game could not start. Recall that the referee is the mediator of the actions. He decides any conflicts. The formal practice match or 'serious game' appears to demand the mediation of a neutral figure. In the kick-about, conflicts are resolved by the actors directly involved in the dispute with no need of a referee/mediator.

One very hot Saturday afternoon we settled down at the side of the pitch to hear Cacá's pre-training talk. The Juniors category was about to begin its training. This moment was central, since everyone were gathered to listen to Cacá. The youngsters were all facing Cacá, and with their backs to others sitting on the floor. We positioned ourselves behind Cacá, thus facing the boys. After calling them all together the trainer gave the following speech to everyone, that is, to the youngsters, to their parents and anyone else within earshot:

"Leandro is going to Germany, we hope. These days the reach of my influence is small, I can't manage any great flights, but even so I have some knowledge. I have a German friend, whom I met here in Brazil when he came to report on Brazilian football during the World Cup in France, and he put me in contact with a lawyer friend of his, living in Germany, who is involved with football. This guy is called Frank and basically works by bringing players from Turkey into German football; he works with second and third division clubs, and my youngest son, Alexandre, who also met Frank, is keeping in touch by telephone and computer and is trying to take Robson over there." (Field Diary; Cacá's speech, 27/07/2006)

Cacá parades his 'knowledge' with entrepreneurs and lawyers who work in the professional football market. He says that his 'reach is small' but, even so, he still has 'some knowledge'. This ethnographic case seems to us central when we think about the strategies, speeches and dreams involved in the weekly practice of football in the Nova Geração school. To go abroad is the dream for boys who aim to become a professional footballer. In a society where formal education is no longer a concrete possibility for upward social movement the 'natives' seek other spaces in which to build the dream of social mobility. Numbers from a research study by IBGE show that among the youth population (between 16 and 24 years) the unemployment rate is around 23%, which represents around 1.1 million unemployed youngsters. Another study conducted by DIEESE shows that 45% of the unemployed in Brazil are youths between 16 and 24 years of age. Football, for those with special physical abilities, becomes a viable market. According to Damo (2005) in that year more than eight hundred persons left the country to work in greater or smaller professional football markets. Cacá tailors his talk on the basis of that reality. Despite never having had, in absolute numbers, any great success in discovering 'stars' he constructs the memory of his school on the basis of past cases and those who manage to win a ticket out of Brazil.

Conclusion

The observations made during the period we were attending classes at the Nova Geração show that the 'collective game' is the principal strategy used by the teacher to teach football. Cacá intervenes during the game with the aim of transmitting correct physical techniques that the students must use in the game, 'molding' the boys in his ideas about how 'good' football, or 'art football', should be played.

The coercive measures imposed during the sessions, through punishments, reinforce what the teacher deems necessary for his students to learn to improve their performances in the game. The concepts 'objectivity' and 'collective game' may be clearly observed in the discourse. The teacher claims to teach the real 'art football', at the same time punishing individual play based on the dribble. The 'national style' appears like a kind of prestige concept which raises the value of the school.

The dream of rising socially through football is a reality and has a marked influence on the boys in the project. The cases of Anderson and Leandro appear in the imagination of the students as examples that show that the dream of becoming a professional footballer can be attained.

Bibliographical references

BARTHOLO, T. L. ; ABRAHÃO, B. O. L. ; SOARES, A. J. G. A construção romântica da trajetória de Mane Garrincha nos gramados brasileiros. In VI Reunión de Antropologia del Mercosur, 2005, Montevidéu.

Damo, A.S (2005). Do dom a profissão: uma etnografia do futebol de espetáculo a partir da formação de jogadores no Brasil e na França. Tese de doutorado. Porto Alegre, UFRGS/PPGAS.

Departamento Intersindical Estatística e Estudos Socioeconômicos. Disponível em: http://www.dieese.org.br . Acesso em: 21 de out. 2006.

Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística. Disponível em: http://www.ibge.org./pnad. Acesso em 20 out. 2006.

Mauss, M. Sociologia e Antropologia. São Paulo, EPU-EDUSP, 1974.

SOARES, Antonio Jorge & LOVISOLO, Hugo. Futebol: a construção do estilo nacional. Revista Brasileira de

Ciências e Esporte. Campinas, 2003.
Wacquant, Loic. Corpo e Alma: notas etnográficas de um aprendiz de boxe. Rio de Janeiro. Relume Dumará, 2002.

NOVA GERAÇÃO (NEW GENERATION) FOOTBALL SCHOOL: PHYSICAL SKILLS AND MORALITY

Summary

The aim of the article is to present a partial report on data collected and analyzed at the Nova Geração (New Generation) football school. The object here is to show how the transmission of physical skills occurs in the process of teaching and learning of football, and the motivations of the youngsters to participate in the Nova Geração football school, run by an untrained professional.

The method used was direct observation of the classes, with the use of field diaries, and from interviews and questionnaires conducted with the students. We observed classes in the following age categories: Mirim, Infantil, Juvenil e Juniores.

The observations made in the period in which we attended classes at the Nova Geração football school show that the 'collective game' is the principal strategy used by the teacher to teach football.

The forms of coercion imposed during the classes, by way of punitive measures, reinforce what the teacher deems necessary for his students to learn in order to improve their performance in the game. The concepts 'objectivity' and 'collective game' can be observed in a striking manner in the discourse.

The dream of moving upward in society via football is a reality and a powerful influence on the boys' attendance of the project.

ESCOLA DE FUTEBOL NOVA GERAÇÃO: TÉCNICAS CORPORAIS E MORALIDADE

Resumo

O objetivo do artigo é apresentar um relatório parcial dos dados coletados e analisados na escola de futebol Nova Geração. A intenção aqui é a de explicitar como ocorre a transmissão de técnicas corporais no processo de ensino e aprendizagem do futebol, e quais as motivações dos jovens para participar da escola de futebol Nova Geração, dirigida por um profissional não formado.

O método utilizado foi à observação direta das aulas, com a utilização do diário de campo, assim como, de entrevistas e questionários que foram aplicados junto aos alunos. Observamos as aulas das categorias: Mirim, Infantil, Juvenil e Juniores.

As observações feitas durante o período de acompanhamento das aulas na escola de futebol Nova Geração mostram que o "jogo coletivo" é a principal estratégia usada pelo professor para ensinar o futebol.

As coerções impostas durante as aulas, através das medidas punitivas, reforçam o que o treinador julga necessário que seus alunos aprendam para melhorarem os seus desempenhos no jogo. Os conceitos de "objetividade" e "jogo coletivo" podem ser observados de forma marcante no discurso.

O sonho de ascender socialmente através do futebol é uma realidade e influência de forma marcante na aderência dos meninos ao projeto.

Palavra - Chave: futebol, técnicas corporais e moralidade.