



Daniel Minuzzi de Souza
Bruno Boschilia
André Marsiglia Quaranta
Alessandra Weiss Ferraz de Oliveira
Wanderley Marchi Júnior

‘Boleiros - era uma vez o futebol¹’: a figurational analysis

Abstract

The sports phenomenon has been shaped as a complex manifestation in society and football is an object researched in distinct areas of knowledge being Physical Education (PE) a privileged field for studies development. To study such phenomenon, we sought the relevance of the social approach. For such, the Competitive Games Analysis Models proposed by Norbert Elias's Configurational Sociology was selected. The media product analyzed was the film ‘Boleiros - era uma vez o futebol’. Methodologically, we tried to develop a media study adapted as a media product analysis. The discussion process focused on the 6 stories presented in the film, seeking to identify the chains of functional interdependencies and the degrees of reciprocal multipolar dependence on social relations. We consider this strategy a didactic-pedagogical resource in formal and informal training processes, as well as a method to consolidate possibilities for understanding the football phenomenon through Sociology of Sport.

Keywords: football; cinema; Norbert Elias; Competitive Gaming Theory.

‘Boleiros - era uma vez o futebol’: un análisis figuracional

Resumen

El fenómeno deportivo se ha configurado como una manifestación compleja en la sociedad, y el fútbol es un objeto de investigación en distintas áreas del conocimiento, siendo la Educación Física un campo privilegiado para el desarrollo de estudios. Para estudiar dicho fenómeno, buscamos la relevancia del enfoque social. Para ello, se seleccionaron los Modelos de Análisis de Juegos Competitivos propuestos por la Sociología Configuracional de Norbert Elias. El producto mediático analizado fue la película ‘Boleiros - era uma vez o futebol’. Metodológicamente, intentamos desarrollar un estudio de medios adaptado como análisis de un producto mediático. El proceso de discusión se centró en las 6 historias presentadas en la película, buscando identificar las cadenas de interdependencias funcionales y los grados de dependencia multipolar recíproca en las relaciones sociales. Consideramos esta estrategia como un recurso didáctico-pedagógico en procesos de

¹ Released in 1998, the film was produced by the State Secretary of Culture of São Paulo, through TV Cultura and Quanta Centro de Produções Cinematográficas in São Paulo. This production was awarded at the Amiens International Film Festival (Festival International du Film D'Amiens) - France in the category of Best Director; and, also, awarded by the São Paulo Association of Art Critics in the ‘Best Screenplay’ category. The name of this film translated into English: Boleiros - Once upon a time, football. (Boleiro: a football player or those involved with football in Brazilian popular meanings).

formación formales e informales, así como un método para consolidar posibilidades de comprender el fenómeno del fútbol a través de la Sociología del Deporte.

Palabras clave: fútbol; cine; Norbert Elias; Teoría del Juego Competitivo.

Introduction

The sports phenomenon has been shaped as a complex manifestation in society (Marchi Júnior, 2022). We have observed such phenomenon providing limitless perspectives, both in the emotional involvement and in the wide coverage from distinct means of communication. Sports is an object pursued by researchers from various areas of knowledge being Physical Education a privileged field for studies development. Said that, for the building of this study we have concentrated on the Sociology of Sports.

According to Elias (1978), sociology studies people as social beings and their relations to each other and to institutions that build social structures. Such structures are not defined randomly or naturally but built by people and subject to modifications. We understand Sports as a polysemic manifestation endowed with multiple meanings, thus, our analytical choice was based on the Configurational Sociology elaborated by the German sociologist Norbert Elias (1978) specifically the Competitive Game Analysis Models perspectives.

The object of analysis the media product 'Boleiros - era uma vez o futebol' Directed by the Brazilian filmmaker Ugo Giorgetti, presents a series of football stories and rescues of memories (called here 'scenarios') reported by five former players and one referee at the fictional Aurelio's Bar in São Paulo

Norbert Elias' Configurational Sociology

Elias' broad background was instrumental in the development of his approach. His training enabled the transit in different areas of knowledge, such as: Medical, Philosophy, Psychology, and Sociology. This multidisciplinary insertion can be considered decisive in the elaboration of the Configurational Sociology, which has four pillars, such as: Behaviour (control of emotions); Power (distribution and maintenance) *Habitus* (how it evolves over time); and Knowledge (from barbarism to civilisation through scientific knowledge and knowledge as power).

To understand Elias' contributions, it is relevant to recover the origin and evolution of sociological scientific knowledge towards overcoming the speculative tone about social

phenomena, beyond religious (mythical), metaphysical (philosophical-reflective) and scientific (positivist). We emphasise, therefore, the search for the autonomy of the social sciences in relation to the natural sciences as a concept of static science aimed at an understanding of the sciences that observe the dynamic society originated from the individual subject to social subject.

Subsequently, Elias organises the objectives of sociological studies, which need to break with philosophical absolutism and sociological relativism, i.e., studying the individual and their social groups and the power relations established among them; preparing the social researcher to overcome religious, metaphysical and positivist definitions; understanding and delimiting social forces by, through and, among people; and raising awareness to mutual control in social relations for a distribution of power balance.

Reorientation of the concept of society and the relationship between the individual and the social, which encompasses the necessary involvements and distances of the researcher and her relationship with the research object. For Elias (1994), when investigating social phenomena and relationships, the researcher must keep in mind that he is a member of this society.

‘The figurations’, which are anchored in the ‘webs of interdependencies’ guided by social (compulsive) forces, and *the agents and structures* (social forces of a certain configuration). Thinking of a configuration like sport, we must consider the interdependent relationships concerning athletes, clubs, coaches, managers, confederations and federations, media, fans, sponsors, and so on, that shape a web in this perception of community.

‘Social Mimesis’ as a theoretical assumption, not as simple imitation, but as a transfer of behaviours that occur both from the macrosocial to the microsocial sphere and vice-versa.

‘Long-Term context’, where social facts are represented by interdependent people, transformations and ruptures having a non-chronological characteristic, i.e., what defines it is not necessarily related to time but the nature (or quality) of a particular social phenomenon.

‘Control of Emotions’ which is circumscribed as an assumption that sustains Elisian Configurational Sociology in which the cathartic effect stands out. Another characteristic brings the possibility of controlled uncontrolled emotions, present for instance, in bodily practices in nature such as Bungee Jump.

‘Self-control’, aiming at observing the civilisational process of violence, in relation to its behaviours and monopolies, shaping a ‘de-civilising’ process in the face of socially established relations.

‘Action for Function’ which questions the reasons for which a given action materialises and what Elias observes as interconnections.

‘The Habitus Concept’, which is passed on from generation to generation, undergoing changes throughout history. Therefore, it is about the ways of acting incorporated through the so-called ‘evolutionary’ and ‘genetic’ (in the sense generational transfers). Hence, Elias examines relationships between social mimicry, habitus, and sport. Social representations developed around sport are disclosed in forms such performance, education, and participation.

‘Power’ as a structural characteristic inherent to human relations and configured as being non-personal. This manifests the inequality of potentials within those social relationships tending to seek balance. Power is not immanent in the person and is not contained solely in the positions, objects or positions that the individual occupies or possesses. In this way, ‘The Mutable Patterns of Interdependence’ which refers to oscillations of power potential in each social relationship, which can be bipolar or multipolar.

To understand society, it is necessary to understand groups and subjects’ interdependent relationships and how relationships take place within certain structures. Elias, (1978, p. 72) states that: the more the functional interdependence between players the less possible it is to explain the relations without exploring individual elements in the game and how they are bonded as a unit.

This didactic strategy enables the degrees of dependence identification in several constantly changing situations and the power relationship within a framework of human relations (ELIAS, 1978).

The power of cohesion is noticeable from the relationship of one group over another. Since power is a structural feature of human relationships and due to its complexity, it is not always possible to visualise the power relationships being established. So, the objective of the model is to make the problem of power apparent and accessible (ibid). The exercise becomes interpretive and explanatory of society and the competitive rules of sports, a characteristic present in social relations from the human instinct inherent in survival, accumulation, and so on.

Competitive Game Models

Elias (1978) proposes six models of competitive game in his work, to explain the dynamics of social relations. This sociological analysis model has already been used by other authors such as Marchi Júnior (2003), Mennel & Goudsblom (1998); Starepravo, Souza & Marchi Júnior (2010, 2012), Souza, Amstel & Marchi Júnior (2024). These models help us understand power relations in a simplified and didactic way, five of these models are presented with rules that can materialize in one or more levels and one without rules.

The 'Primal Contest: model of a contest without rules' displays interdependent relationships between two groups that ignore established social rules. One group acts deliberately in a speculative manner on the possible actions of another group. Thus, this model is composed of uncertainties since there are no pre-established rules guiding the conduct between groups. From our social context and contemporary parameters, it is possible to identify crimes such as thefts and murders. In it, the groups act without concern for self-preservation, placing their own survival at risk. Elias (1978) exemplifies this situation by identifying two groups/tribes that dispute hunting in the same forest, both of which going hungry counting on increasingly scarce resources. In this context, the groups use their outstanding attributes (skills/abilities such as strength and speed) and the other group's weaknesses (slowness, old age, children) to eliminate rivals. Here the groups depend on each other as in a game of chess, each move determines the next move and so on, according to Elias (*ibid*, p. 77).

The second model is the competitive 'Two-person games at one level with rules', where a player (person or institution) acts possessing a power potential superior to the other player and determines the control and flow of the game. It may influence the opponent's moves to condition a favourable result. The player with less power is placed in exceedingly difficult situations leading to mistakes and, consequently, to elimination or defeat.

A third and more complex model is called 'Multi-person games at one level' where a superior player faces all within the same structure as well as others individually. The inferior players do not organise themselves and do not establish relationships with each other to face the superior one, as they act individually. Despite this, the superior player has less influence over the others because his moves are limited to each player, allowing less power over the result, as there may be variations during the matches leading inferior players to small functional relationships, decreasing the power of the superior player.

A fourth model called 'Multi-person games on several levels' sets a game with greater uncertainties as to the result, since the players (or groups), grow during the game creating greater unpredictability. For them to succeed, it is increasingly difficult to act individually, becoming necessary to group or change groups. The player realises that acting individually is a sign of failure, as the game becomes uncontrollable for him.

Both the figuration of the game and the individual player's picture of it — the way in which he perceives the course of the game — change together in a specific direction. They change in functional interdependence, as two inseparable dimensions of the same process. They can be considered separately, but not as being separate' (Elias, 1978, p. 85).

The increase in individual difficulty is proportional to the difficulty for groups. So, the addition of players can lead to a reorganisation, disintegration of the group, or the creation of small groups within the main group which at times compete with other small groups. Such a situation demonstrates that a one-tier group can be divided into a two-tier (Elias, 1978, p. 86).

Another model is called a 'Two-tier games model: oligarchic type'. Considering the perspective of the game as a civilisational process, the transformations resulting from the previous model would culminate in this. The increase in the number of players increases the pressure on individual players, causing changes within the group. Elias (1978) states that a group of players of two-tier can originate from a group in which same-level individuals play with each other.

All players remain interdependent, but they no longer all play directly with each other. This function is taken over by the special functionaries who coordinate the game — representatives, delegates, leaders, governments, royal courts, monopolistic élites and so forth. Together they form a second, smaller group, a second-tier group as one might say. These are the people who play directly with and against each other, but they are nevertheless bound in one way or another to the mass of players who now make up the first storey. Also, there can be no second level without a first level; the people on the second level have no function except with regard to those on the first level' (Elias, 1978, p. 86).

Some social distinction elements seem to be in evidence, since more important groups, with greater power potential within a social configuration take part. Despite the balance of power being more dependent on one group, the other must know there is a relationship of mutual dependence between them, whose opportunities for power are related to the mutual dependence degrees, which can vary. This variation in power can be increased or decreased over time, as the actions change the game's settings. In the oligarchic game, the groups of greater power have greater clarity and perception of the rules not written.

Thinking of it as a stage of civilisation, we can say that those who have knowledge (or clarity of lack of knowledge) are able to have more power over others, which also allows the development of configuration with more than two levels. At this stage, a superior player's actions to another are no longer effective, the actions must be thought of groups over groups. Due to the complexity of interdependent relationships, it is no longer possible to obtain individual benefits. Thus, actions take place within the web of interdependent relationships, that according to Elias, show alliances or rivalry at different levels (Elias, 1978, p. 87).

There is a balance of power within a small group at the top level, then balance between first and second-level players and successively a balance of power within each of the lower groups.

Since the entire structure helps to maintain the upper groups' power, there is no possibility of level changing, only level strengthening when necessary.

Finally, the 'Two-tier game model of the simplified increasingly democratic type' in which the strengths of the lower-level players grow slowly, so that the difference in power between the two groups diminishes. If this happens it reduces inequalities and balances power between groups, i.e., it may bounce back and forth from one group to another. (Ibid, p. 89).

This model is understood as democratic as it reduces levels disparities, with the higher-level players making the lower-level players improve their level to the point that the levels disappear. When this decrease in power occurs between levels, the interdependent relationships increase, and the player's functions can be changed until the players are changed.

Method

This article originated from group work carried out by the authors in the Sociology of Sport discipline in a Postgraduate Program. For analysis, the authors initially watched the film in the classroom, then each member analyzed the film individually.

Methodologically, we developed a media product analysis. The analysis of media productions, such as the cinematographic ones, can be done from different methodologies, not prevailing a universal model (Aumont & Marie, 2010). According to Isboli, Pepece and Gaiotto (2016) methodologies can suit an area of study and/or the interests of those who analyse the work. Based on Andrew (1989), we can say that filmic analysis configures a procedure that makes possible to articulate cinema with different fields of knowledge.

In this sense, we analyzed the film 'Boleiros: era uma vez o futebol', observing how its different scenarios can provide the observer / viewer to understand and/or identify different forms of social relations from the perspective of Norbert Elias's Configurational Sociology, through the competitive game model. The discussion process focused on six stories presented in the film. We sought to identify the chains of functional interdependencies and degrees of multipolar reciprocal dependence in the social relations shown from the theoretical description above.

This film has been analyzed by researchers from different fields such as: Provenzano & Santuario (2014); Marques (2011); Acker and Rossini (2012); and De Jesus Barboza et al. (2018), which denotes its relevance, specially at a time when there were few productions on this topic. It is worth mentioning that the sequence 'Boleiros 2: vencedores e vencidos', launched in 2006.

However, this study differs from the others in terms of the sociological analysis based on the Competitive Game Analysis.

Results and discussions

The film in question, despite its temporality, reveals situations that are part of the behind-the-scenes and everyday life of Brazilian football, in some cases, far from mainstream media coverage. We selected football scenarios that relate to the theoretical discussion and its possible relations to interdependence and power disputes established between specific groups (consider table 1). The scenarios are outlined below in the order presented in the film.

COMPETITION MODEL	TYPE OF INTERDEPENDENCE	DISTRIBUTION OF POWER	SCENARIO/FILM
1. Primal Contest: model of a contest without rules	Mutual, reciprocal, stable and for survival	Equal and bilateral $A \leftrightarrow B$	Scenario 03: Relationship between student / athlete and the coach; relationship between children.
2. Two-person games at one level.	Mutual and unstable.	Uneven and changeable $A > B$	Scenario 02: Relationship between the former athlete and the journalist; relationship between the journalist and the boss; relationship between the financial manager and the journalist.
3. Multi-person games at one level	Simultaneous and independent, several individual constellations	Uneven and not stable. $A > B$ $A > C$ $A > D$	Former athletes at the bar debating the stories.
4. Multi-person games at several levels	Complex, functional, less control between individuals, uncontrollable entry and exit of players.	Unpredictable, individual seeking reorganisation. Increase in people, less individual control. $A \leftrightarrow B$ $\uparrow \quad \downarrow$ $D \leftrightarrow E$	Scenario 04: relationship of individual interest between the entrepreneur and the athlete's talent, as well as between the journalists and the athlete; relationship between the athlete and other athletes in solving a particular problem; relationship between policeman and athlete. Scenarios 05 and 06: Relationship between group of fans and the doctor; relationship between the player and the saint's father. Relationship between Fabinho Guerra and the coach, player Mamama and the woman.
5. Two-tier games model: oligarchic type	Complex, mutual, unstable. Less control of the game, several constellations. It involves alliances, enmities, cooperation, and rivalry. 1 st group: pasta 2 nd group: representatives	Different opportunities for power, disproportionate, rigid, and stable. 2 nd smaller group participates directly (organised). 1 st largest group does not participate directly (disorganised). $1^{st} \text{ group} < 2^{nd} \text{ group}$	Scenario 01: Relationship between club president, referee, and athletes. Scenario 04: Police approach in the athlete, first moment.
6. Game models on two levels: simplified: increasingly democratic type	Unstable, mutual, complex, it involves constraints and conflicts.	Flexible and elastic. There is a more disorganised group, but the difference in power between the two groups decreases. $1^{st} \text{ group} \uparrow$ $2^{nd} \text{ group} \uparrow$	Former athletes telling their stories at the bar.

Table 1. Scene analysis in The Competitive Game Model.

'Penalty'

It portrays a match held on Javari St. Stadium between Juventus and a 'countryside team' (the name of the club was omitted in the film). In losing the match, the countryside team would be relegated to the second division São Paulo championship. Thus, the president of the countryside team decided to bribe referee Virgílio who, pressured by poker game debts and the demands of the team manager who threatened him to solve it 'on the bullet,' accepts the bribe to cover his debts submitting to the president of the team. Within this context, the referee places his career on suspicion to solve a personal problem.

According to Elias (1978), the competitive model of 'Two-tier games model: oligarchic type' may have configurations greater than two levels, but what characterises it is the impossibility of rising from one level to another, i.e., athletes cannot have the referee's power and the referee cannot become a sporting director, being submitted to the latter. Mutual interdependence relationships involve alliances between two levels, and they occur to meet the needs of a specific group, namely the sporting director interest in his club not being demoted and the referee in surviving a death threat and having his debts cleared.

The concept of configuration in this theoretical perspective can be applied to game situations, such as offside, as demonstrated by Morais & Barreto (2011). In it, the player of the threatened team receives a ball positioned ahead of the defenders, so the offside situation is promptly pointed out by the linesman. Virgílio allows the move to continue but to his disappointment the ball is kicked out. One of the players charges him for not marking the infraction. In this mutual interdependent relationship, involving rivalry, the referee tries to quiet the player, threatening him with a red card while adding 'shut up or go out,' causing the player to withdraw for fear of harming the team with his expulsion. Here the different opportunities for power from one level to another are clear when we see the lack of organisation in the player's attacking action and the referee's demands. He requires the assistant to follow his markings saying: 'before you get this shit up, look at me, damn.'

At the break, Virgílio is called by 'players' from another level in the scenario, namely the press. A reporter, based on fans' charges, questions Virgílio as to why he did not attend the linesman's whistle, to what he promptly responds: 'what for? There was no impediment. When the referee is fully convinced of the move, he takes responsibility for himself.' In this passage Virgílio uses his power of knowledge about the rules of the game in an inflexible way to ignore the press and crowd's opinion. It is also noted that Virgílio speaks to the threatened team's coach demanding greater commitment from the athletes and insinuating that the coach makes use of physical

violence, saying: ‘Screw this, your team sucks, you should beat them up in the locker room instead of tactical instruction.’ The coach, who is a Spanish foreigner, replies: the team is [...] ‘una mierda’ [...] and that he is not training Boca Juniors.

Another situation concerns a penalty. During the match, exchange of looks between Virgílio and the sporting director is emphasised. The sporting director leaves the stadium in the company of other people who appear to be private security guards. Thus, it is understood that their presence increases the pressure and decreases Virgílio's control over the situation. Approaching the end of the game, Virgílio allows a penalty when a foul occurs outside the penalty area, only close to the line. To his misery, the player Coringa misses the first and the second kicks. The referee alleges that the Goalkeeper anticipated the collection, but in the third collection Virgílio speaks at Coringa's ear making him move away allowing another player to kick and the charge is converted, favouring the countryside team. Virgílio comes out hearing boos from the crowd, but with the sporting director's approval, his debt remedied, and his life guaranteed.

Therefore, we were able to establish relations to the competitive model of ‘Two-tier games model: oligarchic type’ identifying the existence of a game involving more than one level, i.e., three levels: the athletes (lower/first level); the referee, (second level); and the sporting director (third/higher level). It can be observed that the changing patterns of interdependence present themselves in a multipolar way.

‘Paulinho Majestade’

This scenario brings Reporter Zé Américo, a Paulinho Majestade's fan, seeking to interview the former Santos' player after he announces his trophies and medals sale in an ads section of a local newspaper. Counting on the mediation of Paulinho's friend, ‘Lira’ (a former player and current tire repairer) the reporter arranged to get the amount of R\$ 400.00 from his editor to pay for the interview. As the journalist approaches his ‘object of desire’ - the interview, he becomes increasingly susceptible to meet the demands of his idol. Paulinho, on one hand, uses his influence on Lira to make the reporter meet his demands; on the other hand, each response Zé Américo receives from Lira allows him to take a step forward regarding his editor and the money for the interview.

It is worth mentioning that to guarantee the interview, the reporter establishes a series of interdependent relationships in a ‘two-person Games at one level with rules’, first to his immediate boss and then to the financial manager of the newspaper.

Zé Américo's perception of Paulinho was that he needed to demonstrate the same image he had when he worked on the pitch, even though he was now financially troubled (possibly the real reason for selling medals and trophies). Despite the ad and the financial difficulties, Paulinho defines the amount to be paid by the reporter, and the day, time and place of the interview which leads the journalist to question his actual status '(...) are you sure the guy is in bad shape?' At this point, although Paulinho exercises power over the reporter/fan, his steps are only taken according to the reporter's actions, configuring a mutual and unstable interdependence.

On the appointed night, Paulinho Majestade shows up well dressed at a restaurant of his choice. There, he is readily recognised by the staff, the musician who plays his favorite song, the manager who authorises a dish that is no longer on the menu, and so on. Upon leaving, he uses the requested money to pay for the expensive dishes he used to order when he was playing and had a good life. He not only pays for the bill but tips the waiter and the doorman. The meeting ends with the procession of the employees of the sophisticated restaurant to Paulinho Majestade.

We can relate this story to the 'Two-person Games at one level with rules'. One of the aspects that may generate doubt refers to the change in social status, (change between levels in this configuration). We understand that the athlete was replaced when retired, no longer played a central role for football and faced financial troubles from it, however, he uses his influence on the reporter and restaurant staff to keep his majesty.

By recognising Paulinho and attending to his wishes, the doorman, waiter and manager and musician play a relevant role in this shift of Paulinho's status/level before the reporter. Such actions, for instance, when the musician promptly starts playing a 'Paulinho's' tune, about which he makes the following statement: 'he is playing my tune, when I entered that door, he stopped playing what he was playing and started to play my prefix, d'ya know what I mean?' generate reactions.

After the events described above, feeling safe and confident, Paulinho challenges the reporter with a tone of superiority and authority: 'so boy, would you like to ask me a question?' Zé Américo removes the tape recorder but wrapped in the plot, declines it, putting the equipment away, answering in astonishment: 'no, I have no questions' showing the mutual and unequal relationship between the players.

At the time of the farewell, taken by impulse, which seemed to be a fan's curiosity, the reporter asks: 'Paulinho, I have a question, did someone answer the announcement of the trophies and the medal?' to what Paulinho replies: 'nobody' and continues walking in his elegance. The doorman, oblivious to the big plot, makes a comment saying: 'Paulinho Majestade, the bastard must be mounted on high money.' Thus, we observe the change of status in this social level and the

continuity of the control over others and the relational form in which power can present itself in a configuration.

'Pivete'²

In this scenario, coach Tavinho, at 'Alicate's' junior's football club, criticises and stereotypes boys who are brought by their parents, not exclusively on their wishes or talent and boys 'like these' do not have what is required of a true football player. Later in the scene, Tavinho observes a boy from the periphery who is watching the practice and invites him to play realising this boy has skills and the peculiarities of a future 'ace' of the lawns.

This scenario was analyzed through the 'Primal Contest: model of a contest without rules.' Minding game models as civilisational stages, this can be thought of as barbarism since actions are based on the physical elimination of the opponents and/or on the use of their weaknesses to expose and defeat them.

The coach 'realised the kid had bad blood, because in the first disagreement he promptly fought back.' The boy feels somehow threatened by the others and threatens them back, for instance, in a dialogue between him and another schoolboy, where the Primal Contest becomes evident. Upon receiving a push, Pivete uses the street language to intimidate the opponent: 'man, if you touch me again, I'll kill ya, got it? You asshole, sissy [...] I'll cut your head off and kick it to the goal, ya'know [...] I'll kill ya, blondie' fighting for strength in a mutual and stable relationship.

Pivete indirectly refuses to take part on the group, disappearing from practice, and returning when he wanted to. Otávio offers a football T-shirt of his own trying to encourage the boy to dedicate to football. Failing success, he follows Pivete after practice to talk to his parents and enter him in a football career, but he faces harassment from the social group the boy is part of (a very peripheral place controlled by a group of criminals). The criminals suspecting Otávio, approach him: 'what are you looking for with the boy, [...] the boy is our people [...] here's the thing, get in this car of yours and run, right? I don't want to see ya here anymore [...]' Otávio wished to make Pivete play for a big team, but states: 'I became afraid of the boy, afraid, [...] if I get into his life again [...] and those people come to me again.'

It denotes a relationship of reciprocal interdependence between coach and student, with the distribution of bilateral power.

When asked about the boy's end, Otávio reports seeing Pivete watching practice from a last time when a police car appeared with three men inside, exchanged looks between him and the boy

² A slang for naughty, poor boy.

and the boy never came back. The type of life society provided the boy limited his civilisational possibilities, offering him only two alternatives, to kill or to die.

*'Azul'*³

In this scenario, we identified the 'Multi-person games at several levels' with individual interests arising in the relationships between the entrepreneur and the athlete's talent, and between reporters and athlete.

'Azul' has the characteristics of a great football player, compared to Pelé, however, his relationship to reporters in a functional interdependence is perceived, on a radio program, for instance, in which the announcer says: 'I'm here with Azul, the man from Sunday (...) you can choose the song you want, the one you want [...] what do you think of Jake the singer? Who are you going to dedicate to?' Azul is clearly in a less power situation than the announcer having to submit to interruptions in speeches while induced to 'choose a song' previously established. Interruptions are also repeated in a 'round table' sports talk style program,⁴ scene in which Azul is asked questions but never allowed to conclude an answer, i.e., a less controlled relationship between individuals.

Another scene shows Azul's manager intending to sell a game. The superstitious businessman schedules a meeting with Italian club directors, in a Japanese restaurant, as he had closed many deals there before. When the directors go to the bathroom, he says 'leave it to me, I smell money, I'm seeing it here in front of me, but it *has* to be here, on this table, where I sold Edu Marangon, I sold Adílson [...] it *has* to be here.' In this scene the businessman has more power than the player, who does not manifest himself and is placed on a lower level.

Finally, we highlight Azul driving his new car when the military police make an approach. The game of *oligarchic type* is noticeable here due to the disproportion of power between the police action and a civilian. A policeman yells: 'get out, tramp, get out, move,' the other, also a Black man like Azul, (having the 'power of the law') yells: 'move, move, touch the car, hands up, if you move you will die, don't make any movement.' While being searched by one of the officers and supervised by the other, Azul tries to explain: 'I'm a football player, I'm not a tramp' until an officer finds a player's document and says: 'okay, it's cool, it's Azul, it's really cool' and the other replies: 'really? Then go in peace, sorry for the inconvenience, but c'mom man, in this car, all alone,

³ This scenario portrays similarities Dener's life story, who died in 1994 in a car accident in Rio de Janeiro.

⁴ Eco (1984) presents that 'sports talk' can be used with a function of merely aiming at maintaining the activities of the media. Thus, we interpret that sports commentators can only distinguish what is observable in their events.

smiling, don't push it, man. God bless you, boy,' the first policeman says: 'Azul, beautiful goal boy!' Meanwhile Azul is still perplexed by what happened, clearly embarrassed.

'Pai Vavá'⁵

It portrays a Brazilian football daily situation, the tension between science and faith and the role of faith in this culture. In the scene, a Corinthians player 'Caco' is injured. His fans worry and pressure the medical department of the club, to what the club's doctor responds in the 'light of the sports medicine literature.' Unhappy with the scientific explanations, the fans of 'Gaviões da Fiel'⁶ group (who access 'Caco' in a personalised way) manage to take him to 'Pai Vavá.' The player, pressured by a complex interdependence and losing control of the situation, subjects himself to the demands of others accepting the help. 'Pai Vavá' evaluates the player's case as being 'fat eye' (jealousy) and prescribes electric fish oil, faith, kissing a pole seven times, greeting the referee, and some 'work'⁷ at home. Pai Vavá's language is closer to the understanding of the fans and athlete, as in: 'now, you have to have faith, without faith you will not improve it.' After this incursion, Caco plays well again to the fans' delight.

This scenario seems to be related to the 'Multi-person games at several levels'. When imagining a game of many people in which the number of participants tends to grow constantly, Elias argues that the increase of pressure makes players change or unite to others or wait longer for a single move and individual play; since a player alone will end up being lost in the game and without seeing the overall (Elias, 1987, p. 84).

Thus, it is understood that the technical explanations are difficult for fans to understand for the lack of knowledge and less power than the doctor. Therefore, they resource to their own beliefs, changing groups in the social game.

'Hotel'

This scenario illustrates the concentration of Palmeiras team before a match, having Fabinho Guerra as the spotlight and Mamamá as a new player. It also brings Palmeiras coach as Professor Edil realising Fabinho's crush on a hotel guest.

⁵ Name of the 'Pai de Santo' - a healer/witchdoctor.

⁶ it's the name of the main organized supporters group of Sport Club Corinthians Paulista, one of the largest fan bases in Brazil.

⁷ Referencing Afro-Brazilian religious rituals: witchcraft, black magic, voodoo, among others.

Here, a relationship of ‘Multi-person games at several levels’ is depicted as Fabinho is much superior to others, and faces them separately, however, in case of increase in the number of players, his influence on its web of interdependence would vary.

The coach is the actions’ controller and does everything to prevent Fabinho from spending the night with the woman. For his success, Fabinho makes use of the knowledge he has by predicting the coach's actions. This is where Mamamá enters. In search of opportunities to grow he needs to conquer space in the group, so he goes to the hotel terrace while the coach looks for Fabinho around the hotel. Desperate, when he finds the woman who is flirting with Fabinho, the coach vents "You don't know what Palmeiras and Corinthians are". The coach and Mamamá get sick during the night what places them out of the match, while Fabinho enjoys the night with the woman. So far, it is possible to identify the complex and different levels of established interdependent relationships.

Among the models proposed by Elias, we were unable to identify the *Game models on two levels: simplified increasingly democratic type* in any of the six scenarios.

Final Considerations

In this text we seek to develop an elaborate exercise that allowed us to carry out some reflections on interpretations of social relations in view of the rules of competition enhanced by a cinematographic production that has as background memory of subjects involved with football dialoguing with a sociological reading.

Despite the object analyzed being a cinematographic production and not necessarily expressing reality, important themes are brought up in the different configurations that involves football: racism, corruption, career transition of athletes, science and the myths, the influence of supporters in club decision-making, sport as a means of social ascension in the Brazilian context. Evidently, these are not immutable observations but rather interpretations generated from the Competitive Game Models in which enable us to present chains of functional interdependencies from the Configurational Sociology developed by Norbert Elias.

Beyond the intellectual exercise developed, in this case the analysis of a film, this sociological theory can be used as an important didactic-pedagogical tool in formal/informal training processes and consolidate possibilities of understanding the sporting phenomena through the Sociology of Sport.

Reference

- Acker, A. M, & Rossini, M. S. O Futebol Brasileiro nos Filmes Boleiros 1 e 2, de Ugo Giorgetti. *Sessões do Imaginário*, v. 17 (n. 27), 2012. <https://revistaseletronicas.pucrs.br/index.php/famecos/article/view/11476>.
- Andrew, J.D. *As principais teorias do cinema: Uma introdução*. Rio de Janeiro: Jorge Zahar, 1989.
- Aumont, J., & M. Marie. *A análise do filme*. Lisboa: Texto e Grafia, 2010.
- Boleiros – Era uma vez o Futebol*. Directed by Ugo Giorgetti. Paris Filmes, 1998.
- Couto, J. G. Futebol vira cinema em 'Boleiros' *Folha de São Paulo, Caderno Ilustrada, Bastidores*. São Paulo, Friday, 30/05/1997, <https://www1.folha.uol.com.br/fsp/ilustrad/fq300534.htm> (accessed May 02, 2019).
- Eco, U. *A falação esportiva. Viagem na irrealidade cotidiana*, 9.ed. Rio de Janeiro: Nova Fronteira, 1984.
- Elias, N. *What is sociology?* Columbia University Press, 1978.
- Elias, N. *A Sociedade dos indivíduos*. Rio de Janeiro: Zahar, 1994.
- Isboli, G.H.P., O.M.C. Pecepe, & S.A.V. Gaiotto. 'Filmes como objetivo de estudos para pesquisas em Ciências Sociais Aplicadas: Um modelo para análises'. 4Post presented at XIX *Semead*: São Paulo, November 9-11, 2016. <https://login.semead.com.br/19semead/anais/arquivos/1596.pdf>.
- Marchi Júnior, W. (2003). *A teoria do jogo de Norbert Elias e as interdependências sociais: um exercício de aproximação e envolvimento*. *Conexões*, 1(1), 101-113. doi: <https://doi.org/10.20396/conex.v1i1.8640810>.
- Marchi Júnior, W. (2022). Sociologia configuracional, esporte e um modelo de análise: apontamentos para leituras correlacionais. *Lecturas: Educación Física y Deportes*, 27(289), 127-140. <https://doi.org/10.46642/efd.v27i289.2913>.
- Marques, J. C. & Turtelli, S. R. (organizadores). *Futebol, Cinema e Cia: ensaios*. São Paulo: Cultura Acadêmica, 2011. <https://comunicacaoesporte.files.wordpress.com/2010/10/futebol-e-cinema-boneco-prvio3.pdf>.
- Mennel, S. & Goudsblom, J. *Norbert Elias: on civilization, power, and knowledge*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1998.
- Morais, J. V. de & Barreto, T. V. Figurations, tension-balance and the flexibility of football rules, *Soccer & Society*, 12:2, 212-227, 2011. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1080/14660970.2011.548358>.

Provenzano, B. & Santuario, M. 'A representação do jornalista esportivo nos filmes heleno, garrincha e boleiros'. Paper presented at *Anais do XII Congresso Latinoamericano de investigadores de la Comunicación* (ALAIC), Lima, Peru, August 6-8, 2014. https://congreso.pucp.edu.pe/alaic2014/wp-content/uploads/2013/12/ALAIC2014BrunaProvenzano16-_1_.pdf.

Barbosa, R. J.; Silva, J. B. L.; Golin, C. H. & Assumpção, L. O. T. O papel social do árbitro de futebol: uma análise sociológica a partir do filme 'Boleiros, era uma vez o futebol' *Revista Brasileira de Ciência e Movimento*, v. 26 (n. 2), 2018, 145-152. doi: <https://doi.org/10.31501/rbcm.v26i2.7930>

Souza, D. M. de.; Amstel, N. A. van., & Marchi Júnior, W. Configurando el deporte en Blumenau/SC (1941-1988). *Retos*. v. 51, 2024, 637-648. doi: <https://doi.org/10.47197/retos.v51.101065>

Starepravo, F. A. Souza, J. de, & Marchi Júnior, W. A teoria dos jogos competitivos de Norbert Elias como alternativa à leitura das políticas públicas de esporte e lazer no Brasil. *Revista Brasileira de Educação Física e Esporte*, v. 26, n. 4, 2012. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1590/S1807-55092012000400010>

Starepravo, F. A.; Souza, J. de, & Marchi Júnior, W. Teoria dos jogos competitivos de Norbert Elias: uma possibilidade de leitura das políticas públicas de esporte e lazer. In: *XIII Simposio Internacional de Procesos Civilizadores*. Bogotá, 2010. p. 1-11.