

Goal, War and Orgasm: pleasure can defeat violence.
Gol, Guerra e Gozo: O prazer pode golear a violência.
MOTTA, Joaquim Zailton B. São Paulo: Casa do Psicólogo, 2005. 119p

Por Martin CURI

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Not only European countries, but also Brazil and other South American countries, observed violent incidents in the social field of football matches. The normal reaction of the public opinion, police and state institutions is to require more repression and control. But social scientist warned, that this may be not enough or even the wrong way. We can see nowadays a huge amount of police forces at Brazilian football matches, but they didn't resolve the problem of fan riots. There are already existing researches in sociology, psychology and education claiming for social-pedagogical or other alternative ways to minimize the violence. Joaquim Motta adds to this list his psychoanalytic thesis.

Motta's opinion is not that repression will reduce fan violence, but that fans have to learn sublimation. He defines sublimation as the act to convert lower necessities in culturally higher considered objects. This is one of the defence reactions that the psychoanalysis recognises. People have psychological energy, which may cause behaviour that is not desired by the society, like violence or exaggerated libido. This energy should be transformed into positive outlets like efforts in culture or science. That means that football fans should learn how to use their energy in recognized cultural expressions and not in violence.

Motta describes the society as very selective and demanding. We live in a permanent competition. It's comprehensive, that people can feel weak and react

aggressively, when they feel attacked. The author detects a special rivalry between persons of the same sex, which he calls homorivalry. Its expression varies from person to person depending on their experiences in Freud's stages of development. Based on this emotional complexity we have to confirm ourselves permanently towards our homorivals. A typical place of homorivalry is the football-stadium because it's a traditionally male space. So the threats in the fan chants towards the other fan group can be interpreted not as an expression of power but of fear. This is a basic description of the rivalry in football stadiums.

Every kind of sport is a sublimated war, but only the players are in this sublimations, not the fans. It seems like we have forgotten how to sublimate war. We need a sophisticated competition that is controlled and not destructive.

It's important to understand, that people tend to create groups to distinct themselves and get a good self-esteem. But these groups are artificially created and not natural. Consequence is the discrimination of other groups, like chants against other fans or homosexuals. So we have to try to understand the processes between those groups.

A member of a group gets the solidarity of the other members, but he has to show fidelity to its demands. This happens normally without reflecting and without being aware of the danger of some of these values. Not to follow the demands is interpreted as a betrayal.

Having in mind the rivalry between these groups we can understand that only the cheering of an adversary group is already a humiliation that can provoke aggressions. The police will not be able to control riots, because they are always the minority. It is

impossible to observe all the outskirts of a stadium. And by the way: policemen are also seen as homorivals.

Motta sees the fan groups in a struggle for several objects: space, fame and money. A stadium has only a limited amount of space, so the fan groups try to conquest their territory. But it is also possible to see this competition outside the stadium, when a chanting fan group arrives. They show that they are occupying the area. Nowadays there is a tendency in modern stadiums to minimize cheaper stands and maximize VIP-areas. That means that poorer people are threatened to be banished of the stadiums. Modern football is a business and not only a game. A Brazilian example is that some fan clubs get free tickets, which they can sell. That means they can earn money with their activity. And finally the fans struggle for fame, that means they want to appear in the newspapers. And what is the easiest way to be in the headlines? A fan riot. The press reports about fans that disturb reinforce and stimulate the violence.

Motta finishes his book in thinking about how to handle with this competition of homorival groups. It is clear that he criticises the behaviour of police, media and football business. He claims for more democratic solutions in questions like space and tickets. But his central demand is sublimation. How does Motta imagine sublimation in practice? Basically he proposes creative and not violent competitions between the fans. This could be a prize for the most beautiful flag, choreography or song. But he also thinks of a penalty kick-out during half-time. Supporters should have the chance to pronounce their opinion in television and other media. They could evaluate the referees. Another proposal is to create security-forces with members of the fan clubs. The more succeeded should also win a prize.

Motta rejects the idea of a legal banning of offending with abusive language. It does not hurt anybody and men would feel castrated. Besides his critics to the police forces he doesn't agree with desisting them in the stadiums. People need to feel secure to sublime. Rivalry has to slow down, for that we need more democratic decision in football with the participation of "fan-deputies". Motta thinks that more women in the stadium would help too. The male interests would be changed from the homorivalry to the heteroconquest. So far a few of Mottas proposals to minimize fan-violence.

It is very interesting for a sociologist to see the psychoanalytic way of arguing. Motta uses exactly the two main theses from sociology: football as a valve and football as group identity. Represents for the first thesis are Elias and Dunning (1986) with the theory of civilization. They analysed that higher civilized societies control violence better or they sublime better. Violence is not a new phenomenon.

Later Motta is describing group formation and processes similar to the social identity theory of Tajfel (1981). Very small characteristics can unite a group and differentiate it from others. This is completely arbitrary and can be the origin for discrimination. The strong forces, which unite a group with its values, are described in the subculture theory of Cohen (1961). He made clear, that it is not easy for a member to leave a group and its solidarity. The only possibility is to show a way out by giving alternatives or sublimation.

In Europe there are projects of social work with football fans, which want to protect and support the fan-culture. These methods are very similar to Motta's proposals like motivating for a creative expression in songs, flags and choreographies. There are

also studies by Adang/Stott (2002), based on the social identity theory of Tajfel (1981), defending the presence of police in terms of a public order management instead of riot control. Even this is similar to Motta's ideas.

It seems like it was possible to unite all these ideas under the psychoanalytic point of view. It's interesting to have nearly the same result on the same object in different sciences. That means also that Motta confirms the other theories with its work. The traditional reaction on violence with repression and labelling of fans is not effective. Alternative ways are necessary.

But, even according with Mottas general argumentation, his proposals of minimizing the fan-violence can be discussed. I like a lot the ideas of creativity competitions between fan-groups, not to ban offences and democratic participation of fans in the decision of football. But I have to criticise the proposal of selling all the tickets of a match to a TV-channel to distribute it. The television will declare the match its property and do a lot not fan friendly things, like very late or very early kick-off times. Motta also praises a Brazilian law, which demands all-seater stadiums. It's clear that there are fan-groups which don't like to sit, because it is easier to live fan-culture standing or dancing. All-seater stadiums are the enemy of the creativity, which Motta wishes from the fans. They are normally more expensive and so they exclude poorer fans. This does not conform to democratic structures.

Finally, Motta explains that players should not throw there sweating shirts after a match into the crowd. He thinks it is better to wash and signature the shirts, to raffle them at the next match. This does not conform to the spirit of football, described as a valve.

Trying to domesticate spontaneous expressions of emotions like this would make football much less exciting. People could lose interest.

Nevertheless Motta made an interesting list of alternative solutions of the fan-violence problem, which is now on the guidelines. It is in my view an important step forward. Moreover his theoretical analysis of the fan-situation is excellent. He described it in so general lines, that it should be valuable not only for Brazil, but also for other countries.