

ABORIGINAL GAMES: THE SOCCER AS A TRADITIONAL KAINGANG SPORT

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Abstract

The aboriginal research on games, been recently, have gained notoriety in the scientific community, although, they are playful activities, demonstrates myths and ethnic cultural values. In relation to the games practised by the Kaingang indians, the existing scientific stories are few, being that, the majority of the research is related to soccer being a traditional sport of this group. Some research points that, symbolically, soccer represents the war and the Kaingang's war games. The present work is part of studies carried through, in a project of extension supported by the program University Without Borders and has as objective to investigate, by means of a bibliographical and ethnographical researches, the main Kaingang games, pointing at soccer as a traditional sport.

Keywords: Aboriginal Games - Kaingang Indians - Soccer

Introduction

The issue discussed in this paper is part of studies conducted by researchers at the university extension project Diagnosis of non-educational literacy and training of Indigenous cultural literacy agents in the Indigenous Lands of Ivaí Faxinal, Mococa and Queimadas in Paraná, supported by the state university extension University Without Borders. With the field work carried out under the project, it can be observed that currently there are few traditional games practiced by this group and that football is a sport much practiced among the indigenous people of this ethnic group, a fact that aroused the interest of researchers to study this subject, since surveys have shown that there are few studies related to indigenous traditional games and, in particular, Kaingang traditional games and football in socio-cultural organization of the group.

Although belonging to an ethnic group, the Kaingang are part of

the history and culture of Brazil, they have lived here since the time of the European settlement. The process of social production organized by settlers affected the lifestyle of Indigenous people in these territories, and with the Kaingang it was not different. Although the contact with the settlers was slower than what happened with other indigenous groups, as they lost their traditional lands, villages were set in small areas, managed by the state, and they had to reframe their traditions.

These factors have greatly influenced the transformation of elements of ancient culture, such as traditional Indigenous games, which were prevented from being performed because they were considered too violent (Borba, 1908) and therefore forgotten or reinterpreted over time. This is evidenced by the existence of records of only two traditional games belonging to Kaingang, the Kanjiro and the Pinjire.

The changes as a result of colonization and the advancement of society on their lands meant that this group had contact with a sport that, nowadays, is one of the most important among Brazilians, the association football or soccer. Football is much practiced by these Indigenous people, is part of the everyday life for all Kaingang groups, influencing the way of life of individuals and groups, and serving as a major socializing agents ethnicity.

However, there is little research addressing the significance of football among the Kaingang. Some works known: Rocha Ferreira et al. (2005), Fassheber (2006), Rubio, Futada and Silva (2006), Rocha Ferreira (2007a, 2007b), Belz (2008) and Fassheber and Rocha Ferreira (2009). In education, there are no studies on this practice, which shows the need for more research on these issues, which arise for further information on indigenous and traditional games, in particular, the Kaingang ethnic, and the meaning and importance of football in the socialization of this group.

Thus, this study was made to investigate and discuss, through field observations and literature research, the main games in the Kaingang community, focusing on football as a traditional sport in this group.

History and social organization of Kaingang people

The Kaingang belong to the Jê linguistic group, and also called the Jê from southern Brazil. According to Mota (2004), the Kaingang are

currently the most populous indigenous group in southern Brazil. The nomenclature of the group, although attributed to Telêmaco Borba (SWETSCH, 1994), was already present in the accounts of travelers who passed through the territories they inhabited in the nineteenth century (MOTA, 2004).

The Kaingang number about thirty thousand people and their current lands are located in the states of Santa Catarina, Paraná, Rio Grande do Sul and São Paulo, and the highest concentration of these populations inhabit the land in the state of Paraná. Although this ethnic group inhabits areas from São Paulo to Rio Grande do Sul, Paraná was where they first arrived. The table below shows the presence of Kaingang in Paraná.

Indigenous Lands	Ethnicity	City	Area (Ha) (FUNAI)	Population (FUNASA)
Apucarana	Kaingang	Tamarana	5,575	1,358
Barão de Antonina	Kaingang	São Jerônimo da Serra	3,750	383
São Jerônimo	Kaingang Guarani Xetá	São Jerônimo da Serra	1,339	573
Mococa	Kaingang	Ortigueira	859	114
Queimadas	Kaingang	Ortigueira	3,077	433
Faxinal	Kaingang	Cândido de Abreu	2,043	587
Ivaí	Kaingang	Manoel Ribas and Pitanga	7,306	1,212
Marrecas	Kaingang and Guarani	Turvo and Guarapuava	16,838	653
Koho Mu Boa Vista	Kaingang	Laranjeiras do Sul	7,344	45
Mangueirinha	Kaingang and Guarani	Mangueirinha, Chopinzinho and Coronel Vivida	16,375	2,159
Rio das Cobras	Kaingang Guarani M'bya	Nova Laranjeiras and Espigão Alto do Iguaçú	18,681	2,316
Palmas	Kaingang	Palmas (PR) and Abelardo Luz (SC)	3,800	737
Kakané Porá	Guarani Kaingang and Xeta	Curitiba	44	35 Families

Cuadro1: Tierras Indígenas Kaingang en Paraná (Mota, 2002).

Mota (2002) states that, for better understanding the Kaingang society, it is important to stress the symbolic dualism that guides the social practices of that group. The author demonstrates that both society and nature appear divided, symbolically, between the Kamé and Kairu halves. According to Borba (1908), in the Kaingang, Kamé and Kairu mythology, it was heroes who survived the flood of early times and gave rise to the current Kaingang. For Fernandes (2003), the Kamé and Kairu dualism gives way to a comprehensive classification, in which nature beings, including humans, have values

associated with the halves, such as strong and weak, high and low, brave and fearful.

The Kaingang social system is based on patrilineal descent: the children of a Kamé father will be Kamé and the ones of a Kairu will be a Kairu with matrilineal residence, or the man will live in the house of the father-in-law and will be subordinate to him, and the household is formed by the father, the wife, unmarried sons, married and unmarried daughters and sons-in-law (MOTA, 2002).

Tommasino and Fernandes (2003) point out that the Kaingang lived primarily by hunting and farming, but today, in view of the definition of living space, agriculture is the main element of their economy. There is also the making and sale of handicrafts that, in addition to providing much of the income of those who have permanent jobs in the village (health worker, teacher, driver, tractor driver, operational auxiliary) is also an important element of socialization among women.

In the Kaingang indigenous lands, there is the center of the village, consisting principally of non-indigenous institutions like the health clinic, the school, the headquarter of the National Indigenous Foundation (FUNAI), the jail, the chief's house and the football field, flanked by houses, mostly brick houses built by government projects.

At the time of the colonization of Brazil, in the traditional organization, the Kaingang groups lived in large family groups consisting of up to 200 people in locations called *ÿmã*. Currently, as shown in Kaingang Lands in Paraná table, quoted above, the groups are larger, requiring a reorganization of political, economic and social group, which is always administered by a chief. Mota (2002) emphasizes that the chief is chosen by the community and he chooses his vice-chief and his leadership, which will represent him when he cannot participate in any meeting outside the village, also helping in all the work carried out in the village. There are the "police" made up of about eight men who usually come from family groups that have more power and prestige within the area. The "Polícia", as it is called by the Indigenous people, help to control and combat infringements as alcoholism, quarrels, adultery and gossips that can harm others.

The Kaingang do absolutely everything collectively. In the farms, they work with the family or hire helpers from other families; in the development of handicrafts, they form mutual-aid groups, inviting women of their family group or by affinity; in school, they talk,

exchange information and knowledge all the time, having great difficulty evaluations that are usually individual.

Indigenous games and societies

The Indigenous games exist among the Indigenous people since before the arrival of settlers, but the topic is recent in the scientific community, and only after half of the twentieth century that research began to be conducted on this topic. According to Fassheber (2006), until the end of the 1960s, sports sociology was poor regarding studies with analysis of the phenomenon of sport in society. The author also says that, in the United States and European countries, studies relating to this subject are more numerous in the areas of Social Sciences and Physical Education, unlike what happens in Brazil.

The games are part of the patrimony of humanity, being important bio-socio-cultural and metaphysical elements in the humanization process. Evidence shows that early hominids were playing and playing with each other, since they already were able to use their imagination to create activities regarding helping to develop the skills to plan, build strategies and make judgments (ROCHA FERREIRA, 2005), i.e., it is in the game and for the game that a civilization emerged and developed (Huizinga, 1993).

Rocha Ferreira (2007a) states that the games were created by different people, spread through contact and taking on new meanings with the changes in civilizations and societies, playing a vital role for men of all ages and contributing to the motor, social, emotional and cognitive development of each population.

The author notes that, despite the extermination of the Indigenous population after colonization, their number in Brazil is still very large, reaching about 350 thousand individuals and that this diversity and cultural wealth have much to be studied about so one can know the meanings of games in indigenous societies. One of the main studies on Indigenous traditional games in North America was that of Stewart Cullin (1975), in which the author emphasizes that the games in the Indigenous societies are carried in ceremonies to please the gods, in order to obtain fertility, bring the rain, cast out demons and cure diseases. Fassheber (2006) states that, nowadays, the traditional indigenous games are what every nation invents and creates in a quite

diversified way in order to maintain the identity of their life playful and ritual.

Thus, one can say that:

The traditional indigenous games are physical activities, with entertaining features through which myths and cultural values permeate and, therefore, bring with it the tangible and intangible world, of every ethnicity. They require a specific learning of motor skills, strategies and/or chance [luck]. Generally, they are played ceremonially, ritually, to please a supernatural being and/or for fertility, rain, food, health, fitness, success in war, among others. They also aim to prepare the young for adult life, socialization, cooperation and/or training of warriors. The games take place in certain periods and places, the rules are dynamically established, there is usually no age limit for players, there are not necessarily winners/losers and no need for awards, except prestige; participation itself is full of meanings and provides experiences which are incorporated by the group and the individual. (ROCHA FERREIRA et al., 2005, p. 33).

The authors emphasize that the use of the term "traditional" is related to the way the game is acquired and used, but it is essential to know that the games in the indigenous societies are dynamic and that each group has its own cosmological and ritual notion.

Indigenous games and modern society

It is known that the processes of social exclusion, discrimination and devaluation of Indigenous people meant that many indigenous games were extinguished by the passage of time, disappearing with the cultural richness of these people. Currently, with the policy of valuing cultural diversity, Indigenous people, encouraged by organizations, missions and other institutions began to hold events to give visibility and seek greater appreciation of their cultures, as well as recognition of their identities.

This was the origin of the so-called Jogos dos Povos Indígenas in 1996, which were intended to approximate the Brazilian Indigenous nations from different regions of the country and had the participation

of 470 of them from 29 ethnic groups (RUBIO; Futada, Silva, 2006). The same authors state that this great event came in the 1970s from the idea and necessity of the Indigenous people who inhabited the Brazilian territory to meet and exchange information on their cultural and social issues.

According to Rocha Ferreira et al. (2008), the Jogos dos Povos Indígenas represent moments in which the indigenous people can celebrate and transmit the culture, make trades, meet relatives and new ways to play. Rubio, Futada and Silva (2006) add that the main concern during this event is to strengthen the self-esteem of the groups involved, to promote the different cultures and cultural exchanges between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people, using the sport as a means of integration and interaction of values of several ethnic groups of Brazil.

In a survey conducted during the 8th Jogos do Povos Indígenas, in Fortaleza, they realized the importance that this event has for the Indigenous through questions posed to participants. The main answers given by people about the importance of the games were to show and maintain the culture, traditions and values, exchange experiences with other ethnic groups, fellowship, selling crafts; interest in learning "paleface stuff", learn languages; learn football; and important to show that they are not dependent on white people (ROCHA FERREIRA, 2007b).

For Rubio, Futada and Silva (2006), even though the name of the Jogos dos Povos Indígenas is an analogy to the Olympics, the event features peculiar activities of the various ethnic groups involved, not reproducing, then, activities of other cultures. Thus the evidence that the Games are made up of activities appropriate to indigenous cultures, such as race, tug of war, crossing a large river, physical fights (Huka Huka and variations), archery, log race (one of the main games) and football. In these tests, other cultural presentations are performed, such as dances, body painting and feathering (ROCHA FERREIRA, 2007a; RUBIO; Futada, Silva, 2006). Since the first edition of the Games, ethnic groups that have participated in at least once of the event are: Aikewara, Bakairi, Bororo, Cariri, Cinta Larga, Erikbatsa, Gavião, Guarani, Guató, Iawalapiti, Kadiwéu, Kaiapó, Kaiwá, Kanela, Karajá, Krahô, Marubo, Matis, Ofaié, Pankararú, Pareci, Pataxó, Tapirapé, Tembê, Terena, Xavante and Yanomami (RUBIO; Futada, Silva, 2006).

The Kaingang never participated in an edition of the event, but, according to Fassheber (2006), they have been invited by the organization to observe some styles of the Jogos dos Povos Indígenas, in order to train and participate in a future edition. It is noted, according to the reported studies, that the Jogos dos Povos Indígenas are a way found by the Indigenous people and their allies to revitalize the indigenous culture and identity and also for a greater contact among different ethnic groups.

Traditional games and football among Kaingang

It's important to point out that the Kaingang have traditional games in their culture, which are not often known for lack of research and studies on this subject. In these games, the Kaingang incorporated the practice of other activities, such as football that is now part of the culture of this group.

The report below, Telêmaco Borba (1908), describes an important Kaingang traditional game:

[...] they tend to do an exercise and entertainment called caingire, which seems, and really is, a real fight, as long as the offenses received in this occasion do not result in enmity. To make this entertainment, they prepare a large yard, cut a large amount of short clubs, which they place at both ends of the yard; then they invite people from other camps to have fun; upon accepting the invitation, the others also prepare their clubs and, carrying them, they cautiously come closer to the entertainment place; as soon as they arrive their opponents start the fight; they mutually throw the clubs making loud cries, simulating a real fight, until one of the groups leave the yard under a loud booing because of this. The women, covered with a shield made of barks, gather the clubs that are thrown and placing them with the fighters; and when any of them falls badly hurt, those women take them out of the yard and take care of them. In the fight there are always great injuries, bruises, pierced eyes and broken fingers; but it never results in enmity. Those who end up treated badly, in the worst circumstances, are considered the bravest (turumanin), and are highly extolled [...] They also do it at night and call it pingirê

because they set fire at one end of the clubs; it's the same as cángire, with the addition of skin burns. They are trained to fight since they are children; who throws one down, has to endure the testing of all the others who want to see what it is like, until, being worn out, they succumb in their turn. All their other toys and entertainment are always more or less coarse and brutal. (BORBA, 1908, p. 17-18).

Fassheber (2006) states that the Kanjiro simulates a battlefield, where two groups facing each throw clubs stocked by women who have the task of collecting the wounded. Pinjire, however, as perceived by the report of Borba (1908), is similar to Kanjiro, but differs by being performed at night with the clubs on fire. In his ethnography on Kaingang, Borba (1908) talked about these games with an elderly woman who told him the results of the games were always serious injuries, bruises, pierced eyes and his broken fingers, but it never caused enmity among the participants.

Besides this paper by Telêmaco Borba (1908), there were no descriptions of other traditional games in the literature about the Kaingang. The process of taking over indigenous territories and settling in small areas, the reorganization of family groups, the institution of chiefs supported and strengthened by the regulatory bodies, the loss of forests and the imposition of different work routines, religion and leisure, certainly influenced the practice of traditional games.

Fassheber (2006) reports a Kaingang game, climbing the pine tree, performed with great speed and efficiency. As the pine was a major food source of the group, it is possible that this game was a preparation for a boy to become a man through games.

In our observations we realized that many of the plays of Kaingang children are carried through games. Below, there is the description, made by a professor of T.I. Faxinal, of a children's game:

There is a game that children did and still do. First, children are betting a race. Whoever arrives first at the feet of the tree is a monkey. Whoever gets there last is a jaguar and has to chase and catch the monkeys, climbing on trees.

The child who is caught, climbs off the tree and watches the game. The game ends only when the jaguar catches the last

monkey. The next game, the first monkey becomes the jaguar and it starts all over again.

In these games, in which they establish and modify the rules according to the situation, Kaingang children also play football every day when not at school or accompanying their families in everyday activities, such as production and sale of handicrafts and work on family plantations.



Picture 1: Children playing football in T.I. Faxinal (LAEE/UEM, 2009).

After the contact and settlement, football became part of the Kaingang culture, and is now regarded as a traditional sport in these communities.

So, like many other elements from the contact, but in a less rude way than other invasions - like the work world, religions, etc. -, Football became a practice incorporated to the Kaingang life, more than eighty years ago. According to some elder informants, they would already practiced football in their childhoods, which helps us hypothesize that football is almost

as old to the Kaingáng as it is for other Brazilians. (Fassheber, 2006, p. 109-110).

In the Kaingang Indigenous Lands, there are several structured soccer teams in uniform, participating in school games, local and regional championships.



Picture 2: Football match between teams in the Indigenous Land of Ivai-PR (LAEE/UEM, 2008).

Generally, football fields of indigenous lands are located in the center of the village, which is a demonstration of their integration and their importance in communities. Fassheber (2006) argues that the centrality of football fields demonstrates, beyond the strong significance of this sport for the group, a way of bringing the residents of neighborhoods and families isolated. The sport is practiced by everyone: children, adolescents, adults and women. In the statement below, of an Indigenous university student, one can see aspects of their personal and community meaning.

I started playing football when I was 15, and I would do anything not to lose a match game. The women's team played against the men's team to gain experience of football tricks,

because they used to say we were bad at it, everybody would chase the ball around.

In time, I developed more skills, people said I played well until one day the time the city team invited me to play with them, we made it to the Indoor Association Football Cup, I would ride the school bus to the games, we were the winners.

It would do anything to play football, I would even skip classes. I used to play in the village team and in the city team, but when there was a match in the city during the weekend, it was more complicated because there was no bus, so I would take a lift to arrive at the place. For the way back, it was more complicated because it was too late, my village was 21 km away from the asphalt, so I had to walk this way to find a ride. I would do crazy things, oh, how well I played, those were good times².

Although there are few studies that address the significance of football among the Kaingang groups, it certainly has ramifications on the socio-cultural organization of the group, as stated Rocha Ferreira (2007b), being able to link up with their own social organization, in which we can highlight aspects as: mythology, centrality, kinship and religion. In the reorganization of indigenous cultures from contact and settlement, football in the villages incorporated elements of the Kaingang tradition, since teams can be formed in the tradition of patrilineality, paternal descent, and matrilocality, a traditional standard of residence in which the son-in-law moved in with the parents-in-law or close to them after the wedding.

In casting the soccer teams in the Indigenous Land of Faxinal, which the chief did on a speaker, there was a repetition of last names, this means that teams can be formed by a group of sons and sons-in-law usually associated with the leaders of the indigenous lands (Fassheber; ROCHA FERREIRA, 2006).

The matches set among different Indigenous Lands stimulate contacts among relatives in many villages, the exchange of information, promoting symbolic exchanges and reciprocity of the groups. Thus, the urban and rural contexts are transformed into meeting places and social relations between Indigenous and non-Indigenous (FOG), where they delimit their differences and singularities (Fassheber; ROCHA FERREIRA, 2006). In summary,

according to this second study, football has proved to be a sport that is already part of the Kaingang culture, once it relates to their war games and also serves as an integrating factor between Indigenous peoples and the Fóg (non-Indigenous).

Final Considerations

Throughout the history of the occupation of their territories, Kaingang underwent drastic changes in their lifestyle and in their culture, suffering deprivation and being forced to change their habits and traditions. Many aspects of their culture were eventually forgotten, and one of them is the traditional games, which have always been part of the culture and history of these people, but that did not survive the invasion and occupation of their territories. In this process, however, the Kaingang reorganized their culture, incorporating or discarding many of the elements from the surrounding society.

As part of the group socialization, football was incorporated and became part of the Kaingang culture, being one of its most important elements of socialization.

The research that led to this text showed that the studies related to the Kaingang should be more frequent and deeper, covering the various aspects of village lifestyle, as there is an entire speech of appreciation and recognition of cultural diversity of different ethnic groups, today.

However, there are few studies that seek to understand the complexity of the former and current Kaingang culture and other indigenous groups in general. This research is important because, besides contributing to the written record and wider dissemination of indigenous societal practices, it helps to understand the reframing or restructuring process experienced by different cultural groups in indigenous relation to the surrounding society.

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