

## **YOUTH TRAFFICKING IN FOOTBALL: *DIAMANTES NEGROS*, A FILM TEXT OF PUBLIC SOCIOLOGY**

*TRÁFICO DE JOVENS NO FUTEBOL: DIAMANTES NEGROS, UM TEXTO CINEMATOGRAFICO DE SOCIOLOGIA PÚBLICA*

*TRÁFICO DE JÓVENES EN EL FÚTBOL: DIAMANTES NEGROS, UN TEXTO CINEMATOGRAFICO DE SOCIOLOGÍA PÚBLICA*

**José-Ignacio Barbero-González\*, Hugo Rodriguez-Campazas\*\***

### **Keywords**

Motion pictures.  
Soccer.  
Human migration.  
Human trafficking.  
Sociology.

**Abstract:** Drawing upon the film *Diamantes Negros* (Black Diamonds), the purpose of this paper is to illustrate the potential of film as a resource or a text of public sociology. *Diamantes Negros* approaches the issue of (African) child trafficking in football. Its expository clarity, the relevance of the problem it addresses and its emotional commitment led us to inquire about the topic. Considering the academic-scientific literature, we have confirmed, among other things: a) the (almost) pioneering character of the filmic text within the Spanish context; and b) discursive similarities among academic texts and film fiction. Taking into account these similarities and the film's content and formal features, it is argued that *Diamantes Negros* is a good example of a public sociology text.

### **Palavras-chave**

Cinema.  
Futebol.  
Migração humana.  
Tráfico de pessoas.  
Sociologia.

**Resumo:** O propósito deste artigo é mostrar, por meio do filme "Diamantes Negros", o potencial do cinema como meio, recurso ou texto de sociologia pública. O filme escolhido aborda o assunto do tráfico de meninos (africanos) no âmbito do futebol. Sua clareza expositiva, a relevância do problema narrado e o envolvimento emocional que gera nos levou a indagar nessa problemática. Ao rever a literatura acadêmico-científica, constatamos, entre outras coisas, primeiro, o caráter quase pioneiro no contexto espanhol desse texto fílmico e, segundo, grandes coincidências discursivas entre os escritos acadêmicos convencionais e a ficção cinematográfica. Levando em consideração essas similitudes e o conteúdo e características formais do filme, defende-se que *Diamantes Negros* é um bom texto de sociologia pública.

### **Palabras clave**

Cine.  
Fútbol.  
Migración humana.  
Trata de Personas.  
Sociología.

**Resumen:** El propósito de este artículo es mostrar, sirviéndonos de la película "Diamantes Negros", el potencial del cine como medio, recurso o texto de sociología pública. La película escogida aborda el asunto del tráfico de niños (africanos) en el ámbito del fútbol. Su claridad expositiva, la relevancia del problema narrado y el compromiso emocional que genera nos impulsó a indagar en dicha problemática. Al repasar la literatura académico-científica, hemos constatado, entre otras cosas, primero, el carácter casi pionero en el contexto español de dicho texto fílmico y, segundo, grandes coincidencias discursivas entre los escritos académicos convencionales y la ficción cinematográfica. Teniendo en cuenta dichas similitudes y el contenido y características formales de la película, se defiende que *Diamantes Negros* es un buen texto de sociología pública.

\* Department of Didactic of Musical, Plastic and Body Expression. School of Education and Social Work. University of Valladolid. Valladolid. Spain.  
E-mail: jigna@mpc.uva.es

\*\* Department of Didactic of Musical, Plastic and Body Expression. School of Education and Social Work. University of Valladolid. Segovia. Spain.  
E-mail: hugorc@mpc.uva.es

Received on: 30-06-2014

Approved on: 24-10-2014



## 1 INTRODUCTION

The starting point of this article is the film *Diamantes Negros* (Black Diamonds), of the sports (sub) genre (ALCANTUD, 2013) – a Spanish-Portuguese fiction drama based on real events that focuses on the issue of exploitation and trafficking of black young African men by a diverse group of unscrupulous European scouts, agents and headhunters. Specifically, the story chronicles the misadventures of two underage Malians (Amadou and Mousa, 15 and 16 years old respectively) illegally introduced in Europe with the promise of being hired by a major French football club. Two conditions favor deception: the protagonists' poverty and the cultivated imaginary of escaping it through sport.

In our approach to sports cinema, we considered films (*Diamantes Negros*, in this case) as unconventional academic texts that are very useful as primary sources for research and as educational resources for teaching in the field of Science of Physical Education and Sport (BARBERO, 2011; BARBERO; RODRÍGUEZ, 2010, 2012, 2013). This is not an original approach.

First, social sciences have long considered film (and other forms of more or less artistic expression) as cultural texts (DENZIN, 1989, p. 37) that speak to society and explain its everyday issues (by reproducing, questioning, glorifying them, etc.). Taking a work of art as a cultural text somehow amounts to desecrating it. To paraphrase Varela and Álvarez-Uría (2008, p. 163), it eliminates the status of social extraterritoriality that is often ascribed to art.

Secondly, over the past three decades, there has been an increase in literature using films to explore and explain several topics from the point of view of sociological imagination: education, gender, sexual orientation, race, social theory, violence, globalization, identity, etc. (see, for instance, the collective works of POULTON; RODERICK, 2008; SUTHERLAND; FELTEY, 2012). We should add the issue of our concern: migration and trafficking in sport (football).

Finally, and related to this, within research on teaching practices, we have also seen a recent proliferation of discourses on the desirability (or not) of using “unconventional texts” or “non-traditional texts” – the terms include, as appropriate, any cultural context located out of the usual academic-scientific textbooks or articles (CASTELLANO; DEANGELIS; CLARK-IBAÑEZ, 2008).

In this context, we consider *Diamantes Negros* as an unconventional cultural text of public sociology, for its formal characteristics (accessible and compelling narrative) and its content (a pioneering object of study in Spain).

## 2 PURPOSE

The purpose of this article is to illustrate, based on the Spanish-Portuguese film *Diamantes Negros* (2013), the potential of film as a medium, resource or text of public sociology to explain to the broader public the exploitation and trafficking of young people from the so-called Third World that takes place in the sphere of football.

Since the social context of that film is Africa, our account – based on the dialogue between filmic text and scientific/academic texts – focused on that continent. However, it is hard to think of the movement and trafficking of young football players without remembering the stories of many Latin American players. Therefore, with no intention of drawing automatic correspon-

dences, the latter part of this paper relies on the work of a Chilean author (MENESES, 2013) to suggest possible extrapolations and encourage discussion in that context.

### 3 THEORETICAL NOTES

Public sociology is an intellectual movement that re-emerged in late twentieth century, questioning the purpose of the discipline and which crystallized at the beginning of the new millennium (BURAWOY, 2005a; JEFFRIES, 2009).

Without going into theoretical debates and other disputes that public sociology has generated in the field, since it is not our purpose here (see, for example, BURAWOY, 2009; FERNÁNDEZ, 2006), its typical traits in relation to this work include<sup>1</sup>:

- Its popular orientation, here seen as the wish that sociological explanations are understandable to ordinary mortals. At the beginning of an autobiographical text explaining the emergence of the project, Burawoy asks: “If sociology is not “public”, then what on earth is it? Why would anyone bother to do sociology if it didn’t have a public mission?” (BURAWOY, 2013, p. 279).
- The need for public social scientists to connect with, commit to and become involved in the community, contributing to shape and explain issues relevant to civil society. In this regard, public sociology’s three major goals are collaborating with oppressed communities to increase their capacity and power; working to transform the common sense<sup>2</sup> with which people explain (local or private) everyday problems of their immediate context and ensure that these issues become part of the public debate; and advocating the legitimacy of social scientists acting as activists in their professional field (BURAWOY, 2007, p. 132). We understand that sociology’s historical vicissitudes displace and redirect its attention to what was its original object –social issues – which, in these times, could be summarized as “the distance between democratic constitutions and the reality of a social life marked by great economic, social and political inequalities” (ÁLVAREZ-URÍA; VARELA, 2011, p. 16).
- The effort to reach and converse with audiences outside the boundaries of the discipline itself by publishing “accessible” texts in media that are more common in everyday life than so-called prestigious high-impact journals read by a small number of colleagues.

What is “public sociology” today? Most simply, it is taking sociology to publics beyond the university, engaging them in dialogue about public issues that have been studied by sociologists. (Burawoy 2005b, p. 71).

This dialogue, the author continues, has three dimensions: a dialogue between sociologists; between these and the public; and, most importantly, among members the public themselves.

Finally, the public social scientist is an organic public sociologist who has a direct relationship with a group or movement, contributing to offset the imbalance of social forces.

<sup>1</sup> Many of Burawoy’s works are available at <http://burawoy.berkeley.edu/index.htm>

<sup>2</sup> Burawoy (2007, p. 130) has a Gramscian view of common sense: explanations with which the oppressed narrate their own oppression contain positive and negative elements, partially wrong and accurate analyses. Therefore, Burawoy (2013, p. 297) understands that public sociology is the “elaboration” of common sense, of a particular part of common sense, which we may call “good sense”. It is made of sociological imagination that relates biography and history, which recognizes that the source of personal ills is conditioned by wider social forces. At the same time, public sociologists try to eliminate the other side of common sense – the “bad sense” – the myths of individualism, ideologies of success...

In any case, the role of public sociology “apostle” or “evangelist” taken on by Burawoy (2013, p. 279) does not mean he considers that other sociologies (professional, critical and applied/practical) must disappear. On the contrary, despite unequal distribution of power and disputes within the field, Burawoy argues that all forms of doing sociology are necessary. Finally, we might mention the distinction between “critical” and “public” sociology, given the possibility of considering them as equals. For the author (2013, p. 292), the former directs its reflection to the discipline itself, and its public are other sociologists rather than an extra-academic public.

Films, in turn, whether documentary or fictional, always convey a particular vision of the “chunk” of the world they narrate and, as such, often encourage “reflecting on the imaginary of reality and the *reality of the imaginary*” (MORIN, 1977, preface added in the 1982 edition).

How important are reality and the imaginary in the lives of the two young Black Diamonds? What conflicts and dilemmas are caused by the filmic account on the way viewers imagine the reality narrated? As “total” art, as many consider it for combining moving images, language, music, photography, acting, etc., films invite viewers to identify with the protagonists of the story and allows a (virtual) experience of their hopes, joys and failures.

In addition, film as art and fiction enjoys freedom that allows it to browse and move through paths unexplored by science and traditional academic writing. In this respect, it does not seem exaggerated to say that *Diamantes Negros* is one of the first Spanish texts to address the issue of people trafficking related to football. The plot of the young adult novel *Un balón por una bala* (SALMERÓN, 2012) – a work of fiction as well – also takes us to Sierra Leone, Africa, where a black diamond recently coming from the English League wants to establish a football academy to recover children who have survived the bloody tribal wars. This issue has also been covered by press and television (e. g., ÉVOLE, 2014 includes an interview with **Alassane Diakité**, one of the film’s diamonds, who plays for a neighborhood team in Madrid). By and large, research in Spain focuses on integration of migrants and residents through sport (DOMÍNGUEZ, 2009<sup>3</sup>; DOMÍNGUEZ, JIMÉNEZ; DURÁN, 2010). Studies on the topic are also rare in Spanish-speaking Latin American countries and their approach is usually quite general (STEFFANO, 2012). A different case is the aforementioned work *Niños futbolistas* (MENESES, 2013), a fictionalized journalistic story based on the author’s experience. To investigate the matter, he spent months dedicated to search and buy a child to be sold in Europe, specifically in Spain.

As has been said, given the importance of the problem and the formal characteristics of the story, *Diamantes Negros* seems to be a good “unconventional” public sociology text.

## 4 METHODOLOGICAL NOTES

### 4.1 Sampling: Selection of *Diamantes Negros*

After reviewing several film databases addressing the issue of migration and sport-related trafficking in minors, we finally chose that text for three reasons related to the characteristics of public sociology: i) as film fiction, its message is accessible and appealing to a lay audience;

<sup>3</sup> DOMÍNGUEZ, Sara. *Deporte e inmigración: el deporte como elemento de aculturación de los ecuatorianos en la ciudad de Madrid*, PhD Thesis, unpublished, 2009, Madrid: Universidad Politécnica, 2009.

ii) perhaps – but not necessarily – because it is based on actual events, the narrative explains and allows a better understanding of the socio-economic-cultural context of exploitation and trafficking in minors that takes place under the umbrella of football; in other words, it invites viewers to establish connections between people’s lives, society and history; and iii) the fact of being one of the first texts to address the issue in Spain.

## 4.2 Content analysis

After selecting the film, the two authors conducted separate initial analyses of its content where, given the characteristics of the filmic text, we tried to pay attention to their different elements: visual language, verbal systems, dialogue, characterization, etc. The purpose of this first step was to identify the several topics, categories or “concepts-images” (CABRERA, 2008, p. 17-32) – words we use as synonyms and which emerge in the story. In the second step, we compared particular data, contrasted agreements and disagreements and developed a tentative outline of categories, subcategories and issues to be solved. Subsequently, in the third step we watched the film separately again; now, that provisional outline oriented our eyes. In the fourth step, we put the data together again and planned the writing of this text.

The fifth and final moment was the writing itself, which we understand as a process of dirty writing located within (rather than after) the research, characterized by ups and downs and, advances and retreats – dirt that is usually hidden by the relative clarity and consistency of the final product offered to the reader (ALTHEIDE, 1987; DENZIN, 1989, 2004; RICHARDSON, 2000; NEUENDORF, 2002; BARDIN, 2002; KRIPPENDORFF, 2004).

## 5 HUMAN TRAFFICKING

To facilitate understanding of this brief report-account, we structured it as four main sections that follow certain chronological order. First, we presented what we called “Conditions of possibility for extracting the diamonds: globalization and poverty”, i. e. the starting point or prerequisite for the market of child football players. Then, under “Trafficking in persons at zero cost”, we show the null risk faced by traffickers in their work. Third, we focus on some of the keys of the “operation/emigration circuit”. Finally, “Success at journey’s end?” proposes a reflection about the conclusion of the journey that child football players began with great hopes: given the circumstances (think, for example, of the current crisis of the Ebola virus), we wonder if staying in the first world, even wandering the streets, is not unfortunately their real triumph.

### 5.1 Conditions of possibility for extracting the diamonds: globalization and poverty

This category gathers a set of questions concerning the causes and naturalness of exploitation. The explanatory sub-themes emerging in the film include: the protagonists’ poverty and their environment; football as a real means to escape it and help their families; and the importance of champions (Lampard, Ballack, Keita, Weah, Messi ...) in individual, family and collective imagination.

This concept-image emerges at the beginning of the film: the opening scenes of *Diamantes Negros* show children and youth with faded jerseys of different European teams playing

football in dirt fields, with run-down goalposts next to a dump. Therefore, the starting points are poverty and football; the former summarizes the material conditions of existence while the latter reflects its influence and centrality in global culture.

The word “globalization” was hardly used 40 years ago (GIDDENS, 2003, p. 20), but it has now become a polysemous wildcard to allude to economic and technological flows and interdependencies at planetary scale (“*mondialisation*” in French) and growing cultural homogenization.

Contrary to what we tend to think, globalization processes are older than they appear; they do not respond to a single logic and are not neutral (States lose autonomy, certain transnational actors impose their interests and, finally, cultural homogenization is not the product of symmetric eclecticism):

In cultural terms, the new kind of globalization has to do with a new form of global mass culture, very different from [...] cultural identities associated with the nation-state in an earlier phase. Global mass culture is dominated by the modern means of cultural production, dominated by the image which crosses and re-crosses linguistic frontiers much more rapidly and more easily, and which speaks [...] in a much more immediate way [...] It is dominated by all the ways in which the visual and graphic arts have entered directly into the reconstitution of popular life, of entertainment and of leisure. It is dominated by television and by film, and by the image, imagery, and styles of mass advertising. Its epitome is in all those forms of mass communication of which one might think of satellite television as the prime example. Not because it is the only example but because you could not understand satellite television without understanding its grounding in a particular advanced national economy and culture and yet its whole purpose is precisely that it cannot be limited any longer by national boundaries. (HALL, 2000, p. 27).

Therefore, because of circumstances now considered normal (live broadcasts, transcontinental audience, new image processing technologies...), the 1966 World Cup, held in England, gave a significant contribution to the process of globalization of football (CHISARI, 2006). Naturally, if we look back, we can list many other equally important links. The nearly four hours of “Olympia” (RIEFENSTAHL, 1938) shot as a result of 1936 Olympics in Berlin are an example both in artistic and technological terms.

Moreover, as a core element of globalization, football has become a product that is distributed and consumed worldwide, creating “cultural homogenization” equivalent to “Cocacolaization” or “McDonaldization” (DEJONGHE, 2001 p. 81). As such, it operates as an instance of cultural imperialism (SCHILLER, 1976). Relying on film, the plot of *La Gran Final* (OLIVARES, 2006) illustrates these dimensions of football (homogenization and cultural globalization): the obsession of three groups of people from very different socio-cultural contexts to watch the final match of the 2002 World Cup between Germany and Brazil.

Rather than solving the problem of poverty, free market globalization, financial and technological flows or the so-called new economy mask new forms of neo-colonialism. Therefore, while global and instantaneous dissemination of football through the several screens and the success of sports stars shape the imagery of redemption through football (known as the “dream of being Messi”), poverty pushes people to escape and “jump the Melilla border fence (Spanish border in North Africa) whatever it costs”, says Issouf Sanfo, a young football player from Burkina Faso, who says he “has seen on the internet how they live in Europe” (ROJAS, 2014) and who could well be the protagonist of yet another *Black Diamonds* story.

#### 4.4 Trafficking in persons at zero cost

This category focuses on the null risk faced by the people who traffic with football players. Considering the content analysis of the film, its subtopics are: those youth can already play, they have learned it on their own and in “academies”; all initial costs of counterfeiting “papers” (age, passport, purpose of travel...) and tickets are borne by families who unreservedly support the project; minors are treated as mere commodities that are caught, transported, manipulated and – if they are no good – discarded as waste; the role of usually paid football academies to reinforce the dream of redemption through football; and scouts who choose young athletes for the potential attributed to them, as if they were rough diamonds whose market price multiplies after they have been polished.

Among the many fragments of the film in which this concept-image is developed, we chose the one that shows the two families’ funding strategies (3,000 euros; 17’-20’). One of them is a little better off and organizes a party in their village during which neighbors make small contributions; the other one is much poorer and ends up selling their younger son to a merchant in the city.

If we look at Article 3 of the “Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons...” (ONU, 2001), abduction, transfer, appropriation or trade of Black Diamonds is undoubtedly traffic in children.

As explained, poverty, economic weakness in countries of origin, and the imagery of a happy future in the first world achieved through sport all contribute to shape the supply exploited by traffickers. In this context, during the last three decades, football academies have proliferated in Africa as devices to export talent and recreate the imagery of salvation through football.

Literature (ALEGI, 2010, DARBY; AKINDES; KIRWIN, 2007; DARBY, 2012) distinguishes four types of academies: those controlled by clubs and public and private African agencies; those dependent on joint projects between European and African clubs; and those founded by private sponsors (e. g., a commercial brand or an active or retired football star); and finally, the most numerous ones: ad hoc, private academies that

expose young Africans to the greed of noncertified agents who are able to acquire recruits cheaply and convince them to sign exploitative contracts (DARBY, AKINDES; KIRWIN, 2007, p. 153).

These institutions proliferate – and ad hoc ones are far from the ideal model that would combine academic and football training – because it is easier to overcome the recent restrictive rules on migration through them. One way or another, most of them operate as plantations to produce harvests whose ultimate target are rich clubs from European leagues. Hayatou, the president of the Confederation of African Football, called it “muscle drain”, which, in turn, reinforces dependency and economic poverty of African sports clubs and leagues. Note that 89.4% of African players in the 2014 World Cup in Brazil played in European leagues – 52.1% of them in Italian, French, German and Spanish leagues, which are the most important ones (ALEGI, 2014).

#### 5.2 The exploitation/emigration circuit

This category evokes different times and actors involved in a journey that begins when a scout offers children what they most yearn for: going to Europe. Its subtopics are: the visitor

who collects rough diamonds by telling them they will end up playing for a big club and living in one of their homes; the amazing attraction of the first world (spotlight, cars, publicity...); unscrupulousness of Europeans involved in the process (several intermediaries, whether they are coaches or players); separation of the protagonists, which prevents mutual support; the inevitable moments of relative human degradation that occur when Amadou and Moussa, abandoned in an unknown world – one in Lisbon and the other one in Madrid – are forced into crime merely to survive.

As a synthesis of this concept-image, we chose the fragment where Moussa was arrested in Madrid and the police, following their protocol, force him to undress as he begs “Please, no!, please don’t!, God, please...!”; in parallel, Amadou asks for help in a Lisbon police station and they refuse to help him (78’-82’).

According to the neutral definition of the IOM (2007), immigrants are people who freely decide to move elsewhere, alone or with their families, in order to improve their material and/or social conditions. There is certainly quality emigration in the world of sport (e. g., of coaches, managers or athletes) that corresponds to that model; however, there is a larger type, like that of our young black diamonds, which thrives on deception, false promises, illegal contracts... Thus, the problem postulated by the film fits into the general framework of sports migrations.

Although emigration in football is not new and in fact its development and dissemination would not have been possible without the territorial mobility of its promoters and players, academic interest in the matter is quite recent (BALE; MAGUIRE, 1994; LANFRANCHI; TAYLOR, 2001; TAYLOR, 2006; POLI, 2007, 2008; DARBY, 2007, 2011).

The most traditional classical explanation tends to privilege the role played by economic conditions as a force that pushes people to leave peripheral areas of poverty toward rich countries of destination – for example, from Africa, Latin America and Eastern Europe to Western Europe.

Without underestimating the influence of the economy, many of the authors mentioned (e. g., TAYLOR, 2006, p. 16-19) considered that factor insufficient and propose “relational” models that also look into the role played by culture (language, religion...), history (colonial ties, previous migrations, mutual nationality agreements, economic connections...) and institutions (federations’ regulations that prohibit, restrict or expand the number of foreign players, the Bosman Law of 1995, etc.) in shaping migration channels. From this perspective, economic reasons (escaping poverty), being the most important factor, are not enough to explain how migration is socially constructed in specific socio-historical contexts. Poverty per se is not enough to understand why Angolan and Mozambican emigrants have traditionally been concentrated in Portugal, or Latin Americans in Italy and Spain, and Africans in Belgium and France and, finally, why many players established in the rich countries of central and northern Europe move to leagues of the south of that continent. This is perhaps the frame for our two Malian (French language, former French colony, star emigrants in France...) black diamonds’ desire to go to Paris Saint-Germain, even though any other team or place would be good for them.

This approach allows detecting the shaping and processing of migration (sports) networks over time, highlighting the lack of a single global labor market and, therefore, challenging certain naive visions of globalization.



#### 4.6 Success at journey's end?

This category focuses on the last part of the two diamonds' separate paths. The sub-themes included here are: the meaning and consequences of return (Individual failure? Individual and family dishonor? Debts, etc.), strategies to stay in Europe above all and ultimately not to have to return.

To illustrate this concept-image, we chose the fragment (86'-94') in which Amadou, abandoned in Portugal with the cruciate ligament in his right knee shattered, returns to his village and finds out how his trip was paid for (the fate of his younger brother); meanwhile, Moussa ends up near the Baltic Sea with another young star lent by a large European club – also a minor – who, in order to be happy, improve his game and increase his exchange value, needs teammates from his country of origin.

Before the usual list of credits, *Diamantes Negros* concludes with the following message:

Some 20,000 young Africans brought by agents and pursuing their dream of playing football survive on the streets of Europe.

That is a telling fact that perhaps understates it when it calls these survivors “young”. The lead of the article “Inside football factories that feed the beautiful game” reads:

Boys as young as nine are being exploited by businessmen who hope to profit from European clubs. (MCDUGALL, 2007)

In the same vein, now referring to Latin American football, Chilean journalist MENESES explains the progressive fall in the age for talent detection and recruiting, to the extreme of hiring babies. In this regard, the hoax or joke that said that Aguero's son who was married to Maradona's daughter had been hired before birth – motivated by the supposed genetic talent – might seem funny, but it is a metaphor for the logic underlying and guiding the action of many agents and sports institutions (MENESES, 2013, p. 145-154).<sup>4</sup>

The figure (20,000) is certainly underestimated, especially if we also consider those of non-African origin. As an illustration, the Italian Senate's Commission on Childhood concluded that, in 2000, that country had 5,282 players under 16, mostly from Africa, of whom only 23 had registered contracts. “Most of them had been brought illegally to Italy” (SAVE THE CHILDREN, 2008, p. 22).

As explained in the document (SAVE THE CHILDREN, 2008, p. 16), the embarrassment of failure prevents return, and when those young men call their families on the phone, they lie to them (as Moussa does in the film) telling them that everything is fine, that practice sessions are fantastic and the club's dorm is very welcoming.

Obviously, according to the Citius, Altius, Fortius logic of the sporting pyramid (amply explained by literature), only a handful of members of its base reach the top and only a small percentage of those who dedicated thousands of hours in their childhood and youth to football are able to make a living out of it.

How many children succeed and how many of them fail?

Nobody succeeds. Messi is the big culprit of what is going on and he is a great

<sup>4</sup> Some of the interviews or press comments that took place on the occasion of the presentation of his book can be seen on the Internet.

statistical error. His economy is now so good that people think that all they have to do is to take a kid from a poor neighborhood, transfer him to Europe and become millionaires.

Football is men's soap opera and so happy endings are always told: Messi, Falcão, Neymar. They never speak about those who do not have a happy ending because it would no longer be a *telenovela* (PAZ, 2013).

In this context, the true final success of the journey for most black diamonds is simply to stay in the First World.

## 5 CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of this paper was to show the potential of a fiction film – *Diamantes Negros* – as a public sociology text. For the reasons mentioned at the beginning, we want to add others related to the process of inquiry that the film has triggered on us, the authors of this paper.

Migration and trafficking in children in the world of sports (football) are not among our lines of academic interest and, therefore, our knowledge of such problems was limited to little more than reading the news. Therefore, besides providing us with a comprehensive explanation of the matter, *Diamantes Negros* stimulated and channeled our curiosity towards the literature. As has happened in previous works, in the subsequent process of reading we found that film fictions provide explanations as valid as those of conventional scientific texts. In this case, the discourse that prevails in the latter does not contradict the fiction's narrative. A significant difference, however, is that the latter operates with codes that the former tends to underestimate (e. g., emotional involvement of readers-viewers).

Child exploitation and trafficking in the sphere of football brings to light the darkest and most hidden side of omnipresent globalization. Faced with the idea of equidistant global interdependencies and exchange or movement of capital, technology and information in a market that is free, open and beneficial to all, exploitation and trafficking of black diamonds brings us to reality and makes us see the gulf between rich and poor as well as how, in the desert of poverty, homogenizing cultural globalization creates the illusion of redemption through football in the imagination of starving people. While technology, capital and information move through the global village almost at will, the poor can only leave their places of origin if others decide to trade with them by converting them into mere commodities.

*Diamantes Negros* directed our attention to migration and trafficking in persons of African descent in the world of football. Are the arguments used here transferable to other social contexts, for example, to Latin America? Consider the first paragraph of the book *Niños Futbolistas*:

He turned eleven a few weeks ago and believes that football can take him out of poverty. He says it with high confidence. He thinks that a football career with wins and goals and airplanes and tours and cups and contracts and advertisements and hotels and autographs will take him away from here, from this dirt field in a Latin American city, from this neighborhood where walking alone at night is dangerous and drugs run faster than rats. He believes that if he plays well and works hard he will be able to see the world, so he practices much more than he studies. And he dreams of being hired by some club in Europe. He sees himself at the top, wearing

the jersey of Barcelona or Real Madrid or Inter or Juventus while he does not rule out England or the Bundesliga ... (MENESES, 2013, p. 7).

A start that matches the first images of *Diamantes Negros*: children and youth wearing faded shirts of European teams playing on dirt football fields with run-down goalposts next to a dump... Both scenes are woven with the same threads – poverty and the imaginary of redemption through football.

Finally, back to the aim of this paper: does *Diamantes Negros* illustrate the potential of film as an unconventional medium, resource or public sociology text? We leave it to the reader to consider whether the problem addressed by this film (or others) is socially relevant; whether it helps to move the public arena to a topic that is as usual as taken for granted; whether it facilitates the understanding of relationships between concrete issues and economic, political and cultural macro-forces; and whether, upon seeing the film, they consider it as an accessible text whose reading does not require special mastery of art. *Diamantes Negros* proposes a subversive analysis of the ideology that many other films recreate, which, in narrating the same reality, glorify “the dream of being Messi”. Therefore, from our position as teachers in the field of Physical Education and Sport, we believe that this unconventional text has great potential to stimulate our students’ sociological imagination.

## REFERENCES

- ALCANTUD, Miguel (Ed.). **Diamantes negros**, Madrid: Fado Filmes / Potenza Producciones, 2013.
- ALEGI, Peter. **African Soccerscapes. How a continente changed the world’s game**, Ohio: Ohio University, 2010.
- ALEGI, Peter. How Africa developed Europe. **Football is coming Home**, 23 may 2014. Disponível em: <http://www.footballiscominghome.info/tag/migration/>. Acesso em: 30 maio 2014.
- ALTHEIDE, David L. Ethnographic Content Analysis. **Qualitative Sociology**, New York, v. 10, n.1, p. 65-77, 1987.
- ÁLVAREZ-URÍA, Fernando; VARELA, Julia. **Sociología, capitalismo y democracia**, Madrid: Morata, 2011.
- BALE, John; MAGUIRE, Joseph A. **The Global Sports Arena: Athletic Talent Migration in an Interdependent World**, Frank Cass, 1994.
- BARBERO, José-Ignacio. Ficciones en torno al deporte en tiempos de crisis. *Cultura, Ciencia y Deporte*, Murcia, v. 6, n. 16, p. 65-71, 2011.
- BARBERO, José-Ignacio; RODRÍGUEZ, Hugo. Significados y funciones del deporte en la vida “colegial”. *Análisis de tres películas de cine mudo. Ágora para la Educación Física y el Deporte*, Valladolid, v. 12, n. 1, p. 49-74, 2010.
- BARBERO, José-Ignacio; RODRÍGUEZ, Hugo. El deporte a principios del siglo XX: su (re)presentación en películas de distintas épocas. *Cultura y Educación*, Barcelona, v. 24, n 3, p. 305-318, 2012.
- BARBERO, José-Ignacio; RODRÍGUEZ, Hugo. The near future in “rollerball” dystopian movie: fictional generative themes to stimulate sociological imagination within Physical Education and sports studies. **Movimento**, Porto Alegre, v. 19, n. 3, p. 79-101, 2013.
- BARDIN, Laurence. **Análisis de contenido**. Madrid: Akal, 2002.
- BURAWOY, Michael. Por una sociología pública. **Política y sociedad**, Madrid, v.42, n. 1, p. 197-225, 2005a.

- BURAWOY, Michael. The return of the repressed: recovering the public face of US Sociology, one hundred years on. **The Annals of the American Academy of political and social science**, Philadelphia, v.600, n. 1, p. 68-85, 2005b.
- BURAWOY, Michael. Private troubles and public issues. En BARLOW, A.L. (ed.). **Collaborations for social justice: professionals, public and policy change**, Lanham-Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield, 2007. p. 125-134,
- BURAWOY, Michael. The public sociology wars. En JEFFRIES, V. (ed). **Handbook of public sociology**, Lanham-Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield, 2009.p. 449-473.
- BURAWOY, Michael. Public sociology: the task and the promise. En: GOULD, K.; LEWIS, T. (Eds.). **Ten lessons in introductory sociology**, Oxford: Oxford University, p. 279-298, 2013.
- CABRERA, Julio. **Cine: 100 años de filosofía**. Barcelona: Gedisa, 2008.
- CASTELLANO, Ursula; DE ANGELIS, Joseph; CLARK-IBÁÑEZ, Marisol. Cultivating a sociological perspective using nontraditional texts. **Teaching Sociology**, Washington, v. 36, n. 3, 240-253, jul. 2008.
- CHISARI, Fabio. When football went global: Televising the 1966 World Cup. **Historical Social Research**, Colonia, v. 31, n.1, p. 42-54, 2006.
- DARBY, Paul. Migração para Portugal de jogadores de futebol africanos: recurso colonial e neocolonial. **Análise Social**, Lisboa, v. 41, n. 179, p. 417-433, 2006.
- DARBY, Paul. Out of Africa: The exodus of elite African football talent to Europe. **Working USA**, v.10, n. 4, p. 443-456, nov. 2007.
- DARBY, Paul. Sport and migration: borders, boundaries and crossings. In: MAGUIRE, J.; FALCOUS, M. **Sport and Migration: Borders, Boundaries and Crossings**, London: Routledge, 2011. p. 245-258.
- DARBY, Paul. Gains versus drains: Football academies and the export of highly skilled football labor. **The Brown Journal of World Affairs**, Providence, v. 43, n.2, p. 265-277, 2012.
- DARBY, Paul; AKINDES, Gerard; KIRWIN, Matthew. Football Academies and the Migration of African Football Labor to Europe **Journal of Sport & Social Issues**, London, v.31, p. 143-161, may 2007.
- DEJONGHE, Trudo. The place of sub-Sahara Africa in the worldsportsystem. **Afrika Focus**, Gent-Belgium, v. 17, n. 1, p. 79-111, 2001.
- DENZIN, Norman K. Reading Tender Mercies: Two Interpretations. **The Sociological Quarterly**, Iowa, v.30, n. 1, p. 37-57, 1989.
- DENZIN, Norman K. Reading film: using films and videos as empirical social science material. In: FLICK, U.; KARDORFF, E.V.; STEINKE, I. (Eds). **A Companion to Qualitative Research**. London: Sage. 2004. p. 237-242.
- DOMÍNGUEZ, Sara; JIMÉNEZ, Pedro; DURÁN, Javier. Hábitos deportivos de la población ecuatoriana en la ciudad de Madrid. Análisis de su influencia en el proceso de integración en la sociedad española. **Ágora para la Educación Física y el Deporte**, Valladolid, v. 12, n. 3, p. 237-256, 2010.
- ÉVOLE, Jordi. El fútbol también es así. In: **Salvados**, España: La Sexta TV, 04 mayo 2014.
- FERNÁNDEZ, Manuel. El resurgimiento de la sociología pública. **Revista Española de Sociología**, Madrid, n. 6, p. 7-33, 2006.
- GIDDENS, Anthony. **Un mundo desbocado. Los efectos de la globalización en nuestros días**. Madrid: Taurus, 2003.
- HALL, Stuart. The Local and the Global: Globalization and Ethnicity. In: Anthony D. King (Ed.), **Culture, Globalization and the World-System: Contemporary Conditions for the Representation of Identity**. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 2000. p. 19-39.
- JEFFRIES, Vincent. (ed.). **Handbook of public sociology**. Lanham-Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield, 2009.

- KRIPPENDORFF, Klaus. **Content analysis. An introduction to its methodology**. Thousand Oaks: Sage, 2004.
- KUPER, Simon; SZYMANSKI, Stefan. **Soccernomics**. New York: Nation Books, 2009.
- LANFRANCHI, Pierre; TAYLOR, Matthew. **Moving with the ball: the migration of professional footballers**. Oxford: Berg, 2001.
- MCDOUGALL, Dan. Inside the football factories that feed the beautiful game. **The Observer**, 10 jun. 2007. Disponível em: <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2007/jun/10/football.theobserver>. Acesso em: 12 fev.2014.
- MENESES, Juan-Pablo. **Niños futbolistas**, Barcelona: Blackie Books, 2013.
- MORIN, Edgar. **Le cinéma ou l'homme imaginaire**. Paris: Minuit, 1977. (Un largo extracto del *Prefacio* añadido en 1982 puede verse en: <http://simpleappareil.free.fr/observatoire/index.php?2009/10/02/65-la-realite-semi-imaginaire-de-l-homme>). Acesso em: 15 ene.2014.
- NEUENDORF, Kimberly A. **The Content Analysis Guidebook**. Thousand Oaks: Sage, 2002.
- OLIVARES, Gerardo de (Dir.) **La gran final**. España: Wanda Films, 2006.
- ONU. **PROTOCOLO para prevenir, reprimir y sancionar la trata de personas, especialmente mujeres y niños, que complementa la Convención de las Naciones Unidas contra la Delincuencia Organizada Transnacional**. Resolución aprobada por la Asamblea General de la Naciones Unidas: 55/25 de 2001. Disponible em: <http://www.unodc.org/documents/treaties/UNTOC/Publications/TOC%20Convention/TOCebook-s.pdf>. Acesso em: 21 dec.2013.
- PAZ, Antonio. Entrevista a Juan Pablo Meneses. **Semana.com**, Bogotá, 28 nov. 2013. Disponível em: <http://www.semana.com/vida-moderna/articulo/compra-venta-de-ninos-en-el-futbol/366354-3>. Acesso em: 15 dec.2013.
- POLI, Raffaele. Migrations et commerce de footballeurs africains: aspects historiques, géographiques et culturels. **We pare football**, Draguignan, p. 1-12, 2008. Disponível em: <http://www.wearefootball.org/PDF/une-nouvelle-traite.pdf>. Acesso em: 25 ene.2014.
- POLI, Raffaele. Migrations de footballeurs et mondialisation: du système-monde aux réseaux sociaux. **M@ppemonde**, Montpellier, v. 88, n. 4, p., 1-12, 2007. Disponível em: <http://mappemonde.mgm.fr/num16/articles/art07401.html>. Acesso em: 25 ene.2014.
- POULTON, Emma; RODERICK, Martin (eds.). **Sport in films**, London: Routledge, 2008.
- RICHARDSON, Laurel. Writing. A method of inquiry. In: DENZIN, N.K.; LINCOLN, Y.S. (Eds.) **Handbook of qualitative research**. Thousand Oaks: Sage, 2000. p. 923-948.
- REIFENSTAHL, Leni. (Dir.) **Olympia**. Alemania: Olympia Film / Tobis Filmkunst, 1938.
- ROJAS, Alberto. El zoo del siglo XXI/Issouf Sanfo, **El Mundo**, Madrid, p. 76, 18 mayo 2014.
- SCHILLER, Herbert I. **Communications and cultural domination**, Nueva York: Sharpe, 1976.
- SALMERÓN, Rafael. Un balón por una bala, Madrid: SM, 2012
- SAVE THE CHILDREN. **Niños en competición**. Madrid: S.T.Ch., 2008. Disponível em: [http://www.oei.es/pdfs/Ninos\\_competicion.pdf](http://www.oei.es/pdfs/Ninos_competicion.pdf). Acesso em: 15 dec.2013.
- STEFFANO, Dante, W. Deporte y migración: aportes para su comprensión desde el caso uruguayo. **Revista da ALESDE**, Curitiba, v.2, n.2, p. 33-43, 2012.
- SUTHERLAND, Jean-Anne; FELTEY, Kathryn M. (eds.). Cinematic Sociology. **Social Life in Film**, London: Sage, 2012.
- TAYLOR, Matthew. Global players? Football, migration and globalization, c. 1930-2000. **Historical Social Research**, Colonia, v. 31, n.1, p. 7-30, 2006.

VARELA, Julia; ÁLVAREZ-URÍA, Fernando. **Materiales de sociología del arte**. Madrid: Siglo XXI, 2008.

**Correspondence address:**

Universidad de Valladolid - Facultad de Educación y Trabajo Social - Campus Miguel Delibes  
Paseo Belén, 1. 47011 - Valladolid. España.