

HOW TO MAKE A FOREIGN IDEA YOUR OWN: ARGENTINE IDENTITY AND THE
ROLE SOCCER PLAYED IN ITS FORMATION

by

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Abstract

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Since Spanish-speaking Latin America achieved independence from Spain the question has been whether to follow the North American or European example. Do the new republics embrace the Old World with its aristocracy or the meritocracy of the United States? To choose one, was to dismiss the other, or so the debate went. However, there are points of contact between the Old-and-New Worlds.

Argentine soccer proves a potent example of something that is not wholly one or the other but a combination of both. Though developed exclusively in England, Argentina claims soccer as their national sport. A truly pervasive concept, all parts of Argentine society participate in the sport in some way shape or form. Not only are all sectors included but Argentines use soccer as a means to protest what they see as British aggression. The intercultural transfer model helps dissect the process by which a European activity becomes an inseparable part of Argentine culture. Intercultural transfer shows how an idea or an object moves from one culture and alters and is altered by the culture it's moved to, differentiating both.

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Chapter 1

Introduction: Intercultural Transfer

A battle took place between representatives of the old colonial and imperial worlds in 1986. Three years after a failed invasion of the Falkland Islands, Argentina once again engaged in hostilities with England. Unlike the earlier war, a governing body regulated the 1986 battle to ensure fairness. On the battlefield of Azteca Stadium in Mexico City, eleven-man armies fought for their nation's honor and glory. Argentina's victory over England in the 1986 World Cup did more than avenge the loss of the Falklands War. Victory over England proved to Argentina that they were a match for Europe when the playing field was not stacked in the latter's favor.

In an ironic turn, it was England that first introduced Argentina to the sport of soccer. This is not surprising since the game itself came from England and so any nation that plays it now at one point acquired it from Great Britain. At the 1986 World Cup Argentina had, in a real way, beaten England at its own game. At the same time who owns the sport, the country of its birth or the country that plays it the best? Even more complicated the ruling body, FIFA, was a French creation rather than a British one. Yet, by merit of World Cup victories, France and England can only claim one win a piece though both nations have a strong claim on ownership of the sport.

Brazil has enjoyed the most success in the World Cup claiming five victories. Taking into consideration Argentina and Uruguay's victories at the biggest soccer tournament, South America claims nine out of twenty World Cup titles. At the same time, Europe presents a strong challenge with Italy and Germany contributing a combined eight victories. The question remains, who claims ownership of soccer? Sport historian Joseph Arbena believes that this sport is still European at its core. In his article, "Nationalism and Sport in Latin America 1850-1990: The Paradox of Performing

European Sports,” Arbena advances the idea that Europeans used sports to make Latin American elites more European and so easier to work with.¹

Labeling soccer simply a European sport does injustice to its international nature. There are more national associations that are a part of FIFA than there are member nations in the UN: 209 to 193. Even though Europe, with its plethora of well-funded leagues is the destination for an aspiring soccer star, many of those potential stars come from places outside of Europe. Bringing styles they learned from their home country, foreign players contribute to the differentiation of the sport.

Not only do the players themselves change how the sport is played but the regional governing bodies as well. Although FIFA is the ultimate authority there is sufficient room to develop deviations to the sport. As Allen Guttman notes in *From Ritual to Record*, modern sports are constructions of the culture surrounding them.² In the United States’ soccer league, Major League Soccer (MLS), the field is smaller than FIFA’s standards. Evidencing Guttman’s notion that modern sports are cultural constructs, MLS shortened their soccer fields to create more action on the field in order to draw more spectators to matches.

Even the sport has been changing for well over a century, the rules that differentiate soccer from other sports were born in the distinct cultural context of nineteenth-century England. Though the size of field may change the basics of the game, such as not using one’s hands, came from Sheffield, England. This British game somehow has caught the attention of the world. Tracing how soccer went from England to all 209 members of FIFA is a daunting task and one that I will not attempt here.

¹ Joseph J. Arbena, “Nationalism and Sport in Latin America, 1850-1990: the Paradox of Promoting and Performing ‘European’ Sports,” *The International Journal of the History of Sport*, Vol. 12, No. 2, (Aug. 1995), p. 221; 232.

² Allen Guttman, *From Ritual to Record: The Nature of Modern Sports*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1978) p. 40.

Instead, this thesis traces the paths by which soccer not only found its way to Argentina but became the country's national sport.

Before continuing further, I wish to allay some fears about the nature of this paper and then potentially create some new ones. First and foremost, soccer serves a prominent role in my study but it is not my focus. I'm not interested in determining whether or not Diego Maradona's infamous "hand of God," was actually a handball. Rather, I am concerned with how Argentine and English fans interpreted the event and what it meant to them. Neither am I trying to unearth what the mythical Argentine soccer style looked like, but instead what politicians and media personalities told people it meant. I use the world of sports as a window through which to see how Argentines viewed themselves.

As I use sport to write something other than Sport History, so to do I use sociology. Ian Tyrrell notes, "It was not the United States but Argentina that had the largest proportion of foreign-born residents in the nineteenth century..."³ Though I do spend time examining who these foreign-born residents were and where they came from, determining how they fit into Argentine society is not my goal. Instead, Argentine intellectuals agonized over how to incorporate such a large immigrant population into the national narrative. As elites were trying to induct newcomers, the newcomers themselves made their own space in Argentine society. My interest is in how people from all levels of society perceived their position in the social hierarchy and adapted to it.

Given my interest on the intangible issue of identity, it follows that this is a work of cultural history. While this MA Thesis is a cultural history of the place of soccer in Argentina, I need to make two clarifications. The first is that I will only distinguish between

³ Ian Tyrrell, *Transnational Nation: United States History In Global Perspective Since 1789*, (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007) p. 53.

high and low culture right now. Soccer though certainly low culture, does not behave as such in Argentina, at least not completely so. While stadiums and cafés were centers for low culture, the sports clubs that sponsored the teams often promoted high culture. Soccer is simply too pervasive in Argentine society to make a distinction between high and low culture.

The second clarification concerns the concept of culture. I am concerned that some still think of culture as something that is static, stale and reliant on purely national images or narratives. As Rob Kroes notes in his pivotal “American Empire and Cultural Imperialism,” culture is a collective memory that consists of the “appropriation and digestion of foreign influences.”⁴ Using the now classic examples of blue jeans Kroes notes how Italian and Dutch advertisements differ notably from their North American counterparts. Though the product is the same, the piece of clothing represents something different in the societies. This is my view of culture, a collection of ideas or beliefs that is rigid enough to create an “other” and yet elastic enough to accept an “other’s” belief, that I use for this study.

What I do here in many ways is simply the natural progression of the concept Kroes introduced in his article. I seek to explain how a foreign concept, in this case soccer, travels from its place of origin, England, and is adopted by a receiving society, Argentina. The issue, which has been hinted at, is properly demonstrating agency of both the sending along with the receiving society. The situation becomes more problematic with the realization that often an idea is influenced by more than just the sending or receiving society. Though disseminated by the English school system, soccer could not take the same path in Argentina. The South American country developed a school

⁴ Rob Kroes, “American Empire and Cultural Imperialism: A View from the Receiving End,” *Diplomatic History*, vol. 23, no. 3, (Summer 1999), p. 472.

system based on the North American with an athletics program heavily influenced by German schools.⁵

In his book *Intercultural Transfers and the Making of the Modern World*, Thomas Adam suggests a narrative that is able to show how an idea moves from one culture to another and how it is altered along the journey. In addition to monitoring how the idea changes over time, the intercultural transfer model also tracks how the idea changes the society around it. Adam comments that, "...since ideas traveling between cultures always undergo transformation, intercultural transfer contributes at least partially to the differentiation of both cultures."⁶ The idea is received, altered, repackaged and then exported again at times even to the country of origin. The re-exportation of Argentine soccer to Europe can be seen by the high-caliber players that are drafted by European clubs.

Since I focus almost exclusively on the Atlantic world from the second half of the nineteenth century on, it is worthwhile to discuss the reason why I embrace the model of intercultural transfer rather than of transatlantic history. Though the two do not have to be mutual exclusive, there is a distinction between both models. Transatlantic history tends to be more focused on the nation-state and how they are connected to other nation-states through ideas and economics. In turn, the intercultural transfer model is more interested in how ideas are transmitted below the level of the state, which is to say by citizens on their own time. The state may eventually become involved but the initial transfer occurred between two cultures.⁷ Since my primary interest is the cultural transfer of soccer and how it is used to create identity, it is just the better tool this study.

⁵ Rob Kroes, "American Empire and Cultural Imperialism", p. 463.

⁶ Thomas Adam, *Intercultural Transfer and the Making of the Modern World, 1800-2000: Sources and Context*, (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), p. 6.

⁷ *Ibid*, p. 7.

Intercultural transfer's true value, at least for this study, is its capacity to deconstruct the transfer of soccer showing all its parts. Once all the parties have been exposed, it is easier to both see and show the agency of members within the receiving society. A standard narrative for Latin America has been one of imitation and dependence to either Western Europe or North America. As Joseph Arbena implies, modern sport serves that purpose and makes Latin America more "western." Intercultural transfer breaks that narrative through its insistence that a sending society cannot force the receiving society to accept an idea. Rather, the receiving society must adopt the idea; otherwise the concept will remain a foreign idea.⁸ The promise of intercultural transfer is to show how Latin America takes Western European and North American concepts and makes them their own, more than an imitation.

With a model that explains how soccer is European, as Arbena sees it, and yet also Argentine, the next step is to monitor the changes caused by the sport's transfer. Argentina proves a complicated case study as there were two different points of contact from which Argentines adopted soccer from the British: sports clubs and industrial areas. Adding to the complexity, soccer's transfer breaks with the standard model of intercultural transfer. Adam mentions that in a typical example, agents of transfer came from the leisure class, societal elites, of the receiving society. The individual would be traveling the world for whatever reason and come across an idea that he, or in rare cases she, would think valuable to their own society. With imperfect knowledge of this new idea, the agent of transfer would bring it back to his own country and seek to implement what he thought beneficial.⁹

⁸ Adam, *Intercultural Transfer and the Making of the Modern World*, pp. 5-6.

⁹ *Ibid*, pp. 5-6.

Argentina breaks from this model since it was the British that first brought and played the sport within the country's borders. Although this seems to indicate that England initiated the transfer and vindicates Arbena's notion that the sport was used to Europeanize Latin America, this was not the case. The best documented cases of the early years of Argentine soccer place its practice within British clubs and English-speaking schools. Both spaces served an almost exclusively English clientele. Argentine elites were permitted access to sports clubs and matches between schools but only as guests. Though played in Argentina's borders, soccer was firmly within the British sphere of influence. Argentine guests to these clubs were the ones who saw the benefit of the sport and initiated the transfer.

In most cases the transfer of ideas took place between the upper-echelons of society since they were the ones that could afford to travel. While true that the elites were involved in soccer's transfer to Argentina, there was a second location of transfer. In the industrial areas of the docks and factories, the lower classes played the sport for company teams and with transitory British sailors. Divorced from the "gentlemanly" aspects of soccer, the style sport played in these industrial areas focused on individual achievement and victory at all costs. The lower classes saw different benefits to the adoption of the sport and formed a secondary transfer.

Overall the transfer of soccer from England to Argentina passed through six stages. The sport left England through two different groups, middle-class investment managers and working-class sailors, and arrived in Argentina in two separate locations, clubs and industrial areas. Though in both locations soccer was played predominantly by Englishmen, the new context, nonetheless, altered what the sport represented. From British social clubs, Argentine elites adopted soccer, in addition to other English sports, and practiced them in their own clubs. At the same time, the middle-and-working-classes

also adopted a more aggressive and less regulated version of soccer. In a final transfer, established teams from all classes formed leagues in which to an extent both styles of the game persisted.

My ultimate goal is to use the intercultural transfer model not only to show how a foreign idea is adopted and made one's own but to trace an element of identity creation. In discussing the Pfalz region of Germany, Celia Applegate discusses how the development of a regional identity is a necessary step in to creating a national one.¹⁰ The concept she speaks about is *heimat*, and refers to the homeland in a romantic sense. Spanish has a similar concept of *patria*, though it is broken into two parts; *patria chica* (local community) and *patria grande* (national community). Through civic activities, like picking up trash, the Pfälzers participated in the process of identity creation. Soccer performed a similar function in Argentina, regardless of who played the game. The local clubs served as a manifestation of a neighborhood's identity and placement within the league dictated the place the region held within the national context.

Beyond helping anchor a regional identity, soccer, at times, directly represented the nation. As the sport was the physical manifestation of the *patria chica*, it also applied to the *patria grande* during important international matches. Like Applegate's Pfälzers, Argentines would never say they were supporting national identity by attending World Cup matches and yet they were. Not only did they physically represent the nation through wearing national colors, they shared an interpretation of the match. Maradona's infamous "hand of god," either symbolized blatant poor sportsmanship or brilliant play depending on whether one was an English or Argentine fan. Sharing this perspective created a common experience that united people.

¹⁰ Celia Applegate, *A Nation of Provincials: the German Idea of Heimat*, (Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 1990) p. 3.

To discuss the intercultural transfer of soccer and its effect on the Argentine identity, I have divided this thesis into four chapters. Chapter one discusses Buenos Aires at the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth-century. Intellectuals controlled the government during that time and set out to develop a progressive and modern state based on the example of Western Europe and North America. As Buenos Aires grew into an industrial metropolis on scale with London or Chicago, Argentine leaders worried about the effects pollution would have on their race. Open spaces and parks were constructed so that children might breathe free air and develop strong muscles which they would pass to their offspring. Chapter one analyzes the society into which soccer was adopted.

Chapter two discusses the transfer itself. Within the first thirty years of the twentieth century, soccer progresses from a British to an Argentine sport. It was during this time that clubs developed regional identities based on the neighborhoods in which they had headquarters. This time period also saw the construction of a hierarchy by which clubs were ranked from most to least successful. The creation of different divisions let clubs know how they fit into society, giving even the smallest of clubs a part to play. The chapter ends with a coup where soccer loses any apolitical status it had and became a political tool.

Chapters three and four are similar in that they both show how the stadium was a mirror reflecting Argentine society. During times of peace, fan violence was subdued. However, when the country experienced social or economic turmoil, stadiums turned into warzones. Chapter three focuses on internal issues and how the working classes used soccer to resist the state. Alternatively, chapter four discusses foreign challenges, specifically from England and how Argentines used stadiums to speak out against what they saw as imperialism.

Important Dates

- 1829-1852: Dictatorship of Juan Manuel Rosas.
- 1867: The Hogg brothers play the first football match on the Palermo cricket field.
- 1893: Alexander Watson Hutton forms the Argentine Football Association.
- 1913: Racing Club becomes the first predominantly Argentine team to win the championship.
- 1930: General José Uriburu comes to power thanks to a coup.
- 1931: Soccer is professionalized.
- 1945-1955: First presidency of Juan Perón.
- 1958: Argentina participates in its first World Cup since 1934 and loses to Czechoslovakia.
- 1966-1970: Dictatorship by General Juan Carlos Onganía.
- 1976-1981: Dictatorship by Jorge Rafael Videla, most associated with the Dirty War.
- 1978: Argentina wins its first World Cup.
- 1979: Argentina wins the Youth World Cup without dropping a game.
- 1982: Argentina invades the Falkland Islands.
- 1983: Raúl Alfonsín of the Radical Party was elected President.
- 1986: Maradona unleashes the 'Hand of God' against the British team in the semi-finals.
- 1994: Maradona fails a drug test and is expelled from the World Cup.

Chapter 2

Buenos Aires: A City of Cultural Islands

Argentina in general and Buenos Aires in particular, was a Euro-Latin American melting pot beginning in the second half of the nineteenth century, or at least that is the impression the Argentine capital gave. Attracted by investment and an abundance of work, foreign immigrants poured into the country increasing its population from 1.8 million in 1869 to nearly 12 million by 1930.¹¹ Buenos Aires swelled to accommodate the influx of people till the city limits occupied square acreage comparable to London and Paris. The River Plate region was a land of opportunity for immigrants as Britain invested between 500 and 600 million pounds to develop the region's infrastructure.¹² Most of the investment capital went to expanding Argentine infrastructure allowing the country to become a leading exporter of meat and grain. Rapid economic growth and excess money not only fostered a middle class but even gave the working class a certain level of buying power.

The turn of the twentieth century was a time of great opportunity and prosperity for Argentina. It was also a formative period shaped by migration and the creation of a national identity, in addition to a time of great industrialization. Recuperating from a repressive dictatorship that had lasted from 1829 to 1852, Argentine leaders hoped to recreate the image of their country as a beacon of progress and democracy. Looking to Western Europe and the United States for both inspiration and advice, Argentina attempted to shed its old Spanish trappings. The process of westernization included embracing the latest fashions from Paris, technology from Britain, and political structure

¹¹ Charles S. Sargent, *The Spatial Evolution of Greater Buenos Aires: 1870-1930*, (Arizona: Arizona State University, 1974), p. 19; p. 59.

¹² David Rock, "The British of Argentina," in *Settlers and Expatriates: Britons Overseas*, ed. Robert Bickers, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), p. 36.

from the United States. Spearheading this national overhaul was the capital of Buenos Aires which was transformed to show how civilized the Argentine people were.

Despite the best intentions and efforts of Argentine leaders, their city on a hill divided itself along cultural lines. In spite of sharing the same geographic space, immigrants, the wealthy, the middle class, and the poor developed their own insular worlds. Technological advances such as the electric trolley opened the city for travel but also served as the dividing lines between neighborhoods. Buenos Aires claimed hundreds of thousands of European immigrants providing expertise as well as manual labor. Most developed their own enclaves in an attempt to retain their own ethnic identities. The exception to this rule was the Italians that came to Argentina in a large enough groups so as to not be so easily segregated.¹³ The people living in Buenos Aires, *porteños*, were loyal first and foremost to their neighborhoods.

To see how the city developed into a fractured collection of cultural spheres, one needs to look at those who guided Argentina out of the dictatorship which dominated Argentine political culture from 1829 to 1852. One of the most influential Argentine thinkers of the nineteenth-century was Domingo Faustino Sarmiento (1811-1888). He served as president from 1868 to 1874 but was influential in Argentine politics both before and after his presidency. Forced into exile during the dictatorship, Sarmiento wondered why his people allowed such a tyrant as Juan Manuel Rosas to rule and how he could ensure such an error did not occur again. *Facundo*, or Fertile Ground, was published in 1845 and advanced Sarmiento's notion that Argentines were a barbarous backwards people that needed to civilize themselves. To this end, Sarmiento advocated that Argentina should model itself after Western Europe and the United States and, if

¹³ Donna R. Gabaccia, *Italy's Many Diasporas*, (London: Routledge, 2004), p. 104.

possible, attract Northern European immigrants so that Argentines might be bettered by means of proximity.¹⁴

Though ultimately successful in attracting Europeans willing to come to this country, they were not from the region that was desired by Argentine leaders. 33 percent of Buenos Aires was foreign-born in 1855 and by 1895 the portion reached 55 percent. The majority of newcomers came from the Latin, Spanish, and Italian, rather than the Anglo-Saxon culture.¹⁵ Initially acceptable, their racial composition proved counterproductive to Sarmiento's and the Argentine elite's civilizing mission. As the nineteenth century came to a close, "civilizing" symbolized a partnership between the political and scientific. The goal of this alliance was to create a civilized Argentina, one that was racially perfect.

The alliance between the political and scientific came out of necessity. Argentine leaders had to accommodate hundreds of thousands of immigrants crowding into the city centers. The dangers of population concentration became clear with a cholera outbreak in 1867 and a yellow fever epidemic in 1871. Those of means were able move to the better climate of the hills north of Buenos Aires.¹⁶ Those who could not afford to move to the north remained trapped in the central and southern parts of the city. Looking at the inner city from suburbs, the Argentine elite saw street violence, crime, poverty and vagrancy. Since it was determined that the same atmosphere that caused the epidemics

¹⁴ Mark Szuchman, *Mobility and Integration in Urban Argentina: Córdoba in the Liberal Era*, (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1980), pp. 76-77.

¹⁵ Julia Rodríguez, *Civilizing Argentina: Science, Medicine, and the Modern State*, (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2006), p.24.

¹⁶ Sonia Berjman, *Plazas y Parques de Buenos Aires: La Obra de Los Paisajistas Franceses, André, Courtois, Thays, Bouvard, Forestier, 1860-1930*, (Buenos Aires: Fondo de Cultura Económico de Argentina, 1998), p. 35.

was causing these societal illnesses, the state hired social pathologists to cure those diseases and make for a more hygienic society.¹⁷

The fear among Argentine scientists and politicians at the turn of the century was that genetic defects born out of the poor environment of the city would spread to the society at large.¹⁸ One such intellectual, Enrique Romero Brest, was particularly concerned about children living in the inner-city. He worried that the bad air coupled with the lack of physical stimulation made children more susceptible to disease and the development of genetic defects that could lead to the degeneration of the Argentine race.¹⁹ To cure this societal ill, Brest recommended physical education and the construction of fields of play. Open spaces and exercise not only took children off the streets and away from locations of ill repute, but also aided them in the formation of moral traits that could be genetically passed down to their children.²⁰ Within the Argentine concept of hygiene the moral component of social uplift was ever present.

Though Brest cites only a few sources it seems that his pedagogy was formed from a tour of Europe. The few sources he cites are from French pedagogues, which is expected, as France was a favorite model for Argentine intellectuals at the turn of the century. Speaking at a conference in 1903, psychologist Horacio Piñero declared that Argentina was intellectually French.²¹ Of particular interest to Argentine intellectuals such as Brest and Piñero were Parisian parks. The main point of parks, at least most attractive to the Argentine intellectual, was to create open space in the suffocating city, space where the air was more hygienic. Some parks were designed for people to picnic in while

¹⁷ Julia Rodríguez, *Civilizing Argentina*, pp. 5-6.

¹⁸ *Ibid*, p. 72.

¹⁹ Enrique Romero Brest, *Pedagogía de la educación física*, edition 7, (Buenos Aires: Librería del Colegio, 1938), pp. 17-18.

²⁰ *Ibid*, pp. 19-20.

²¹ Rodríguez, p. 32.

others were meant for people to walk through and only observe the beauty of nature. Architects who embraced the rules of painting, such as balance between objects and attention to color palettes were put in charge of designing these city parks.

One in particular was especially successful and was responsible for parks in England, Holland, and Monte Carlo, in addition to his home country of France. Eduard André was born in France in 1840 and believed that parks should be constructed so that enlightened people may experience objective beauty.²² André also believed there should be open spaces in the park so that people could engage in hygienic exercise. In 1867 Sarmiento took a trip to Paris where his friend, the French consul to Uruguay, introduced the Argentine to André, creating a connection between France and Argentina.²³

Not much is made of the relationship of Sarmiento and Eduard André as the famous park designer never journeyed to Argentina. However, his secretary, Charles Thays, actually travelled to Argentina and brought his mentors' ideas to Buenos Aires. Born in Paris in 1849, Thays immigrated to Buenos Aires where he died in 1934.²⁴ At the turn of the twentieth century, Buenos Aires was in full bloom. The epidemics still fresh in the minds of the Argentine elite made them receptive to the idea that parks provided a hygienic break from the grime of the city. Additionally André's idea that parks could stimulate the enlightened individual indicated that beauty could aid in the social uplift of the working class.

Thays' parks followed the same principles as André's but with an important difference. Rather than using standard European flora, Thays' parks showcased local plants. His purpose was to draw people's attention to the beauty that could be found in

²² Sonia Berjman, *Plazas y Parques de Buenos Aires*, pp. 30-31.

²³ *Ibid*, p. 42.

²⁴ *Ibid*, pp. 106-107.

their own nation rather than endlessly longing for the exotic European.²⁵ In his mind parks could have more than just a hygienic purpose, they could also contribute to nation-building.

Argentina's public parks provide an interesting case study for intercultural transfer. While the transfer was initiated by the receiving country those that brought the object to Argentina came from the sending country. Public officials and well-moneyed industrialists provided the funding for the parks and decorations but foreign architects, such as André and Thays, designed the parks. The current model for intercultural transfer notes that the agent of transfer comes from the receiving society and often only has a vague understanding of the idea he is carrying.²⁶ In the case of Argentina's parks the agents of transfer were the foreign architects who were already familiar with the idea. This example should cause us to rethink the current model of intercultural transfer.

Even with French agents of intercultural transfer, the object of transfer, the parks, was still adapted to its new setting by the inclusion of local plants and the notion that public spaces could be used to foster nationalism. Returning to his home country of France in 1913, Thays recommended that his countrymen use local flora whenever they designed a new park.²⁷ In keeping with the model of intercultural transfer, the idea, in this case city parks, returns to its society of origin, France, albeit in a changed form. Thays sought to bring French parks to Argentina but after a lifetime spent in a new setting altered the idea he was transferring. He then acted as an agent of transfer once again but this time bringing the changed idea back to the society from which he originally transferred it.

²⁵ Sonia Berjman, *Plazas y Parques de Buenos Aires*, p 118.

²⁶ Thomas Adam, *Intercultural Transfer and the Making of the Modern World*, p. 6.

²⁷ Berjman, p. 111.

Though intended to be a part of nation-building, Argentine parks did not inspire that level of devotion on its own. The elite saw beauty and pride in the parks but to the others, parks were open spaces in which one could practice sports. Public spaces enabled the residents of the neighborhood to socialize over increasingly popular games such as soccer. Only when soccer had become the national sport were public parks viewed in a nationalistic light but not because of the local flora but as the womb in which Argentina nurtured its soccer stars.

Before the park building craze captured Buenos Aires, a decision was made that would determine the city's fate, at least in terms of industrial development. In 1870 it was decided that in order to meet the needs of a growing export-based economy a new port needed to be constructed. Two locations were proposed for the port, one to the east of the principal square, plaza de mayo, and the other alongside the neighborhoods of Barracas and Boca in the south where the cattle industry was located. The landed elite favored the later since it would cost them less to export their beef to European markets. Alternatively, the northern location offered easy access to the center of the city where banks, governmental buildings, and the president's palace were located. Industrialists and foreign investors favored this location.

Eventually the Argentine leaders chose the northern location and Eduardo Madero, political head of the party in favor of the northern port, was chosen to spearhead the project. Despite the central location, the eastern beach was muddy and prone to flood causing construction problems. To combat these issues, Madero went to London and had a reputable engineer, Sir John Hawkshaw, create the blueprint.²⁸ In addition to British plans, Madero's trip abroad secured a loan from Baring Brothers of London which he

²⁸ James R. Scobie, *Buenos Aires: Plaza to Suburb 1870-1910*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1974), p. 80.

then used to secure British machinery to make the construction possible.²⁹ By 1910 the completed port was able to clear some 30,000 ships and some 18 million tons of cargo.³⁰

Choosing the northern location had an impact beyond improving the shipping capabilities of Buenos Aires. Though the idea came from Madero and he was the man on location, British investors and engineers funded and carried out the project. Argentina received the modern port that it needed while England got a controlling stake in the shipping both to and from the country. In what would become standard practice, in return for receiving help modernizing its country, Argentina handed over control of its territory and resources to foreign companies.

Modernization of the port was neither the only industrial project nor the most ambitious. In Argentina as in the United States, railroads were to connect the fertile hinterlands with the industrial cities and enable expansion. In 1862 the first section of rail was built by the Buenos Ayres and San Fernando Railway Company to connect Buenos Aires' northern farmlands with the city. A second line was constructed in 1865 by the Buenos Ayres Great Southern Railroad Company to provide access to cattle ranches. The routes themselves totaled only about ten miles and took a significant amount of time to complete.³¹ Both grain and meat were sought after by British trade companies and consumers but it was clear that two short lines of railroads could not move enough food to feed an empire. By 1870 Argentine Railroad companies had only been able to lay 732 kilometers of tracks across the entire country. Seizing the opportunity not only to open the country to further export but also as another investment opportunity, British industrialists formed the Anglo-Argentine Company. Officially established in 1876, the

²⁹ James R. Scobie, *Buenos Aires: Plaza to Suburb 1870-1910*, pp. 75, 83.

³⁰ *Ibid*, p. 86.

³¹ Charles S. Sargent, *Greater Buenos Aires, 1870-1930*, pp. 7-8.

railroad company worked quickly and in four years constructed well over 9,000 kilometers of tracks throughout Argentina.³²

Not only did the new lines open much of the fertile Argentine plains but they also provided citizens an easy escape from the city. The two more popular destinations for people fleeing the city was Belgrano and Flores both towns were railroad terminuses, the former to the north and the latter due west. Argentines who could afford to do so, both the elite as well as the middle class, followed the example set by the British and followed the tracks to the suburbs where they found life to be more comfortable.³³ The only catch was that government buildings, banks, trade houses, and basically all their businesses remained fixed in the center of the city. Dependable and ruled by the clock, trains made it possible for the elite and middle class to live outside the city and yet commute into it for work.

Three great railroad terminuses governed the northern, western, and southern line but their job was to bring goods and passengers to the city. In the nineteenth century if one wanted to get from one part of the city to the other, one could either walk or take the horse-drawn tram. Given the narrow nature of the city's streets and elevated sidewalks with the mass of people that used them, walking was best done in short burst. The alternative, in form of the horse-drawn tram, was not much better of an option. Horses were underfed and overworked leading to many dying in mid-route, stopping the tram until a replacement could be fetched.³⁴ The schedule was impossible to keep and the tram was expensive as the companies that owned the lines had to keep purchasing horses. As an added annoyance there was no uniform price for service meaning that

³² James R. Scobie, *Buenos Aires: Plaza to Suburb 1870-1910*, p. 20.

³³ Ibid, pp.124-127.

³⁴ Charles S. Sargent, *Greater Buenos Aires, 1870-1930*, p. 68.

certain routes were more expensive than others. The tram service, much like the sidewalks, were unreliable.

In the last few years of the 1890's an upgrade came to public transportation that made its use both more affordable as well as more reliable. Using electricity provided by recently build French and Swiss power plants, Argentine railroad companies along with the Anglo-Argentine company began to lay new track and power lines for the electric trolley.³⁵ Faster and more dependable than horse trams, electric trolleys could reliably keep a schedule in addition to charging lower fare as each car carried more passengers. The consolidation of all rail lines by the Anglo-Argentine Railway Company in 1907 took another step in making public transportation more comfortable. A single company now set a unified price across all routes. By 1910 public transportation ferried 324 million passengers to and from work showing its popularity among Argentine commuters.³⁶

If trains opened up access to towns outside the city, generous bank loans would allow most consumers to live in them as well.³⁷ Outer towns were integrated into Buenos Aires by being transformed into suburbs. Thanks to readily available supplies of brick, homes could be built taller so families could purchase smaller plots of land. Houses were constructed in classic Spanish style featuring an outside wall which opened onto the sidewalk while the inside opened into a greeting room. Beyond the entrance was an open air patio where the family spent most of their time and only the closest of friends were invited. Those who could afford to do so hired Italian architects, such as Nicolás and José Canale to add elegance to their homes. Foreign designers generally kept the Spanish patio style construction but added classical European flourishes to the façade facing the

³⁵ James Scobie, *Buenos Aires: Plaza to Suburb*, p. 174.

³⁶ *Ibid*, p. 177.

³⁷ Charles S. Sargent, *Greater Buenos Aires, 1870-1930*, p. 82.

street.³⁸ Even the houses of Buenos Aires demonstrated a South American and European conglomeration.

By 1910 Buenos Aires bore the markings of a prosperous European city. Men walking down the street, regardless of their class, wore suits of somber colors with stiff collars as well as a nice hat. Women wore brightly colored dresses to provide contrast to the men and city around them. Travelers to the city expressed a degree of frustration about their inability to distinguish the elite from mere commoners.³⁹ More than a visual experience, walking through the streets of Buenos Aires one heard a mixture of Spanish, English, Italian, and French. The acoustic experience was due partly because it was fashionable to learn French, or at least a few words, and good business to learn English. Many other languages were heard since just under half of the population of Buenos Aires came from abroad. The 1909 census noted about 1.2 million people lived in the Federal City, with 54 percent native and the remainder immigrants. The two most represented foreign groups were the Italians with 22 percent, and the Spanish with 14 percent.⁴⁰ Not only did the architecture of Buenos Aires resemble Europe, but so too did its people.

Along with replicating scientific and industrial advances of Western Europe, Argentina was also creating a social hierarchy. The same technologies that allowed citizens to escape the overcrowding of the city also allowed them to create their own cultural spheres of influence. Investment and industrialization made the already wealthy even more so, and with an eye on Europe, the Argentine elite fancied themselves a type of aristocracy. They took up European pastimes and isolated themselves in their exclusive social clubs. The immigrants more often than not huddled together and set up their own organizations so that they did not need to rely on the government or their

³⁸ James Scobie, *Buenos Aires: Plaza to Suburb*, pp. 127-129.

³⁹ *Ibid*, p. 35.

⁴⁰ Charles S. Sargent, *Greater Buenos Aires, 1870-1930*, p 260.

neighbors. Those who could afford to do so, retreated to the suburbs leaving the poor to be corralled by the industrialists to wherever they were needed. With no strong national ideology, such as “Manifest Destiny” in the United States, Buenos Aires fractured into a collection of different neighborhoods.

The development of separate cultural spheres rather than a unified imagined community owes much to the rapid industrialization of the city. Venture capital continued to flow into the city building more factories to process meat, grain, and other industrial goods consuming every hectare of free space. By 1930, towards the end of the modernizing process, only five percent or 960 hectares of Buenos Aires was classified as open space.⁴¹ As land became increasingly harder to come by, the city ceased to expand outwards and instead grew taller. In 1904 the number of buildings with four stories and more numbered 138, ten years later that number increased to 730.⁴² These new buildings were intended for housing but neighborhoods adapted these structures to serve many different roles.

Though travel throughout the city was made easier after 1910, the effects of the previous several decades lingered on. Before the reliability of the electric trolley, most people could not look beyond their own neighborhood for everyday needs such as clothes and bread. Also, Dona Gabaccia notes in *Italy's Many Diasporas*, the Italian expatriate community often was insular. Italian migrants turned small artisan shops into small factories using recently arrived immigrants for labor. Italian owners used Italian labor to sell to other Italians, an enclosed ethnic enclave.⁴³ Since Italians lived throughout Buenos Aires, they could not completely isolate themselves. Instead they created these

⁴¹ Charles Sargent, *Greater Buenos Aires*, p. 88.

⁴² Ibid, p. 62.

⁴³ Dona Gabaccia, *Italy's Many Diasporas*, p. 79.

small factories throughout the Argentine capital, granting neighborhoods a degree of autonomy.

Another particular insulating space, also familiar to Italian immigrants was the local café. Often owned by the same man that ran the small factory, cafés were familiar Italian landmarks and adopted a new identity in Buenos Aires.⁴⁴ More than a place where one drank his morning coffee, they were a place of social escape. It became a space where men would meet and share their lives. Since the café was an intimate setting, entry was permitted by those who were already patrons. Outsiders or those who hailed from areas outside the service radius of the café were merely tolerated. This social space in addition to the small shops helped to fix an individual's identity in his neighborhood rather than the city at large.⁴⁵

The Argentine elite also modeled their own social interaction after the French and English communities. Since the middle of the nineteenth century, British expatriates formed social clubs. In 1882 one of the most influential clubs was founded by then president Julio A. Roca (1880-1886), the Jockey Club. As the name suggest one of the primary activity enjoyed by members was horse racing but the club also created other courts and spaces as its members wished. Located in the center of the city, the Jockey Club was a place where the elite could spend an evening or the weekend socializing with their peers. Membership to an elite club was a symbol of a man's prestige and so it was

⁴⁴ Dona Gabaccia, *Italy's Many Diasporas*, p. 86.

⁴⁵ Christopher Thomas Gaffney, *Temples of the Earthbound Gods: Stadiums in the Cultural Landscapes of Rio de Janeiro and Buenos Aires*, (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2008), pp. 135-137.

guarded. In the absence of divine bloodlines, admittance to the Jockey Club would have to suffice.⁴⁶

While the elite created their own cultural sphere on the most expensive land around the center of the city, the working class was not so lucky. Trapped in the city proper or its southern neighborhoods, those who could not afford to move to houses and apartments in the suburbs lived in the *conventillos* or tenements. They stayed in the neighborhoods along the port or in the industrial neighborhoods of La Boca and Barracas to the south. In 1919 there were 2,697 *conventillos* in Buenos Aires. With 613 tenements, La Boca had twice the number as the next closest, which was Monserrat, a district alongside the port.⁴⁷ People who could not move outside the city were stuck with cramped quarters, streets, and industrial pollution. In 1914 the municipal council of Buenos Aires created zones for, “dangerous and unhealthy industries,” where poor workers were stuck.⁴⁸

As modernization continued, avenues for the working class to escape the central city were opened. In the 1900's there were a few worker groups that pooled resources to purchase land and materials as well as low-cost housing set up by philanthropic organizations. The Jockey Club undertook philanthropic efforts by donating the proceeds from its Thursday races to underwrite the low-cost housing loans. Donations could be substantial such as one million pesos in 1910.⁴⁹ Other initiatives came from workers themselves through the establishment of cooperatives, pooling resources so their members could pay rent or place a down payment on a plot of land. Whether through

⁴⁶ Julio Frydenberg, “Practicas y Valores en el Proceso de Popularización del Fútbol,” *Entrepasados*, Año VI, Nº 12, Buenos Aires, 1997, 12-6-2012, www.efdeportes.com, section I : Los Clubes-Equipos.

⁴⁷ Charles S. Sargent, *Greater Buenos Aires*, p. 65.

⁴⁸ James R. Scobie, *Buenos Aires: Plaza to Suburb*, p. 199.

⁴⁹ *Ibid*, p. 190.

wealthy charities, cooperatives, or simply extra capital by 1904 the population of the tenements was decreasing relative to the city's population. In 1887, 27 percent of the population of Buenos Aires lived in *conventillos* but by 1904 that number had dropped to 15 percent.⁵⁰

The Argentine clubs that developed at the turn of the century engaged in more than just philanthropic pursuits. Much like public parks, albeit more successful, social clubs acted to nationalize both immigrants as well as their children. Not only the elite formed clubs, but also the working class in neighborhoods such as Boca Juniors and River Plate. For these clubs membership did not require social standing but simply the means to pay the reasonable monthly membership fee.⁵¹ Once part of a club, members gained access to its hygienic facilities, such as pools and fields for sports, and to festivals and gatherings hosted by the club. These festivals and institutions helped give its members a social identity that was rooted in their local neighborhood. Since the practice of sport was a large part of these clubs' activities and particularly spectating matches, identity was created by "othering" those from surrounding neighborhoods.⁵² Though clubs gave members an identity tied to Argentina, they aided to the Italian tendency of loyalty to the *patria chica*, or local country of the neighborhood.⁵³

A 1909 census of Buenos Aires shows the tendency of immigrants to group together rather than spread through the city. The 80,000 foreign born residents of 1876 had blossomed into 45.5 percent of the population of Buenos Aires or 560,560 people. Spanish immigrants tended to stay in Monserrat, a port neighborhood, as they

⁵⁰ Charles S. Sargent, *Greater Buenos Aires*, p. 13.

⁵¹ Julio Frydenberg, Rodrigo Daskal & Cesar R. Torres, "Sports Clubs with Football in Argentina: Conflicts, Debates and Continuities," *International Journal of Sport History*, vol. 30, no. 14, p. 1673.

⁵² *Ibid*, pp. 1675-1676.

⁵³ Dona Gabaccia, *Italy's Many Diasporas*, p. 3.

represented 32.4 percent of the population of that district. Russian immigrants only made up 1.1 percent of the total population of Buenos Aires and yet they represented 11 percent of the population of Balvanera Norte, the northwest neighbor of Monserrat.⁵⁴

Exact population figures, especially among foreign born residents in the industrial districts, are hard to come by since a large percentage of the population was transitory. A 1914 national census took stock of the work force in Buenos Aires and classified over 82,000 workers as day-laborers, those that worked at either the docks or factories. 90 percent of these day-laborers were born outside Argentina.⁵⁵ As Gabaccia shows with her work on the Italian international community, *servi*, laborers, moved to places where work was most readily available.⁵⁶ Buenos Aires with its numerous industrial projects, ports as well as railroads, was a popular destination. At the same time these workers either moved on or moved home when the work was finished. Gabaccia estimates that a total of 50 percent, or 1.5 million in the case of Argentina, of Italian migrants returned to Italy in the modern period.⁵⁷ In addition to making it difficult to record exact numbers of foreign born residents, the transitory workers were not looking to adopt an Argentine identity.

Overall, Buenos Aires was developing culturally segregated neighborhoods. The native-born residents lived in the suburbs of the city and the recent immigrants lived towards the center and south. Italians were an exception to this rule and as Gabaccia noted, were too large a group to completely segregate.⁵⁸ The highest concentration of Italians was in Balvanera Sud, where they made up 29.1 percent of the population. The

⁵⁴ Charles S. Sargent, *Greater Buenos Aires, 1870-1930*, p 260.

⁵⁵ *Ibid*, p. 265.

⁵⁶ Dona Gabaccia, *Italy's Many Diasporas*, p. 73.

⁵⁷ *Ibid*, p. 7.

⁵⁸ *Ibid*, p. 104.

second highest was San Bernardo, the westernmost district at 28.2 percent.⁵⁹ They lived in both the industrial centers as well as the suburbs, in a way bridging the gap between the already settled and the settling. It was not uncommon for Italian families with extra room either in their homes or apartments to make additional money renting spaces to newcomers.⁶⁰

North American immigrants proved to be another notable exception. They represented about 2.9 percent of the total population and made up just about 2 percent of every neighborhood. Unlike the other immigrant groups, U.S. citizens did not construct congregations in one area but spread equally throughout the city. The likely cause of this is the nature of North American investment in Argentina. Not nearly as sizeable as that of Great Britain, the United States could not monopolize any particular industry but instead invested in several industries. Likewise overseers for this investment spread themselves through the city.⁶¹

The British represented a small but mighty portion of the Buenos Aires cultural sphere. Representing a total of 1.1 percent of the total population of Argentina, the British community exercised disproportionate influence over the country. However, Argentina had been borrowing money from Great Britain since the 1820's. As investments increased in frequency and size through the turn of the twentieth century, more middle-men were required. At its height the British community numbered over 40,000.⁶² Few of them planned on staying any longer than their contract mandated and so made little to no attempt to integrate. Instead they formed social clubs of their own in which they could recreate the atmosphere of English high culture. One of the oldest and most prominent of

⁵⁹ Charles S. Sargent, *Greater Buenos Aires, 1870-1930*, p 260.

⁶⁰ Dona Gabaccia, p. 101.

⁶¹ Sargent, p. 260.

⁶² Eduardo Archetti, *Masculinidades: fútbol, tango y polo en la Argentina*, (Buenos Aires: Editorial Antropología, 2003), p. 22.

these clubs was the Cricket Club. Formed in 1831, it only admitted British-born men.⁶³ In the Jockey Club, which took the Cricket Club for inspiration, sports were practiced and expatriates socialized.

In addition to clubs, the British formed their own schools in order to keep their children from mixing with Argentines. The first English-speaking school was established even before the Cricket Club. Margaret Hyne ran a girls school out of her home, teaching approximately 70 children from 1823 until she left Buenos Aires in 1842.⁶⁴ By the 1920's there were over 60 English schools established across the country catering nearly exclusively to the British population.⁶⁵ Though English-speaking schools in a Spanish-speaking country foster segregation, there was a reason to establish a different school system. Argentine schools followed the North American model rather than the British one. Well-meaning parents did not want their children to be at a disadvantage when they returned to England. Attending separate schools meant that foreign children only played with other foreign children which further insulated English families from their host country.

Though Argentina had succeeded in attracting European immigrants, foreign participation in Argentine society was not as extensive as leaders had hoped. Migrant workers often remained in their *conventillos* around the docks and factories seeking to return home one day. Middle-class immigrants who managed foreign investments lived among Argentines in the suburbs but inhabited a completely different cultural space. Even though the two people existed in the same physical space, the neighborhood, their children went to different schools and the adults participated in different social activities. The only Argentines who were allowed a glimpse into the immigrant's world were the

⁶³ Andrew Graham-Yooll, *The Forgotten Colony: a history of the English speaking communities in Argentina*, (London: Hutchinson Publishing Group, 1981), p. 189.

⁶⁴ Graham-Yooll, p. 118.

⁶⁵ David Rock, "The British of Argentina," pp. 33-34

elites who were occasionally invited to attend social events such as sports matches or Fourth of July parties.

Even without the separate foreign cultural spheres in Buenos Aires there would still be division among the Argentines. The elite lived in their own neighborhoods to the north of the city and attended their own social clubs. At the turn of the twentieth century when automobiles became available, the wealthy drove into the city with their cars rather than using public transportation, further insulating themselves from their fellow citizens. Likewise, those who had enough money to purchase luxuries, inhabited their suburbs. Their needs and wants could be met within the neighborhood in which they lived and local cafés provided a location for socializing as well as an identity.

The city of Buenos Aires seemed to travelers to be a model of intercultural cooperation evidenced by the diverse collection of immigrants but this façade was created at a price. The city had a collection of Parisian parks and thoroughfares, buildings designed by Italian architects, and modern conveniences such as railways, electric trolleys, and gas powered lampposts provided by the British. All these amenities came however at the price of economic control. England controlled the railways, shipping lanes, meat processing factories, and the telephone lines; France and Switzerland controlled the power stations; and the United States fought for what was left over.⁶⁶ Though the modernization of Buenos Aires was a result of intercultural cooperation, foreign powers gained a disproportionate advantage in the trade.

In the 1920s and beyond Argentine leaders needed a way to unify the country and regain a certain amount of control over their own destiny. People needed a reason to visit adjacent neighborhoods to build a cohesive national identity. Likewise Argentina needed to find a way to integrate immigrants rather than allowing them to stay in their

⁶⁶ Andrew Graham-Yooll, *The Forgotten Colony*, p. 239.

separate enclaves. The solution seized by leaders was already growing in popularity among Argentines by the 1920s, and it was soccer. The sport was practiced by the rich, poor, and foreigners alike. Games could draw people out to the stadium even if it was in a different neighborhood. Soccer could provide the cohesion that the city was lacking, the only challenge was turning an English activity into something that was representative of Argentina.

Chapter 3

The Intercultural Transfer of Soccer

Into the collection of cultural islands of Buenos Aires the British brought many sports, the least of which was soccer. Though the sport's exact origin is unknown, references to "football" begin creeping into British legislative records already in the fourteenth century. Early sources chronicle local lawmaker's attempts, and failures, to prevent what was a destructive activity for both person and property.⁶⁷ The simplicity of the game and a weak power of the state allowed the game to be played at any time with little opportunity to stop it.

Soccer, as practiced in fourteenth-century England, descended from medieval folk games with rules and rituals communicated orally, each region to develop its own version of this proto-sport.⁶⁸ As a result, certain regions developed the habit of kicking, others of throwing, and still others of hitting the ball with sticks. It is difficult and somewhat unhelpful to determine which version of football written records indicate. For that reason I use "football" to denote the ambiguous game that was representative of both soccer and rugby.

Though the game did not have a spiritual goal, a football match often took place on the holy days. There were neither set rules, nor attempts to regulate the game in any way. There was no regulated field size or even a field for that matter as the game was played in the streets. The number of players on each side was not fixed either. Matches lasted as long as they needed to, that is until it was dark or one side secured victory.

Even without uniformity, there existed certain similarities between the football matches across England. Though matches could be initiated at any time, they often took

⁶⁷ Eric Dunning and Kenneth Sheard, *Barbarians, Gentleman and Players: A Sociological Study of the Development of Rugby Football*, 2nd edition, (New York: Routledge, 2005), p. 20.

⁶⁸ *Ibid*, p. 27.

place as part of the ceremony accompanying a holiday. In Dorset, football formed part of the Shrovetide ceremonies where the last man married in the past year provided the ball for the match.⁶⁹ “The combat-style” game, as Eric Dunning and Kenneth Sheard refer to it, was played between groups inside a region, such as the shoemakers and the drapers. Matches served as arenas for the groups to air out disagreements and guild conflicts that had been brewing throughout the previous year. These frustrations, coupled with weak municipal authority, led to a martial atmosphere that local governments were unable to moderate. Due to weakness of the central authority, the British landed gentry provided the lacking authority.⁷⁰ In Dorset, the ball was presented by the lord of the manor whose duty it was to initiate the match. Though municipalities tried to ban the destructive game, the landed gentry that supported it were strong enough to ensure football’s survival into the nineteenth century.

No consensus has been reached on why the folk version of football fell out of favor, and for the purpose of this paper it is not necessary to speculate too far. By the middle of the nineteenth century, a combination of social and economic changes helped keep folk-football off the streets and to channel it into newly specialized spaces for the play. A newly created police force combined with the waning power of the aristocracy was finally able to enforce the bans on the sport. In addition Britain had just gone through a social shift from a rural to an urban society. Though one of the first countries to industrialize, it was not until the end of the eighteenth century that massive factories associated with the Industrial Revolution pulled people into the cities.⁷¹ Open spaces were consumed as the city expanded into the countryside. Municipal authorities

⁶⁹ Eric Dunning and Kenneth Sheard, *Barbarians, Gentleman and Players*, p. 22.

⁷⁰ Ibid, p. 33.

⁷¹ James C. Riley, “A Widening Market in Consumer Goods,” in Euan Cameron, *Early Modern Europe: An Oxford History*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), p. 245.

designated “public recreation grounds” to exercise sports and tasked the police to ensure games took place only in those spaces.⁷² The wild and carefree nature of folk-football was no longer sustainable in industrial Britain. A new world governed by the clock and scientific rates of production could not accommodate such chaos.

Football proved more resistant to regulation and found a new home in the British public school system. The name is a little misleading. Even though designated as “public,” the English schools were anything but open to the public. These boarding schools were scattered around the United Kingdom, mostly away from cities, and educated the next generation of leaders.⁷³ Parents hoped that their children would learn important skills such as self-reliance and how to interact with one’s peers. At the same time, schools conditioned students to live in a hierarchical society through faculty-sanctioned bullying. Older students were encouraged by the school administrators to “police” the younger ones and keep them in their place. While British society was beginning to shy away from non-state sanctioned violence, there was still a place for it within the school system and so there was a place for what would become soccer.

The creation of acceptable locations for open conflict, according to Norbert Elias, is important to the civilizing process. While it is doubtful that such a linear process exists, the model is helpful in describing a role of modern sport in society. Elias explains that in moving from barbarity to civility an individual must temper his desires, specifically his desire to take that which he wishes. The individual gives up this privilege so that others will not exercise the same power against him and in so doing can guarantee that what he

⁷² Eric Dunning and Kenneth Sheard, *Barbarians, Gentleman and Players*, p. 37.

⁷³ *Ibid*, pp.41-42.

gains, he may keep.⁷⁴ The urge to engage in violent acts, is however, according to Elias, innate and so a civilized society needs to create a space in which such emotions can be released. Great Britain was already creating spaces for the controlled release of violence in the form of “public recreation grounds.” In the public school setting, violence was useful as boys developed into men and were called upon to defend their “manliness.”

One of the most influential figures in the development of football, at least the one most written about, is Thomas Arnold. Appointed headmaster of the Rugby School in the early nineteenth century, Arnold established a series of reforms which created an environment friendly to the development of modern sport. It is worth mentioning that though the style of football played at the Rugby School became the eponymous sport, football also referred to the competing style being played at the rival boarding school of Eton. The distinction between rugby and soccer only emerged in 1863 with the inaugural meeting of the Football Association, which played the latter version of the sport.⁷⁵ Since both sports shared the same origins and even had the same birthplace, public schools, it stands to reason that social and cultural factors would be similar in both institutions.

British public schools catered to the needs of well-to-do families made up of the aristocracy and wealthy industrialists. Arnold came from a middle-class background, typical of most headmasters at the time. Children from the aristocracy saw themselves as superior to their headmasters and sought to avoid submission to school authority. Fortunately for Arnold, Rugby had a lower proportion of budding aristocrats than other public schools, which gave him more freedom to implement reforms. At the same time he was certainly aware of the problems caused by children of the landed class. Many of his

⁷⁴ Norbert Elias, “The Social Constraint through Self-Constraint,” in *Civilization, Power, and Knowledge*, editors Stephen Mennell and Johan Goudeblom, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1998), p. 56.

⁷⁵ Eric Dunning and Kenneth Sheard, *Barbarians, Gentleman and Players*, p. 93.

reforms were aimed at limiting their power. Arnold denied children admittance to his school if they came from aristocratic families and outlawed typical aristocratic leisure activities such as hunting, shooting, and fishing.⁷⁶ With traditional recreational activities unavailable, the boys at Rugby needed to find a new activity for their leisure time.

Control and use of leisure time was important not only to the headmasters, but also to the boys themselves. Arnold, like his counterparts in other schools, wished to train the boys to be 'Christian gentlemen,' enlightened adults attuned to the needs of industrial Britain.⁷⁷ His students needed to recognize a larger community than just themselves and see how they both influenced and were influenced by it. Team sports such as folk-football taught children how to work together to achieve a common goal, a lesson easier learned in the school yard than in a classroom. Leisure time was not only valuable for the teachers but the students as well. Public schools were competitive environments both inside and outside its walls. Strong students, usually the older boys, were given preferential treatment by headmasters who used them to keep control of the younger boys. Football was a means for older boys to demonstrate their dominance and validate their hierarchical position.⁷⁸

Eventually, the public school boys graduated and moved to institutes of higher learning, taking their game with them. The new setting provided new problems. Soccer, at least initially, was considered to be an undignified activity for a university student. Many agreed with the notion at the time and for them soccer was simply a childhood game. Those who refused to let the sport go needed to overcome the problem of rules since not all students came from the same public school and so played widely different versions of the game. Universities contained students from various schools with their own

⁷⁶ Eric Dunning and Kenneth Sheard, *Barbarians, Gentleman and Players*, p. 66.

⁷⁷ *Ibid*, p. 63.

⁷⁸ *Ibid*, p. 43.

version of the game as well as internal rivalries. The desire to play in the end won out and in 1848 a code was created, fusing together several different school traditions.⁷⁹

Codification of the rules of soccer was not only an important step in the creation of the modern sport; it naturally led to the creation of a governing body to rule it. According to Allen Guttman the creation of rules is pivotal to the creation of a modern sport.⁸⁰ Rules were created in order to make the game more enjoyable and in the case of soccer at Cambridge and Oxford, ultimately playable. The codification of rules filtered the dozens of versions of “football” into two distinct games, soccer and rugby. The issue between the two sports was whether or not permitting “running the ball in” and if “hacking” was permissible, both characteristics associated with rugby.⁸¹ Creating rules permitted the two versions of what was nominally the same game to differentiate from each other. Differentiation allowed potential practitioners to clearly communicate the version of the sport they were playing.

It would be natural to think that leagues and teams would form from these university teams but that was not the case. In 1858 Sheffield FC became the first recorded soccer club and yet had no affiliation with a university or public school. Instead the organization was formed by friends who frequented a local pub.⁸² Though never receiving full recognition in the university setting, the upper and middle classes discovered a use for the sport. When taught to the working class, the physical exertion proved beneficial but gave workers something else to do with their free time rather than drinking or engaging in other questionable pursuits.⁸³ Clubs formed out of a desire to play

⁷⁹ Adrian Harvey, *Football: The First Hundred Years*, (New York: Routledge, 2005), p. 41.

⁸⁰ Allen Guttman, *From Ritual to Record: The Nature of Modern Sports*, (New York: University of Columbia Press, 1978) p. 40.

⁸¹ Eric Dunning and Kenneth Sheard, *Barbarians, Gentleman and Players*, p. 94.

⁸² Adrian Harvey, p. 99.

⁸³ *Ibid*, p. 56.

the sport and a location in which to play it, regardless of social class. What was once a game for the upper class, was opened for all to join. In 1863, representatives from the more influential clubs gathered at a pub and established the Football Association to regulate the game and facilitate matches.

Just four years after the rules of soccer were codified; they were transferred to the editor of the English-speaking newspaper, *The Standard*, in Buenos Aires.⁸⁴ By the 1860s there was already a significant British presence, if not in the country as a whole, at least in Buenos Aires. In 1867 members of the Cricket Club, led by the Hogg family, used the Palermo de San Benito cricket field to play soccer. Teams were divided by the color of hat which each team wore, colored versus white, and by the end of the match Hogg's team had secured victory.⁸⁵ Though noteworthy in its own right, the match was not a watershed event. The English expatriates continued to play soccer for the next 30 years but did not form a league until the 1890s.

As modern football was helped along in England by a school headmaster, so too was the image of soccer increased by an educator in Argentina. In 1882, St. Andrews school in Buenos Aires contracted a professor from the University of Edinburgh, Alexander Watson Hutton, to be their new headmaster.⁸⁶ Watson Hutton had been a professor of humanities with a focus on education, which at the time taught him the importance of team sports in a student's development. The Scotsman only served as headmaster of St. Andrews for two years before founding his own school, Buenos Aires English High School in 1884. Students at the English High School, all British, were taught

⁸⁴ Eduardo Archetti, *Masculinidades: fútbol, tango y polo en la Argentina*, (Buenos Aires: Editorial Antropología, 2003), p. 77.

⁸⁵ Eduardo Olivera, *Orígenes de Deportes Británicos en el Río de Plata*, (Buenos Aires: Talleres gráficos argentinos L.J. Rosso, 1932) p. 30

⁸⁶ Andrew Graham-Yooll, *The Forgotten Colony: a history of the English speaking communities in Argentina*, (London: Hutchinson Publishing Group, 1981), p. 130.

the values of teamwork and above all, the principal of “fair play.”⁸⁷ The latter principal referred to a strict moral code according to which players were heavily penalized for making a foul and since Watson Hutton was a referee for the matches, judgment was swift. Usually penalties involved not participating in a certain number of games. Flagrant faults could result in suspension. Already a part of the curriculum back home, physical education in the form of field games spread to other English schools. By 1893 there were enough students to sustain the Argentine Football League.⁸⁸

The League and its numerous incarnations over the years was the first step in creating the spectator sport that soccer later became. Enrollment in English high schools was still limited to British families but the matches between the schools were open to a wider audience. Legislators in attendance, such as Juan Fitz Simón, hypothesized that such games could be of incalculable benefit to the development of the country.⁸⁹ At the end of the century, the Argentine elites modelled their country as an idealized European state with the latest theories on urban development. Simón hoped that children taught in the same manner as those in the United States and Europe would make Argentina a world power.

Dealing with a large immigrant population from mostly southern Europe, the issue of second-generation children was important to legislators. Between 1860 and 1930 around six million immigrants found their way to Argentina and a little over half of them made the country their new home.⁹⁰ A high immigration level was cause for concern among state officials for numerous reasons ranging from criminality and degeneration of

⁸⁷ Julio Frydenberg, *Historia Social de Fútbol: de amateurismo a la profesionalización*, (Buenos Aires: Siglo Vientiuno Editores, 2011), p. 26.

⁸⁸ J.A. Managan, “Early Evolution of Modern Sport in Latin America,” as found in *Sport in Latin American Society : Past and Present*, ed. J.A. Mangan and LaMartine P. DaCosta, (Portland, OR: F. Cass, 2002) p.26.

⁸⁹ Eduardo Olivera, *Origenes de Deportes Británicos*, p. 31.

⁹⁰ Eduardo Archetti, *Masculinidades*, p. 21.

the race to urban development. One of the more important fears, at least in relation to the transfer of soccer, was how to turn immigrants, more importantly their children, into Argentines. Several initiatives were launched but the most popular was the creation of a public school system available to all. Spanish, rather than Italian or French, was spoken in the classrooms, the pledge of allegiance was said at the start of the day, and students were to attend six class hours a week on Argentine history.⁹¹

The question that legislators and educators disagreed upon was how physical education would be taught in these public schools. Enrique Romero Brest was one of the leading voices for the call for physical education programs. His book, *Pedagogía de la educación física* (Pedagogy of Physical Education) first published in 1905 went by 1938 through seven editions.⁹² In his book Brest defended the importance of physical education programs and described how it could improve the Argentine race. Through repetitive and quantitative exercises both boys and girls could perfect their body and pass on improved genes to their children.⁹³

Because the end goal was perfection of the whole body (both the individual body as well as the national one), not only should physical activities work all muscle groups but that growth should also be apparent and measurable. At the same time Brest believed that a person's emotional state affects the quality of the exercise. A person must willingly participate in the activity and enjoy it since it makes their movements more natural and so more beneficial.⁹⁴ To this end sports were helpful since they engaged students in enjoyable exercise. However, not all sports were considered to be equally beneficial.

⁹¹ Julia Rodriguez, *Civilizing Argentina: Science, Medicine, and the Modern State*, (North Carolina: University of North Carolina Press; 2006), p. 221.

⁹² Enrique Romero Brest, *Pedagogía de la educación física*, ed. 7, (Buenos Aires: Librería del Colegio, 1938), *Prólogo*.

⁹³ *Ibid*, p. 159.

⁹⁴ *Ibid*, pp. 58-59.

Though 'foot-ball' was popular and enjoyable it was too competitive for the pre-pubescent and focuses too much on the lower extremities.⁹⁵ A more appropriate place for competitive sports is in secondary school and as part of an exercise regimen fostering a complete body workout.

Brest considered the British educational model to be incompatible with the needs of the Argentine state. English pedagogy was too reliant on the playing of sports and did not dedicate enough space to developing the mind. In the end, the British system only promoted an unhealthy desire of victory above the improvement of the Argentine race.⁹⁶ Not willing to risk the dangers of degeneration, sporting competitions were kept out of the Argentine school system. To participate in sports, especially competitive ones like soccer, one either needed to go to a private school or join a social club in which the sport was played.

Hidden within the *Pedagogía de la educación física* is the desire to keep soccer a sport for the elite. As Julia Rodriguez explains in her book, *Civilizing Argentina*, from the second half of the nineteenth century up to the 1930s Argentina was run by the intellectual elite. They were worried about dangerous genetic elements being brought into their society and used science to weed them out.⁹⁷ First publishing his ideas within this intellectual climate, Brest talked about the polluting environment of the city which caused genetic defects among children.⁹⁸ Placing soccer, as he does, within the scope of secondary education and extra-curricular clubs, put the sport beyond the reach of working-class families. Though public schools were open to all, most working-class children completed a few years of school before helping to support their families. Even

⁹⁵ Enrique Romero Brest, *Pedagogía de la educación física*, p. 109.

⁹⁶ Ibid, pp. 367-369.

⁹⁷ Julia Rodriguez, *Civilizing Argentina: Science, Medicine, and the Modern State*, p. 5.

⁹⁸ Enrique Romero Brest, p. 17.

those who had the time to devote themselves to sports might not have the funds to pay the monthly duties for club membership.

Even as the Argentine elites were adopting soccer as their own, the British community attempted to maintain its position of dominance. However even the version of soccer played by the British Argentines was becoming different from the game played back in England. Influenced by a North American tradition in which the graduates of a school form a team, students of the English High School formed the Alumni.⁹⁹ In Britain students left home to go to public schools, which were removed from corrupting influences of the city, and moved away again once they graduated. In Argentina as in the U.S., children went to schools in the same region in which they lived. Even after graduating many stayed in that region making it easier to form a post-graduation team than it had been in England.

Once a team was formed the natural progression was to establish a club to support the team and participate in the soccer league. Though Argentine elites were denied membership in the British clubs, they were nonetheless allowed into the stands to watch important matches. This breach was secured since clubs served a primarily social function, creating a space for the English and the Argentine cohorts to build relationships and discuss business. In this context the game being played was secondary to the *tertulias* or social gathering that happened afterwards.¹⁰⁰ A visitor to one match, identified as Erin, was disappointed that there did not seem to be much effort among the “athletes” playing the “manly” game of football. Erin goes on to note that the players seemed more interested in the ample refreshments that were available after the match. *Porteños* (those

⁹⁹ Julio Frydenberg, *Historia Social de Fútbol*, p. 32.

¹⁰⁰ Julio Frydenberg, Rodrigo Daskal & Cesar R. Torres, “Sports Clubs with Football in Argentina: Conflicts, Debates and Continuities,” *International Journal of Sport History*, vol. 30, no. 14, p. 1671.

from Buenos Aires) were also in attendance viewing the spectacle from the shade of nearby willow trees.¹⁰¹

Though soccer might not be fit for the lower classes, it was acceptable for the private schools of the elite as well as their social clubs. In 1899, six years after Watson Hutton formed his soccer league, a second division was added in which Argentine clubs were allowed to compete.¹⁰² While clearly an attempt by the English community to maintain their control over the sport in Argentina this move nonetheless shows that they needed to appease the local elite. Teams from the two divisions never met each other except in show matches but local teams still received notoriety and legitimacy from belonging to the official league; a foot in the door the English had to allow.

From 1899 onward the Argentine elite gained more control over soccer's administration. The first native-born president of the league, Florencio Martínez de Hoz, was elected in 1906 and a few years later, rules and regulations were translated into Spanish.¹⁰³ The English community continued losing influence in the administration of the sport due primarily to the transitory nature of the English colony in Argentina. Most were there on contract by some industrial company set to oversee the construction of industrial infrastructure such as ports and railroads. Once the project was complete, the overseers returned home. As the first two decades of the twentieth century pressed forward not only was the work of modernizing Argentina becoming more completed, but Europe also marched steadily towards war.

¹⁰¹ "Standard," published as *The Standard*, 09-11-1864, (Buenos Aires) p. 3.

¹⁰² Christopher Gaffney, *Temples of the Earthbound Gods: Stadiums in the Cultural Landscapes of Rio de Janeiro and Buenos Aires*, (Austin, Texas: University of Texas Press, 2008), p. 132.

¹⁰³ Vic Duke and Liz Crolley, "Fútbol, Politicians and the People," in *Sport in Latin American Society Past and Present*, ed. J.A. Mangan and LaMartine P. DaCosta, (Portland, OR; F. Cass, 2002), pp.100-101.

Though the 1900s saw the decline in English administration of the league, their teams continued to be dominant on the field. The Alumni proved to be the dominant team from 1901 to 1911. Their performance was so dominant that even though the team was made up of English players, Argentines still remember them fondly to this day. Still all good things must come to an end and the team decided to leave the league in 1912.¹⁰⁴ It is not known precisely why the Alumni decided to not compete anymore especially while their performance was still dominant. Many have speculated as to the primary cause being the changing style of soccer; becoming more influenced by individual performance rather than by team dynamics.¹⁰⁵ Though potentially a factor, during the 1910s the English community was in decline. Able-bodied men returned to England to fight in the Great War, leaving behind too few to make a team.

In 1913 the decline of English soccer teams was completed when the Racing Club, once a British team but now with more Argentine players, won the first division championship with a team made up of local players.¹⁰⁶ The teams arrived with great fanfare from England to play against locals but the expatriates retreated from the soccer field altogether and largely from the administration of the league. In the 1917 annual review of the Association, only three of the nineteen board members had English surnames.¹⁰⁷ Soccer had passed fully into the hands of the Argentine elite.

Having gained administrative control of soccer, the local elites were surprised to learn that their hegemonic control of the sport was still contested. By the time of Martínez de Hoz' appointment there were some 300 clubs in Buenos Aires dedicated to playing

¹⁰⁴ Eduardo Archetti, *Masculinidades: fútbol, tango y polo en la Argentina*, p. 85.

¹⁰⁵ Julio Frydenberg, "Prácticas y Valores en el Proceso de Popularización del Fútbol," *Entrepasados*, Año VI, Nº 12, Buenos Aires, 1997, Efdportes, 12-6-2012, www.efdeportes.com, section IV : Valores.

¹⁰⁶ Pablo Alabarces, *Fútbol y patria : El fútbol y las narrativas de la nación en la Argentina*, (Buenos Aires ; Prometeo libros, 2002) p. 51.

¹⁰⁷ *Memoria y Balance 1917*, <http://biblioteca.afa.org.ar/libros.html#> as seen on 3/10/2014.

soccer competitively. The majority of clubs was not sporting clubs such as the Racing and River Plate Club but associations formed to play soccer exclusively. In the early 1900s any group of eleven people could be considered a club by the ruling soccer body the Argentine Football Association (AFA) and compete in a division.¹⁰⁸ Most of these players came from a robust middle class which had become interested in the sport.

The question remains as how did soccer, a game jealously guarded by both the English as well as the Argentine elite, diffuse to the population at large. Buenos Aires had developed as not only an ethnically but also as a socio-economic segregated city.¹⁰⁹ By 1910 the various neighborhoods in the city had developed its own identity that was independent from the city and country at large.¹¹⁰ Generally speaking the northern parts of the city were home to the elite, the south to the working class, and the western suburbs to the middle class. The relatively segregated world of Buenos Aires was bridged with common ground provided by the workplace and sports clubs.

If soccer was considered too morally ambiguous to teach to immigrant children, the same was not true of their parents. In addition to building much of Argentina's infrastructure, the three million Italians brought with them socialist and anarchist ideas.¹¹¹ Organizing strikes and protests members of both the working as well as the middle classes requested a larger piece of the financial boom. Worried both about the effect social unrest would have on both production as well as future investment, the elite needed to curb those strikes.

Looking to the North American model for inspiration, Argentine companies formed their own sports teams. According to the US model, company teams helped

¹⁰⁸ Julio Frydenberg, "Espacio Urbano y Practica del Futbol, Buenos Aires 1900-1915." Efdportes, 12-6-2012, www.efdeportes.com, Section II: Canchas y Viviendas

¹⁰⁹ See Chapter I.

¹¹⁰ Eduardo Archetti, *Masculinidades: fútbol, tango y polo en la Argentina*, p. 26.

¹¹¹ Donna R. Gabaccia, *Italy's Many Diasporas*, (London: Routledge, 2004), p. 76.

regulate the free time of their employees.¹¹² There was also the sense that competition strengthened one's loyalty to his company. Team sports allowed for a clear definition of us versus them, strengthening the employee's identity in the company through the creation of an "other." If workers were engaged in sports activities they would be less likely to take part in counter-productive activities such as strikes. Argentine businessmen sought to replicate the idea with a sport familiar to them, soccer. So began the use of soccer as an opiate for the working classes.

Though company teams were an important vehicle for the dissemination of soccer not only among the working but the middle class as well, the teams themselves faded in time as a result of regulation and social change. Adhering to the principals of amateurism inherited from the English, the AFA's administrators established specific rules for team names admitted to the league. Article 27 of the 1915 Charter prohibited teams from choosing offensive names or names of businesses.¹¹³ The article, which remained unchanged while other rules changed over the years, clearly gives preference to sports clubs, which catered to various neighborhoods, as the preferred means of participating in the league.

Another event that discouraged work-teams was the *semana trágica* (tragic week) in the summer of 1919. A coalition of police, military, and civilian paramilitary groups violently attacked workers protesting against the government.¹¹⁴ The brutality of weeklong bloodletting did not completely destroy worker groups but it did encourage them to let the Radical Party, composed of middle class reformers, handle social reform.

¹¹² Julio Frydenberg, *Historia Social de Fútbol*, p. 109.

¹¹³ Estatutos y Reglamento General 1915, http://biblioteca.afa.org.ar/libros.html#_3/10/2014 p. 26.

¹¹⁴ Julia Rodriguez, *Civilizing Argentina: Science, Medicine, and the Modern State*, p. 252.

The *semana trágica* made it more difficult for people from the lower classes to find common ground on a socio-economic basis. Worker groups and trade unions continued to exist but with the knowledge that public demonstrations would set off another chain of reprisals. However, no one stopped laborers from participating in their local sports clubs either as players or spectators at matches. Soccer provided access to the public sphere in a similar way as trade unions but without the same risk. I do not know if the intellectuals intended their heavy-handed treatment of the working class to foster a regional identity rather than a socio-economic one but it fit with their overall desire to naturalize foreign immigrants.

While the working class had difficulty gathering, the Argentine middle class enjoyed unparalleled access to social and political prestige in the 1910s. The Radical Party won the 1916 election thanks in no small part to the introduction of universal male suffrage in 1912.¹¹⁵ As the world marched to war, Argentina's meat and grain became more valuable further enhancing the country's economy giving the middle class more buying power. Along with the economic boom came an increase in leisure time which the youth invested in a number of ways but playing soccer was especially popular. Institutions and clubs attracted young people from various backgrounds but were especially attractive to second-generation immigrants.¹¹⁶

Detached from the historic continuity of their parent's culture, youths embraced the community that soccer provided. Hobsbawm notes that while club membership can be used as exclusionary, they could also provide historic continuity as well as social

¹¹⁵ Federico Finchelstein, *Transatlantic Fascism: Ideology, Violence, and the Sacred in Argentina and Italy, 1919-1945*, (Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 2010) pp. 49-50.

¹¹⁶ Julio Frydenberg, Rodrigo Daskal & Cesar R. Torres, "Sports Clubs with Football in Argentina," p. 1672.

cohesion.¹¹⁷ By becoming a member of a sports club or wearing team jerseys one pledged allegiance to a club investing his identity in the association. Belonging to a club allowed members to trace their personal narrative through the club's history and share in historic events much like one would share a nation's past achievements. Since clubs were also localized in a neighborhood, identifying with a club connected one with the surrounding area as well as granting not only personal but also communal identity.

As youths from the popular sectors contested the nature of soccer's transfer, the sport morphed to fit its new setting. In both England as well as the United States sports were fostered in the school setting. In his work on intercollegiate sports, Ronald A. Smith demonstrates how colleges, specifically Yale and Harvard in the U.S. and Oxford and Cambridge in England, added morals to modern sports. Using the example of rugby, Smith demonstrates how the rules followed the English morals of tradition and social hierarchy. In the transfer to the United States that placed higher value on equality and victory, rugby morphed into American Football.¹¹⁸

In Argentina, at least initially, the school setting was meant to accomplish a similar feat. In the English High School, Alexander Watson Hutton served as the referee for the matches. If a student committed a foul the student had to sit out not only that game but also subsequent games. For flagrant fouls, expulsion was an enforceable option in the English High School.¹¹⁹ With the decision to keep soccer out of public schools, the Argentine elite created an avenue for soccer to develop outside institutional control.

¹¹⁷ Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, *The Invention of Tradition*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983.) p. 9.

¹¹⁸ Ronald A. Smith, *Sports & Freedom: The Rises of Big-Time College Athletics*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), pp. 88-89.

¹¹⁹ Julio Frydenberg, "Practicas y Valores en el Proceso de Popularización del Fútbol," *Efdeportes*, 12-6-2012, www.efdeportes.com, section IV : Valores.

The distinctly Argentine form of soccer began on the streets of Buenos Aires. Some boys did play soccer in the streets themselves but the term itself corresponds to playing the sport in any open area not specifically designed with soccer in mind. While the idea of fair play was still present, it was only kept so that teams could play against one another. With no external authority to enforce the rules, fouls were regulated by the young men themselves allowing the game to be rougher. More important to the Argentine youths than rules was their masculinity and social standing. Sportsmanship and teamwork, two attributes most prized in the British version, gave way to a play style focusing more on individual skill. Argentine youths put emphasis on aggressive play and skill in handling the ball itself. The team merely served as a backdrop to allow the individual to shine. It was this style of soccer that introduced a new generation of players and spectators to the sport.

Worried how this new aggressive style of play would affect their sport, Argentine elites used the newly Hispanicized *Asociación Argentina de Football* to guide soccer's development. A list of rules and regulations designed to govern league play as well as affiliation with the league was published in Spanish in 1915. In addition to setting up a bureaucracy, the document sought to guarantee the amateur nature of soccer and so ensure that teams participating in the league had community ties to their neighborhoods. Professional players, they worried, would go to wherever the money was rather than playing for the local club.

Concerned that the "victory at all cost" mentality, an attribute of the soccer developing on the street, would infect their "gentleman's" game, AAF board members established rules governing both the player as well as the crowd's behavior. In a clear defense of Victorian style amateurism players were not allowed to receive more money than was expended in travel expenses. They were also not allowed to protest the

decisions of the officials nor cause incidents either on or off the field.¹²⁰ Soccer players were supposed to be model citizens and so accept the authority of the officials and be well mannered in society at large. Reminiscent of Watson Hutton, players who violated the rules were suspended from play for an amount of time dependent on the severity of the infraction. The behavior of spectators was similarly regulated. Officials were allowed to end the game for: lack of light, bad weather, and poor behavior of fans.¹²¹ Both players and fans were encouraged by these regulations to behave as proper Victorian gentlemen.

Even with regulations governing behavior, the Argentine elite did not want just anyone participating in its league. Of the roughly 300 registered clubs, many had just eleven males wanting to play soccer competitively.¹²² The elites needed a way to weed out the teams so that only the successful and established teams could participate in the league. In the section about field regulations each club was required to have its own field and was not permitted to play on another club's field. Additionally each club was required to provide separate facilities for home and visiting teams including locker rooms and showers.¹²³ This may not seem like a limiting factor except a 1933 census classified only five percent of Buenos Aires as open space.¹²⁴ It was difficult and expensive for clubs to acquire the space to build the facilities required to enter the league. A club made up of only eleven people could not hope to do so and since businesses were not allowed to be visible in the sport, there was little chance to be sponsored as many clubs are today.

¹²⁰ Estatutos y Reglamento General 1915, <http://biblioteca.afa.org.ar/libros.html#>, 3/10/2014 pp. 22-23.

¹²¹ Ibid, pp. 34-35.

¹²² Julio Frydenberg, "Espacio Urbano y Practica del Futbol, Buenos Aires 1900-1915," Efdportes, 12-6-2012, www.efdeportes.com, Section II: Canchas y Viviendas.

¹²³ Estatutos y Reglamento General 1915, <http://biblioteca.afa.org.ar/libros.html#> as seen on 3/10/2014 p. 27.

¹²⁴ Charles Sargent, *Greater Buenos Aires, 1870-1930*, p.88.

The elites' goal of making entry into the league more difficult in order to eliminate the "victory at all costs" mentality from their sport backfired. By making the possession of a stadium the ticket to enter the big league, the Argentine elite left an avenue, however narrow, for any club to enter. Though difficult, there were still a number of ways to procure or obtain an appropriate sized plot of land in the Greater Buenos Aires area. A team could, and many did, move out to the suburbs which were still connected by rail to the rest of the city but where space was easier to acquire.¹²⁵ However, by moving out of the city, these clubs gave up their original fan-base for the more middle class audience of the suburbs. Another way, and a more popular one, was to acquire a field through membership fees. Clubs like Boca Juniors, located in urban areas, expanded their member base so they could afford to buy expensive land in the city.¹²⁶

Ultimately, soccer's growing fan base, especially among the middle class, was detrimental to the elite version of soccer. Seizing the opportunity to play in the prestigious AAF, middle-and-working class clubs drew in fans and members through engaging play styles such as the kind practiced in the streets of Buenos Aires, and winning matches. In order to draw in more fans, clubs partnered with the growing print media to broadcast their victories and create interest in their clubs.¹²⁷

In 1919 a middle class newspaper, *El Gráfico*, was established to disseminate ideas about sport in general with a special focus on soccer. The weekly newspaper set about to exalt the style of soccer practiced by popular clubs as a uniquely Argentine export. Street soccer was not chaotic as thought by the elite but rather artistic. A good

¹²⁵ Julio Frydenberg, "Espacio Urbano y Practica del Futbol, Buenos Aires 1900-1915." Section II: Canchas y Viviendas.

¹²⁶ Gustavo Grabia, *La Doce, Historia de la Barra Brava de Boca*, (Mondadori, Random House, 2011) e-book, Chapter 1.

¹²⁷ Julio Frydenberg, "Practicas y Valores en el Proceso de Popularización del Futbol," Efdportes, 12-6-2012, www.efdeportes.com, Section III: La Competencia.

player dribbled the ball like a good musician played his instrument. In contrast, the British style, also practiced by the Argentine elite, was portrayed as mechanical, cold and calculating.¹²⁸ While certainly not negative, *El Gráfico* advances that not only can there be different styles of soccer but that they are equally valid.

The Argentine elites held, on the one hand, to the view that Western Europeans were genetically superior and emulating their practices would improve their own gene pool. On the other hand, Italian immigrants and those from Spain only corrupted the Argentine race with old blood and old traditions. Turning the narrative on its head, *El Gráfico*, and one of its most famous journalists Borocotó, claimed that it was the Italian immigrants that enhanced Argentina, in particular its style of soccer, rather than contaminating the country.¹²⁹ According to Borocotó, Italian immigrants and their children turned into Argentines by living on the land and breathing its air and brought a freedom to the sport that was lacking from the British version of soccer.¹³⁰

While *El Gráfico* fostered soccer's popularity as something distinctly Argentine, another newspaper, *La Argentina*, created rivalries to draw more people to the stadium.¹³¹ Exploiting pre-existent tensions between neighborhoods, *La Argentina* locked first the city of Buenos Aires and then the country into what Norbert Elias calls cycles of violence.¹³² Though there was little violence among fans and teams in the beginning, rivalries nonetheless locked the opponents together, the actions of one influencing the actions of the other. The more worthy an adversary the more notable the victory which appealed to the men whose masculine identity was invested in the team. When *La*

¹²⁸ Eduardo Archetti, *Masculinidades: fútbol, tango y polo en la Argentina*, p. 93

¹²⁹ *Ibid*, p. 99.

¹³⁰ *Ibid*, p. 102.

¹³¹ Julio Frydenberg, *Historia Social de Fútbol*, p. 73.

¹³² Norbert Elias, *Quest for Excitement: Sport and Leisure in the Civilizing Process*. (Illinois: University of Chicago Press, 1998), p. 10.

Argentina created rivalries it not only helped anchor immigrant identities in their neighborhoods but it also connected them, via soccer, to the larger Argentine world. I do not suggest that newspapers conspired to create a national consciousness, but their actions certainly created a more inclusive national narrative. Rivalries generated more fan attention and so sold more tickets and newspapers. Nation-building was a bi-product of good business. While *La Argentina* created rivals to improve magazine sales, *El Grafico* tailored their stories to reach Italian immigrants.

As the middle class and working class soccer grew in popularity, the elite attempted to stand firm on the Victorian principle of amateurism. In the *Rules and Regulation* printed in 1923, the board of the AAF made it clear that professional players were not welcome in the league. The first sub-clause of Article 141 banned any player who could even be considered a professional from playing in the league.¹³³ The elite claimed that the world of soccer was supposed to be fair, unlike the real world, and professional players were given an unfair advantage. Paying someone to play a sport was considered poor sportsmanship.¹³⁴ At the same time spectators paid entry fees in order to see an exciting game and joined clubs to be a part of something prestigious. Even clubs made up of the elite wanted to field impressive players but were not allowed any means of attracting them. Rather than offering salaries, clubs provided perks for their more successful players such as a place to live and groceries. Additional bounties were rewarded to goals scored and victories achieved. This “under the table” incentive program was referred to as *marronismo* and if not condoned by the media and public, it was not condemned.

¹³³ Estatutos y Reglamento General 1923, <http://biblioteca.afa.org.ar/libros.html#> 3/17/2014 p. 26.

¹³⁴ Julio Frydenberg, *Historia Social de Fútbol*, p. 120

Soccer's para-legal financial situation worked for a time but was ultimately unsustainable. Players found themselves at the mercy of the clubs to which they belonged as they lived outside the protection of the law. Exceptional performance was required but at the same time not rewarded. The dream of every child playing on the streets of Buenos Aires was to one day play for a club that played in the first division. The problem for up and coming players was that they had to prove their worth both in the independent leagues as well as the lower second and third divisions of the professional league. The great show, as soccer was already known, required talented players even in the less prestigious divisions. Once these lower-division teams found talented players they were hesitant to allow them to slip away to the more prestigious clubs. In April of 1931 in an effort to improve their situation, soccer players went on strike demanding that they be allowed to switch clubs.¹³⁵

The strike was as much about the direction Argentine soccer were to take as it was about player's rights. Elite Argentines wanted to hold on to amateurism looking to replicate English social hierarchy. The middle and working class was on the other side looking to professionalize the sport, recreating the meritocracy of North American sports.¹³⁶ In a move that would be unthinkable for both U.S. as well as British sports, both parties appealed to the government for intervention. General José Félix Uriburu eagerly seized this opportunity to gain public support and legitimacy in the wake of his coup against President Hipólito Irigoyen, of the middle class backed Radical Party, in 1930.

Going further than either side anticipated, General Uriburu gave soccer full protection by the law. Players were allowed to receive salaries and clubs were permitted to make legally binding contracts. The solution benefited both parties but neither wanted

¹³⁵ Julio Frydenberg, "El Nacimiento del Fútbol Profesional Argentino," Efdportes, 12-6-2012, www.efdeportes.com, section I.

¹³⁶ Ronald A. Smith, *Sports and Freedom*, p. 172.

to ask for it because of the public backlash against *marronismo*. To counter potential public disapproval, Uriburu used the media to explain how professionalization would only help to improve the great show.¹³⁷ Partly to prove his devotion to the sport, partly to make the spectacle bigger, the dictator created the *Liga Argentina de Football* (LAF). Though modeled after FIFA, the new league was not recognized by the European organization.¹³⁸ Despite international nonchalance the LAF governed the smaller independent leagues especially those in the rural areas of Argentina. Though separate from the more popular AAF, the alternate league was a step towards bringing Argentine soccer under one centralized authority.

In addition to giving the sport legal and political backing, Uriburu also provided state funding to ensure the survival of soccer. The 1930s heralded the beginnings of the Great Depression for Argentina. The economic boom enjoyed by the country went bust. Clubs found that they had less money to pay for the complexes they had built in order to participate in the AAF. There also were clubs which were growing in prestige and popularity but just needed the capital to build their own stadiums. Uriburu provided tax breaks to those clubs which wished to build their own stadium as well as bailout money for clubs which went bankrupt.¹³⁹ Thanks in no small part to government intervention, soccer was able to survive and thrive, at least in terms of popularity, during the lean 1930s.

By the end of Uriburu's reign, the last vestiges of British involvement in soccer were swept away. In 1934 the "F" in AAF was officially changed from the English "football" to the Spanish "fútbol" and the acronym was reorganized into a more Hispanic

¹³⁷ Julio Frydenberg, "El Nacimiento del Fútbol Profesional Argentino," section II.

¹³⁸ Vic Duke, "Fútbol, Politicians and the People," in *Sport in Latin American Society Past and Present*, ed. J.A. Mangan and LaMartine P. DaCosta. (Portland, OR: F. Cass, 2002), p. 103.

¹³⁹ Vic Duke, *Football, Nationality, and the State*, p. 105.

form, *Asociación de Fútbol Argentino* (AFA). The sport continually took on greater importance bringing cohesion and balance to the country. In the 1950s history was even further rewritten omitting British influence in the development of soccer. Rather than English schools and factories, school children learned that it was English sailors who brought the sport to Argentina.¹⁴⁰ Useful agents of transfer as seafarers do not stay in one place long enough to transmit anything more than an idea. They were also anonymous, leaving no name or record and so allowing Argentine leaders to interpret their role in soccer at will. At least in myth, soccer was something that Argentina could claim as wholly theirs.

To an extent educators and politicians were correct; the game practiced in their own country was different from the country in which it originated. Economic interests entered Argentine soccer early on in its development as clubs required capital to purchase and build stadium complexes. Less team-oriented Argentine soccer elevated individual skill and praised one's ability to improvise in order to give a good show. Though the British community tried to keep locals out of their clubs and away from the sport they were ultimately unsuccessful. The sport first spread to the Anglophile members of the Argentine elite. With the aid of a North American model, business owners created soccer teams in order to regulate the free time of their workers.

The game easily adapted to fit in a multitude of contexts. A convenient economic boom coincided with the increasing popularity of the sport. Children of middle class and working class immigrants had extra leisure time to practice a new sport. Good accessible education was made available thanks both to the Argentine government and imported North American teachers. As a result Argentina had one of the most literate populations in Latin America. It is ironic that after Brest successfully campaigned to keep soccer out

¹⁴⁰ Pablo Alabarces, *Fútbol y patria*, p.49-50.

of public schools that still aided the development of soccer. Literate youths read about their sport heroes in the latest edition of *El Gráfico* and about their local team's enemy in *La Argentina*. As long as soccer remains a sport for young people, school will form a part of the game's development.

Clubs were formed, stadiums built, and the print media set about creating a culture around soccer. Newspapers had to convince a large immigrant population with loose ties to the country to participate in the gaming culture. Drawing attention to trends already present the media helped anchor a team's identity in the neighborhood. Second-generation immigrants embraced the historic continuity of the soccer club which tied their identity to the neighborhood and then to the country at large. The stadium represented the world, not as it was but as it should be, while the players represented the people of the neighborhood.

Bending to the will of its patrons, Argentine soccer reinvented itself, celebrating individual brilliance in the newspapers. Media presented the British notion of teamwork and the concept of "fair-play" as mechanical and foreign. In the 1930s, Argentina laid claim to a version of soccer declaring it different from the one practiced by the British. Seizing on one of the first naturally occurring founts of national identity, the government aided the development of the sport in whatever way it could. Local soccer teams such as Quilmes and Lomas and Boca Juniors developed international identities as the former played against a squad from Uruguay and the later toured Europe. As the clubs created identity in local rivalries, politicians set out to simulate the same phenomenon internationally.

Chapter 4

Violence as an Answer to Injustice

Formation of a nation state comes with the centralization of power by the state government. A state must also obtain and then maintain a monopoly on violence to make sure that its will is enforced. This process of monopolizing the use of force includes limiting the amount of violence observed by the public in everyday life. The state regulates violence by passing laws and enforcing them using their sanctioned form of violence through their agents, the police. Problems begin to form for the state when another party competes for control of the use of force; the most common in terms of Latin America is the Armed Forces. Creating acceptable spaces for violence, such as the sporting arena, is another method the state uses to limit the visibility of force, at least among citizens.

Even when a society begins to contain everyday violence it is impossible to get rid of it entirely. Rather than attempting to eliminate violence all together, it is more beneficial to create spaces in which violence remains acceptable. Such spaces include the barracks and, more notably, the sporting arena, where people can express these emotions and then continue on with their day-to-day life.¹⁴¹ The faux war of sporting events is still effective today as evidenced by increased nationalistic fervor around the World Cup or Olympic Games. For the first half of the twentieth century, Argentines considered soccer to be something at which they excelled, far more than any other nation.

¹⁴¹ Norbert Elias, "The Social Constraint through Self-Constraint," in *Civilization, Power, and Knowledge*, editors Stephen Mennell and Johan Goudsblom, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1998),p. 57.

Looking to the United States, England, and France for inspiration for their own development, many Latin American countries fell into similar patterns. Like other Western European countries, Argentina went through a period of centralization and concentration of power in the hands of the government. However the state could not secure exclusive rights on the use of force. Violence was always contested. Argentina revered its military as a force for nationalism.¹⁴² Up until the Falklands War (1982) the Argentine military was a power outside the state's sphere of influence. As with many Latin American countries, control of Argentina oscillated between liberal democracies and military dictatorships.

Argentina's experience with civil unrest began almost immediately after its independence. In 1820 the southern branch of the Latin American revolutionary movement, led by José de San Martín, met with his northern brother in arms, Simón Bolívar. After the meeting, San Martín returned to his home and disappeared from historical record. Lacking a strong figure to unify behind, the people of the River Plate region fought among themselves. The polarizing issue was one that most new republics had to address, the issue of where governing control would be located. Should the new country be federal, controlled by the states, or centralized, power controlled by the government in the capital city? Though present in most New World nation-states, these factions appeared under different names such as centralists and federalists or liberals and conservatives. For Argentina the two sides called themselves the *unitarios*, those who wanted the country to be ruled from Buenos Aires, and the *federales*, who wanted to grant more control to the states.¹⁴³

¹⁴² Julia Rodriguez, *Civilizing Argentina: Science, Medicine, and the Modern State*, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006), p. 220.

¹⁴³ Thomas E. Skidmore and Peter H. Smith, "Argentina: Prosperity, Deadlock, and Change," in *Modern Latin America*, 6th ed., (New York; Oxford University Press, 2005), pp. 69-70.

Open conflict between the two factions was interrupted when a wealthy landowner seized control of Buenos Aires and then the country. Juan Manuel Rosas was and still remains an ambiguous figure. His dictatorship from 1829 to 1852 was pivotal in uniting both rural and urban Argentina creating a single nation. Being a landowner, Rosas was, by way of profession, a *federal* but he concentrated rule of the country in Buenos Aires as the *unitarios* wanted. The political ambiguity of Rosas links him to other military leaders across Latin America such as Antonio Lopez de Santa Ana. This style of leader, which Mexican writer Octavio Paz called military caudillo, uses force both directed at the country and its neighbors to concentrate power in his own hands.¹⁴⁴ The goal of the military caudillo is to bring order to the country and he legitimated his monopoly on violence through the use of excessive violence.

Rosas did conduct wars against Argentina's neighbors to unify the public behind him as well as establishing a secret police to weed out dissent within the country. Officially called *Mazorca*, the name literally refers to an ear of corn but also contains the two Spanish words *mas* and *horca* which together means "more gallows." Their goal was to eliminate opposition to Rosas' rule through fear tactics such as public executions. For the better part of twenty years, from 1835 to 1852, Rosas' forces fought a guerrilla-style war with his opposition until he was overthrown by one of his own generals.¹⁴⁵

Autocratic rule was replaced with a democratic model designed after the political system of the United States. Those that came to power in the period after Rosas were often those intellectuals who he had persecuted and exiled during his reign, following the oscillating pattern between the liberal and conservative. One of the more influential post-civil-war presidents, Domingo Faustino Sarmiento, ruled between 1868 and 1874. A

¹⁴⁴ Octavio Paz, "El laberinto de la soledad," Octavio Paz, *Colección Popular*, 3rd edition, (Mexico; Fondo de Cultura Económica, 2008) p. 136.

¹⁴⁵ Thomas E. Skidmore and Peter H. Smith, "Argentina: Prosperity, Deadlock, and Change," p. 70.

notable politician in his own right, his works of literature proved to be his more lasting contribution to Argentina. Sarmiento wrote his most famous book, *Facundo* in 1845 while he was exiled to Chile. In it he wondered if the Argentine countryside, from where Rosas came, caused his countrymen to easily accept their own death as well as inflict it on others.¹⁴⁶ This breeds a fatalistic acceptance of brute force from caudillos like Rosas rather than an acceptance of the rule of law. Much better, thought Sarmiento was it for people to move to the cities which were “centers of civilization,” where people followed the tenets of liberal democracy.¹⁴⁷ Not only should Argentines glorify the urban over the rural, they also should foster immigration from Western Europeans to learn from their example by means of proximity.

From the late nineteenth century up until the end of World War II, Argentina received a steady stream of immigrants from across Europe. Between 1860 and 1930 Argentina received six million immigrants. Hailing mostly from Italy and Spain, 39.4 percent and 35.2 percent respectively, these newcomers brought with them regional identities.¹⁴⁸ With these new immigrants came ideas competitive to both the democratic and the authoritarian, such as anarchism among the Italian immigrants. Dona Gabaccia notes that there were no mass labor movements in Latin America before Italian immigration, which makes sense in the Spanish *patrón-peon* relationship. In 1901 the first major anarchist labor federation, Federación Obrera Regional Argentina (FORA), was formed by Italian immigrants.¹⁴⁹ Responsible for the coordination of hundreds of strikes, worker unions presented a challenge to state authority. The challenge was answered in

¹⁴⁶ Domingo Faustino Sarmiento, *Facundo*, (Buenos Aires: Librería LA FACULTAD, 1921) pp. 26-27.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid*, pp. 36-37.

¹⁴⁸ Eduardo Archetti, *Masculinidades: fútbol, tango y polo en la Argentina*, (Buenos Aires; Editorial Antropología, 2003) p. 21.

¹⁴⁹ Dona Gabaccia. *Italy's Many Diasporas*, (London; Routledge, 2004) p. 116.

1919 when military and para-military groups killed demonstrating union members in the streets of Buenos Aires.

Though forced into silence, worker unions got a second chance to thrive in the 1940s under an energetic minister of labor that became president, Juan Perón. Symbolically Perón represented each of the three competing powers. He was a colonel in the military, encouraged the formation of worker unions, and was democratically elected in 1946. Looking to bind the country together, he employed the sport of soccer as a means to foster national unity. Since the first decade of the twentieth century, soccer clubs served to create local urban identities. Perón, through personal appearances at important matches and the creation of an Argentine-wide soccer league, made soccer into something that united the country.

However, the government never did gain full control of the sport. Even though the president of the governing soccer body, the AFA, was often a political appointee, elected executives ran the clubs.¹⁵⁰ Perón unintentionally created something that could stand independently of the government and even serve as a focal point for resistance. Stadiums, especially soccer stadiums, were centers of the neighborhoods and a place for people to gather and validate their identity through victory over opponents. Beginning in the 1960s and continuing through the 1980s both social unrest and incidents of soccer fan violence spiked in Argentina. Since stadiums were bastions of identity it was only natural that political debates about the direction of the country would find their way into their stands.¹⁵¹

¹⁵⁰ Richard Giulianotti, *Football: A Sociology of the Global Game*, (Massachusetts; Polity Press, 1999) p. 58.

¹⁵¹ Amílcar Romero, "Las Barras Bravas y la contrasociedad deportiva," (Buenos Aires: Centro Editor de América Latina, 1994), p. 18.

Before continuing, it is important to note that violence among soccer fans is not a uniquely Argentine phenomenon, nor is the timing in the spike. A “hooligan,” sometimes prefaced with “soccer,” refers to a fan who exhibits extreme and often violent behavior. The term and archetype is British in origin and yet different forms of hooliganism can be found in most, if not all, countries that practice soccer.¹⁵² Though ruffians had been present in folk football, there was a perceived increase in violence beginning in the 1960s which inspired Britain to take action.¹⁵³ Committees were created to identify loci of fan violence such as public transportation and proximity among rival fans in stadiums. Based on the committees’ findings and a trial and error approach the British state in the late 1980s was able to reassert control over the stadium. Rival fans were separated from each other by cages, closed circuit televisions were installed, and the police created a plain-clothes detail to infiltrate hooligan groups. These measures combined with tougher sentences for violent fans led to a noticeable decrease in hooligan activity, reaffirming the state’s monopoly on violence.¹⁵⁴

At the same time that Europe was dealing with increased soccer violence, Argentina was experiencing something similar. Between 1958 and 1983 there were 93 separate instances of fan violence which led to 100 dead and 4000 injured.¹⁵⁵ Violent outbreaks that resulted in fatalities became an increasingly common occurrence leading up to the period from 1982 to 1985 during which thirteen incidents occurred or one every

¹⁵² Richard Giulianotti, “Social Identity and Public Order,” in Richard Giulianotti, *Football, Violence, and Social Identity*, (London; Routledge, 1994), p.11.

¹⁵³ Ibid, p. 13.

¹⁵⁴ Richard Giulianotti, *Football: A Sociology of the Global Game*, (Malden, Massachusetts: Polity Press, Malden, 1999), pp. 49-50

¹⁵⁵ Amílcar Romero, *Deporte, Violencia, y Política: Crónica Negra, 1958-1983*, (Buenos Aires: Centro Editor de America Latina, 1985), p. 10.

three months.¹⁵⁶ Though experiencing equal if not greater fan upheaval as in Europe, Argentina did not possess the same tools to respond to the situation. Under control of the military at the time, the government lacked the social capital needed to push through policy reform and even the legitimacy to enforce public order. In short, the Argentine state did not have a monopoly on violence.

Political unrest and the unique nature of Argentine soccer gave rise to a special type of soccer hooligan, the *barra brava*. Professional fans, *barras bravas* received pay from the club they represented to attend matches and, in more extreme cases, to participate in violent activity either against rival fans, players, and sometimes enemies of the club's president. Structured into a loose paramilitary organization, older *bravas* served as officers, directing the younger ones in battle while not participating themselves. The existence of militant professional fans coincided with a period of unrest both on and off the soccer field which made all but their most militant actions tolerable. Even the Argentine press came to the defense of the *barras bravas* claiming that their violent activity was inherent to the sport of soccer as it was inherent in society.¹⁵⁷ Within the media's defense of fan violence there is strong criticism of Elias' 'civilizing process.' Rather than containing violence in sports arenas, it is from there that violence bursts, or so contended the Argentine press. A look at the events leading up to the fan violence in the second half of the twentieth century shows that though omnipresent in Argentine soccer its form adapted to the changes in the society around it.

Since the British first began practicing football in the greater Buenos Aires area, footballers clashed with the authorities. There is a story of a police commissioner who happened to come across a group of British expatriates playing football in a field. Not

¹⁵⁶ Amílcar Romero, *Muerte en la Cancha 1958-1985*, (Buenos Aires, Editorial Nueva America, 1986), pp. 230-231

¹⁵⁷ Amílcar Romero, "Las Barras Bravas y la contrasociedad deportiva," p. 22.

understanding what they were doing, he had them arrested, no doubt thinking they were violent miscreants.¹⁵⁸ Misunderstandings were frequent in the early history of football but seemed to only result in amusing anecdotes swapped between players. At the same time, such incidents show that tension between state and sport was present from the beginning. Enrique Romero Brest campaigned to keep sports out of schools thinking that they promoted competition at the cost of cooperation.¹⁵⁹

The first decades of the twentieth century saw a boom in the popularity of sports in general and soccer in particular. Public fields and retro-fitted pitches gave way to stadiums constructed specifically for soccer matches. The physical structure of the stadium, a playing field built to specifications, seating for fans, and locker rooms were requirements for what Allen Guttman labels as modern sports.¹⁶⁰ Rationalization paid homage to the calculating nature of society that wanted to see measurable improvement, at least according to Guttman.¹⁶¹ Construction of sporting facilities also served as the entrance fee that clubs paid in order to participate in the AFA.

The stadium represented something different to the stands. As Gastón Julian Gil observes in his history of the Aldosivi, an Argentine soccer club, the stadium represented a space belonging to the fans themselves.¹⁶² As symbolic owners of the space, fans created a model of the world, not as it was, but as it should be, a world of justice. Teams of equal number met on a field that conferred no advantage one way or another and the more deserving, the side that played harder or more skilfully, prevailed. For people living

¹⁵⁸ Eduardo Olivera, *Orígenes de Deportes Británicos*, (Buenos Aires: Talleres gráficos argentinos L.J. Rosso, 1932), p. 36.

¹⁵⁹ Julio Frydenberg, "Prácticas y Valores en el Proceso de Popularización del Fútbol," section IV: Los Valores.

¹⁶⁰ Allen Guttman, *From Ritual to Record*, (New York: Columbia Press, 1988), p. 43

¹⁶¹ *Ibid*, p. 85.

¹⁶² Gastón Julian Gil, *Fútbol e identidades locales*, (Buenos Aires: Mino y Davila, 2002), p. 76.

in the competitive world of industrial capitalism, a space that was governed by the principal of “fair-play” was appealing.

Not just an ideal space, the stadium performed a practical function as well. Dominated by European styled snobbism, Argentines needed spaces where they could relax.¹⁶³ Stadiums became such places. An almost exclusively masculine space, soccer spectators were expected to chant encouragement to their own teams and abuse at the opposing fans. To not participate in the chorus made one less of a man in this world and surrounding fans made that clear to those who abstained.¹⁶⁴ So the stadium was not only a place for releasing pent up frustration but also for defending one’s honor and masculinity.

Along with being a place where ungentlemanly conduct was not only permitted but expected, violence was present as well. In the early years of Argentine soccer violence was used to achieve two goals. The first goal was as a response to perceived injustice on the field. If an official made a questionable call or a player was not living up to his potential fans threw a projectile at the offending party. The missile of choice was a glass soda bottle, designed to correct that injustice. Rocks and oranges were also used though bottles were the most iconic. Recorded instances of these missiles hitting players and delaying the game are present but are also rare in the early years. One reason for this is that fans switched sides at the end of the half making sure that they were always behind their team’s goal.¹⁶⁵ Anthropologists have made much of this movement, saying it

¹⁶³ Sonia Berjman, *Plazas y Parques de Buenos Aires*, 1st edition,(Buenos Aires: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1998), p.69.

¹⁶⁴ Juan Pablo Ferreiro, “Ni la muerte nos va a separar, desde la cielo te voy a alentar: Apuntes Sobre Identidad y Fútbol en Jujuy,” ed. Pablo Alabarces *Futbologías: Fútbol, Identidad y Violencia en América Latina*, (Buenos Aires: CLASCO, 2003), p. 63.

¹⁶⁵ Eduardo Archetti and Amílcar Romero, “Death and Violence in Argentinian Football,” editors Richard Giulianotti, Norman Bonney, and Mike Hepworth, *Football, Violence, and Social Identity*, (London: Routledge, 1994), p.47.

symbolically represented Argentines innate desire to protect their home or honor represented by the goal. While certain fans did associate the goal with home, practically that position also protected the goalie, an easy target, from attack.

The second goal of early fan violence was to increase one's social prestige among fellow fans. As clubs evolved, merchandise, such as team jerseys, flags, and team colored scarves became an important way for fans to identify with their team. Such an association meant that fans could visibly share in their team's success. At the same time, banners and jerseys made tempting spoils of war.¹⁶⁶ During matches, opposing fans launched raids against each other looking for trophies. Someone who was able to steal an opponent's paraphernalia enjoyed higher standing among his compatriots. Likewise, a successful defense also conferred honor on the defender. Since one's identity was on the line, there were certainly skirmishes that took place in these early years but not to the degree of violence nor its level of organization that was the norm from the 1960s to the 1980s.

Several factors contributed to the limitation of fan violence in the stadium, and few pertain to state interference in the world of soccer. Luis Alberto Romero notes that in the 1920's, union affiliations were on the decline which indicates an ease in social tensions. What is more, there was incredible growth in the middle sectors of society.¹⁶⁷ Growth in the professionalized sectors of society was beneficial to soccer fans that, until 1958, came from the middle class. Thanks to the public schooling initiatives of the turn of the century, Argentina boasted one of, if not the, most educated populace in Latin America. Not only was education obtainable by most, there were a good number of white-collar jobs available to those with degrees.

¹⁶⁶ Eduardo Archetti and Amílcar Romero, "Death and Violence in Argentinian Football," p.47.

¹⁶⁷ Luis Alberto Romero, *A History of Argentina in the Twentieth Century*, translated James P. Brennan, (University Park: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2002), pp. 37-39.

Further indicating the effect overall economic prosperity was having on Argentine society, particularly the middle class, a coup was welcomed rather than treated with social unrest. European capital investment began to slow with the outbreak of World War I and never returned to the same level of prominence. Argentina sought additional investment from North American banks, such as J.P. Morgan to make up the deficit.¹⁶⁸ Dependency of foreign capital and its limitations became clear during the Great Depression. The leader of the middle-class Radical Party and President in 1930, Hipólito Yrigoyen was unable to fix the economy as quickly as the public wanted. He also made the misstep fostering closer ties with Great Britain over the more lucrative relationship with the United States. A great portion of the public called for his replacement and did not object when the military stepped in.¹⁶⁹

At this point, the Argentine case differs from Elias' model for the process of civilization. In his analysis of the Weimar Republic, the state was said to lose its monopoly on violence when it lost control of the military and police. Elias arrives at this conclusion by examining the rise of the NSDAP. Elias hypothesizes that the independent activity by the enforcement wing of the state nullified its monopoly on violence allowing Adolf Hitler to wage war on his political enemies using his storm troopers.¹⁷⁰ Though harmful to post-World War I Germany, such a condition did not have the same effect on Argentina.

Just as fascist Germany was different from fascist Italy, Argentina had its own brand of fascism that aided a smooth transfer from democratic institutions to military dictatorship. Coined 'nacionalismo,' Argentine fascism traced its origins to the early

¹⁶⁸ Luis Alberto Romero, *A History of Argentina in the Twentieth Century*, pp. 42-43.

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid*, p. 57.

¹⁷⁰ Norbert Elias, "The State Monopoly of Violence in the Weimar Republic," in *Civilization, Power, and Knowledge*, editors Stephen Mennell and Johan Goudeblom, (Illinois: University of Chicago Press, 1998), p.154.

1930's and reached its peak with Perón's leadership in the period from 1946 to 1955.¹⁷¹ At heart it was a political movement that professed the good of the nation, *patria*, above everything else. Order was prized above all and nacionalistas saw individualism as well as liberalism as enemies to their movement. With this rubric, the military coup, embodied by General José Félix Uriburu accomplished the civic function of restoring order to an economically distraught Argentina.¹⁷²

Argentina nacionalismo was still in its infant stages and faith in Uriburu proved to be misplaced. Trusting that he had amassed a cult following like Hitler or Mussolini, Uriburu called elections in April of 1931, and was soundly defeated. At the same time the public made it clear that their issue was with Uriburu rather than military control when they elected General Augustín P. Justo in his place.¹⁷³ The election of Justo did not symbolize a victory of nacionalismo over democratic tradition, since he was still elected by the public. The two political movements continued to fight for control of the government behind the scenes until World War II exacerbated the tensions.

The war proved a mixed blessing for Argentina. On one hand, economic prosperity followed Argentina through World War II thanks to its position far from the fighting. Through the exports of food products, not only was Argentina able to pay off its pre-war debt but gain 125 million pounds of British debt.¹⁷⁴ Though England and the rest of the European powers were able to pay what they owed to their lenders, it was only the liquidation of their empires that made it possible. On the other hand, Argentina held on to its neutrality longer than the United States appreciated. Military leaders felt affinity for the

¹⁷¹ Federico Finchelstein, *Transatlantic Fascism: Ideology, Violence, and the Sacred in Argentina and Italy 1919-1945*, (Durnham: Duke University Press, 2010), p. 113.

¹⁷² Federico Finchelstein, *Transatlantic Fascism*, pp. 114-116.

¹⁷³ Luis Alberto Romero, *A History of Argentina in the Twentieth Century*, pp. 59-64.

¹⁷⁴ Andrew Graham-Yooll *The Forgotten Colony: a history of the English speaking communities in Argentina*, (London: Hutchinson Publishing Group, 1981), p.243.

Axis as they modelled their troops after German military doctrine and were sympathetic to the cause of fascism. Members of the Radical Party supported the Allies and their liberal democracies. Trying to appease both parties along with trying to maintain access to the European market as a whole caused Argentina to be left out of the U.S.'s post-war economic programs.¹⁷⁵

With the ability of Europe to purchase Argentine beef and grain diminished, Argentina looked to the United States as a prime market for its goods. By the end of the 1940s a quarter of all exports went to the U.S., making the North Americans the largest purchasers of Argentine goods. The Import-Export Bank loaned Argentine banks 125 million dollars to pay off foreign creditors in 1950.¹⁷⁶ Three years later Milton Eisenhower, the U.S. President's brother, visited Argentina with corporate executives from Westinghouse, John Deere, and Kaiser in tow.¹⁷⁷ Such overtures by the United States were not motivated by charity but rather the desire for stability. Fearful that communism would take hold in South America; the United States wanted to cultivate commitments to industrial capitalism.

U.S. fear was directed at the new president of Argentina who styled himself as a man of the people and set to nationalize the country. Elected in 1946, Colonel Juan Perón brought nacionalismo to its apex in Argentina. Tapping into anti-foreign sentiments along with a need to promote domestic industry, the Argentine president systematically nationalized major foreign-owned service industries. British Railroad Company, the U.S. run telephone company, and the French dock facilities were all brought under

¹⁷⁵ Luis Alberto Romero, *A History of Argentina in the Twentieth Century*, pp. 85-90.

¹⁷⁶ David M.K. Sheinin, *Argentina and the United States: An Alliance Contained*, (Athens, Georgia: University of Georgia Press, 2006), p. 98.

¹⁷⁷ *Ibid*, p. 107.

government control.¹⁷⁸ Seeking to empower the people, Perón encouraged workers in these factories to strike so he could step in on their behalf. Such practices helped to create a strong working-class identity.

In addition to state control of the economy, Perón's rhetoric advanced the other goal of nacionalismo, the unification of citizens under the banner of the state.¹⁷⁹ This was achieved through state-funded schools, distribution of books, involvement in the mass media, and nationalization of one of the most popular sports in Argentina, soccer. The *Unión de Estudiantes Secundarios* (UES), Perón's program for high-school students, best shows his use of sports and school to create a cult of identity around himself. Consisting of a field and facilities, students were welcomed to play sports for the price of listening to political indoctrination.¹⁸⁰ At times Perón would appear to play with the students which, in addition to his portrait placed all throughout the facilities, unified behind him.

Though mismanagement of the economy inspired a 1955 coup that ousted Perón from power, the national pride he imbued in Argentine survived his downfall. The Argentine soccer team headed for the 1958 Swiss World Cup confident that they played the game better than anyone else. The squad needed to perform well, Perón's policies, while strengthening the Argentine identity, did so at the cost of its economy.¹⁸¹ The World Cup was a chance for Argentina to prove that it could compete on the world stage both in the sports arena as well as economically. It became apparent that confidence in the

¹⁷⁸ Thomas E. Skidmore and Peter H. Smith, "Argentina: Prosperity, Deadlock, and Change," pp. 83-84.

¹⁷⁹ Juan Perón, *Peron Expounds His Doctrine*, translated Argentine Association of English Culture, (Buenos Aires, 1948) p. 18.

¹⁸⁰ Raanan Rein, "'El primer deportista': the political use and abuse of sport in peronist Argentina," *The International Journal of Sport History*, vol. 15, no. 2 (August 1998), pp. 65-66.

¹⁸¹ Thomas E. Skidmore and Peter H. Smith, "Argentina: Prosperity, Deadlock, and Change," pp.86-87

mythic Argentine style was misplaced as the team was ousted in an embarrassing 6-1 defeat to Czechoslovakia.¹⁸² Middle-class supporters were hit hardest by this defeat and their presence in the stands began to wane.

The middle class decline in attendance was assisted by the first noted fatality in the soccer stadium stands. Alberto Mario Linker was at a River Plate match because he was invited by a friend. The game was close and the official made a call against River, which angered the fans in the section around Linker. Police took to the field with the hopes of calming the fans down; their actions had the opposite effect. Possibly panicking, or perhaps reading the crowd's intent correctly, the police officers fired a volley of tear gas into the crowded stands. When the gas cleared Linker was found dead with an imprint of a canister on his temple. The official report hid police involvement in the incident and no investigation was launched making the perceived betrayal more potent.¹⁸³ Linker's death was a starting point for a weakening in the state's monopoly of violence.

Soccer stadiums became dangerous places. The year following Linker's death another tragedy demonstrated that these arenas were deadly in more ways than one. The match itself was forgettable one but when a section of stands buckled in on itself, that was not. The old stands could not take the weight of the shouting and stamping crowd. The collapse took the life of a fifty-year-old man and injured hundreds more.¹⁸⁴ Two years of tragedy drove ticket sales down 33 percent and the middle-class patrons ceased attending matches all together.¹⁸⁵ By the 1960s Argentine soccer had become a working-class sport.

¹⁸² Pablo Alabarces, *Fútbol y Patria*, p. 84.

¹⁸³ Amílcar Romero, *Muerte en la Cancha*, pp.15-18.

¹⁸⁴ *Ibid*, p. 21.

¹⁸⁵ Amílcar Romero, *Deporte, Violencia, y Política*, p. 17.

More than leaving the country in a difficult economic situation, Perón left it on the brink of civil war. Argentina was still a battleground between the *federalistas* and the *unitarios*, only the factions were now called *golpistas* and *legalistas*. Battle was no longer to determine the seat of power but the political direction of the country. *Golpistas*, which means coup d'état in Spanish, supported the military takeover and were ultra conservatives. They had close ties to the Catholic Church and favored closer ties with the United States and Europe. The *legalistas* also called *peronistas* after their exiled leader were made up of the working class and university students. They supported democratic election and wished to continue Perón's focus on the social programs for the poor.

The tension between the two factions was not helped by a visit from Dwight D. Eisenhower in 1960. His visit was aimed to reassure the Argentine government that they could expect U.S. military aid to handle subversive elements. At the same time, a new generation of Argentine military cadets emerged. They believed threats to national security was more likely to come from inside the country. They trained with American officers in counter-insurgency maneuvers in case communists infiltrated their land.¹⁸⁶ Feeling emboldened by US backing, the *golpistas* broke the tension and the country entered a guerrilla war.¹⁸⁷ In a sad turn of events for a country that wanted to be a beacon of civilization in South America violence provoked violence as it became common place.

Legalistas bombed government buildings and assassinated military officials. The *golpistas* then reacted with raids on *peronista* hotspots. For the army the church was their space of authority while the young guerrillas claimed the university. There was one space where the line blurred and that was the soccer stadium. While the stands belonged to the

¹⁸⁶ David M.K. Sheinin, *Argentina and the United States: An Alliance Contained*, pp. 122-123.

¹⁸⁷ Amílcar Romero, *Deporte, Violencia y Política* pp.24-26.

peronistas the president of the AFA was appointed by the government, not to mention that many of the club owners were *golpistas* themselves. In Argentina the soccer stadium was the one place that was untouchable, at least by the state. Though fans mainly fought each other, they united against a common foe as soon as the police arrived.

However rather than trying to break this bastion of guerrilla strength, the *golpistas* made it stronger. Large sums of money were invested to make bigger stadiums and purchase expensive players, with team River's owner, Antonio Vespucio Libertti leading the way.¹⁸⁸ The purpose behind the government's involvement in soccer was twofold. First, the current administration could claim a team's success as their own, adding legitimacy to their rule. In 1967 one of the oldest Argentine teams, Racing Club defeated the visiting team Celtic Glasgow. Juan Carlos Onganía, Argentina's current dictator, invited the team to the Pink House, the Presidential Palace, to celebrate their victory as a national accomplishment. In his address to the people Onganía claimed that it was the team's discipline, vigor, and spirituality that led them to victory; which coincidentally were the same values he propulgated.¹⁸⁹ Soccer was useful to unite, albeit temporarily, the people behind an Argentina that was led by the military.

Soccer was useful to the *golpistas* in another, more devious way. The soccer stadium served as a beacon of the neighborhood, uniting residents for at least ninety minutes a week in a common identity. By making the five teams with the largest followings, Boca Juniors, River Plate, Independiente, Racing, and San Lorenzo de Almagro bigger, the *golpistas* hoped to expand those club's followers. There has been no definitive word on what the military junta wanted to achieve by expanding soccer's influence. The common argument is that they wished to use sports as a safety valve and

¹⁸⁸ Amílcar Romero, *Deporte, Violencia y Política*, p. 18.

¹⁸⁹ Pablo Alabarces, *Fútbol y Patria*, p. 103.

distract spectators from societal ills.¹⁹⁰ In the Argentine case this does not seem likely since the stadium was a safe place for neighborhoods to meet and potentially plot unrest. More likely is the conclusion of longtime chronicler of Argentine sports violence, Amílcar Romero, that the military was looking to cement fan's regional identity.¹⁹¹ The stronger one's identity was in the club, the stronger the rivalry between the clubs and the less likely fans would ally with each other.

Despite government meddling in the affairs of soccer, *peronistas* still flocked to their respective stadiums. Though the world outside was changing, the stadium was still a space where all was as it should be, where justice won out. Soccer was still a sport played and regulated by fallible humans and just as earlier in the century, it was the fan's duty to fix injustice. There was, however, one key difference, the social constraints which limited the level of acceptable violence were more relaxed. As Elias might say the commonplace occurrence of violence on the streets de-civilized Argentines to a point where self-restraint was no longer valued.

Labelled outcasts and guerrillas by the military authorities, *peronistas* embraced an identity that was open and inviting to them, the local soccer club. More loyal to the club and less restrained, fan violence spiraled out of control. In 1967 Hector Souto went to see his team play in the national championships. Arriving late to a close match, Souto made the mistake of entering the stadium on the wrong side where the opposing fans were standing. Not realizing his mistake the boy cheered his team upon entering, an act taken to be a provocation by the opposing fans. Knocking him down they began to beat him and warded off the few who tried to stop them. The beating continued until the boy, whose only mistake was entering the wrong side of the stadium, lay dead. Only three

¹⁹⁰ Robert M. Levine, "Sports as Dramaturgy for Society: A Concluding Chapter," ed. Joseph L. Arbena, (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press Inc, 1988),p. 75.

¹⁹¹ Amílcar Romero, "Las Barras Bravas y la Contrasociedad Deportiva," p.33.

attackers were accused while the rest of the mob was acquitted of any wrong doing.¹⁹² This was one of the few cases of fan violence where anyone was charged with wrongdoing. In the years to come, thousands were detained but then released the next day making fan violence almost a ritual.

In addition to signaling the end of fan coexistence, Souto's death gave official status to a group of professional fans, *barras bravas*. A *barra* is a location where a certain group meets such as friends who have met in the same bar for years. In Argentina the meaning was expanded to include an entire neighborhood which in this case is demarcated by soccer loyalty. *Brava* means strong one, so a *barra brava* would be a neighborhood warrior. The first mention of *barras bravas* was in an article published by *Crítica* in 1928. Hardly an organized group, the term referred to fans who did not care about the match but did enjoy the shouting of insults and other rowdy behavior.¹⁹³ By the 1960s however *barras bravas* transformed themselves into an organized entity funded by the teams they supported.

These super-fans acted at least as cheerleaders. They had special benches reserved only for them and during a game it was their job to lead the crowd in chants that encouraged their own team or demoralized the enemy. At worse *barra bravas* were thugs who committed violent acts that more "civilized" members of society could not be seen doing. Regardless of how they were viewed these professional fans existed in both Argentine worlds. As working-class youths they were labeled *peronistas* and they reported to the club owners who represent the *golpistas*.

While *barras bravas* did not receive a direct salary they did receive benefits for services rendered. They did not need to worry about purchasing tickets to home or away

¹⁹² Amílcar Romero, *Muerte en la Cancha*, pp. 27-41.

¹⁹³ Julio Frydenberg, *Historia Social de Fútbol*, p. 226.

games as those were provided for them and they were also given a portion of available tickets to sell themselves. More importantly, at least financially, were the monopolies they were awarded. *Barras bravas* were the only officially licensed vendors of club merchandise. The sale of team jerseys, banners, and other general merchandise were controlled by the *barras bravas*. Additionally vendor carts selling food and beverages inside the stadium were also controlled by the professional fans who could earn a living by attending soccer matches.

Club administrators bestowed these monopolies as payment for services rendered. In addition to hyping up the crowd, *barras bravas* were at times used against their own team. If a player's contract was about to expire, team owners would have his fans shout insults at the player lowering the cost of re-signing him. Additionally these super-fans acted as spies. They followed players off the field making sure they did not get into too much trouble. At other times *barras bravas* were used against the club president's political rivals.¹⁹⁴

Honor as a social currency was another factor in the swell of stadium violence. If one's team was performing well then honor was gained by association. However if one's team underperformed honor was lost. If the stadium represents the world as it should be, according to the fan, then his chosen team should emerge victorious. Loss was unacceptable and signified that something was wrong with the constructed world. After a bad defeat the last people to leave the stadium were the *barras bravas* of the losing side who would continue their chants to regain lost honor and by show of their devotion they would try to secure the next victory. The 1958 World Cup loss served as the beginning of a two-decade soccer drought. Club teams and the national team continuously lost

¹⁹⁴ Christopher Thomas Gaffney, *Temple of the Earthbound Gods*, pp. 167-175.

important matches, depriving fans of the prestige they would have gained by association with their club.

The 1970s saw an increase in violence both inside and outside the stadium. Even the return of Perón did not calm down the guerillas. Exile and age had changed Perón making his ideals more conservative, alienating his own supporters. Armed with the knowledge that the state could not deter them, new *peronistas* kidnapped or assassinated military officials as well as foreign CEOs. A national newspaper, *La Prensa*, reported that approximately 2000 people died between 1973 and 1976 as the result of terrorism.¹⁹⁵ Argentina was regressing to the state the country had been in under Juan Manuel Rosas and there seemed to be nobody who could take control.

Fighting was taken into soccer stadiums, a space that had once been all but sacred. In the past meddlesome fans threw rocks and bottles but in the 1970s many brought guns to matches as well. Fans also began to form alliances with other teams both to attack common rivals as well as to battle the police. In 1973 fans of Quilmes and Nueva Chicago joined together to shoot at the police who came to restore order. After a fierce battle the police was able to subdue the rioters, leading a chain-gang of hundreds of fans away. One onlooker, Jorge Taboada, told the press that the battle was like a scene from a movie only made worse since it was real.¹⁹⁶

In 1976 the military once again assumed direct control of the country. A military council seized the government and elected Jorge Rafael Videla to personify their power. Promising a return to the stability and prosperity of the past the military declared war on the guerillas. In a move reminiscent of Rosas' secret police, *Mazorca*, Videla established his own secret police. Determined to show the *peronistas* that their capacity of violence

¹⁹⁵ Amílcar Romero, *Deporte, Violencia y Patria*, p. 90.

¹⁹⁶ *Ibid*, p. 82.

was large, the secret police took people and they were never seen again. No records were kept and so the exact number of the “disappeared” is not known but thousands, if not tens of thousands, of people were never heard from again.¹⁹⁷ In spite of the “dirty war,ss” Argentina still hosted the 1978 World Cup and even managed their first international win.

In keeping with the tradition of previous dictators, Videla sought to use soccer as a barometer of this regime’s success. The national team’s victory became a sign that his war was having a positive effect. The World Cup was also an opportunity to legitimize his regime to the international community showing how Argentina was improving. To this effect, approximately 500 million dollars were spent on preparing the country. That was more than three times what Spain spent on the World Cup four years earlier. Roads were repaved, stadiums renovated, and slums were hidden behind walls.¹⁹⁸ Victory confirmed, not only to the military itself, but the world that conditions in Argentina were improving.

The World Cup was not all about posturing and deception but some benefit came to the people as well. Cesár Luis Menotti, head coach for the Argentine national team, attempted to use his position to unite the country. Unable to get players from the larger more established teams, the national team was pieced together with players from smaller clubs. The lack of affiliation to more well-established clubs allowed Menotti to avoid neighborhood rivalries and permitted the claim to be a team of the people. He also framed his team within the history of Argentine soccer, suggesting that all that happened before led the country to this point.¹⁹⁹ The team’s ultimate victory belonged not to one neighborhood but to the whole country. Argentines were given the option of an identity that was neither based in a neighborhood nor a political party but a wholly national one.

¹⁹⁷ Thomas E. Skidmore and Peter H. Smith, *Modern Latin America*, pp. 98-99.

¹⁹⁸ Pablo Alabarces, *Futbol y Patria*, p. 126.

¹⁹⁹ *Ibid*, p.127-129.

As if to demonstrate an embrace of this new national identity anchored in soccer, ticket sales rose 33 percent, as the long absent middle class became once again interested in the sport.²⁰⁰

By 1979 the “dirty war” had succeeded in subduing guerilla activity. Not only did violence decrease in the streets but also in the soccer stadiums as well. A successful World Cup, in the sense that Argentina both won and eluded international outcry over government crackdown, indicated that the military had a strong hold on the country. Victory, and the feeling of unity, would prove to be fleeting when a non-violent demonstration undid much of the junta’s achievements. In that year mothers from across the country marched into the Plaza de Mayo, the main public square, and made a simple demand; they wanted to know to where their sons had disappeared. Since the government could not use its normal violent methods against mothers, it tried to entice them to celebrate the Argentine team’s victory in the Youth World Cup.²⁰¹ Such a ploy did not work and mothers kept returning to the plaza drawing more international pressure to end the “dirty war.”

Losing international and domestic support quickly, the military junta was desperate to unite the people behind them again. Opportunity came in the form of islands off the Argentine coast. The Malvinas, better known to the world as the Falklands, were islands that belonged to Great Britain and yet Argentina had a claim to them too. Seeing an opportunity to strengthen their position, the government invaded the islands. The junta believed they would have U.S. backing for their claim and that England would not bother to defend islands 8000 miles away from its shores. The plan initially worked as the country unified behind such a show of strength, especially one aimed at their most bitter

²⁰⁰ Amílcar Romero, *Deporte, Violencia, y Política* p. 107.

²⁰¹ Jimmy Burns, *Hand of God: The Life of Diego Maradona*, (New York: The Lyons Press, 1996), pp. 51-53.

of rivals.²⁰² Sadly such sentiment was short lived and Margaret Thatcher, the Iron Lady, was not about to let such aggression go unchecked. The U.S. under Ronald Reagan was unwilling to support Argentina and had to back the English claim. A British expeditionary force was launched and the Falklands were returned to English hands.²⁰³

The lost war was humiliating to the military junta. The codes of honor that bound a fan to its team were the same that bound the people to its government and in particular the military rulers. They were the rock of Argentine history, always the strong faction that brought honor by defeating the country's enemies, mostly domestic rather than foreign. Already facing international pressure over the "dirty war," the loss of the Falkland war was the final straw for the military leadership. The loss of a war was the equivalent of a soccer team losing a match. In this case the fans could not regain honor by avenging themselves on their opponents and so their team had to take all the blame. Having lost too much respect, the military was forced to relinquish its position and allow for a transfer of power to Raul Alfonsín the first democratically elected President Argentina had in about twenty years.

Unfortunately the departure of the military did not end stadium violence. On the contrary, without a strong central government to impose order, stadium violence in the first half of the 1980s increased in frequency. Though the British were able to curb hooliganism by the end of the 1980s, Argentina had not been able to follow suit. In June of 2013 after the death of a fan, one of 70 that have occurred in the new millennium, the government banned fans from visiting their teams when they played away games.²⁰⁴ Violence has not been confined to stadiums either as mass looting happened across

²⁰² Pablo Alabarces, *Fútbol y Patria*, p. 137.

²⁰³ Thomas E. Skidmore and Peter H. Smith, *Modern Latin America*, pp. 100-101.

²⁰⁴ Ignacio de los Reyes, "BBC News," 06/11/2013, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-latin-america-22864505> as viewed, 02/07/2014.

Argentina in response to an economic downturn. Argentina may go through periods where societal violence is more subdued but has not managed to reach Elias' idea of civilization where it is out of every day view.

A problem is that few would consider Argentina as a barbarous country. Argentina is a prosperous country, at least in comparison to other South American countries, whose citizens enjoy most of the technological amenities as those do in the developed world. Argentina may go through periods of economic downturns but then so do all countries at some point. By most criteria, Argentina ranks as a civilized society and yet violence remains sporadic. With respect to Elias, he does provide historians with useful tools to analyze violence within a society but as a determinate for how civilized a society is, it leaves much to be desired. In fact the "process of civilization," suggests a linear progression from barbarity to civility. Never mind that few processes are truly linear as there are often relapses but the definition of civilization is not a fixed point. In today's terms civilization means access to Wi-Fi and cellular service and it is anyone's guess as to what tomorrow brings.

Violence is a part of the Argentine identity, at least for the time being. Not a wanton desire to destroy but a desire to protect one's own even to the destruction of one's own being. Fan violence still exists because fans still strongly identify with their local teams and wish to protect that identity. Social unrest still exists in Argentina because her people want to defend their place in society. Perhaps one day Argentines will feel secure enough in their constructed identities to not need to fight for them but it would be a long road.

Chapter 5

From Mentor to Nemesis: Great Britain in the Argentine Mind

In his article on sports and nationalism in Latin America, sports historian Joseph L. Arbena advances three goals of the nationalizing process. These goals include building loyalty to the nation at the expense of the neighborhood; cultivation of pride in the achievements of the country's citizens above foreigners; and promotion of a negative view of foreigners.²⁰⁵ In the article Arbena, however, argues that sporting events so popular in most Latin American societies do not produce a lasting effect on these societies' national identity. Though victory in an event can cause a country to rejoice, such as Argentina winning the World Cup for the first time, such an event does not lead to national cohesion. In the case of Argentina, victory was not enough to save either the government from political collapse or the country from economic collapse.

If not strong enough to create and sustain a national identity by itself, soccer nevertheless proved an invaluable building stone for the creation of an Argentine identity, playing a role in each of Arbena's goals. Neighborhoods rallied around their local soccer clubs, facilitating loyalty to the *patria chica* of the *barrio*. Juan Perón made soccer the national sport through a discourse that minimized England's role in the transfer of the sport. Becoming distinctly Argentine, the soccer style played by local clubs was celebrated as a national achievement. The final goal, the creation of a negative view of foreigners, came about in the 1966 World Cup with England once again as the target. A controversial call by the referee gave Argentina an "other." In the course of forty years Britain went from the model of development to the great villain of the national narrative.

²⁰⁵ Joseph J. Arbena, "Nationalism and Sport in Latin America, 1850-1990: the Paradox of Promoting and Performing 'European' Sports," *The International Journal of the History of Sport*, Vol. 12, No. 2, (Aug. 1995), p. 220.

The soccer stadium was most often the battlefield in which the rivalry would play out though an actual battlefield is included as well. For a true rivalry to exist, the two parties need to be more or less equals otherwise it is merely the stronger party bullying the weaker one. Argentina has yet to be as strong as Great Britain economically, politically or militarily but the soccer field is a different story. In his article on Mexican nationalism, Arbena writes that Anglo sports like soccer were an arena in which Latin Americans could compete at the same or even higher level than Western Europe.²⁰⁶ Though Argentina's military was not as well equipped as England's their soccer teams were evenly matched, at least by numbers. Once again, the sport provided, in a world of inequality, a moment where there was justice.

In some respects Argentina had a false start in the nation building process, or at least that is what its leaders thought in the 1870s. Worried about how the new country allowed the dictator Juan Manuel Rosas to rule for over two decades from 1829 to 1852, nation builders sought a new model. Looking to both Europe as well as the United States, Argentine leaders attempted to attract North American and European immigrants to help develop their new country. Italy sent the greatest number of people but Great Britain gained the most economic ground controlling key growth industries such as shipping and the railroads. The British were able to obtain such deference thanks to their disposable income, unrivaled shipping capability, and controller of a quarter of the Earth's landmass.²⁰⁷

Exact population figures for English immigrants are unknown but liberal estimates claim that at their peak, towards the end of the nineteenth century, there were

²⁰⁶ Joseph J. Arbena, "Sport Development and Mexican Nationalism," *Journal of Sports History*, vol. 18, No. 3, (Winter, 1991) p. 362.

²⁰⁷ Niall Ferguson, *Empire: The Rise and Demise of the British World Order and the Lessons for Global Power*, (New York: Basic Books, 2004), p. ix.

60,000 British expatriates in Argentina. Other sources suggest that though there were only around 40,000.²⁰⁸ The expatriate community was not a static one making exact data collection difficult. Most of the English lived in Argentina on contract with various companies for a period of years before returning home at the end of their posting. Still others worked as freelance entrepreneurs who stayed only if their business ventures did not prove successful enough to return. While on post the immigrants oversaw hundred-million pounds worth of investment in shipping, meatpacking, and telegraphic businesses to name the most prevalent. Massive industrial projects such as building a new port in Buenos Aires and providing rail-access between major cities and the countryside were largely accomplished thanks to English loans and machinery.

As an introverted group, British expatriates attempted to carve out a little piece of Britain in Argentina. English schools and clubs were strict with their admittance policy so those born outside Albion were denied membership. Schools that followed a British curriculum developed sports programs but matches only took place between English-speaking schools.²⁰⁹ Locals were denied membership because their presence drew attention to the fact that expatriates were not in England, shattering this illusion. Occasionally the Argentine elite received invitations to attend the English sport clubs as a guest in order to view a soccer match or horse race but that was all.

This behavior by the British in Argentina is odd considering that it was not replicated in all parts of Latin America. In Lima, Peru not only did an Englishman donate the trophy for the Peruvian Soccer League but the expatriate community also organized

²⁰⁸ David Rock, "The British of Argentina," in *Settlers and Expatriates: Britons Overseas*, ed. Robert Bickers, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), p. 18.

²⁰⁹ *Ibid*, pp. 33-34.

the tournaments and even raised the funds to build the national stadium.²¹⁰ Argentine high schools did adopt soccer but played in different leagues than the English ones and had to build their own fields. Arbena notes a trend in Latin America as a whole according to which sports made the local elites more European.²¹¹ Again in the case of Argentina, the British did not mind if the locals adopted their customs but did nothing to actively encourage or reward such action. They further favored segregation between English and Argentine sport teams.

A number of factors made Argentina unique from the rest of Latin America. One important distinguishing characteristic was the relative homogenous nature of the Argentine identity. Unlike most other Latin American countries, Argentina did not have a large indigenous or mestizo population to provide a counter-claim in the issue of identity. Like residents of the United States, Argentines came almost exclusively from Europe. What is more, Argentina boasted a well educated elite that ran the country from the second half of the nineteenth century. Here Eric Hobsbawm's notion of tradition provides a compelling insight into the expatriate community's actions.

According to Hobsbawm, tradition, in this case club membership, can be used to foster a sense of superiority when it is not obviously present.²¹² The Argentine elite were just as European and educated as the British. In most other Latin American countries the *mestizaje* of the population allowed the English to feel racially superior but that feeling was denied in Argentina. Exclusivity was then used by the expatriate community to create the same superiority that could not be established by racial or educational means.

²¹⁰ Steve Stein, "The Case of Soccer in Early Twentieth-Century Lima," ed. Joseph L. Arbena, *Sport and Society in Latin America: Diffusion, Dependency, and the Rise of Mass Culture*, (Westport Connecticut: Greenwood Press Inc, 1988), p. 75.

²¹¹ Joseph J. Arbena, "Nationalism and Sport in Latin America, 1850-1990: the Paradox of Promoting and Performing 'European' Sports," p. 221.

²¹² Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, *The Invention of Tradition*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), p. 10.

Keen observers of European culture, the Argentine elite, which did not possess the natural superiority of an aristocracy, adopted exclusivity as well. They created the Racing and Jockey Clubs which were modelled after the British clubs. Membership to either of those clubs was a sign that one had reached the upper levels of Argentine society. Unwittingly not only did the English give Argentina its national sport in soccer but also a way to create a social hierarchy.

In 1914 the world went to war and most of the British expatriates felt the call of duty to return home and fight. Of the some 45,000 immigrants only 28,300 remained at the start of the war and that number continued to decline.²¹³ Coupled with the departure of the English was a shrinking of the status in the social world of Argentina. Clubs and private schools that had prided themselves on exclusivity and built up British superiority had to choose to admit non-Anglos or close down. England retained a strong presence in Argentina at least economically. Through the 1930s, 37 percent of Argentine exports went to England, by far the largest of any competing power at the time.²¹⁴ The Anglo-Argentine Railroad Company ran the trains coming in and out of Buenos Aires, giving the English-owned company a portion of every other export industry. On a cultural front, even though the 1930s saw increased popularity for Argentine soccer, the English version and play style was still held as a standard. Visitation by foreign soccer clubs to Argentina was greeted with great fanfare and matches were attended by dignitaries, factory owners, and other members of the elite.

The 1940s was a turning point in Anglo-Argentine relations both culturally as well as economically. Spending on World War II forced Britain to liquidate much of its international holdings, including the Anglo-Argentine Railroad Company. In 1948 the

²¹³ David Rock, "The British of Argentina," p. 27.

²¹⁴ David M.K. Sheinin, *Argentina and the United States: An Alliance Contained*, (Athens, Georgia: University of Georgia Press, 2006), pp. 70-71.

British government allowed Juan Perón to nationalize the Argentine railways in return for a year's supply of beef. The economic downturn continued and by 1950 British investment into Argentina was only 69 million pounds, down from the 356 million it had been just four years before.²¹⁵ The decline was felt equally in the cultural realm as it was in the economic. The post-war years saw the rise of Perón who sought to break away from the model of western capitalism.

In summer of 1943 the military overthrew the government and established its control over the country for the next 40 years. Fascist Italy and Germany became a more relatable model to the military junta than the democratic England. In Argentina, both the communist party as well as supporters of breaking relations with the Axis were banned. Though the military finally entered the war on the side of the Allies, the country's neutrality and reputation for accepting fleeing war criminals won the ire of the United States.²¹⁶ Since the U.S. took on the duty of rebuilding the economy of continental Europe, it denied Argentina access to its primary market.

Being let down by the capitalist countries on which it relied, the military junta looked to its minister of labor for solutions to the economy by increasing the buying power of its own people. Before taking part in the military takeover of Argentina, Perón had spent several years in Europe where he witnessed Italian fascism as well as the destructive violence of the Spanish Civil War.²¹⁷ Determined to keep such social unrest out of Argentina, he used his position as labor minister and later president to create a strong working-class identity tied to the nation. In a speech Perón gave in 1944, he professed that the reason for the unrest of the masses was found in social injustice which

²¹⁵ David Rock, "The British of Argentina," pp. 40-41.

²¹⁶ Luis Alberto Romero, *A History of Argentina in the Twentieth Century*, trans. James P. Brennan, (Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2002), pp. 91-92.

²¹⁷ *Ibid*, p. 93.

could only be countered with justice.²¹⁸ By justice, he meant stopping the exploitation of the workers by foreign companies.

Rhetorically, Perón was uniting the workers through the creation of a common foe, factory owners. The rapid industrialization of Argentina at the turn of the twentieth century was recast as industrialists selling the country as a colony for personal profit.²¹⁹ Rather than focusing on the modernizing effects of foreign capital, it is turned into a means of enslavement. Perón's solution is reminiscent of Hitler and Mussolini's economic policies of autarchy and nationalization. Keeping with the theme of "us" versus "them," Perón explained that economic independence can only be achieved by state control of foreign-owned industries, by which he meant rail, electricity, and communications.²²⁰ Such policies increased his own standing among the working class and also gave them a common external enemy, the "exploitative foreigners."²²¹ Here is the beginning of Arben's third stage of nationalism, promoting the negative view of foreigners. Perón never identifies these exploitative foreigners by name, mainly because he still wanted access to their markets, but it was clear that he was referring primarily to England and the United States.

Creating a national consciousness among workers included the social as well as the economic realm. An avid sportsman, as to be expected of one interested in justice and competition, Perón sought to incorporate his love of sports into social policy. Speaking in 1948, Perón declared, "As it happens, the sporting environment is where differences disappear, where a camaraderie superior to any other is born, and where a

²¹⁸ Juan Perón, *Peron Expounds His Doctrine*, trans., Argentine Association of English Culture, (Buenos Aires; 1948) p. 16.

²¹⁹ *Ibid*, pp. 50-51.

²²⁰ *Ibid*, pp. 120-121.

²²¹ *Ibid*, p. 81.

nobility and greatness of spirit are formed that must be human beings' sole objective."²²²

This statement reflects the ideas of Enrique Romero Brest, Argentina's founder of physical education, whose ideas about the uplifting nature of athletic activity were popular when Perón was in school. A slight deviation from the liberal Brest, Perón thought that sports programs, especially for young adults, would be useful in producing good soldiers.²²³

Interested in using sports, and more importantly sporting competitions to enhance national prestige, Perón ended Argentina's isolationism from the world of sports. In 1948 Argentina participated in the London Olympics sending the largest delegation that had ever left the country, 365 members in all.²²⁴ The excursion netted Argentina three gold medals, vindicating the superiority of the nation over foreigners. Success followed after success when in 1950 Buenos Aires hosted the world basketball championship. There Argentina was able to defeat the United States.²²⁵ The U.S. denied Argentina access to the markets it needed but on the basketball court both nations were equals and victory proved the Argentine superior. The case of the 1950 basketball world championship marks one of the first times that a sporting event was used to avenge political and economic wounds.

In addition to creating international competition, Perón was interested in national sports. Though he preferred aristocratic sports such as fencing, Perón recognized the popularity of soccer and its usefulness for political ends. He released government funds to help some of the more popular clubs build modern stadiums that could hold more

²²² Juan Perón found in Raanan Rein, "'El primer deportista': the political use and abuse of sport in peronist Argentina," *The International Journal of Sport History*, vol. 15, no. 2 (August 1998), p. 57.

²²³ Juan Perón, *Peron Expounds His Doctrine*, p. 170.

²²⁴ Raanan Rein, p. 68

²²⁵ *Ibid*, p. 69.

people. In honor to the man who made it possible, Racing Club named its new stadium the President Perón stadium. At the opening of the Huracán stadium, another one the government funded, the President gave a speech that again extolled Brest's ideas that sports represent a healthy for the development of virtues and morality.²²⁶ Though financial aid to struggling soccer clubs was appreciated, the Eva Perón Foundation's creation of the children's soccer championships proved to be one of the most lasting initiatives.

Sources are unreliable given the amount of pro and anti-Perón propaganda found in reports at the time. However it is certain that by 1950, tens of thousands of children participated in youth soccer across Argentina.²²⁷ In addition to playing sports, national symbolism was ever present in the youth programs, through the playing of the national anthem to pictures of Perón everywhere. Championships were held in Buenos Aires and teams that qualified were transported from all over the country to the capital, in a move that Latin American historian Raanan Rein describes as building a national consciousness.²²⁸ The idea is that children were shown different parts of Argentina and they were connected through something as simple as sports, in this case soccer. Though Perón was forced into exile in 1955 the youth soccer program continued and 20 years later in 1970s provided an opportunity for a young Diego Maradona to rise to fame.

Despite a strong desire to use soccer to advance the cause of nationalism, the sport did not come from Argentina but from England, a known fact. Perón could not eliminate the English influence in the creation of the soccer but could describe the process of how this foreign sport was made into something distinctly Argentine. Perón

²²⁶ Raanan Rein, "'El primer deportista': the political use and abuse of sport in peronist Argentina," p. 62.

²²⁷ Ibid, p. 63.

²²⁸ Ibid, p. 64.

once again called on the mass-media to re-write history of soccer in a way that Argentina was more conspicuously present. In 1950 a series of historical films were released. Scripted by Homero Manzi, a prominent member of the Argentine intellectual elite, these films contained a heroic account of Argentina's past, designed to reach the public at large.²²⁹

One of the films in the series, *Escuela de Campeones*, took up Alexander Watson Hutton and his English High School team as its subject. Hutton was already considered the father of Argentine soccer; his Alumni were equally revered for their decade-long dominance. *Escuela de Campeones* sets about turning the Scot, Hutton, and his team of English expatriates into Argentines.

In the film Hutton is shown as he goes to the Ministry of Education to receive permission to establish a new school that taught not only strength of mind but of body as well. The minister of education, none other than Domingo Sarmiento, expresses concern that in sixteen years of building schools, none had made learning interesting. Hutton assures Sarmiento that sports are the key to make students eager to learn. The two shake hand in agreement and the school is formed.

Though not pivotal for the plot of the film, this scene places the English High School within the development of the Argentine school system. Rather than understanding Hutton's school as an extension of the English school system replicated in Argentina, it becomes the first successful Argentine public school. Two scenes later Manzi continues to rewrite the history of the English High School. In a speech given to the newly formed school Hutton declares that since Argentina has given them so much, the country deserves their best. The students and parents gathered are still

²²⁹ Pablo Alabarces, *Fútbol y patria: El fútbol y las narrativas de la nación en la Argentina*, (Buenos Aires: Prometeo Libros, 2002), p. 76.

representative of the British expatriate community and so Hutton is outlining the process of naturalization and how schools fit into that process.

In the climax of the film, tragedy strikes. While playing against St. Andrews, Hutton's first school and the primary antagonist of the film, one of the students from the English High School is accidentally killed. A large number of British students leave and it looks as though Hutton will have to close down his school. Just when all is lost Mr. Diego Brown shows up with a dozen boys all of whom have Hispanic names such as Guillermo and Alfredo. He tells Hutton that they are "sons of Argentina" and no one has been able to teach them. Not only do the boys keep the school open but it was their participation in the soccer team that earned the English High School its decade long dominance.

It is interesting that the boys are considered to be sons of Argentina even before they begin to play soccer. While the Brown family existed and was certainly influential in developing modern sport in Argentina, they were British expatriates. If Manzi wished to reinforce the idea that playing soccer made one an Argentine he would have left the Brown family English. Only once the children started playing soccer would their names take on their Hispanic equivalent. In other films of the time participating in soccer is equated to participating in the national identity but not so in *Escuela de Campeones*. This could be a way to further divorce soccer from its English roots. A naturalized Scotsman provided the space to play but Argentina provided the skill.

The creative liberties taken by *Escuela de Campeones* changed the placement of the Alumni, Hutton's team, in soccer's narrative. As the English High School was transformed into Argentina's first public school so were the Alumni turned into the first great soccer team. This is an inversion since it was the team's departure rather than entrance that signified the beginning of the hybridization of soccer. One of the last English teams, they began to fade away in the 1910's and their decline allowed Argentine

teams to claim the spotlight.²³⁰ In a reversal, rather than becoming the last British team, the movie portrays the Alumni as the first Argentine team since it was made up of “sons of Argentina.”²³¹

The process fits nicely with Hobsbawm’s concept of invented tradition and historic continuity.²³² By telling a de-Anglicized history of Argentine soccer, Perón was able to create an inclusive rather than exclusive version of Argentina’s sport history. Hutton was not a Scottish headmaster of an English high school but rather a promoter of Argentina’s public school system and agent of naturalization. The Alumni was a team composed of the country’s ethnic groups rather than being exclusively English expatriates. This gave the Italian and Spanish segments of Argentine society a place within the history of the country, giving them what Hobsbawm calls historic continuity. Though second-and third-generation immigrants, they could claim to have participated in the formation of the Argentine identity.

Perón-era films did not just help create a sense of self but also helped define who the other is, through soccer rivalries. In a film released two years before the *Escuelas de Campeones, Pelota de Trapo* (1948), the star has a heart condition and needs to retire or risk his life. He tries to retire but his skills as a soccer player are needed in order for Argentina to defeat Brazil in tournament finals. Before taking the field his coach tells the star that it is too dangerous to play. Looking at the flag of Argentina, of screen, the star player heroically says, “There are many ways to give one’s life for his country. And this is one of them.”²³³ In *Pelota de Trapo*, the soccer field serves as a

²³⁰ Pablo Alabarces, *Fútbol y patria*, p. 51.

²³¹ *Ibid*, p. 78.

²³² Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, *The Invention of Tradition*, p. 7.

²³³ Pablo Alabarces, *Fútbol y Patria*, p. 75. Translation mine.

battlefield on which Argentine soldiers fight and die. Though the star ultimately lives, his dream of playing soccer for Argentina dies.

Opponents are not created equal. In order for a rivalry to exist both parties need to engage in competition. This represents a modified version of Norbert Elias' cycle of violence in which the identity of one party is derived from the conflict with another.²³⁴ In Elias' example, however, both parties, such as the Whigs and Tories, are almost a binary pair. Behavior and identity are determined negatively such as "we" are against something because "they" support it. In *Pelota de Trapo*, the Argentines are playing against the Brazilians in a fictional tournament because both countries believe to play the best soccer in the world. The star was willing to risk a heroic death because it was a worthy rival.

The concept of rivalries has been a part of Argentine soccer since the beginning. Clubs were imbued with their neighborhood's identity and regional tensions were released on the battlefield of the soccer stadium. Soccer sociologist Richard Giulianotti mentions that the purest rivalries are found among teams from the same city.²³⁵ This type of rivalry is best expressed through Buenos Aires' Boca Juniors and River Plate clubs both originated in the same southern working-class neighborhood. After a time River Plate relocated its club to the wealthier northern Buenos Aires and a rivalry formed between the two clubs. Victory among rivals validated the identity of the victor while defeat fostered introspection. Through movies and personal appearances, Perón attempted to apply the concept of civic rivalries to the nation as a whole. When the national team played, they carried the identity of the country meaning that their victory could be shared by everyone, not just the local.

²³⁴ Norbert Elias and Eric Dunning, *Quest for Excitement: Sport and Leisure in the Civilizing Process*, (New York: B. Blackwell, 1986), p. 10.

²³⁵ Richard Giulianotti, *Football: A Sociology of the Global Game*, (Malden, Massachusetts: Polity Press, 1999), p. 10.

Through Perón's effort, soccer had become the national sport. In a way the sport was achieving Arben's second goal of nationalism, increasing loyalty to the *patria grande*, the nation, at the expense of the *patria chica*. Celia Applegate's study on the Pfalz region of Germany, *A Nation of Provincials*, reveals that regionalism can work in concert with nationalism. To make her point, Applegate explores the idea of *heimat* which, as she describes it, bears striking resemblance to the Spanish concept of *patria*. Both words refer to a romanticized concept of homeland that can apply to the local as well as the national. According to Applegate the abstract concept of nation must be experienced through an appreciation of the local.²³⁶ It is much easier to conceptualize one's role in a regional identity and then see how that region becomes a part of the country at large.

Soccer performs a similar role in Argentina. Clubs are organized into divisions: the most prestigious are placed in division "A" and the least down to "D." This hierarchy is useful for determining where teams and the neighborhoods they represent fit into the national hierarchy. If a neighborhood produces a club that competes in the lower division, it is of lesser importance. Though less prestigious the lower division clubs still have a place within the hierarchy and participate alongside their peers. For Applegate, it is the participation in neighborhood events, such as attending a soccer game that anchors one's identity in the local space.²³⁷ In the case of Argentine soccer since players represent the neighborhood along with the club if a player moves to a more prestigious division, so does the local identity.

Applegate mentions that there was an additional factor that influenced the idea of *heimat*, the presence of a strong "other." The concept became more prevalent when

²³⁶ Celia Applegate, *A Nation of Provincials: the German Idea of Heimat*, (Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 1990) p. 15.

²³⁷ *Ibid*, p. 13.

Napoleon came to power and presented the German states with a reason to look for commonality rather than difference.²³⁸ The same cohesion occurs in soccer when a local team plays a team from another country. After several decades of isolationism in sports, Argentina joined the 1958 World Cup and was eliminated by Czechoslovakia six to one. Soon after this defeat the economy entered a period of decline, most likely as a result of Perón's unsustainable economic policies. The two blows in the sport as well as economic realm heralded dark times for Argentina.²³⁹

Feeling lost and in need of a new direction, at least in terms of their soccer program, Argentina turned back to the creators of the sport, England. In 1965 Osvaldo Zubeldía was named head coach and he brought a modern training regimen to the team. His players were all required to learn English, play with rugby balls, and carry weights with them everywhere. Athletes were expected to be in peak condition and every moment of their life was regulated. This technique was based on Zubeldía's idea about the training regimen of the English and other European teams.²⁴⁰ In reality, England had serious doubts about its own style and looked towards continental Europe for inspiration. Even though the English roots in Argentine soccer were being erased from public memory, among sports managers there still existed this idea that somehow the British version of the game was better.

Any positive thinking about European soccer was made difficult if not impossible by the 1966 World Cup. The games took place in England and were rife with controversy at least as Uruguay and Argentina perceived of it. In the semi-final round Argentina met with England in a game that established a soccer rivalry. At the 25 minute mark of the

²³⁸ Celia Applegate, *A Nation of Provincials*, p. 7.

²³⁹ Pablo Alabarces, *Fútbol y Patria*, p. 84.

²⁴⁰ Amílcar Romero, *Deporte, Violencia y Política: Crónica Negra 1958-1983*, (Buenos Aires: Centro Editor de América Latina, 1985), p. 35.

game, Antonio Rattin, the captain of the Argentine team, earned the dubious distinction of being the first person to ever have been expelled from Wembley Stadium.²⁴¹ He was sent off not for a foul he committed but for arguing with the head referee over a free kick that was given to the English team. Kreitlein, the West German referee wished to assert that his calls were beyond question and so made an example of the Argentine captain. As Rattin was being escorted off the field he grabbed one of the flags on the corner of the field, bearing the Union Jack, and twisted it; an act that the crowd perceived as an insult. Even with the expulsion that happened early in the game, it took England much of the remaining time to score the one goal which would win them the game.

Controversial calls in the World Cup, and sport in general, were not uncommon and remain a common occurrence to this day. Since so much national pride is invested in these games, spectators perceive the game the way they wish. Being so common, a single questionable call would have not been enough to create a lasting animosity between England and Argentina. There was another controversial game that helped the rivalry along. The day before the England versus Argentina match, Uruguay played against West Germany. In that match two Uruguayan players were sent off the field for committing fouls. This decision made by the English referee, J. Finney, secured West Germany's victory. These calls gave cause for some to perceive of it as a conspiracy since the first referee was German and the second English. Both agreed to show favoritism in their matches against the two South American teams.²⁴²

Conspiracy theories and controversial calls were aided by Alf Ramsey's, England's head coach, actions after the game. In 1966, as is now, it is customary for players to trade jerseys with their opponents as a sign of respect and it is generally

²⁴¹ Klaus Dodd, *Pink Ice: Britain and the South Atlantic Empire*, (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), p. 95.

²⁴² Pablo Alabarces, *Fútbol y Patria*, p. 95.

considered good sportsmanship. Displeased with Argentina's aggressive play style, Ramsey ran onto the field yelling, "Don't trade jerseys with these animals!" In an interview with the press after the game Ramsey reiterated his comment explaining to the press, and thereby to the whole world, that the Argentines were animals.²⁴³ This episode quickly became an international incident that caused FIFA to reevaluate those that were chosen to arbitrate matches, ultimately deciding to include more non-European referees including those from developing nations.

The situation was eagerly exploited by politicians at home. Juan Carlos Onganía rose to power in Argentina with a coup de' tat that occurred on June 29, 1966 only six days after the game and needed a way to legitimize his rule. Argentina was still attempting to recover from Perón's economic policies which, while beneficial to the working-class, were harmful to the economy as a whole. Onganía and his fellow military leaders looked to bring foreign investment and companies back into the country upsetting the workers.²⁴⁴ Seeing an opportunity to deflect ire from industrialists to the country as a whole, the new dictator invited the national team to the *Casa Rosada*. Onganía declared the team to be "moral champions" in the sense that they should have won if England had played the game fairly. In this view of the game, "animals" became victims of European racism and conspiracy. Though clearly the victim of European injustice, at least so the working-class felt, the Argentine side had made it a close game. Alf Ramsey's anger stemmed from his outrage because his team had almost lost even though they had secured the referee's favor.²⁴⁵

²⁴³ Klaus Dodd, *Pink Ice: Britain and the South Atlantic Empire*, p. 96.

²⁴⁴ Thomas E. Skidmore and Peter H. Smith, "Argentina: Prosperity, Deadlock, and Change," in *Modern Latin America*, 6th ed., (New York; Oxford University Press, 2005), p. 94.

²⁴⁵ Pablo Alabarces, *Fútbol y Patria*, p. 95.

The World Cup of 1966 was not the last time that the administration labelled the Argentine team “moral champions.” The idea that though the team played their very best they could not win was not acceptable for soccer fans. Far better was it to imagine that the team was cheated out of victory. Such a concept resonated most strongly with working-class soccer fans who felt they were similarly robbed of the fruits of their labor by foreign companies. The struggle of their national team was symbolic for their own struggle and strengthened Argentine solidarity.²⁴⁶

As soon as the Argentine loss to England was reinterpreted as an act of injustice, violence became a legitimate response. As soccer fans were licensed to throw rocks and bottles at underperforming players at home, the players and fans felt the same could be applied to the international level. If European clubs received unfair rulings in their favor, a more violent and aggressive play style was acceptable in order to even the odds. This idea was put into practice when the Argentine club, Racing, beat Celtic Glasgow in the Intercontinental Tournament of 1967. The victory was hard won and over the three games there were several expulsions for dirty play in the form of aggressive pushing and sliding perpetrated by the Argentine team.²⁴⁷ Winning was of prime importance and violence was justified as long as it brought success.

The very next year Osvaldo Zubeldía’s local team, Estudiantes de la Plata, faced Manchester United. The first game was played in Buenos Aires with the de facto president, Onganía, present in the stands. After a rough game with one expulsion, Estudiantes won by a goal. The English-speaking press exploded. Alex Stepney, one of the English players, was quoted by *El Gráfico* as repeating Ramsey’s insult: “The players from Estudiantes play dirty and are animals.” Brian Glanville of the *Sunday Times* wrote

²⁴⁶ Roberto di Giano, *El Fútbol y las Transformaciones del Peronismo*, (Buenos Aires: Leviatán, 2006), pp.42-43.

²⁴⁷ Pablo Alabarces, *Fútbol y Patria*, p. 102.

an article lamenting the death of professional soccer and how it had been replaced by the overly violent play style of Argentina.²⁴⁸

Public opinion declined even more when Estudiantes went to Manchester for the second game. Frustrated with the outcome of the previous game and the aggressive play of the Argentines, the English team did not shy away from violence. A fight broke out between two players and both of them were expelled from the field. The brutal match ended in a draw and since Estudiantes had won the previous game, they were crowned champions. Spectators congratulated the victors with shouts of “Animals!” and a shower of beer bottles and cans. If the Argentine players closed their eyes and listened to the insults from the stands and the shower of projectiles falling on the field, they could have been in a stadium in Buenos Aires.²⁴⁹

In addition to restoring some measure of Argentine honor for their loss in the World Cup, the Estudiantes-Manchester game marked another change in the way the public viewed England. Though popular opinion about the former empire had begun to change in the 1940s due to Peron and his efforts to create a working-class identity, English soccer was still held in high regard. In the Argentine mind the concepts of “fair play” and “sportsmanship” were exemplified by the British teams. Even when the role England played in the creation of Argentine soccer was down-played there was still recognition of a debt owed. The Estudiantes-Manchester game demonstrated to Argentines that English fans and even players were similar to them, neither mythic nor superior. With the myth of European superiority dispelled, the last inhibition to creating a rivalry was removed. A true rival needs to perform on the same level on which Argentina and Europe in general and England in particular played.

²⁴⁸ Pablo Alabarces, *Fútbol y Patria*, p. 104.

²⁴⁹ *Ibid*, p. 105.

Once the violent style of Racing and Estudiantes did its job in avenging the injustice of the 1966 World Cup it was free to fade into the background once more. Its decline was aided by an ugly game that saw three Argentine players arrested for fighting on the field.²⁵⁰ Keeping with Argentine soccer tradition, violence was used to combat injustice. Once justice was restored, the sport returned to the principal of “fair play.” Zubeldía and his style was replaced as head coach by César Luis Menotti who desired to return Argentina to their mythic soccer style focused on improvisational talent of star players.

Menotti more than any head coach before sought to reinforce the national identity through his soccer team. Of particular importance was his use of the press, in particular *El Gráfico*, to create negative stereotypes of the other completing Arben's third goal of nationalism, a negative view of foreigners. The press' narrative portrayed Argentina's European opponents as drunk, lazy, and untrustworthy. None of them deserved to win the World Cup as much as the Argentine team.²⁵¹ Soccer and the tension around the international event were again helping the cause of creating a national identity.

Argentina won its first World Cup in 1978 and by doing so vindicated the mythical Argentine soccer style. Though the military junta gained a temporary boost in popularity, at least within the country, this came at the cost of increased international pressure. The administration built walls hoping to hide the slums from foreign eyes but ultimately the world saw how Videla's government's treated their political opponents. Thousands disappeared at the hands of the secret police between 1976 and 1983. The Carter administration alone denied 100 million dollars' worth of equipment citing human rights

²⁵⁰Pablo Alabarces, *Fútbol y Patria*, pp. 112-114.

²⁵¹*Ibid*, p. 128.

abuses as the cause.²⁵² Increased international pressure to end the “dirty war” was mirrored by increased internal pressure. First meeting in 1977, every Thursday the mothers of the plaza, as they came to be known, met at the Plaza de Mayo wearing white scarves and demanded to know what happened to their husbands and sons.²⁵³ Their boldness and the failure of the junta to repress them brought increased international pressure.

The junta was losing support at home and needed an event to unify the country behind the military. A solution was found in a set of islands known to the Argentines as the Malvinas and to the rest of the world as the Falklands. Even before the 1982 invasion those islands occupied an important place in the Argentine mind. In a 1968 film *Somos los Mejores*, a group of neighborhood kids went to London to watch Estudiantes play Manchester. Just as they were arriving at Heathrow one of the kids shouted, “Leave the Malvinas.”²⁵⁴ Looking to gain national fervor and not believing that England would fight for a set of islands thousands of miles away, Argentina invaded the Falklands in April of 1982. They were initially successful, overwhelming the English troops stationed there and winning popular support. Foreign minister, Nicanor Costa Méndez believed that the U.S. would support Argentina’s claim to the islands and further deter the British from responding. But he was wrong.²⁵⁵ Not only did Margaret Thatcher deploy troops to recapture the islands, the U.S. also supported the military action.

Throughout the three months of fighting, soccer remained a useful tool to the military junta. Heavy censorship of the media gave the public the impression that Argentine forces were prevailing against the imperialist foe. The 1982 national team,

²⁵² David M.K. Sheinin, *Argentina and the United States: An Alliance Contained*, p. 164.

²⁵³ Marguerite Guzman Bouvard, *Revolutionizing Motherhood: The Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo*, (Delaware: Scholarly Resources Inc., 1994), p. 2.

²⁵⁴ Pablo Alabarces, *Fútbol y Patria*, p. 107.

²⁵⁵ David M.K. Sheinin, *Argentina and the United States: An Alliance Contained*, p. 174.

which included the rising star Diego Maradona, posed in front of a banner that read, "LAS MALVINAS SON ARGENTINAS."²⁵⁶ News about the invasion were broadcasted with scenes from Argentina's 1978 World Cup win, meant to inspire the populace with tales of past exploits. In a friendly match against the U.S.S.R. held in Buenos Aires the chant went up, "HE WHO DOESN'T JUMP IS AN ENGLISHMEN."²⁵⁷ The battle lines were drawn not just on the islands off the coast but in the minds of the people as well, to be Argentine was to not be English.

While fighting continued in the Falklands, the national team went to Spain for the World Cup. It was there that the players and their supporters saw uncensored reports about the war and realized that their country was about to lose. Potentially demoralized by the news, the Argentine team was eliminated from the tournament by the West German team in a lackluster performance. Losing both the literal as well as symbolic wars, the junta had lost all its popular support. No longer able to legitimize its rule, the pillar of authority which had been the Argentine military was undone. Without something else that could unify the country, it seemed that Argentina would fall back to factions fighting on the streets again. Fortunately there was such a unifying figure in the Argentine soccer star Diego Maradona. Born in the poorest of neighborhoods of Buenos Aires, he rose to prominence not through politics, business, or the army but as a soccer player. From 1979 to his last World Cup appearance as a player in 1994 Maradona captured the mind of Argentina and gave the country a hero to follow.

In his biography of Maradona, *Hand of God*, the journalist Jimmy Burns tells the story of how an international legend and national icon was formed. His parents had moved from the provinces to Buenos Aires during the 1950s looking for the worker's

²⁵⁶ Jimmy Burns, *Hand of God: The Life of Diego Maradona*, (New York: The Lyons Press, 1996), p. 89.

²⁵⁷ *Ibid*, p. 91.

paradise Perón had promised. Born in 1960, five years after Perón's exile, the neighborhood in which Maradona grew up maintained its loyalty to the popular leader.²⁵⁸ At the young age of eight, he started playing in the children's soccer league that was made possible by Eva Perón. It was after practice one day that a TV executive spotted the young boy and made sure that his progress was documented.²⁵⁹ After practice the young Maradona was asked to demonstrate his skill by juggling various objects with his feet and body, all caught on camera. Through television and articles, Argentina watched their young prodigy's legend grow.

Maradona's mythic rise was greatly aided by his first appearance on the soccer field. At age ten he was taken to an Argentinos Juniors game, his local team. During half-time he wandered on the field and dazzled the crowd with ball-handling prowess. The spectators were so in awe that when the players tried to return to play the crowd shouted, "Let him stay."²⁶⁰ In an interview later that same year, a young Maradona predicted that he would be a great soccer player and lead his country to glory. In 1979, the young boy's prophecy was fulfilled for the first time as he led his team to victory in the Youth World Cup.

Elevated from a local to a national icon after a high profile international victory, the military junta lost no time in allying itself with the popular Maradona. His victory coincided with the visit of a delegation of the Organization of American States' (OAS) to Buenos Aires to talk to the mothers of the disappeared. When the final whistle blew securing Maradona's win, state-run media encouraged everyone to take to Plaza de Mayo in celebration. Thousands flocked to the central square making access to the OAS' offices, a few blocks from the plaza, difficult if not impossible. Upon his return, Maradona

²⁵⁸ Jimmy Burns, *Hand of God*, pp. 14-15.

²⁵⁹ *Ibid*, pp. 20-21.

²⁶⁰ *Ibid*, p. 21.

and his team was invited by General Videla to the Casa Rosada where they were congratulated for their performance.²⁶¹

As Burns sees it, the link between the icon and the military worked both ways. If the régime could claim the icon as its own, so too would the icon share in the régime's defeat. As Maradona remembers it, he and the team believed the propaganda about the war and learning of its true nature greatly demoralized the team.²⁶² The Falklands not only cost the military its place of power but also removed the same myth of invincibility that surrounded its soccer hero. Argentina suffered a humiliating defeat to Brazil and the team left Spain as soon as they could afterward. The coach who had won Argentina its first World Cup, Menotti, was replaced and Maradona left the country to play soccer in Europe.

Though the soccer star and champion of the nation left Spain in disgrace, this episode merely added to his legend. In 1986 when the World Cup was held in Mexico, Maradona was given not only a chance at redemption but also an opportunity to place his status as a living legend beyond contention. When it became clear that England and Argentina would most likely face each other in the quarter-finals, the international press seized the opportunity. The Coaches of both countries were informed by the governments to depoliticize the game which of course was impossible.²⁶³ Though players and coaches did their best to just talk about the sport to the media and the fans watching, the game was a symbolic rematch of the war between the two countries. In this war, the playing field was equal. There were no technological or economic advantages afforded to either side, only the skill of one country versus the skill of another.

²⁶¹ Jimmy Burns, *Hand of God*, pp. 51-53.

²⁶² *Ibid*, p. 94.

²⁶³ *Ibid*, pp. 157-158.

The game began with a tense first half. Both sides played hesitantly as though both knew that they were not playing just a game; they were soldiers fighting for their nation's honor. A sluggish first half was followed by a quick two goals by Maradona in the first ten minutes of the second half. Nearly as important as the goals themselves was the manner in which the legend made them happen. Just as a Greek hero, the two opportunities were created and executed by the national icon with a little help on the first one and none on the second. The first goal, the now infamous "hand of god," was so named by Maradona as if God himself punished England for humiliating Argentina in the Falklands.²⁶⁴ A controversial goal even to this day, footage indicates to many, that the ball was pushed into the goal by his hand rather than his head. Whatever happened does not matter since the goal was allowed by the referees.

Maradona's second goal in the match was also paradigmatic of Argentine soccer but there was controversy about it. Taking the ball in the middle of the field Maradona went through practically the entire English team without any help from his fellow players before putting the ball in the net. Later called the "goal of the century" it justified the hero-worship Maradona received; a man who took the burden of the country on his shoulders and led his team to victory. Much later the hero confided that he held those English players on the field responsible for the Argentine deaths in the war. The first goal he stated "was like picking the pocket of an Englishmen," while the second, "sealed the deal."²⁶⁵

The questionable manner in which the first goal was achieved was justified in the same way the Estudiantes-Manchester game was legitimized twenty years prior. Maradona's goal, with a little help from his hand, was accepted in order to bring justice

²⁶⁴ Pablo Alabarces, *Fútbol y Patria*, p. 151.

²⁶⁵ *Ibid*, p.153. (translation mine).

back into the world. Nobody in Argentina doubted that the islands were theirs and it was only out of a sense of out-dated imperialism that England maintained control over them. If Britain was going to break the rules of fair-play in the world at large, then Argentina should be allowed to do it in the soccer stadium.

Earning his redemption from the World Cup defeat in Spain and avenging the nation for its wartime losses, Maradona was received back to Argentina with great fanfare. Once again he was invited to the Casa Rosada to appear on the balcony and lend his popularity to the current leader. Instead of meeting a dictator, as in his previous visit to the presidential palace, this time Maradona met the democratically elected Raul Alfonsín who received the national hero. Since 1983 Argentina had been undergoing a painful transition from the authoritarian rule of the junta to democratic rule. Years of oppression and state control of the country's industry had left a mark on both the people as well as the economy. Maradona's victorious return marked the first time since the invasion of the Falklands that the Argentine leader could deliver good news to the country.²⁶⁶

Though governments rose and fell, the impression was that Maradona was always there for the country. He would eventually fail a drug test and be expelled from the 1994 World Cup but his legend continued past his downfall. A good part of the legend concerns his skill as the one who defeated the English, not just in Argentina but in other countries as well. In the 1998 World Cup a camera crew caught up with a group of Scottish fans who were celebrating the "hand of god" that had knocked England out of

²⁶⁶ Jimmy Burns, *Hand of God*, p. 165.

the same tournament over a decade ago.²⁶⁷ Maradona had become a symbol not just of Argentine soccer but also of worldwide resistance to the British.

Even legends that loomed larger than life need to leave the arena and in 1996 Maradona finally ended a career that had been fizzling out since his 1994 World Cup appearance. Seeming to vindicate Arben's belief that sport could not solve national problems, Maradona was unable to stave off economic catastrophe. Throughout the 1980s, the peak of his career, Argentine wage-earners lost nearly 25 percent of their per-capita income. Inflation approached near 700 percent in 1985 just a year before the World Cup. By the time of Maradona's exit, there were signs of improvement. Carlos Menem became the first leader of the party opposite to the one in power to win an election in 1989. He was able to free up capital by privatizing state-owned companies that Perón had once nationalized and dealt with hyperinflation by linking the peso to the U.S. dollar. Though Menem's policy would save the country from economic collapse for another ten years, in the end Argentina went into default on its loans.²⁶⁸

Throughout the economic decline, soccer continued to go on. The Argentina-England soccer rivalry had been present through the Dirty War, dictatorship, and economic collapse and yet not been able to prevent any of them. At most soccer had been able to provide a momentary diversion and as historian of Brazil, Robert Levine, notes: such emotions fade quickly after the match is over.²⁶⁹ This is true of most matches by teams that often compete against each other. It is easier to forge the sting of loss or

²⁶⁷ María Graciela Rodríguez, "Los Días en que Maradona usó Kilt: Intersección de Identidades Profundas con Representaciones Massmediáticas," ed. Pablo Alabarces, *Futbologías: Fútbol, Identidad y Violencia en América Latina*, (Buenos Aires: CLASCO, 2003), p. 184.

²⁶⁸ Thomas E. Skidmore and Peter H. Smith, "Argentina: Prosperity, Deadlock, and Change," pp. 103-107.

²⁶⁹ Robert M. Levine, "Sport Dramaturgy for Society: A Concluding Chapter," ed. Joseph L. Arben, *Sport and Society in Latin America: Diffusion, Dependency, and the Rise of Mass Culture*, (Westport, Connecticut: Green Wood Press, 1988), p. 142.

exuberance of victory since the match is repeated a couple of times a year. However, in matches that happen only once a year or once every four years, it is possible to create a moment in which memory will invoke a shared emotional experience. This is reminiscent of Eric Hobsbawm's analysis of the emotionally and symbolically charged membership of social groups. U.S. school children pledging their allegiance to the flag, to take one example, symbolize their membership in an imaginary community.²⁷⁰ One could argue that the same applies to the rituals of soccer matches.

In his study of the soccer club, Corinthians, Matthew Shirts applies Hobsbawm's "invented traditions" to Brazilian soccer. The sport had become such a part of the culture that it became an unofficial part of citizenship of the country.²⁷¹ To put it another way, two Brazilians who had never met each other could celebrate a game together as if they had been old acquaintances. Soccer is such a part of Brazilian culture that it forms a tradition and shared memory of its own. The same is true for Argentina.

Few of the week to week games proved memorable except to fans of any given club but there were moments that resonated at a national level. "Animal," was not something that the English head coach called the 1966 Argentine team but the entire nation for all time. Maradona's two goals against the same opponent twenty years later will likewise always unite Argentina in some feeling of national pride and vindication. Maradona as a figure even has a polarizing effect that helps people choose a side. The same "hand of god" remembered fondly by Argentina causes revulsion to England, demarking who belongs and who is the other.

²⁷⁰ Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, *The Invention of Tradition*, p. 11.

²⁷¹ Matthew Shirts, "Sócrates, Corinthians, and Questions of Democracy and Citizenship," ed. Joseph L. Arbena, *Sport and Society in Latin America: Diffusion, Dependency, and the Rise of Mass Culture*, (Westport, Connecticut: Green Wood Press, 1988), p. 107.

Though soccer did not create an Argentine identity alone, it did do much of the nationalizing work. The creation of clubs provided regional identities which were then linked among each other through the creation of leagues so rivalries were formed. Loyalty to the nation at large was fostered through club participation in international matches and the national team's participation in World Cups. Matches, especially international ones, helped cement identity by defining and reviling the opponent. Finally through the media it became possible to share the experience of a match not just among contemporaries but across time, fulfilling the needs of tradition.

Chapter 6

Conclusion

John F. Kasson outlines in his *Amusing the Million* the development of the three major amusement parks, Steeplechase, Luna Park, and Dreamland in Coney Island at the turn of the twentieth-century. Similar to the transformation Buenos Aires was undergoing at the same time, electric trolleys and an increase in leisure time and spending power allowed the masses of New Yorkers to simultaneously help create and participate in consumer culture. Kasson shows the rise of the amusement parks as a rebellion against the Victorian values of “high culture.” Similar to Enrique Romero Brest’s ideas, the New York elite told the lower classes to work hard and save their money so that they do not succumb to their animal passions.²⁷² To encourage appropriate interaction among classes and to reinforce class hierarchy, the intellectual elite constructed spaces such as Central Park and the World’s Columbian Exposition in Chicago. These places were designed to encourage public order and cultural unity.²⁷³

Coney Island provided a different escape for the masses. At the three major amusement parks there was no attempt to moralize the patrons but an inversion of the outside world. Within the park’s borders, people enjoyed anonymity and the freedom of being separated from social obligations. At Luna Park, the façade of aristocratic splendor was not meant to intimidate but make fun of class hierarchies.²⁷⁴ Like the Argentine soccer stadium, the amusement parks of Coney Island were idealized spaces belonging to the middle and lower classes. Life could be, for a time, as the masses wanted it to be rather than how it was.

²⁷² John F. Kasson, *Amusing the Million: Coney Island at the Turn of the Century*, (New York: Hill & Want, 1978), pp. 4-7.

²⁷³ *Ibid*, p. 18.

²⁷⁴ *Ibid*, p. 66.

Not a benign space, Kasson follows Maxim Gorky's interpretation of Coney Island, that it was a social safety valve. Far from being an edifying experience, the fantasy of the amusement parks, kept the lower classes rooted in place.²⁷⁵ The promise of a weekend getaway made the social injustice of the week more bearable. Rather than using their increased buying power and leisure time to improve their lot in society, they chose to spend it on what was designed to be a fleeting fantasy. The question needs to be raised here, if the same is true for Argentine soccer. Coney Island amusement parks and soccer grew up at the same time and were enabled by the same industrial technologies. The military overlords of the second half of the twentieth century certainly tried to use the sport as a safety valve. Victory, and the emotional high that came with it, was fleeting just as the enjoyment from the amusement parks rides. It might well be that Argentine soccer fulfilled a similar function.

Both soccer and amusement parks provided an inversion from the normal status quo found outside the boundaries of the soccer field. Amílcar Romero refers to the soccer stadium as the *contrasociedad deportivo*, what anthropologists would refer to as carnivalesque. Just as Coney Island broke down class obligation allowing public displays of affection, Argentine stadiums permitted a level of violence not permitted in the streets outside.²⁷⁶ In this way the *barras bravas* served in a similar function to the freaks in the main thoroughfare of Coney Island. The bearded ladies and midgets represented the inversion of the mundane allowing other spectators to participate as well.²⁷⁷ The *barras bravas* earned their living by going to matches and enhancing the spectacle through their chants as well as daring raids on opposing fans. It is also clear that they expect other

²⁷⁵ John F. Kasson, *Amusing the Million*, pp. 108-109.

²⁷⁶ Amílcar Romero, "Las Barras Bravas y la contrasociedad deportiva," (Buenos Aires: Centro Editor de América Latina, 1994), p. 17.

²⁷⁷ Kasson, pp. 50-51.

fans to participate in their antics by implying shame to those who do not participate, “those who do not jump are English!” Just like the freak shows of Coney Island, the *barras bravas* served little benefit to society outside the stadium.

There are significant differences between the two idealized spaces that allow soccer to have greater impact. Unlike amusement parks, Argentine soccer provided more than just diversion. As Frydenberg, Daskal, and Torres note in their article, sport clubs served as a focal point for their neighborhood identities. Facilities built to gain access to the AFA were used throughout the week not only by members but by schools and other community programs. Clubs embraced their identity as “citizen-builders,” offering programs designed to keep children off the streets.²⁷⁸ Having a noteworthy soccer team was an effective way of attracting more members that allowed the club to expand its reach.

Another way that sports in general provides for community is by linking the public world with the political one. Clubs have their own internal hierarchy with presidents and board members playing a visible leadership role in directing its day-to-day activities. A team that is doing well reflected positively on the club president, earning him a popular base if he wished to enter the field of politics.²⁷⁹ The political link that allowed the military junta to use soccer for its benefit also allowed politicians to rise up through its ranks. Though the soccer field is an idealized place, it is still connected to the world around it, in this sense it is the opposite of amusement parks.

During times of political oppression, the popularity of soccer plus its usefulness to the government gave the sport a little more immunity than other public institutions.

²⁷⁸ Julio Frydenberg, Rodrigo Daskal & Cesar R. Torres, “Sports Clubs with Football in Argentina: Conflicts, Debates and Continuities,” *International Journal of Sport History*, vol. 30, no. 14, p. 1677.

²⁷⁹ Vic Duke and Liz Crolley, “Fútbol, Politicians and the People: Populism and Politics in Argentina,” *The International Journal of the History of Sport*, (published online, Sep. 2010) p. 101.

Though the working class was the target of much of the military junta's repression, they were still allowed to congregate in their local stadium and participate in the ritual of soccer. Ticket costs were kept low and those who could afford or did not wish to pay could always participate in communal spectating at the local café. As long as leaders of the *barras bravas* presented themselves before officials first, they were even allowed to carry out their more violent functions. In that way the state, while not condoning, accepted the public space of the stadium.

All this is not to say that soccer is a boon to society without adding any discontent. Elias' observation that stadiums were spaces in which violence is acceptable is certainly true in Argentina. In the stands fans are permitted more latitude with regards to violent acts than would normally be acceptable in the world outside the stadium. Gaffney describes the local geography leading up to a game as "increasingly militarized."²⁸⁰ Police and state officials, their number is determined by the popularity of the game, directed fans making sure those fans of either team were separated from the other. Inside the stadium, police kept an eye on the stands stepping in if violence got out of control. The same spaces that provided refuge from political oppression opened a door for violence among fans.

In a similar way, the sport that allowed the nation to celebrate its successes permitted itself to be a tool of the state. Thousands took to the streets at the prompting of the state-sponsored radio stations to celebrate Maradona's victory in the Youth World Cup. Revelers became willing foils to the Mother of the Disappeared as the party impeded access to give testimony to the human rights committee.²⁸¹ A few years later

²⁸⁰ Chris Gaffney, "Stadiums and society in twenty-first century Buenos Aires," *Soccer & Society*, Vol. 10, No. 2, March 2009, p. 165.

²⁸¹ Jimmy Burns, *Hand of God: The Life of Diego Maradona*, (New York: The Lyons Press, 1996), pp. 51-53.

support was given to the government during the Falkland conflict. At international matches, *barras bravas* led the stadium in nationalistic chants increasing popular support for the war.

That soccer has beneficial and harmful effects on society testifies to its difference from amusement parks. Both represent idealized spaces. The Coney Island amusement parks represent a release from class distinctions and social obligations, a carnivalesque existence. In a similar way, soccer and the stadium represent a world of ideal conflict even on the national level with the developing versus the developed nations. The main difference was in the development of these created spaces. Since amusement parks offered a release from communal requirements, the experience was a largely individualistic one. Though strangers met and conversed at the park, anonymity was the prized attribute and such relationships only existed within the boundaries of the park. People did share in the experience of the park, but such a relationship linked them only to the identity of the consumer.

The idealized world of Argentine soccer was a communal one centered on identity. Relationships built in the stadium were extensions of relationships built in the neighborhoods. Even members that did not live in the same neighborhood still met each other on the club grounds. The shared experience among soccer spectators was also something greater than a link to consumer culture. Sports defined identity in terms of the local and foreign with both teams divided into home and away teams. When an Argentine team played a team from another nationality the definition of local expanded to include the entire nation. Soccer then did not hold the same carnivalesque qualities that amusement parks had. It represented not an escape from the world but rather enjoyment of a world as it should be, one that could encourage a participant in his everyday life.

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Biographical Information

Brandon Blakeslee graduated from Calvin College, a small but mighty liberal arts school in Grand Rapids, Michigan in 2010 with a double major in History and Spanish. A semester abroad in the Yucatan Peninsula piqued his curiosity about Latin America and how national identity is created. Brandon's senior thesis was on a small but growing neighborhood in Grand Rapids and the Hispanic community that lived in it. The paper focused on the issue of identity and how a people group could be adopted into the North American one.

Fascinated by the issue of identity and how it is created, Brandon pursued his graduate studies at the University of Texas Arlington. It was there while taking a class on the intercultural transfer model that he discovered an ideal method for studying how identity develops over time. The new model seemed an ideal method for tracking the development of Latin American nationalities.

In the future Brandon hopes to leverage his M.A. to continue his studies and expound his thesis into a dissertation. Though using sports as a vehicle, his primary interest is in how Latin America absorbs U.S. and European concepts and objects and make them their own. His goal is to tell a history of Latin America that does not ignore or marginalize its colonial past, or favor one competing ideology over another, but shows how they work together collectively to support an unique identity.